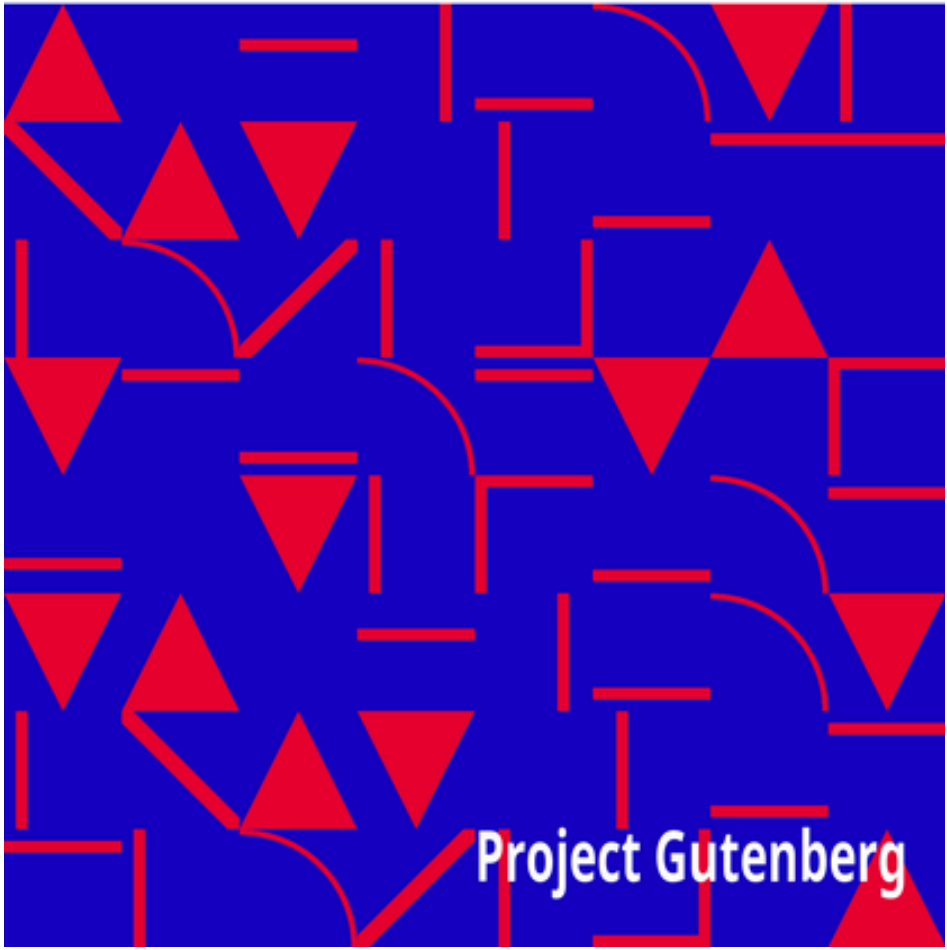
A Christmas Greeting: A Series of Stories

H. C. Andersen



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A CHRISTMAS GREETING

A Series of Stories,

BY HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

[Man Carrying Firewood.]

New York:

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Published by James Miller,

522 Broadway.

TO

CHARLES DICKENS, Esq.

I am again in my quiet Danish home, but my thoughts are daily in dear England, where, a few months ago, my many friends transformed for me reality into a charming story.

Whilst occupied with a greater work, there sprung forth—as the flowers spring forth in the forest—seven short stories.* I feel a desire, a longing, to transplant in England the first produce of my poetic garden, as a Christmas greeting: and I send it to you, my dear, noble, Charles Dickens, who by your works had been previously dear to me, and since our meeting have taken root for ever in my heart.

Your hand was the last that pressed mine on England's coast: it was you who from her shores wafted me the last farewell. It is therefore natural that I should send to you, from Denmark, my first greeting again, as sincerely as an affectionate heart can convey it.

Hans Christian Andersen.

Copenhagen. 6th December, 1847.

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* The first seven in this volume.

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THE OLD HOUSE.

In the street, up there, was an old, a very old house,—it was almost three hundred years old, for that might be known by reading the great beam on which the date of the year was carved: together with tulips and hop-binds there were whole verses spelled as in former times, and over every window was a distorted face cut out in the beam. The one story stood forward a great way over the other; and directly under the eaves was a leaden spout with a dragon's head; the rain-water should have run out of the mouth, but it ran out of the belly, for there was a hole in the spout.

All the other houses in the street were so new and so neat, with large window-panes and smooth walls, one could easily see that they would have nothing to do with the old house: they certainly thought, "How long is that old decayed thing to stand here as a spectacle in the street? And then the protecting windows stand so far out, that no one can see from our windows what happens in that direction! The steps are as broad as those of a palace, and as high as to a church tower. The iron railings look just like the door to an old family vault, and then they have brass tops,—that's so stupid!"

On the other side of the street were also new and neat houses, and they thought just as the others did; but at the window opposite the old house there sat a little boy with fresh rosy cheeks and bright beaming eyes: he certainly liked the old house best, and that both in sunshine and moonshine. And when he looked across at the wall where the mortar had fallen out, he could sit and find out there the strangest figures imaginable; exactly as the street had appeared before, with steps, projecting windows, and pointed gables; he could see soldiers with halberds, and spouts where the water ran, like dragons and serpents.

That was a house to look at; and there lived an old man, who wore plush breeches; and he had a coat with large brass buttons, and a wig that one could see was a real wig. Every morning there came an old fellow to him who put his rooms in order, and went on errands; otherwise, the old man in the plush breeches was quite alone in the old house. Now and then he came to the window and looked out, and the little boy nodded to him, and the old man nodded again, and so they became acquaintances, and then they were friends, although they had never spoken to each other,—but that made no difference. The little boy heard his parents say, "The old man opposite is very well off, but he is so very, very lonely!"

The Sunday following, the little boy took something, and wrapped it up in a piece of paper, went down stairs, and stood in the doorway; and when the man who went on errands came past, he said to him—

"I say, master! will you give this to the old man over the way from me? I have two pewter soldiers—this is one of them, and he shall have it, for I know he is so very, very lonely."

And the old errand man looked quite pleased, nodded, and took the pewter soldier over to the old house. Afterwards there came a message; it was to ask if the little boy himself had not a wish to come over and pay a visit; and so he got permission of his parents, and then went over to the old house.

And the brass balls on the iron railings shone much brighter than ever; one would have thought they were polished on account of the visit; and it was as if the carved-out trumpeters—for there were trumpeters, who stood in tulips, carved out on the door—blew with all their might, their cheeks appeared so much rounder than before. Yes, they blew —"Trateratra! the little boy comes trateratra!"—and then the door opened.

The whole passage was hung with portraits of knights in armor, and ladies in silken gowns; and the armor rattled, and the silken gowns rustled! And then there was a flight of stairs which went a good way upwards, and a little way downwards, and then one came on a balcony which was in a very dilapidated state, sure enough, with large holes and

long crevices, but grass grew there and leaves out of them altogether, for the whole balcony outside, the yard, and the walls, were overgrown with so much green stuff, that it looked like a garden; but it was only a balcony. Here stood old flower-pots with faces and asses' ears, and the flowers grew just as they liked. One of the pots was quite overrun on all sides with pinks, that is to say, with the green part; shoot stood by shoot, and it said quite distinctly, "The air has cherished me, the sun has kissed me, and promised me a little flower on Sunday!—a little flower on Sunday!"

And then they entered a chamber where the walls were covered, with hog's leather, and printed with gold flowers.

> "The gilding decays,
> But hog's leather stays!"

said the walls.

And there stood easy chairs, with such high backs, and so carved out, and with arms on both sides. "Sit down! sit down!" said they. "Ugh! how I creak; now I shall certainly get the gout, like the old clothes-press, ugh!"

And then the little boy came into the room where the projecting windows were, and where the old man sat.

"I thank you for the pewter soldier, my little friend!" said the old man, "and I thank you because you come over to me."

"Thankee! thankee!" or "cranky! cranky!" sounded from all the furniture; there was so much of it, that each article stood in the other's way, to get a look at the little boy.

In the middle of the wall hung a picture representing a beautiful lady, so young, so glad, but dressed quite as in former times, with clothes that stood quite stiff, and with powder in her hair; she neither said "thankee, thankee!" nor "cranky, cranky!" but looked with her mild eyes at the little boy, who directly asked the old man, "Where did you get her?"

"Yonder, at the broker's," said the old man, "where there are so many pictures hanging. No one knows or cares about them, for they are all of them buried; but I knew her in by-gone days, and now she has been dead and gone these fifty years!"

Under the picture, in a glazed frame, there hung a *bouquet* of withered flowers; they were almost fifty years old; they looked so very old!

The pendulum of the great clock went to and fro, and the hands turned, and every thing in the room became still older; but they did not observe it.

"They say at home," said the little boy, "that you are so very, very lonely!"

"Oh!" said he, "the old thoughts, with what they may bring with them, come and visit me, and now you also come! I am very well off!"

Then he took a book with pictures in it down from the shelf; there were whole long processions and pageants, with the strangest characters, which one never sees now-a-days; soldiers like the knave of clubs, and citizens with waving flags: the tailors had theirs, with a pair of shears held by two lions,—and the shoemakers theirs, without boots, but with an eagle that had two heads, for the shoemakers must have everything so that they can say, it is a pair!—Yes, that was a picture book!

The old man now went into the other room to fetch preserves, apples, and nuts;—yes, it was delightful over there in the old house.

"I cannot bear it any longer!" said the pewter soldier, who sat on the drawers; "it is so lonely and melancholy here! but when one has been in a family circle one cannot accustom oneself to this life! I cannot bear it any longer! the whole day is so long, and the evenings are still longer! here it is not at all as it is over the way at your home, where your father and mother spoke so pleasantly, and where you and all your sweet children made such a delightful noise. Nay, how lonely the old man is!—do you think that he gets kisses? do you think he gets mild eyes, or a Christmas tree?—He will get nothing but a grave.—I can bear it no longer!"

"You must not let it grieve you so much," said the little boy; "I find it so very delightful here, and then all the old thoughts, with what they may bring with them, they come and visit here."

"Yes, it's all very well, but I see nothing of them, and I don't know them!" said the pewter soldier, "I cannot bear it!"

"But you must!" said the little boy.

Then in came the old man with the most pleased and happy face, the most delicious preserves, apples, and nuts, and so the little boy thought no more about the pewter soldier.

The little boy returned home happy and pleased, and weeks and days passed away, and nods were made to the old house, and from the old house, and then the little boy went over there again.

The carved trumpeters blew, "trateratra! there is the little boy! trateratra!" and the swords and armor on the knights' portraits rattled, and the silk gowns rustled; the hog's-leather spoke, and the old chairs had the gout in their legs and rheumatism in their backs: Ugh!—it was exactly like the first time, for over there one day and hour was just like another.

"I cannot bear it!" said the pewter soldier, "I have shed pewter tears! it is too melancholy! rather let me go to the wars and lose arms and legs! it would at least be a change. I cannot bear it longer!—Now, I know what it is to have a visit from one's old thoughts, with what they may bring with them! I have had a visit from mine, and you may be sure it is no pleasant thing in the end; I was at last about to jump down from the drawers.

"I saw you all over there at home so distinctly, as if you really were here; it was again that Sunday morning; all you children stood before the table and sung your Psalms, as you do every morning. You stood devoutly with folded hands; and father and mother were just as pious; and then the door was opened, and little sister Mary, who is not two years old yet, and who always dances when she hears music or singing, of whatever kind it may be, was put into the room—though she ought not to have been there—and then she began to dance, but could not keep time, because the tones were so long; and then she stood, first on the one

leg, and bent her head forwards, and then on the other leg, and bent her head forwards—but all would not do. You stood very seriously all together, although it was difficult enough; but I laughed to myself, and then I fell off the table, and got a bump, which I have still—for it was not right of me to laugh. But the whole now passes before me again in thought, and everything that I have lived to see; and these are the old thoughts, with what they may bring with them.

"Tell me if you still sing on Sundays? Tell me something about little Mary! and how my comrade, the other pewter soldier, lives! Yes, he is happy enough, that's sure! I cannot bear it any longer!"

"You are given away as a present!" said the little boy; "you must remain. Can you not understand that?"

The old man now came with a drawer, in which there was much to be seen, both "tin boxes" and "balsam boxes," old cards, so large and so gilded, such as one never sees them now. And several drawers were opened, and the piano was opened; it had landscapes on the inside of the lid, and it was so hoarse when the old man played on it! and then he hummed a song.

"Yes, she could sing that!" said he, and nodded to the portrait, which he had bought at the broker's, and the old man's eyes shone so bright!

"I will go to the wars! I will go to the wars!" shouted the pewter soldier as loud as he could, and threw himself off the drawers right down on the floor.

What became of him? The old man sought, and the little boy sought; he was away, and he stayed away.

"I shall find him!" said the old man; but he never found him. The floor was too open—the pewter soldier had fallen through a crevice, and there he lay as in an open tomb.

That day passed, and the little boy went home, and that week passed, and several weeks too. The windows were quite frozen, the little boy was obliged to sit and breathe on them to get a peep-hole over to the old

house, and there the snow had been blown into all the carved work and inscriptions; it lay quite up over the steps, just as if there was no one at home;—nor was there any one at home—the old man was dead!

In the evening there was a hearse seen before the door, and he was borne into it in his coffin: he was now to go out into the country, to lie in his grave. He was driven out there, but no one followed; all his friends were dead, and the little boy kissed his hand to the coffin as it was driven away.

Some days afterwards there was an auction at the old house, and the little boy saw from his window how they carried the old knights and the old ladies away, the flower-pots with the long ears, the old chairs, and the old clothes-presses. Something came here, and something came there; the portrait of her who had been found at the broker's came to the broker's again; and there it hung, for no one knew her more—no one cared about the old picture.

In the spring they pulled the house down, for, as people said, it was a ruin. One could see from the street right into the room with the hog's-leather hanging, which was slashed and torn; and the green grass and leaves about the balcony hung quite wild about the falling beams.—And then it was put to rights.

"That was a relief," said the neighboring houses.

A fine house was built there, with large windows, and smooth white walls; but before it, where the old house had in fact stood, was a little garden laid out, and a wild grapevine ran up the wall of the neighboring house. Before the garden there was a large iron railing with an iron door, it looked quite splendid, and people stood still and peeped in, and the sparrows hung by scores in the vine, and chattered away at each other as well as they could, but it was not about the old house, for they could not remember it, so many years had passed,—so many that the little boy had grown up to a whole man, yes, a clever man, and a pleasure to his

parents; and he had just been married, and, together with his little wife, had come to live in the house here, where the garden was; and he stood by her there whilst she planted a field-flower that she found so pretty; she planted it with her little hand, and pressed the earth around it with her fingers. Oh! what was that? She had stuck herself. There sat something pointed, straight out of the soft mould.

It was——yes, guess!—it was the pewter soldier, he that was lost up at the old man's, and had tumbled and turned about amongst the timber and the rubbish, and had at last laid for many years in the ground.

The young wife wiped the dirt off the soldier, first with a green leaf, and then with her fine handkerchief—it had such a delightful smell, that it was to the pewter soldier just as if he had awaked from a trance.

"Let me see him," said the young man. He laughed, and then shook his head. "Nay, it cannot be he; but he reminds me of a story about a pewter soldier which I had when I was a little boy!" And then he told his wife about the old house, and the old man, and about the pewter soldier that he sent over to him because he was so very, very lonely; and he told it as correctly as it had really been, so that the tears came into the eyes of his young wife, on account of the old house and the old man.

"It may possibly be, however, that it is the same pewter soldier!" said she, "I will take care of it, and remember all that you have told me; but you must show me the old man's grave!"

"But I do not know it," said he, "and no one knows it! all his friends were dead, no one took care of it, and I was then a little boy!"

"How very, very lonely he must have been!" said she.

"Very, very lonely!" said the pewter soldier; "but it is delightful not to be forgotten!"

"Delightful!" shouted something close by; but no one, except the pewter soldier, saw that it was a piece of the hog's-leather hangings; it had lost all its gilding, it looked like a piece of wet clay, but it had an opinion, and it gave it:

"The gilding decays,
But hog's leather stays!"

This the pewter soldier did not believe.

THE DROP OF WATER.

What a magnifying glass is, you surely know—such a round sort of spectacle-glass that makes everything full a hundred times larger than it really is. When one holds it before the eye, and looks at a drop of water out of the pond, then one sees above a thousand strange creatures. It looks almost like a whole plateful of shrimps springing about among each other, and they are so ravenous, they tear one another's arms and legs, tails and sides, and yet they are glad and pleased in their way.

Now, there was once an old man, who was called by every body Creep-and-Crawl; for that was his name. He would always make the best out of everything, and when he could not make anything out of it he resorted to witchcraft.

Now, one day he sat and held his magnifying glass before his eye, and looked at a drop of water that was taken out of a little pool in the ditch. What a creeping and crawling was there! all the thousands of small creatures hopped and jumped about, pulled one another, and pecked one another.

"But this is abominable!" said Creep-and-Crawl, "Can one not get them to live in peace and quiet, and each mind his own business?" And he thought and thought, but he could come to no conclusion, and so he was obliged to conjure. "I must give them a color, that they may be more discernible!" said he; and so he poured something like a little drop of red wine into the drop of water, but it was bewitched blood from the lobe of the ear—the very finest sort for a penny; and then all the strange creatures became rose-colored over the whole body. It looked like a whole town of naked savages.

"What have you got there?" said another old wizard, who had no name, and that was just the best of it.

"Why," said Creep-and-Crawl, "if you can guess what it is, I will make you a present of it; but it is not so easy to find out when one does not know it!"

The wizard who had no name looked through the magnifying glass. It actually appeared like a whole town, where all the inhabitants ran about without clothes! it was terrible, but still more terrible to see how the one knocked and pushed the other, bit each other, and drew one another about. What was undermost should be topmost, and what was topmost should be undermost!—See there, now! his leg is longer than mine!—whip it off, and away with it! There is one that has a little lump behind the ear, a little innocent lump, but it pains him, and so it shall pain him still more! And they pecked at it, and they dragged him about, and they ate him, and all on account of the little lump. There sat one as still as a little maid, who only wished for peace and quietness, but she must be brought out and they dragged her, and they pulled her, and they devoured her!

"It is quite amusing!" said the wizard.

"Yes; but what do you think it is?" asked Creep-and-Crawl. "Can you find it out!"

"It is very easy to see," said the other, "it is some great city, they all resemble each other. A great city it is, that's sure!"

"It is ditch-water!" said Creep-and-Crawl.

THE HAPPY FAMILY.

Really, the largest green leaf in this country is a dock-leaf; if one holds it before one, it is like a whole apron, and if one holds it over one's head in rainy weather, it is almost as good as an umbrella, for it is so immensely large. The burdock never grows alone, but where there grows one there always grow several: it is a great delight, and all this delightfulness is snails' food. The great white snails which persons of quality in former times made fricassees of, ate, and said, "Hem, hem! how delicious!" for they thought it tasted so delicate—lived on dock leaves, and therefore burdock seeds were sown.

Now, there was an old manor-house, where they no longer ate snails, they were quite extinct; but the burdocks were not extinct, they grew and grew all over the walks and all the beds; they could not get the mastery over them—it was a whole forest of burdocks. Here and there stood an apple and a plumb-tree, or else one never would have thought that it was a garden; all was burdocks, and there lived the two last venerable old snails.

They themselves knew not how old they were, but they could remember very well that there had been many more; that they were of a family from foreign lands, and that for them and theirs the whole forest was planted. They had never been outside it, but they knew that there was still something more in the world, which was called the manor-house, and that there they were boiled, and then they became black, and were then placed on a silver dish; but what happened further they knew not; or, in fact, what it was to be boiled, and to lie on a silver dish, they could not possibly imagine; but it was said to be delightful, and

particularly genteel. Neither the chafers, the toads, nor the earth-worms, whom they asked about it could give them any information,—none of them had been boiled or laid on a silver dish.

The old white snails were the first persons of distinction in the world, that they knew; the forest was planted for their sake, and the manor-house was there that they might be boiled and laid on a silver dish.

Now they lived a very lonely and happy life; and as they had no children themselves, they had adopted a little common snail, which they brought up as their own; but the little one would not grow, for he was of a common family; but the old ones, especially Dame Mother Snail, thought they could observe how he increased in size, and she begged father, if he could not see it, that he would at least feel the little snail's shell; and then he felt it, and found the good dame was right.

One day there was a heavy storm of rain.

"Hear how it beats like a drum on the dock leaves!" said Father Snail.

"There are also rain-drops!" said Mother Snail; "and now the rain pours right down the stalk! You will see that it will be wet here! I am very happy to think that we have our good house, and the little one has his also! There is more done for us than for all other creatures, sure enough; but can you not see that we are folks of quality in the world? We are provided with a house from our birth, and the burdock forest is planted for our sakes! I should like to know how far it extends, and what there is outside!"

"There is nothing at all," said Father Snail. "No place can be better than ours, and I have nothing to wish for!"

"Yes," said the dame. "I would willingly go to the manor-house, be boiled, and laid on a silver dish; all our forefathers have been treated so; there is something extraordinary in it, you may be sure!"

"The manor-house has most likely fallen to ruin!" said Father Snail. "or the burdocks have grown up over it, so that they cannot come out. There need not, however, be any haste about that; but you are always in

such a tremendous hurry, and the little one is beginning to be the same. Has he not been creeping up that stalk these three days? It gives me a headache when I look up to him!"

"You must not scold him," said Mother Snail; "he creeps so carefully; he will afford us much pleasure—and we have nothing but him to live for! But have you not thought of it?—where shall we get a wife for him? Do you not think that there are some of our species at a great distance in the interior of the burdock forest?"

"Black snails, I dare say, there are enough of," said the old one—"black snails without a house—but they are so common, and so conceited. But we might give the ants a commission to look out for us; they run to and fro as if they had something to do, and they certainly know of a wife for our little snail!"

"I know one, sure enough—the most charming one!" said one of the ants; "but I am afraid we shall hardly succeed, for she is a queen!"

"That is nothing!" said the old folks; "has she a house?"

"She has a palace!" said the ant—"the finest ant's palace, with seven hundred passages!"

"I thank you!" said Mother Snail; "our son shall not go into an ant-hill; if you know nothing better than that, we shall give the commission to the white gnats. They fly far and wide, in rain and sunshine; they know the whole forest here, both within and without."

"We have a wife for him," said the gnats; "at a hundred human paces from here there sits a little snail in her house, on a gooseberry bush; she is quite lonely, and old enough to be married. It is only a hundred human paces!"

"Well, then, let her come to him!" said the old ones; "he has a whole forest of burdocks, she has only a bush!"

And so they went and fetched little Miss Snail. It was a whole week before she arrived; but therein was just the very best of it, for one could thus see that she was of the same species.

And then the marriage was celebrated. Six earth-worms shone as well as they could. In other respects the whole went off very quietly, for the old folks could not bear noise and merriment; but old Dame Snail made a brilliant speech. Father Snail could not speak, he was too much affected; and so they gave them as a dowry and inheritance, the whole forest of burdocks, and said—what they had always said—that it was the best in the world; and if they lived honestly and decently, and increased and multiplied, they and their children would once in the course of time come to the manor-house, be boiled black, and laid on silver dishes. After this speech was made, the old ones crept into their shells, and never more came out. They slept; the young couple governed in the forest, and had a numerous progeny, but they were never boiled, and never came on the silver dishes; so from this they concluded that the manor-house had fallen to ruins, and that all the men in the world were extinct; and as no one contradicted them, so, of course it was so. And the rain beat on the dock-leaves to make drum-music for their sake, and the sun shone in order to give the burdock forest a color for their sakes; and they were very happy, and the whole family was happy; for they, indeed were so.

THE STORY OF A MOTHER

A mother sat there with her little child. She was so downcast, so afraid that it should die! It was so pale, the small eyes had closed themselves, and it drew its breath so softly, now and then, with a deep respiration, as if it sighed; and the mother looked still more sorrowfully on the little creature.

Then a knocking was heard at the door, and in came a poor old, man wrapped up as in a large horse-cloth, for it warms one, and he needed it, as it was the cold winter season! Every thing out of doors was covered with ice and snow, and the wind blew so that it cut the face.

As the old man trembled with cold, and the little child slept a moment, the mother went and poured some ale into a pot and set it on the stove, that it might be warm for him; the old man sat and rocked the cradle, and the mother sat down on a chair close by him, and looked at her little sick child that drew its breath so deep, and raised its little hand.

"Do you not think that I shall save him?" said she, "*Our Lord* will not take him from me!"

And the old man,—it was Death himself,—he nodded so strangely, it could just as well signify yes as no. And the mother looked down in her lap, and the tears ran down over her cheeks; her head became so heavy—she had not closed her eyes for three days and nights; and now she slept, but only for a minute, when she started up and trembled with cold: "What is that?" said she, and looked on all sides; but the old man was gone, and her little child was gone—he had taken it with him; and the old clock in the corner burred, and burred, the great leaden weight ran down to the floor, bump! and then the clock also stood still.

But the poor mother ran out of the house and cried aloud for her child.

Out there, in the midst of the snow, there sat a woman in long, black clothes; and she said, "Death has been in thy chamber, and I saw him hasten away with thy little child; he goes faster than the wind, and he never brings back what he takes!"

"Oh, only tell me which way he went!" said the mother: "Tell me the way, and I shall find him!"

"I know it!" said the woman in the black clothes, "but before I tell it, thou must first sing for me all the songs thou hast sung for thy child!—I am fond of them; I have heard them before; I am Night; I saw thy tears whilst thou sang'st them!"

"I will sing them all, all!" said the mother; "but do not stop me now;—I may overtake him—I may find my child!"

But Night stood still and mute. Then the mother wrung her hands, sang and wept, and there were many songs, but yet many more tears; and then Night said, "Go to the right, into the dark pine forest; thither I saw Death take his way with thy little child!"

The roads crossed each other in the depths of the forest, and she no longer knew whither she should go; then there stood a thorn-bush; there was neither leaf nor flower on it, it was also in the cold winter season, and ice-flakes hung on the branches.

"Hast thou not seen Death go past with my little child?" said the mother.

"Yes," said the thorn-bush; "but I will not tell thee which way he took, unless thou wilt first warm me up at thy heart. I am freezing to death; I shall become a lump of ice!"

And she pressed the thorn-bush to her breast, so firmly, that it might be thoroughly warmed, and the thorns went right into her flesh, and her blood flowed in large drops, but the thorn-bush shot forth fresh green leaves, and there came flowers on it in the cold winter night, the heart of the afflicted mother was so warm; and the thorn-bush told her the way she should go.

She then came to a large lake, where there was neither ship nor boat. The lake was not frozen sufficiently to bear her; neither was it open, nor low enough that she could wade through it; and across it she must go if she would find her child! Then she lay down to drink up the lake, and that was an impossibility for a human being, but the afflicted mother thought that a miracle might happen nevertheless.

"Oh, what would I not give to come to my child!" said the weeping mother; and she wept still more, and her eyes sunk down in the depths of the waters, and became two precious pearls; but the water bore her up, as if she sat in a swing, and she flew in the rocking waves to the shore on the opposite side, where there stood a mile-broad, strange house, one knew not if it were a mountain with forests and caverns, or if it were built up; but the poor mother could not see it; she had wept her eyes out.

"Where shall I find Death, who took away my little child?" said she.

"He has not come here yet!" said the old grave woman, who was appointed to look after Death's great greenhouse! "How have you been able to find the way hither? and who has helped you?"

"*Our Lord* has helped me," said she. "He is merciful, and you will also be so! Where shall I find my little child?"

"Nay, I know not," said the woman, "and you cannot see! Many flowers and trees have withered this night; Death will soon come and plant them over again! You certainly know that every person has his or her life's tree or flower, just as every one happens to be settled; they look like other plants, but they have pulsations of the heart. Children's hearts can also beat; go after yours, perhaps you may know your child's; but what will you give me if I tell you what you shall do more?"

"I have nothing to give," said the afflicted mother, "but I will go to the world's end for you!"

"Nay, I have nothing to do there!" said the woman, "but you can give me your long black hair; you know yourself that it is fine, and that I like! You shall have my white hair instead! and that's always something!"

"Do you demand nothing else?" said she,—"that I will gladly give you!" And she gave her her fine black hair, and got the old woman's snow-white hair instead.

So they went into Death's great greenhouse, where flowers and trees grew strangely into one another. There stood fine hyacinths under glass bells, and there stood strong-stemmed peonies; there grew water plants, some so fresh, others half sick, the water-snakes lay down on them, and black crabs pinched their stalks. There stood beautiful palm-trees, oaks, and plantains; there stood parsley and flowering thyme: every tree and every flower had its name; each of them was a human life, the human frame still lived—one in China, and another in Greenland—round about in the world. There were large trees in small pots, so that they stood so stunted in growth, and ready to burst the pots; in other places, there was a little dull flower in rich mould, with moss round about it, and it was so petted and nursed. But the distressed mother bent down over all the smallest plants, and heard within them how the human heart beat; and amongst millions she knew her child's.

"There it is!" cried she, and stretched her hands out over a little blue crocus, that hung quite sickly on one side.

"Don't touch the flower!" said the old woman, "but place yourself here, and when Death comes,—I expect him every moment,—do not let him pluck the flower up, but threaten him that you will do the same with the others. Then he will be afraid! he is responsible for them to *Our Lord*, and no one dares to pluck them up before *He* gives leave."

All at once an icy cold rushed through the great hall, and the blind mother could feel that it was Death that came.

"How hast thou been able to find thy way hither?" he asked. "How couldst thou come quicker than I?"

"I am a mother," said she.

And Death stretched out his long hand towards the fine little flower, but she held her hands fast around his, so tight, and yet afraid that she should touch one of the leaves. Then Death blew on her hands, and she

felt that it was colder than the cold wind, and her hands fell down powerless.

"Thou canst not do anything against me!" said Death.

"But that *Our Lord* can!" said she.

"I only do His bidding!" said Death. "I am His gardener, I take all His flowers and trees, and plant them out in the great garden of Paradise, in the unknown land; but how they grow there, and how it is there I dare not tell thee."

"Give me back my child!" said the mother, and she wept and prayed. At once she seized hold of two beautiful flowers close by, with each hand, and cried out to Death, "I will tear all thy flowers off, for I am in despair."

"Touch them not!" said Death. "Thou say'st that thou art so unhappy, and now thou wilt make another mother equally unhappy."

"Another mother!" said the poor woman, and directly let go her hold of both the flowers.

"There, thou hast thine eyes," said Death; "I fished them up from the lake, they shone so bright; I knew not they were thine. Take them again, they are now brighter than before; now look down into the deep well close by; I shall tell thee the names of the two flowers thou wouldst have torn up, and thou wilt see their whole future life—their whole human existence: and see what thou wast about to disturb and destroy."

And she looked down into the well; and it was a happiness to see how the one became a blessing to the world, to see how much happiness and joy were felt everywhere. And she saw the other's life, and it was sorrow and distress, horror, and wretchedness.

"Both of them are God's will!" said Death.

"Which of them is Misfortune's flower? and which is that of Happiness?" asked she.

"That I will not tell thee," said Death; "but this thou shalt know from me, that the one flower was thy own child! it was thy child's fate thou saw'st,—thy own child's future life!"

Then the mother screamed with terror, "Which of them was my child? Tell it me! save the innocent! save my child from all that misery! rather take it away! take it into God's kingdom! Forget my tears, forget my prayers, and all that I have done!"

"I do not understand thee!" said Death. "Wilt thou have thy child again, or shall I go with it there, where thou dost not know!"

Then the mother wrung her hands, fell on her knees, and prayed to our Lord: "Oh, hear me not when I pray against Thy will, which is the best! hear me not! hear me not!"

And she bowed her head down in her lap, and Death took her child and went with it into the unknown land.

[Mother Praying with Angel Overhead.]

THE STORY OF A MOTHER

THE FALSE COLLAR.

There was once a fine gentleman, all of whose moveables were a bootjack and a hair-comb: but he had the finest false collars in the world; and it is about one of these collars that we are now to hear a story.

It was so old, that it began to think of marriage; and it happened that it came to be washed in company with a garter.

"Nay!" said the collar, "I never did see anything so slender and so fine, so soft and so neat. May I not ask your name?"

"That I shall not tell you!" said the garter.

"Where do you live?" asked the collar.

But the garter was so bashful, so modest, and thought it was a strange question to answer.

"You are certainly a girdle," said the collar; "that is to say an inside girdle. I see well that you are both for use and ornament, my dear young lady."

"I will thank you not to speak to me," said the garter. "I think I have not given the least occasion for it."

"Yes! when one is as handsome as you," said the collar, "that is occasion enough."

"Don't come so near me, I beg of you!" said the garter. "You look so much like those men-folks."

"I am also a fine gentleman," said the collar. "I have a boot-jack and a hair-comb."

But that was not true, for it was his master who had them: but he boasted.

"Don't come so near me," said the garter: "I am not accustomed to it."

"Prude!" exclaimed the collar; and then it was taken out of the washing-tub. It was starched, hung over the back of a chair in the sunshine, and was then laid on the ironing-blanket; then came the warm box-iron. "Dear lady!" said the collar. "Dear widow-lady! I feel quite hot. I am quite changed. I begin to unfold myself. You will burn a hole in me. Oh! I offer you my hand."

"Rag!" said the box-iron; and went proudly over the collar: for she fancied she was a steam-engine, that would go on the railroad and draw the waggons. "Rag!" said the box-iron.

The collar was a little jagged at the edge, and so came the long scissors to cut off the jagged part.

"Oh!" said the collar, "you are certainly the first opera dancer. How well you can stretch your legs out! It is the most graceful performance I have ever seen. No one can imitate you."

"I know it," said the scissors.

"You deserve to be a baroness," said the collar. "All that I have is a fine gentleman, a boot-jack, and a hair-comb. If I only had the barony!"

"Do you seek my hand?" said the scissors; for she was angry; and without more ado, she *cut him*, and then he was condemned.

"I shall now be obliged to ask the hair-comb. It is surprising how well you preserve your teeth, Miss," said the collar. "Have you never thought of being betrothed?"

"Yes, of course! you may be sure of that," said the hair comb. "I *am* betrothed—to the boot-jack!"

"Betrothed!" exclaimed the collar. Now there was no other to court, and so he despised it.

A long time passed away, then the collar came into the rag chest at the paper mill; there was a large company of rags, the fine by themselves, and the coarse by themselves, just as it should be. They all had much to say, but the collar the most; for he was a real boaster.

"I have had such an immense number of sweet-hearts!" said the collar, "I could not be in peace! It is true, I was always a fine starched-up gentleman! I had both a bootjack and a hair-comb, which I never used! You should have seen me then, you should have seen me when I lay down!—I shall never forget *my first love*—she was a girdle, so fine, so soft, and so charming, she threw herself into a tub of water for my sake! There was also a widow, who became glowing hot, but I left her standing till she got black again; there was also the first opera dancer, she gave me that cut which I now go with, she was so ferocious! my own hair-comb was in love with me, she lost all her teeth from the heart-ache; yes, I have lived to see much of that sort of thing; but I am extremely sorry for the garter—I mean the girdle—that went into the water-tub. I have much on my conscience, I want to become white paper!"

And it became so, all the rags were turned into white paper; but the collar came to be just this very piece of white paper we here see, and on which the story is printed; and that was because it boasted so terribly afterwards of what had never happened to it. It would be well for us to beware, that we may not act in a similar manner, for we can never know if we may not, in the course of time, also come into the rag chest, and be made into white paper, and then have our whole life's history printed on it, even the most secret, and be obliged to run about and tell it ourselves, just like this collar.

THE SHADOW.

It is in the hot lands that the sun burns, sure enough!—there the people become quite a mahogany brown, ay, and in the *hottest* lands they are burnt to negroes. But now it was only to the *hot* lands that a learned man had come from the cold; there he thought that he could run about just as when at home, but he soon found out his mistake.

He, and all sensible folks, were obliged to stay within doors,—the window-shutters and doors were closed the whole day; it looked as if the whole house slept, or there was no one at home.

The narrow street with the high houses, was built so that the sunshine must fall there from morning till evening—it was really not to be borne.

The learned man from the cold lands—he was a young man, and seemed to be a clever man—sat in a glowing oven; it took effect on him, he became quite meagre—even his shadow shrunk in, for the sun had also an effect on it. It was first towards evening when the sun was down, that they began to freshen up again.

In the warm lands every window has a balcony, and the people came out on all the balconies in the street—for one must have air, even if one be accustomed to be mahogany!* It was lively both up and down the street. Tailors, and shoemakers, and all the folks, moved out into the street—chairs and tables were brought forth—and candles burnt—yes, above a thousand lights were burning—and the one talked and the other sung; and people walked and church-bells rang, and asses went along with a dingle-dingle-dong! for they too had bells on. The street boys were screaming and hooting, and shouting and shooting, with devils and detonating balls:—and there came corpse bearers and hood wearers,—for there were funerals with psalm and hymn,—and then the din of carriages driving and company arriving:—yes, it was, in truth, lively

enough down in the street. Only in that single house, which stood opposite that in which the learned foreigner lived, it was quite still; and yet some one lived there, for there stood flowers in the balcony—they grew so well in the sun's heat—and that they could not do unless they were watered—and some one must water them—there must be somebody there. The door opposite was also opened late in the evening, but it was dark within, at least in the front room; further in there was heard the sound of music. The learned foreigner thought it quite marvellous, but now—it might be that he only imagined it—for he found everything marvellous out there, in the warm lands, if there had only been no sun. The stranger's landlord said that he didn't know who had taken the house opposite, one saw no person about, and as to the music, it appeared to him to be extremely tiresome. "It is as if some one sat there, and practised a piece that he could not master—always the same piece. 'I shall master it!' says he; but yet he cannot master it, however long he plays."

> * The word *mahogany* can be understood, in Danish, as having two meanings. In general, it means the reddish-brown wood itself; but in jest, it signifies "excessively fine," which arose from an anecdote of Nyboder, in Copenhagen, (the seamen's quarter.) A sailor's wife, who was always proud and fine, in her way, came to her neighbor, and complained that she had got a splinter in her finger. "What of?" asked the neighbor's wife. "It is a mahogany splinter;" said the other. "Mahogany! it cannot be less with you!" exclaimed the woman;—and thence the proverb, "It is so mahogany!"—(that is, so excessively fine)—is derived.

One night the stranger awoke—he slept with the doors of the balcony open—the curtain before it was raised by the wind, and he thought that a strange lustre came from the opposite neighbor's house; all the flowers shone like flames, in the most beautiful colors, and in the midst of the flowers stood a slender, graceful maiden,—it was as if she also shone; the light really hurt his eyes. He now opened them quite wide—yes, he was quite awake; with one spring he was on the floor; he crept gently behind the curtain but the maiden was gone; the flowers shone no longer, but

there they stood, fresh and blooming as ever; the door was ajar, and, far within, the music sounded so soft and delightful, one could really melt away in sweet thoughts from it. Yet it was like a piece of enchantment. And who lived there? Where was the actual entrance? The whole of the ground-floor was a row of shops, and there people could not always be running through.

One evening the stranger sat out on the balcony. The light burnt in the room behind him; and thus it was quite natural that his shadow should fall on his opposite neighbor's wall. Yes! there it sat, directly opposite, between the flowers on the balcony; and when the stranger moved, the shadow also moved: for that it always does.

"I think my shadow is the only living thing one sees over there," said the learned man. "See! how nicely it sits between the flowers. The door stands half-open: now the shadow should be cunning, and go into the room, look about, and then come and tell me what it had seen. Come, now! be useful, and do me a service," said he, in jest. "Have the kindness to step in. Now! art thou going?" and then he nodded to the shadow, and the shadow nodded again. "Well then, go! but don't stay away."

The stranger rose, and his shadow on the opposite neighbor's balcony rose also; the stranger turned round and the shadow also turned round. Yes! if any one had paid particular attention to it, they would have seen, quite distinctly, that the shadow went in through the half-open balcony-door of their opposite neighbor, just as the stranger went into his own room, and let the long curtain fall down after him.

Next morning, the learned man went out to drink coffee and read the newspapers.

"What is that?" said he, as he came out into the sunshine. "I have no shadow! So then, it has actually gone last night, and not come again. It is really tiresome!"

This annoyed him: not so much because the shadow was gone, but because he knew there was a story about a man without a shadow.* It was known to everybody at home, in the cold lands; and if the learned

man now came there and told his story, they would say that he was imitating it, and that he had no need to do. He would, therefore, not talk about it at all; and that was wisely thought.

* Peter Schlemihl, the shadowless man.

In the evening he went out again on the balcony. He had placed the light directly behind him, for he knew that the shadow would always have its master for a screen, but he could not entice it. He made himself little; he made himself great: but no shadow came again. He said, "Hem! hem!" but it was of no use.

It was vexatious; but in the warm lands every thing grows so quickly; and after the lapse of eight days he observed, to his great joy, that a new shadow came in the sunshine. In the course of three weeks he had a very fair shadow, which, when he set out for his home in the northern lands, grew more and more in the journey, so that at last it was so long and so large, that it was more than sufficient.

The learned man then came home, and he wrote books about what was true in the world, and about what was good and what was beautiful; and there passed days and years,—yes! many years passed away.

One evening, as he was sitting in his room, there was a gentle knocking at the door.

"Come in!" said he; but no one came in; so he opened the door, and there stood before him such an extremely lean man, that he felt quite strange. As to the rest, the man was very finely dressed,—he must be a gentleman.

"Whom have I the honor of speaking to?" asked the learned man.

"Yes! I thought as much," said the fine man. "I thought you would not know me. I have got so much body. I have even got flesh and clothes. You certainly never thought of seeing me so well off. Do you not know your old shadow? You certainly thought I should never more return. Things have gone on well with me since I was last with you. I have, in all respects, become very well off. Shall I purchase my freedom from service? If so, I can do it;" and then he rattled a whole bunch of valuable

seals that hung to his watch, and he stuck his hand in the thick gold chain he wore around his neck;—nay! how all his fingers glittered with diamond rings; and then all were pure gems.

"Nay; I cannot recover from my surprise!" said the learned man: "what is the meaning of all this?"

"Something common, is it not," said the shadow: "but you yourself do not belong to the common order; and I, as you know well, have from a child followed in your footsteps, As soon as you found I was capable to go out alone in the world, I went my own way. I am in the most brilliant circumstances, but there came a sort of desire over me to see you once more before you die; you will die, I suppose? I also wished to see this land again,—for you know we always love our native land. I know you have got another shadow again; have I anything to pay to it or you? If so, you will oblige me by saying what it is."

"Nay, is it really thou?" said the learned man: "it is most remarkable: I never imagined that one's old shadow could come again as a man."

"Tell me what I have to pay," said the shadow; "for I don't like to be in any sort of debt."

"How canst thou talk so?" said the learned man; "what debt is there to talk about? Make thyself as free as any one else. I am extremely glad to hear of thy good fortune: sit down, old friend, and tell me a little how it has gone with thee, and what thou hast seen at our opposite neighbor's there—in the warm lands."

"Yes, I will tell you all about it," said the shadow, and sat down: "but then you must also promise me, that, wherever you may meet me, you will never say to any one here in the town that I have been your shadow. I intend to get betrothed, for I can provide for more than one family."

"Be quite at thy ease about that," said the learned man; "I shall not say to any one who thou actually art: here is my hand—I promise it, and a man's bond is his word."

"A word is a shadow," said the shadow, "and as such it must speak."

It was really quite astonishing how much of a man it was. It was dressed entirely in black, and of the very finest cloth; it had patent leather boots, and a hat that could be folded together, so that it was bare crown and brim; not to speak of what we already know it had—seals, gold neck-chain, and diamond rings; yes, the shadow was well-dressed, and it was just that which made it quite a man.

"Now I shall tell you my adventures," said the shadow; and then he sat, with the polished boots, as heavily as he could, on the arm of the learned man's new shadow, which lay like a poodle-dog at his feet. Now this was perhaps from arrogance; and the shadow on the ground kept itself so still and quiet, that it might hear all that passed: it wished to know how it could get free, and work its way up, so as to become its own master.

"Do you know who lived in our opposite neighbor's house?" said the shadow; "it was the most charming of all beings, it was Poesy! I was there for three weeks, and that has as much effect as if one had lived three thousand years, and read all that was composed and written; that is what I say, and it is right. I have seen everything and I know everything!"

"Poesy!" cried the learned man; "yes, yes, she often dwells a recluse in large cities! Poesy! yes, I have seen her,—a single short moment, but sleep came into my eyes! She stood on the balcony and shone as the aurora borealis shines. Go on, go on!—thou wert on the balcony, and went through the doorway, and then———"

"Then I was in the antechamber," said the shadow. "You always sat and looked over to the antechamber. There was no light; there was a sort of twilight, but the one door stood open directly opposite the other through a long row of rooms and saloons, and there it was lighted up. I should have been completely killed if I had gone over to the maiden; but I was circumspect, I took time to think, and that one must always do."

"And what didst thou then see?" asked the learned man.

"I saw everything, and I shall tell all to you: but,—it is no pride on my part,—as a free man, and with the knowledge I have, not to speak of my position in life, my excellent circumstances,—I certainly wish that you would say *you** to me!"

> * It is the custom in Denmark for intimate acquaintances to use the second person singular, "Du," (thou) when speaking to each other. When a friendship is formed between men, they generally affirm it, when occasion offers, either in public or private, by drinking to each other and exclaiming, "*thy health*," at the same time striking their glasses together.—This is called drinking "*Duus*:"—they are then, "*Duus Brodre*," (thou brothers,) and ever afterwards use the pronoun "*thou*," to each other, it being regarded as more familiar than "De," (you). Father and mother, sister and brother, say *thou* to one another—without regard to age or rank. Master and mistress say *thou* to their servants—the superior to the inferior. But servants and inferiors do not use the same term to their masters, or superiors—nor is it ever used when speaking to a stranger, or any one with whom they are but slightly acquainted—they then say as in English—*you*.

"I beg your pardon," said the learned man; "it is an old habit with me. *You* are perfectly right, and I shall remember it; but now *you* must tell me all *you* saw!"

"Everything!" said the shadow, "for I saw everything, and I know everything!"

"How did it look in the furthest saloon?" asked the learned man. "Was it there as in the fresh woods? Was it there as in a holy church? Were the saloons like the starlit firmament when we stand on the high mountains?"

"Everything was there!" said the shadow. "I did not go quite in, I remained in the foremost room, in the twilight, but I stood there quite well; I saw everything, and I know everything! I have been in the antechamber at the court of Poesy."

"But *what did* you see? Did all the gods of the olden times pass through the large saloons? Did the old heroes combat there? Did sweet children play there, and relate their dreams?"

"I tell you I was there, and you can conceive that I saw everything there was to be seen. Had you come over there, you would not have been a man; but I became so! And besides, I learned to know my inward nature, my innate qualities, the relationship I had with Poesy. At the time I was with you, I thought not of that, but always—you know it well—when the sun rose, and when the sun went down, I became so strangely great; in the moonlight I was very near being more distinct than yourself; at that time I did not understand my nature; it was revealed to me in the antechamber! I became a man!—I came out matured; but you were no longer in the warm lands;—as a man I was ashamed to go as I did. I was in want of boots, of clothes, of the whole human varnish that makes a man perceptible. I took my way—I tell it to you, but you will not put it in any book—I took my way to the cake woman—I hid myself behind her; the woman didn't think how much she concealed. I went out first in the evening; I ran about the streets in the moonlight; I made myself long up the walls—it tickles the back so delightfully! I ran up, and ran down, peeped into the highest windows, into the saloons, and on the roofs, I peeped in where no one could peep, and I saw what no one else saw, what no one else should see! This is, in fact, a base world! I would not be a man if it were not now once accepted and regarded as something to be so! I saw the most unimaginable things with the women, with the men, with parents, and with the sweet, matchless children; I saw," said the shadow "what no human being must know, but what they would all so willingly know—what is bad in their neighbor. Had I written a newspaper, it would have been read! but I wrote direct to the persons themselves, and there was consternation in all the towns where I came. They were so afraid of me, and yet they were so excessively fond of me. The professors made a professor of me; the tailors gave me new clothes—I am well furnished; the master of the mint struck new coin for me, and the women said I was so handsome! and so I

became the man I am. And I now bid you farewell;—here is my card—I live on the sunny side of the street, and am always at home in rainy weather!" And so away went the shadow.

"That was most extraordinary!" said the learned man.

Years and days passed away, then the shadow came again.

"How goes it?" said the shadow.

"Alas!" said the learned man, "I write about the true, and the good, and the beautiful, but no one cares to hear such things; I am quite desperate, for I take it so much to heart!"

"But I don't!" said the shadow, "I become fat, and it is that one wants to become! You do not understand the world. You will become ill by it. You must travel! I shall make a tour this summer; will you go with me?—I should like to have a travelling companion! will you go with me, as shadow? It will be a great pleasure for me to have you with me; I shall pay the travelling expenses!"

"Nay, this is too much!" said the learned man.

"It is just as one takes it!"—said the shadow. "It will do you much good to travel!—will you be my shadow?—you shall have everything free on the journey!"

"Nay, that is too bad!" said the learned man.

"But it is just so with the world!" said the shadow,—"and so it will be!"—and away it went again.

The learned man was not at all in the most enviable state; grief and torment followed him, and what he said about the true, and the good, and the beautiful, was, to most persons, like roses for a cow!—he was quite ill at last.

"You really look like a shadow!" said his friends to him; and the learned man trembled, for he thought of it.

"You must go to a watering-place!" said the shadow, who came and visited him; "there is nothing else for it! I will take you with me for old acquaintance' sake; I will pay the travelling expenses, and you write the descriptions—and if they are a little amusing for me on the way! I will go

to a watering-place,—my beard does not grow out as it ought—that is also a sickness—and one must have a beard! Now you be wise and accept the offer; we shall travel as comrades!"

And so they travelled; the shadow was master, and the master was the shadow; they drove with each other, they rode and walked together, side by side, before and behind, just as the sun was; the shadow always took care to keep itself in the master's place. Now the learned man didn't think much about that; he was a very kind-hearted man, and particularly mild and friendly, and so he said one day to the shadow: "As we have now become companions, and in this way have grown up together from childhood, shall we not drink '*thou*' together, it is more familiar?"

"You are right," said the shadow, who was now the proper master. "It is said in a very straight-forward and well-meant manner. You, as a learned man, certainly know how strange nature is. Some persons cannot bear to touch grey paper, or they become ill; others shiver in every limb if one rub a pane of glass with a nail: I have just such a feeling on hearing you say *thou* to me; I feel myself as if pressed to the earth in my first situation with you. You see that it is a feeling; that it is not pride: I cannot allow you to say *thou* to me, but I will willingly say *thou* to you, so it is half done!"

So the shadow said *thou* to its former master.

"This is rather too bad," thought he, that I must say *you* and he say "thou," but he was now obliged to put up with it.

So they came to a watering-place where there were many strangers, and amongst them was a princess, who was troubled with seeing too well; and that was so alarming!

She directly observed that the stranger who had just come was quite a different sort of person to all the others;—"He has come here in order to get his beard to grow, they say, but I see the real cause, he cannot cast a shadow."

She had become inquisitive; and so she entered into conversation directly with the strange gentleman, on their promenades. As the daughter of a king, she needed not to stand upon trifles, so she said,

"Your complaint is, that you cannot cast a shadow?"

"Your Royal Highness must be improving considerably," said the shadow,—"I know your complaint is, that you see too clearly, but it has decreased, you are cured. I just happen to have a very unusual shadow! Do you not see that person who always goes with me? Other persons have a common shadow, but I do not like what is common to all. We give our servants finer cloth for their livery than we ourselves use, and so I had my shadow trimmed up into a man: yes, you see I have even given him a shadow. It is somewhat expensive, but I like to have something for myself!"

"What!" thought the princess, "should I really be cured! These baths are the first in the world! In our time water has wonderful powers. But I shall not leave the place, for it now begins to be amusing here. I am extremely fond of that stranger: would that his beard should not grow! for in that case he will leave us."

In the evening, the princess and the shadow danced together in the large ball-room. She was light, but he was still lighter; she had never had such a partner in the dance. She told him from what land she came, and he knew that land; he had been there, but then she was not at home; he had peeped in at the window, above and below—he had seen both the one and the other, and so he could answer the princess, and make insinuations, so that she was quite astonished; he must be the wisest man in the whole world! she felt such respect for what he knew! So that when they again danced together she fell in love with him; and that the shadow could remark, for she almost pierced him through with her eyes. So they danced once more together; and she was about to declare herself, but she was discreet; she thought of her country and kingdom, and of the many persons she would have to reign over.

"He is a wise man," said she to herself—"It is well; and he dances delightfully—that is also good; but has he solid knowledge?—that is just as important!—he must be examined."

So she began, by degrees, to question him about the most difficult things she could think of, and which she herself could not have answered; so that the shadow made a strange face.

"You cannot answer these questions?" said the princess.

"They belong to my childhood's learning," said the shadow. "I really believe my shadow, by the door there, can answer them!"

"Your shadow!" said the princess; "that would indeed be marvellous!"

"I will not say for a certainty that he can," said the shadow, "but I think so; he has now followed me for so many years, and listened to my conversation—I should think it possible. But your royal highness will permit me to observe, that he is so proud of passing himself off for a man, that when he is to be in a proper humor—and he must be so to answer well—he must be treated quite like a man."

"Oh! I like that!" said the princess.

So she went to the learned man by the door, and she spoke to him about the sun and the moon, and about persons out of and in the world, and he answered with wisdom and prudence.

"What a man that must be who has so wise a shadow!" thought she; "It will be a real blessing to my people and kingdom if I choose him for my consort—I will do it!"

They were soon agreed, both the princess and the shadow; but no one was to know about it before she arrived in her own kingdom.

"No one—not even my shadow!" said the shadow, and he had his own thoughts about it!

Now they were in the country where the princess reigned when she was at home.

"Listen, my good friend," said the shadow to the learned man. "I have now become as happy and mighty as any one can be; I will, therefore, do something particular for thee! Thou shalt always live with me in the palace, drive with me in my royal carriage, and have ten thousand pounds a year; but then thou must submit to be called shadow by all and every one; thou must not say that thou hast ever been a man; and once

a-year, when I sit on the balcony in the sunshine, thou must lie at my feet, as a shadow shall do! I must tell thee: I am going to marry the king's daughter, and the nuptials are to take place this evening!"

"Nay, this is going too far!" said the learned man; "I will not have it; I will not do it! it is to deceive the whole country and the princess too! I will tell every thing!—that I am a man, and that thou art a shadow—thou art only dressed up!"

"There is no one who will believe it!" said the shadow; "be reasonable, or I will call the guard!"

"I will go directly to the princess!" said the learned man.

"But I will go first!" said the shadow, "and thou wilt go to prison!" and that he was obliged to do—for the sentinels obeyed him whom they knew the king's daughter was to marry.

"You tremble!" said the princess, as the shadow came into her chamber; "has anything happened? You must not be unwell this evening, now that we are to have our nuptials celebrated."

"I have lived to see the most cruel thing that any one can live to see!" said the shadow. "Only imagine—yes, it is true, such a poor shadow-skull cannot bear much—only think, my shadow has become mad; he thinks that he is a man, and that I—now only think—that I am his shadow!"

"It is terrible!" said the princess; "but he is confined, is he not?"

"That he is. I am afraid that he will never recover."

"Poor shadow!" said the princess, "he is very unfortunate; it would be a real work of charity to deliver him from the little life he has, and, when I think properly over the matter, I am of opinion that it will be necessary to do away with him in all stillness!"

"It is certainly hard!" said the shadow, "for he was a faithful servant!" and then he gave a sort of sigh.

"You are a noble character!" said the princess.

The whole city was illuminated in the evening, and the cannons went off with a bum! bum! and the soldiers presented arms. That was a marriage! The princess and the shadow went out on the balcony to show

themselves, and get another hurrah!

The learned man heard nothing of all this—for they had deprived him of life.

THE OLD STREET-LAMP.

Have you heard the story about the old street lamp? It is not so very amusing, but one may very well hear it once. It was such a decent old street-lamp, that had done its duty for many, many years, but now it was to be condemned. It was the last evening,—it sat there on the post and lighted the street; and it was in just such a humor as an old figurante in a ballet, who dances for the last evening, and knows that she is to be put on the shelf to-morrow. The lamp had such a fear of the coming day, for it knew that it should then be carried to the town-hall for the first time, and examined by the authorities of the city, who should decide if it could be used or not. It would then be determined whether it should be sent out to one of the suburbs, or in to the country to a manufactory; perhaps it would be sent direct to the ironfounder's and be re-cast; in that case it could certainly be all sorts of things: but it pained it not to know whether it would then retain the remembrance of its having been a street-lamp.

However it might be, whether it went into the country or not, it would be separated from the watchman and his wife, whom it regarded as its family. It became a street-lamp when he became watchman. His wife was a very fine woman at that time; it was only in the evening when she went past the lamp that she looked at it, but never in the daytime. Now, on the contrary, of late years, as they had all three grown old,—the watchman, his wife, and the lamp,—the wife had always attended to it, polished it up, and put oil in it. They were honest folks that married couple, they had not cheated the lamp of a single drop. It was its last evening in the street, and to-morrow it was to be taken to the town-hall; these were two dark thoughts in the lamp, and so one can know how it burnt. But other thoughts also passed through it; there was so much it had seen, so much it had a desire for, perhaps just as much as the whole

of the city authorities; but it didn't say so, for it was a well-behaved old lamp—it would not insult any one, least of all its superiors. It remembered so much, and now and then the flames within it blazed up, —it was as if it had a feeling of—yes, they will also remember me! There was now that handsome young man—but that is many years since,—he came with a letter, it was on rose-colored paper; so fine—so fine! and with a gilt edge; it was so neatly written, it was a lady's hand; he read it twice, and he kissed it, and he looked up to me with his two bright eyes—they said, "I am the happiest of men!" Yes, only he and I knew what stood in that first letter from his beloved.

I also remember two other eyes—it is strange how one's thoughts fly about!—there was a grand funeral here in the street, the beautiful young wife lay in the coffin on the velvet-covered funeral car; there were so many flowers and wreaths, there were so many torches burning, that I was quite forgotten—out of sight; the whole footpath was filled with persons; they all followed in the procession; but when the torches were out of sight, and I looked about, there stood one who leaned against my post and wept. I shall never forget those two sorrowful eyes that looked into me. Thus there passed many thoughts through the old street-lamp, which this evening burnt for the last time. The sentinel who is relieved from his post knows his successor, and can say a few words to him, but the lamp knew not its successor; and yet it could have given him a hint about rain and drizzle, and how far the moon shone on the footpath, and from what corner the wind blew.

Now, there stood three on the kerb-stone; they had presented themselves before the lamp, because they thought it was the street-lamp who gave away the office; the one of these three was a herring's head, for it shines in the dark, and it thought that it could be of great service, and a real saving of oil, if it came to be placed on the lamp-post. The other was a piece of touchwood, which also shines, and always more than a stock-fish; besides, it said so itself, it was the last piece of a tree that had once been the pride of the forest. The third was a glow-worm; but where it had come from the lamp could not imagine; but the glow-worm was

there, and it also shone, but the touchwood and the herring's head took their oaths that it only shone at certain times, and therefore it could never be taken into consideration.

The old lamp said that none of them shone well enough to be a street-lamp; but not one of them thought so; and as they heard that it was not the lamp itself that gave away the office, they said that it was a very happy thing, for that it was too infirm and broken down to be able to choose.

At the same moment the wind came from the street corner, it whistled through the cowl of the old lamp, and said to it, "What is it that I hear, are you going away to-morrow? Is it the last evening I shall meet you here? Then you shall have a present!—now I will blow up your brain-box so that you shall not only remember, clearly and distinctly, what you have seen and heard, but when anything is told or read in your presence, you shall be so clear-headed that you will also see it."

"That is certainly much!" said the old street-lamp; "I thank you much; if I be only not re-cast."

"It will not happen yet awhile," said the wind; "and now I will blow up your memory; if you get more presents than that you may have quite a pleasant old age."

"If I be only not re-cast," said the lamp; "or can you then assure me my memory?"

"Old lamp, be reasonable!" said the wind, and then it blew. The moon came forth at the same time. "What do you give?" asked the wind.

"I give nothing!" said the moon; "I am waning, and the lamps have never shone for me, but I have shone for the lamps."* So the moon went behind the clouds again, for it would not be plagued. A drop of rain then fell straight down on the lamp's cowl, it was like a drop of water from the eaves, but the drop said that it came from the grey clouds, and was also a present,—-and perhaps the best of all. "I penetrate into you, so that you have the power, if you wish it, in one night to pass over to rust, so that you may fall in pieces and become dust." But the lamp thought this was a

poor present, and the wind thought the same. "Is there no better—is there no better?" it whistled, as loud as it could. A shooting-star then fell, it shone in a long stripe.

> * It is the custom in Denmark, and one deserving the severest censure, that, on those nights in which the moon shines; or, according to almanac authority, ought to shine, the street lamps are not lighted; so that, as it too frequently happens, when the moon is overclouded, or on rainy evenings when she is totally obscured, the streets are for the most part in perfect darkness. This petty economy is called "the magistrates' light," they having the direction of the lighting, paving, and cleansing of towns.
>
> The same management may be met with in some other countries besides Denmark.

"What was that?" exclaimed the herring's head; "did not a star fall right down? I think it went into the lamp! Well, if persons who stand so high seek the office, we may as well take ourselves off."

And it did so, and the others did so too; but the old lamp shone all at once so singularly bright.

"That was a fine present!" it said; "the bright stars which I have always pleased myself so much about, and which shine so beautifully,—as I really have never been able to shine, although it was my whole aim and endeavor,—have noticed me, a poor old-lamp, and sent one down with a present to me, which consists of that quality, that everything I myself remember and see quite distinctly, shall also be seen by those I am fond of; and that is, above all, a true pleasure, for what one cannot share with others is but a half delight."

"It is a very estimable thought," said the wind; "but you certainly don't know that there must be wax-candles; for unless a wax-candle be lighted in you there are none of the others that will be able to see anything particular about you. The stars have not thought of that; they think that everything which shines has, at least, a wax-candle in it. But now I am tired," said the wind, "I will now lie down;" and so it lay down to rest.

The next day—yes, the next day we will spring over: the next evening the lamp lay in the arm chair,—and where? At the old watchman's. He had, for his long and faithful services, begged of the authorities that he might be allowed to keep the old lamp; they laughed at him when he begged for it, and then gave him it; and now the lamp lay in the arm-chair, close by the warm stove, and it was really just as if it had become larger on that account,—it almost filled the whole chair. The old folks now sat at their supper, and cast mild looks at the old lamp, which they would willingly have given a place at the table with them. It is true they lived in a cellar, a yard or so below ground: one had to go through a paved front-room to come into the room they lived in; but it was warm here, for there was list round the door to keep it so. It looked clean and neat, with curtains round the bed and over the small windows, where two strange-looking flowerpots stood on the sill. Christian, the sailor, had brought them from the East or West Indies; they were of clay in the form of two elephants, the backs of which were wanting: but in their place there came flourishing plants out of the earth that was in them; in the one was the finest chive,—It was the old folks' kitchen-garden,—and in the other was a large flowering geranium—this was their flower-garden. On the wall hung a large colored print of "The Congress of Vienna;" there they had all the kings and emperors at once. A Bornholm* clock, with heavy leaden weights went "tic-tac!" and always too fast; but the old folks said it was better than if it went too slow. They ate their suppers, and the old lamp, as we have said, lay in the armchair close by the warm stove. It was, for the old lamp, as if the whole world was turned upside down. But when the old watchman looked at it, and spoke about what they had lived to see with each other, in rain and drizzle, in the clear, short summer nights, and when the snow drove about so that it was good to get into the pent-house of the cellar,—then all was again in order for the old lamp, it saw it all just as if it were now present;—yes! the wind had blown it up right well,—it had enlightened it.

* Bornholm, a Danish island in the Baltic is famous for its manufactures of clocks, potteries, and cement; it contains also considerable coal mines, though not worked to any extent. It is fertile in minerals, chalks, potters' clay of the finest quality, and other valuable natural productions; but, on account of the jealous nature of the inhabitants, which deters foreigners from settling there, these productions are not made so available or profitable as they otherwise might be.

The old folks were so clever and industrious, not an hour was quietly dozed away; on Sunday afternoons some book was always brought forth, particularly a book of travels, and the old man read aloud about Africa, about the great forests and the elephants that were there quite wild; and the old woman listened so attentively, and now and then took a side glance at the clay elephants—her flower-pots. "I can almost imagine it!" said she; and the lamp wished so much that there was a wax candle to light and be put in it, so that she could plainly see everything just as the lamp saw it; the tall trees, the thick branches twining into one another, the black men on horseback, and whole trains of elephants, which, with their broad feet, crushed the canes and bushes.

"Of what use are all my abilities when there is no wax candle?" sighed the lamp; "they have only train oil and tallow candles, and they are not sufficient."

One day there came a whole bundle of stumps of wax candles into the cellar, the largest pieces were burnt, and the old woman used the smaller pieces to wax her thread with when she sewed; there were wax candle ends, but they never thought of putting a little piece in the lamp.

"Here I stand with my rare abilities," said the lamp; "I have everything within me, but I cannot share any part with them. They know not that I can transform the white walls to the prettiest paper-hangings, to rich forests, to everything that they may wish for. They know it not!"

For the rest, the lamp stood in a corner, where it always met the eye, and it was neat and well scoured; folks certainly said it was an old piece of rubbish; but the old man and his wife didn't care about that, they were

fond of the lamp.

One day it was the old watchman's birth day; the old woman came up to the lamp, smiled, and said, "I will illuminate for him," and the lamp's cowl creaked, for it thought, "They will now be enlightened!" But she put in train oil, and no wax candle; it burnt the whole evening; but now it knew that the gift which the stars had given it, the best gift of all, was a dead treasure for this life. It then dreamt—and when one has such abilities, one can surely dream,—that the old folks were dead, and that it had come to an ironfounder's to be cast anew; it was in as much anxiety as when it had to go to the town-hall to be examined by the authorities; but although it had the power to fall to pieces in rust and dust, when it wished it, yet it did not do it; and so it came into the furnace and was re-cast as a pretty iron candlestick, in which any one might set a wax candle. It had the form of an angel, bearing a nosegay, and in the centre of the nosegay they put a wax taper and it was placed on a green writing-table; and the room was so snug and comfortable: there hung beautiful pictures—there stood many books; it was at a poet's, and everything that he wrote, unveiled itself round about: the room became a deep, dark forest,—a sun-lit meadow where the stork stalked about; and a ship's deck high aloft on the swelling sea!

"What power I have!" said the old lamp, as it awoke. "I almost long to be re-cast;—but no, it must not be as long as the old folks live. They are fond of me for the sake of my person. I am to them as a child, and they have scoured me, and they have given me train oil. After all, I am as well off as 'The Congress,'—which is something so very grand."

From that time it had more inward peace, which was merited by the old street-lamp.

THE DREAM OF LITTLE TUK.

Ah! yes, that was little Tuk: in reality his name was not Tuk, but that was what he called himself before he could speak plain: he meant it for Charles, and it is all well enough if one do but know it. He had now to take care of his little sister Augusta, who was much less than himself, and he was, besides, to learn his lesson at the same time; but these two things would not do together at all. There sat the poor little fellow with his sister on his lap, and he sang to her all the songs he knew; and he glanced the while from time to time into the geography-book that lay open before him. By the next morning he was to have learnt all the towns in Zealand by heart, and to know about them all that is possible to be known.

His mother now came home, for she had been out, and took little Augusta on her arm. Tuk ran quickly to the window, and read so eagerly that he pretty nearly read his eyes out; for it got darker and darker, but his mother had no money to buy a candle.

"There goes the old washerwoman over the way," said his mother, as she looked out of the window. "The poor woman can hardly drag herself along, and she must now drag the pail home from the fountain: be a good boy, Tukey, and run across and help the old woman, won't you?"

So Tuk ran over quickly and helped her; but when he came back again into the room it was quite dark, and as to a light, there was no thought of such a thing. He was now to go to bed; that was an old turn-up bedstead; in it he lay and thought about his geography lesson, and of Zealand, and of all that his master had told him. He ought, to be sure, to have read over his lesson again, but that, you know, he could not do. He therefore put his geography-book under his pillow, because he had heard that was a very good thing to do when one wants to learn one's lesson; but one

cannot, however, rely upon it entirely. Well there he lay, and thought and thought, and all at once it was just as if some one kissed his eyes and mouth: he slept, and yet he did not sleep; it was as though the old washerwoman gazed on him with her mild eyes and said, "It were a great sin if you were not to know your lesson tomorrow morning. You have aided me, I therefore will now help you; and the loving God will do so at all times." And all of a sudden the book under Tuk's pillow began scraping and scratching.

"Kickery-ki! kluk! kluk! kluk!"—that was an old hen who came creeping along, and she was from Kjöge. I am a Kjöger hen,"* said she, and then she related how many inhabitants there were there, and about the battle that had taken place, and which, after all, was hardly worth talking about.

> * Kjöge a town in the bay of Kjöge "To see the Kjöge hens," is an expression similar to "showing a child London," which is said to be done by taking his head in both hands, and so lifting him off the ground. At the invasion of the English in 1807, an encounter of a no very glorious nature took place between the British troops and the undisciplined Danish militia.

"Kribledy, krabledy—plump!" down fell somebody: it was a wooden bird, the popinjay used at the shooting-matches at Prästöe. Now *he* said that there were just as many inhabitants as he had nails in his body; and he was very proud. "Thorwaldsen lived almost next door to me.* Plump! here I lie capitally."

> * Prästöe, a still smaller town than Kjöge. Some hundred paces from it lies the manor-house Ny Söe, where Thorwaldsen generally sojourned during his stay in Denmark, and where he called many of his immortal works into existence.

But little Tuk was no longer lying down: all at once he was on horseback. On he went at full gallop, still galloping on and on. A knight with a gleaming plume, and most magnificently dressed, held him before him on the horse, and thus they rode through the wood to the old town

of Bordingborg, and that was a large and very lively town. High towers rose from the castle of the king, and the brightness of many candles streamed from all the windows; within was dance and song, and King Waldemar and the young, richly-attired maids of honor danced together. The morn now came; and as soon as the sun appeared, the whole town and the king's palace crumbled together, and one tower after the other; and at last only a single one remained standing where the castle had been before,* and the town was so small and poor, and the school boys came along with their books under their arms, and said, "2000 inhabitants!" but that was not true, for there were not so many.

> * Bordingborg, in the reign of King Waldemar a considerable place, now an unimportant little town. One solitary tower only, and some remains of a wall, show where the castle once stood.

And little Tukey lay in his bed: it seemed to him as if he dreamed, and yet as if he were not dreaming; however, somebody was close beside him.

"Little Tukey! little Tukey!" cried some one near. It was a seaman, quite a little personage, so little as if he were a midshipman; but a midshipman it was not.

"Many remembrances from Cörsör.* That is a town that is just rising into importance; a lively town that has steam-boats and stagecoaches: formerly people called it ugly, but that is no longer true. I lie on the sea," said Cörsör; "I have high roads and gardens, and I have given birth to a poet who was witty and amusing, which all poets are not. I once intended to equip a ship that was to sail all round the earth; but I did not do it, although I could have done so: and then, too, I smell so deliciously, for close before the gate bloom the most beautiful roses."

> * Cörsör, on the Great Belt, called, formerly, before the introduction of steam-vessels, when travellers were often obliged to wait a long time for a favorable wind, "the most tiresome of towns." The poet Baggesen was born here.

Little Tuk looked, and all was red and green before his eyes; but as soon as the confusion of colors was somewhat over, all of a sudden there appeared a wooded slope close to the bay, and high up above stood a magnificent old church, with two high pointed towers. From out the hill-side spouted fountains in thick streams of water, so that there was a continual splashing; and close beside them sat an old king with a golden crown upon his white head: that was King Hroar, near the fountains, close to the town of Roeskilde, as it is now called. And up the slope into the old church went all the kings and queens of Denmark, hand in hand, all with their golden crowns; and the organ played and the fountains rustled. Little Tuk saw all, heard all. "Do not forget the diet," said King Hroar.[1] Again all suddenly disappeared. Yes, and whither? It seemed to him just as if one turned over a leaf in a book. And now stood there an old peasant-woman, who came from Soröe,[2] where grass grows in the marketplace.

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[1] Roeskilde, once the capital of Denmark. The town takes its name from King Hroar, and the many fountains in the neighborhood. In the beautiful cathedral the greater number of the kings and queens of Denmark are interred. In Roeskilde, too, the members of the Danish Diet assemble.

[2] Soröe, a very quiet little town, beautifully situated, surrounded by woods and lakes. Holberg, Denmark's Molière, founded here an academy for the sons of the nobles. The poets Hauch and Ingemann were appointed professors here. The latter lives there still.

She had an old grey linen apron hanging over her head and back: it was so wet, it certainly must have been raining "Yes, that it has," said she; and she now related many pretty things out of Holberg's comedies, and about Waldemar and Absalon; but all at once she cowered together,

and her head began shaking backwards and forwards, and she looked as she were going to make a spring. "Croak! croak!" said she: "it is wet, it is wet; there is such a pleasant death-like stillness in Soröe!" She was now suddenly a frog, "Croak;" and now she was an old woman. "One must dress according to the weather," said she. "It is wet, it is wet. My town is just like a bottle; and one gets in by the neck, and by the neck one must get out again! In former times I had the finest fish, and now I have fresh rosy-cheeked boys at the bottom of the bottle, who learn wisdom, Hebrew, Greek,—Croak!" When she spoke it sounded just like the noise of frogs, or as if one walked with great boots over a moor; always the same tone, so uniform and so tiring that little Tuk fell into a good sound sleep, which, by the bye, could not do him any harm.

But even in this sleep there came a dream, or whatever else it was: his little sister Augusta, she with the blue eyes and the fair curling hair, was suddenly a tall, beautiful girl, and without having wings was yet able to fly; and she now flew over Zealand—over the green woods and the blue lakes.

"Do you hear the cock crow, Tukey? cock-a-doodle-doo! The cocks are flying up from Kjöge! You will have a farm-yard, so large, oh! so very large! You will suffer neither hunger nor thirst! You will get on in the world! You will be a rich and happy man! Your house will exalt itself like King Waldemar's tower, and will be richly decorated with marble statues, like that at Prästöe. You understand what I mean. Your name shall circulate with renown all round the earth, like unto the ship that was to have sailed from Cörsör; and in Roeskilde"——

"Do not forget the diet!" said King Hroar.

"Then you will speak well and wisely, little Tukey; and when at last you sink into your grave, you shall sleep as quietly"——

"As if I lay in Soröe," said Tuk, awaking. It was bright day, and he was now quite unable to call to mind his dream; that, however, was not at all necessary, for one may not know what the future will bring.

And out of bed he jumped, and read in his book, and now all at once he knew his whole lesson. And the old washerwoman popped her head in at the door, nodded to him friendly, and said, "Thanks, many thanks, my good child, for your help! May the good ever-loving God fulfil your loveliest dream!"

Little Tukey did not at all know what he had dreamed, but the loving God knew it.

THE NAUGHTY BOY.

A long time ago there lived an old poet, a thoroughly kind old poet. As he was sitting one evening in his room, a dreadful storm arose without, and the rain streamed down from heaven; but the old poet sat warm and comfortable in his chimney-corner, where the fire blazed and the roasting apple hissed.

"Those who have not a roof over their heads will be wetted to the skin," said the good old poet.

"Oh let me in! let me in! I am cold, and I'm so wet!" exclaimed suddenly a child that stood crying at the door and knocking for admittance, while the rain poured down, and the wind made all the windows rattle.

"Poor thing!" said the old poet, as he went to open the door. There stood a little boy, quite naked, and the water ran down from his long golden hair; he trembled with cold, and had he not come into a warm room he would most certainly have perished in the frightful tempest.

"Poor child!" said the old poet, as he took the boy by the hand. "Come in, come in, and I will soon restore thee! Thou shalt have wine and roasted apples, for thou art verily a charming child!" And the boy was so really. His eyes were like two bright stars; and although the water trickled down his hair, it waved in beautiful curls. He looked exactly like a little angel, but he was so pale, and his whole body trembled with cold. He had a nice little bow in his hand, but it was quite spoiled by the rain, and the tints of his many-colored arrows ran one into the other.

The old poet seated himself beside his hearth, and took the little fellow on his lap; he squeezed the water out of his dripping hair, warmed his hands between his own, and boiled for him some sweet wine. Then the

boy recovered, his cheeks again grew rosy, he jumped down from the lap where he was sitting, and danced round the kind old poet.

"You are a merry fellow," said the old man; "what's your name?"

"My name is Cupid," answered the boy. "Don't you know me? There lies my bow; it shoots well, I can assure you! Look, the weather is now clearing up, and the moon is shining clear again through the window."

"Why, your bow is quite spoiled," said the old poet.

"That were sad indeed," said the boy, and he took the bow in his hand and examined it on every side. "Oh, it is dry again, and is not hurt at all; the string is quite tight. I will try it directly." And he bent his bow, took aim, and shot an arrow at the old poet, right into his heart. "You see now that my bow was not spoiled," said he, laughing; and away he ran.

The naughty boy! to shoot the old poet in that way; he who had taken him into his warm room, who had treated him so kindly, and who had given him warm wine and the very best apples!

The poor poet lay on the earth and wept, for the arrow had really flown into his heart.

"Fie!" said he, "how naughty a boy Cupid is! I will tell all children about him, that they may take care and not play with him, for he will only cause them sorrow and many a heart-ache."

And all good children to whom he related this story, took great heed of this naughty Cupid; but he made fools of them still, for he is astonishingly cunning. When the university students come from the lectures, he runs beside them in a black coat, and with a book under his arm. It is quite impossible for them to know him, and they walk along with him arm in arm, as if he, too, were a student like themselves; and then, unperceived, he thrusts an arrow to their bosom. When the young maidens come from being examined by the clergyman, or go to church to be confirmed, there he is again close behind them. Yes, he is for ever following people. At the play he sits in the great chandelier and burns in bright flames, so that people think it is really a flame, but they soon discover it is something else. He roves about in the garden of the palace

and upon the ramparts: yes, once he even shot your father and mother right in the heart. Ask them only, and you will hear what they'll tell you. Oh, he is a naughty boy, that Cupid; you must never have anything to do with him. He is for ever running after everybody. Only think, he shot an arrow once at your old grandmother! But that is a long time ago, and it is all past now; however, a thing of that sort she never forgets. Fie, naughty Cupid! But now you know him, and you know, too, how ill-behaved he is!

THE TWO NEIGHBORING FAMILIES.

We really might have thought something of importance was going on in the duck-pond, but there was nothing going on. All the ducks that were resting tranquilly on the water, or were standing in it on their heads—for that they were able to do—swam suddenly to the shore: you could see in the wet ground the traces of their feet, and hear their quacking far and near. The water, which but just now was smooth and bright as a mirror, was quite put into commotion. Before, one saw every tree reflected in it, every bush that was near: the old farm-house, with the holes in the roof and with the swallow's nest under the eaves; but principally, however, the great rose-bush, sown, as it were, with flowers. It covered the wall, and hung forwards over the water, in which one beheld the whole as in a picture, except that everything was upside down; but when the water was agitated, all swam away and the picture was gone. Two duck's feathers, which the fluttering ducks had lost, were rocking to and fro: suddenly they flew forwards as if the wind were coming, but it did not come: they were, therefore, obliged to remain where they were, and the water grew quiet and smooth again, and again the roses reflected themselves—they were so beautiful, but that they did not know, for nobody had told them. The sun shone in between the tender leaves—all breathed the most beautiful fragrance; and to them it was as with us, when right joyfully we are filled with the thought of our happiness.

"How beautiful is existence!" said each rose. "There is but one thing I should wish for,—to kiss the sun, because it is so bright and warm.* The roses yonder, too, below in the water, the exact image of ourselves—them also I should like to kiss, and the nice little birds below in their nest. There are some above, too; they stretch out their heads and chirrup

quite loud: they have no feathers at all, as their fathers and mothers have. They are good neighbors, those below as well as those above. How beautiful existence is!"

> * In Danish the sun is of the feminine gender, and not, as with us, when personified, spoken of as "he." We beg to make this observation, lest the roses' wish "to kiss the sun," be thought unmaidenly. We are anxious, also, to remove a stumbling block, which might perchance trip up exquisitely-refined modern notions, sadly shocked, no doubt, as they would be, at such an apparent breach of modesty and decorum.—(Note of the Translator.)

The young birds above and below—those below of course the reflection only in the water—were sparrows: their parents were likewise sparrows; and they had taken possession of the empty swallow's nest of the preceding year, and now dwelt therein as if it had been their own property.

"Are those little duck children that are swimming there?" asked the young sparrows, when they discovered the duck's feathers on the water.

"If you *will* ask questions, do let them be a little rational at least," said the mother. "Don't you see that they are feathers, living stuff for clothing such as I wear, and such as you will wear also? But ours is finer. I should, however, be glad if we had it up here in our nest, for it keeps one warm. I am curious to know at what the ducks were so frightened; at us, surely not; 'tis true I said 'chirp,' to you rather loud. In reality, the thick-headed roses ought to know, but they know nothing; they only gaze on themselves and smell: for my part, I am heartily tired of these neighbors."

"Listen to the charming little birds above," said the roses, "they begin to want to sing too, but they cannot as yet. However, they will do so by and by: what pleasure that must afford! It is so pleasant to have such merry neighbors!"

Suddenly two horses came galloping along to be watered. A peasant boy rode on one, and he had taken off all his clothes except his large broad black hat. The youth whistled like a bird, and rode into the pond where it was deepest; and as he passed by the rosebush he gathered a rose and stuck it in his hat; and now he fancied himself very fine, and rode on. The other roses looked after their sister, and asked each other, "Whither is she going?" but that no one knew.

"I should like to go out into the world," thought one; "yet here at home amid our foliage it is also beautiful. By day the sun shines so warm, and in the night the sky shines still more beautifully: we can see that through all the little holes that are in it." By this they meant the stars, but they did not know any better.

"We enliven the place," said the mamma sparrow; "and the swallow's nest brings luck, so people say, and therefore people are pleased to have us. But our neighbors! Such a rose-bush against the wall produces damp; it will doubtless be cleared away, and then, perhaps, some corn at least may grow there. The roses are good for nothing except to look at and to smell, and, at most to put into one's hat. Every year—that I know from my mother—they fall away; the peasants wife collects them together and strews salt among them; they then receive a French name which I neither can nor care to pronounce, and are put upon the fire, when they are to give a pleasant odor. Look ye, such is their life; they are only here to please the eye and nose! And so now you know the whole matter."

As the evening came on, and the gnats played in the warm air and in the red clouds, the nightingale came and sang to the roses; sang that the beautiful is as the sunshine in this world, and that the beautiful lives for ever. But the roses thought that the nightingale sang his own praise, which one might very well have fancied; for that the song related to them, of that they never thought: they rejoiced in it, however, and meditated if perhaps all the little sparrows could become nightingales too.

"I understood *the song of that bird quite well*," said the young sparrows; "one word only was not quite clear to me. What was the meaning of 'the beautiful?'"

"That is nothing," said the mamma sparrow, "that is only something external. Yonder at the mansion, where the pigeons have a house of their own, and where every day peas and corn is strewn before them—I have myself eaten there with them, and you shall, too, in time; tell me what company you keep, and I'll tell you who you are—yes, yonder at the mansion they have got two birds with green necks and a comb on their head; they can spread out their tail like a great wheel, and in it plays every color, that it quite hurts one's eyes to look at it. These birds are called peacocks, and that is 'THE BEAUTIFUL.' They only want to be plucked a little, and then they would not look at all different from the rest of us. I would already have plucked them, if they had not been quite so big."

"I will pluck them," chirped the smallest sparrow, that as yet had not a single feather.

In the peasant's cottage dwelt a young married couple; they loved each other dearly, and were industrious and active: everything in their house looked so neat and pretty. On Sunday morning early the young woman came out, gathered a handful of the most beautiful roses, and put them into a glass of water, which she placed on the shelf.

"Now I see that it is Sunday," said the man, and kissed his little wife. They sat down, read in the hymn-book, and held each other by the hand: the sun beamed on the fresh roses and on the young married couple.

"This is really too tiring a sight," said the mamma sparrow, who from her nest could look into the room, and away she flew.

The next Sunday it was the same, for every Sunday fresh roses were put in the glass: yet the rose-tree bloomed on equally beautiful. The young sparrows had now feathers, and wanted much to fly with their mother; she, however, would not allow it, so they were forced to remain. Off she flew; but, however, it happened, before she was aware, she got entangled in a springe of horse-hair, which some boys had set upon a

bough. The horse-hair drew itself tightly round her leg, so tightly as though it would cut it in two. That was an agony, a fright! The boys ran to the spot and caught hold of the bird, and that too in no very gentle manner.

"It's only a sparrow," said they; but they, nevertheless, did not let her fly, but took her home with them, and every time she cried they gave her a tap on the beak.

There stood in the farm-yard an old man, who knew how to make shaving-soap and soap for washing, in square cakes as well as in round balls. He was a merry, wandering old man. When he saw the sparrow that the boys had caught, and which, as they said, they did not care about at all, he asked, "Shall we make something very fine of him?" Mamma sparrow felt an icy coldness creep over her. Out of the box, in which were the most beautiful colors, the old man took a quantity of gold leaf, and the boys were obliged to go and fetch the white of an egg, with which the sparrow was painted all over; on this the gold was stuck, and mamma sparrow was now entirely gilded; but she did not think of adornment, for she trembled in every limb. And the soap-dealer tore a bit off the lining of his old jacket, cut scollops in it so that it might look like a cock's comb, and stuck it on the head of the bird.

"Now, then, you shall see master gold-coat fly," said the old man, and let the sparrow go, who, in deadly fright, flew off, illumined by the beaming sun. How she shone! All the sparrows, even a crow, although an old fellow, were much frightened at the sight; they, however flew on after him, in order to learn what foreign bird it was.

Impelled by anguish and terror, he flew homewards: he was near falling exhausted to the earth. The crowd of pursuing birds increased; yes, some indeed even tried to peck at him.

"Look! there's a fellow! Look! there's a fellow!" screamed they all.

"Look! there's a fellow! Look! there's a fellow!" cried the young sparrows, as the old one approached the nest. "That, for certain, is a young peacock; all sorts of colors are playing in his feathers: it quite hurts one's eyes to look at him, just as our mother told us. Chirp! chirp!

That is the beautiful!" And now they began pecking at the bird with their little beaks, so that it was quite impossible for the sparrow to get into the nest: she was so sadly used that she could not even say "Chirrup," still less, "Why, I am your own mother!" The other birds, too, now set upon the sparrow, and plucked out feather after feather; so that at last she fell bleeding in the rose-bush below.

"Oh! poor thing!" said all the roses, "be quieted; we will hide you. Lean your little head on us."

The sparrow spread out her wings once more, then folded them close to her body, and lay dead in the midst of the family who were her neighbors,—the beautiful fresh roses.

"Chirp! chirp!" sounded from the nest. "Where can our mother be? It is quite inconceivable! It cannot surely be a trick of hers by which she means to tell us that we are now to provide for ourselves? She has left us the house as an inheritance; but to which of us is it exclusively to belong, when we ourselves have families?"

"Yes, that will never do that you stay here with me when my household is increased by the addition of a wife and children," said the smallest.

"I shall have, I should think, more wives and children than you," said the second.

"But I am the eldest," said the third. They all now grew passionate; they beat each other with their wings, pecked with their beaks, when, plump! one after the other was tumbled out of the nest. There they lay with their rage; they turned their heads on one side, and winked their eyes as they looked upward: that was their way of playing the simpleton. They could fly a little, and by practice they learned to do so still better; and they finally were unanimous as to a sign by which, when at some future time they should meet again in the world, they might recognise each other. It was to consist in a "Chirrup!" and in a thrice-repeated scratching on the ground with the left leg.

The young sparrow that had been left behind in the nest spread himself out to his full size. He was now, you know, a householder; but his grandeur did not last long: in the night red fire broke through the

windows, the flames seized on the roof, the dry thatch blazed up high, the whole house was burnt, and the young sparrow with it; but the young married couple escaped, fortunately, with life. When the sun rose again, and every thing looked so refreshed and invigorated, as after a peaceful sleep, there was nothing left of the cottage except some charred black beams leaning against the chimney, which now was its own master. A great deal of smoke still rose from the ground, but without, quite uninjured, stood the rose-bush, fresh and blooming, and mirrored every flower, every branch, in the clear water.

"Oh! how beautifully the roses are blooming in front of the burnt-down house!" cried a passer-by. "It is impossible to fancy a more lovely picture. I must have that!"

And the man took a little book with white leaves out of his pocket: he was a painter, and with a pencil he drew the smoking house, the charred beams, and the toppling chimney, which now hung over more and more. But the large and blooming rose-tree, quite in the foreground, afforded a magnificent sight; it was on its account alone that the whole picture had been made.

Later in the day two of the sparrows who had been born here passed by. "Where is the house?" asked they. "Where the nest? Chirp! chirp! All is burnt down, and our strong brother,—that is what he has got for keeping the nest. The roses have escaped well; there they are yet standing with their red cheeks. They, forsooth, do not mourn at the misfortune of their neighbors. I have no wish whatever to address them; and, besides, it is very ugly here, that's my opinion." And off and away they flew.

On a beautiful, bright, sunny autumn day—one might almost have thought it was still the middle of summer—the pigeons were strutting about the dry and nicely-swept court-yard in front of the great steps—black and white and party-colored—and they shone in the sunshine. The old mamma pigeon said to the young ones: "Form yourselves in groups, form yourselves in groups, for that makes a much better appearance."

"What little brown creatures are those running about amongst us?" asked an old pigeon, whose eyes were green and yellow. "Poor little brownies! poor little brownies!"

"They are sparrows: we have always had the reputation of being kind and gentle; we will, therefore, allow them to pick up the grain with us. They never mix in the conversation, and they scrape a leg so prettily."

"Yes, they scratched three times with their leg, and with the left leg too, and said also "Chirrup!" It is by this they recognised each other; for they were three sparrows out of the nest of the house that had been burnt down.

"Very good eating here," said one of the sparrows. The pigeons strutted round each other, drew themselves up, and had inwardly their own views and opinions.

"Do you see the cropper pigeon?" said one of the others. "Do you see how she swallows the peas? She takes too many, and the very best into the bargain!"—"Coo! coo!"—"How she puts up her top-knot, the ugly, mischievous creature!" "Coo! coo! coo!"

And every eye sparkled with malice. "Form yourselves in groups! form yourselves in groups! Little brown creatures! Poor little brownies! Coo! coo!" So it went on unceasingly, and so will they go on chattering in a thousand years to come.

The sparrows ate right bravely. They listened attentively to what was said, and even placed themselves in a row side by side, with the others. It was not at all becoming to them, however. They were not satisfied, and they therefore quitted the pigeons, and exchanged opinions about them; nestled along under the garden palisades, and, as they found the door of the room open that led upon the lawn, one of them, who was filled to satiety, and was therefore over-bold, hopped upon the threshold. "Chirrup!" said he, "I dare to venture!"

"Chirrup!" said another, "I dare, too, and more besides!" and he hopped into the chamber. No one was present: the third saw this, and flew still further into the room, calling out, "Either all or nothing!

However, 'tis a curious human nest that we have here; and what have they put up there? What is that?"

Close in front of the sparrows bloomed the roses; they mirrored themselves in the water, and the charred rafters leaned against the over-hanging chimney. But what can that be? how comes this in the room of the mansion? And all three sparrows were about to fly away over the roses and the chimney, but they flew against a flat wall. It was all a picture, a large, beautiful picture, which the painter had executed after the little sketch.

"Chirrup!" said the sparrows, "it is nothing! It only looks like something. Chirrup! That is beautiful! Can you comprehend it? I cannot!" And away they flew, for people came into the room.

Days and months passed, the pigeons had often cooed, the sparrows had suffered cold in winter, and in summer lived right jollily; they were all betrothed and married, or whatever you choose to call it. They had young ones, and each naturally considered his the handsomest and the cleverest: one flew here, another there; and if they met they recognised each other by the "Chirrup?" and by the thrice-repeated scratching with the left leg. The eldest sparrow had remained an old maid, who had no nest and no family; her favorite notion was to see a large town, so away she flew to Copenhagen.

There one beheld a large house, painted with many bright colors, quite close to the canal, in which lay many barges laden with earthen pots and apples. The windows were broader below than above, and when the sparrow pressed through, every room appeared like a tulip, with the most varied colors and shades, but in the middle of the tulip white men were standing: they were of marble, some, too, were of plaister; but when viewed with a sparrow's eyes, they are the same. Up above on the roof stood a metal chariot, with metal horses harnessed to it; and the goddess of victory, also of metal, held the reins. It was *Thorwaldsen's Museum*.

"How it shines! How it shines!" said the old maiden sparrow. That, doubtless, is 'the beautiful.' Chirrup! But here it is larger than a peacock!" She remembered still what her mother, when she was a child, had looked upon as the grandest among all beautiful things. The sparrow fled down into the court: all was so magnificent. Palms and foliage were painted on the walls. In the middle of the court stood a large, blooming rose-tree; it spread out its fresh branches, with its many roses, over a grave. Thither flew the old maiden sparrow, for she saw there many of her sort. "Chirrup!" and three scrapes with the left leg. Thus had she often saluted, from one year's end to the other, and nobody had answered the greeting—for those who are once separated do not meet again every day—till at last the salutation had grown into a habit. But to-day, however, two old sparrows and one young one answered with a "Chirrup!" and with a thrice-repeated scrape of the left leg.

"Ah, good day, good day!" It was two old birds from the nest, and a little one besides, of the family. "That we should meet here! It is a very grand sort of place, but there is nothing to eat here: that is 'the beautiful!' Chirrup!"

And many persons advanced from the side apartments, where the magnificent marble figures stood, and approached the grave that hid the great master who had formed the marble figures. All stood with, glorified countenances around Thorwaldsen's grave, and some picked up the shed rose-leaves and carefully guarded them. They had come from far—one from mighty England, others from Germany and France: the most lovely lady gathered one of the roses and hid it in her bosom. Then the sparrows thought that the roses governed here, and that the whole house had been built on account of them. Now, this seemed to them, at all events, too much; however, as it was for the roses that the persons showed all their love, they would remain no longer. "Chirrup!" said they, and swept the floor with their tails, and winked with one eye at the roses. They had not looked at them long before they convinced themselves that they were their old neighbors. And they really were so. The painter who had drawn the rose-bush beside the burned-down house, had afterwards

obtained permission to dig it up, and had given it to the architect—for more beautiful roses had never been seen—and the architect had planted it on Thorwaldsen's grave, where it bloomed as a symbol of the beautiful, and gave up its red fragrant leaves to be carried to distant lands as a remembrance.

"Have you got an appointment here in town?" asked the sparrows.

And the roses nodded: they recognised their brown neighbors, and rejoiced to see them again. "How delightful it is to live and to bloom, to see old friends again, and every day to look on happy faces! It is as if every day were a holy-day."

"Chirrup!" said the sparrows. "Yes, it is in truth our old neighbors; their origin—from the pond—is still quite clear in our memory! Chirrup! How they have risen in the world! Yes, Fortune favors some while they sleep! Ah! there is a withered leaf that I see quite plainly." And they pecked at it so long till the leaf fell off; and the tree stood there greener and more fresh, the roses gave forth their fragrance in the sunshine over Thorwaldsen's grave, with whose immortal name, they were united.

THE DARNING-NEEDLE.

There was once upon a time a darning needle, that imagined itself so fine, that at last it fancied it was a sewing-needle.

"Now, pay attention, and hold me firmly!" said the darning-needle to the fingers that were taking it out. "Do not let me fall! If I fall on the ground, I shall certainly never be found again, so fine am I."

"Pretty well as to that," answered the fingers; and so saying, they took hold of it by the body.

"Look, I come with a train!" said the darning-needle, drawing a long thread after it, but there was no knot to the thread.

The fingers directed the needle against an old pair of shoes belonging to the cook. The upper-leather was torn, and it was now to be sewed together.

"That is vulgar work," said the needle; "I can never get through it. I shall break! I shall break!" And it really did break. "Did I not say so?" said the needle; "I am too delicate."

"Now it's good for nothing," said the fingers, but they were obliged to hold it still; the cook dropped sealing-wax upon it, and pinned her neckerchief together with it.

"Well, now I am a breast-pin," said the darning-needle. "I was sure I should be raised to honor: if one is something, one is sure to get on!" and at the same time it laughed inwardly; for one can never see when a darning-needle laughs. So there it sat now as proudly as in a state-carriage, and looked around on every side.

"May I take the liberty to inquire if you are of gold?" asked the needle of a pin that was its neighbor. "You have a splendid exterior, and a head of your own, but it is small, however. You must do what you can to grow,

for it is not every one that is bedropped with sealing-wax!" And then the darning-needle drew itself up so high that it fell out of the kerchief, and tumbled right into the sink, which the cook was at that moment rinsing out.

"Now we are going on our travels," said the needle. "If only I do not get lost!" But it really did get lost.

"I am too delicate for this world!" said the needle, as it lay in the sink, "but I know who I am, and that is always a consolation;" and the darning-needle maintained its proud demeanor, and lost none of its good-humor.

And all sorts of things swam over it—shavings, straws, and scraps of old newspapers.

"Only look how they sail by," said the needle. "They do not know what is hidden below them! I stick fast here: here I sit. Look! there goes a shaving: it thinks of nothing in the world but of itself—but of a shaving! There drifts a straw; and how it tacks about, how it turns round! Think of something else besides yourself, or else perhaps you'll run against a stone! There swims a bit of a newspaper. What's written there is long ago forgotten, and yet out it spreads itself, as if it were mighty important! I sit here patient and still: I know who I am, and that I shall remain after all!"

One day there lay something close beside the needle. It glittered so splendidly, that the needle thought it must be a diamond: but it was only a bit of a broken bottle, and because it glittered the darning-needle addressed it, and introduced itself to the other as a breast-pin.

"You are, no doubt, a diamond?"

"Yes, something of that sort." And so each thought the other something very precious, and they talked together of the world, and of how haughty it is.

"I was with a certain miss, in a little box," said the darning-needle, "and this miss was cook; and on each hand she had five fingers. In my whole life I have never seen anything so conceited as these fingers! And

yet they were only there to take me out of the box and to put me back into it again!"

"Were they, then, of noble birth?" asked the broken bottle.

"Noble!" said the darning-needle; "no, but high-minded! There were five brothers, all descendants of the 'Finger' family. They always kept together, although they were of different lengths. The outermost one, little Thumb, was short and stout; he went at the side, a little in front of the ranks: he had, too, but one joint in his back, so that he could only make one bow; but he said, if a man were to cut him off, such a one were no longer fit for military service. Sweet-tooth, the second finger, pryed into what was sweet, as well as into what was sour, pointed to the sun and moon, and he it was that gave stress when they wrote. Longman, the third brother, looked at the others contemptuously over his shoulder. Goldrim, the fourth, wore a golden girdle round his body! and the little Peter Playallday did nothing at all, of which he was very proud. 'Twas boasting, and boasting, and nothing but boasting, and so away I went."

"And now we sit here and glitter," said the broken glass bottle.

At the same moment more water came along the gutter; it streamed over the sides and carried the bit of bottle away with it.

"Well, that's an advancement," said the darning-needle. "I remain where I am: I am too fine; but that is just my pride, and as such is to be respected." And there it sat so proudly, and had many grand thoughts.

"I should almost think that I was born of a sunbeam, so fine am I! It seems to me, too, as if the sunbeams were always seeking me beneath the surface of the water. Ah! I am so fine, that my mother is unable to find me! Had I my old eye that broke, I verily think I could weep; but I would not—weep! no, it's not genteel to weep!"

One day two boys came rummaging about in the sink, where they found old nails, farthings, and such sort of things. It was dirty work; however, they took pleasure in it.

"Oh!" cried one who had pricked himself with the needle, "there's a fellow for you."

"I am no fellow, I am a lady!" said the darning-needle; but no one heard it. The sealing-wax had worn off, and it had become quite black; but black makes one look more slender, and the needle fancied it looked more delicate than ever.

"Here comes an egg-shell sailing along!" said the boys; and then they stuck the needle upright in the egg-shell.

"The walls white and myself black," said the needle. "That is becoming! People can see me now! If only I do not get seasick, for then I shall snap."

But it was not sea-sick, and did not snap.

"It is good for sea-sickness to have a stomach of steel, and not to forget that one is something more than a human being! Now my sea-sickness is over. The finer one is, the more one can endure!"

"Crack!" said the egg-shell: a wheel went over it.

"Good heavens! how heavy that presses!" said the needle. "Now I shall be sea-sick! I snap!" But it did not snap, although a wheel went over it. It lay there at full length, and there it may lie still.

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL.

Most terribly cold it was; it snowed, and was nearly quite dark, and evening—the last evening of the year. In this cold and darkness there went along the street a poor little girl, bareheaded, and with naked feet. When she left home she had slippers on, it is true; but what was the good of that? They were very large slippers, which her mother had hitherto worn; so large were they; and the poor little thing lost them as she scuffled away across the street, because of two carriages that rolled by dreadfully fast. One slipper was nowhere to be found; the other had been laid hold of by an urchin, and off he ran with it; he thought it would do capitally for a cradle when he some day or other should have children himself. So the little maiden walked on with her tiny naked feet, that were quite red and blue from cold. She carried a quantity of matches in an old apron, and she held a bundle of them in her hand. Nobody had bought anything of her the whole livelong day; no one had given her a single farthing.

She crept along trembling with cold and hunger—a very picture of sorrow, the poor little thing!

The flakes of snow covered her long fair hair, which fell in beautiful curls around her neck; but of that, of course, she never once now thought. From all the windows the candles were gleaming, and it smelt so deliciously of roast goose, for you know it was new year's eve; yes, of that she thought.

In a corner formed by two houses, of which one advanced more than the other, she seated herself down and cowered together. Her little feet she had drawn close up to her, but she grew colder and colder, and to go home she did not venture, for she had not sold any matches and could not bring a farthing of money: from her father she would certainly get

blows, and at home it was cold too, for above her she had only the roof, through which the wind whistled, even though the largest cracks were stopped up with straw and rags.

Her little hands were almost numbed with cold. Oh! a match might afford her a world of comfort, if she only dared take a single one out of the bundle, draw it against the wall, and warm her fingers by it. She drew one out. "Rischt!" how it blazed, how it burnt! It was a warm, bright flame, like a candle, as she held her hands over it: it was a wonderful light. It seemed really to the little maiden as though she were sitting before a large iron stove, with burnished brass feet and a brass ornament at top. The fire burned with such blessed influence; it warmed so delightfully. The little girl had already stretched out her feet to warm them too; but—the small flame went out, the stove vanished: she had only the remains of the burnt out match in her hand.

She rubbed another against the wall: it burned brightly, and where the light fell on the wall, there the wall became transparent like a veil, so that she could see into the room. On the table was spread a snow-white tablecloth; upon it was a splendid porcelain service, and the roast goose was steaming famously with its stuffing of apple and dried plums. And what was still more capital to behold was, the goose hopped down from the dish, reeled about on the floor with knife and fork in its breast, till it came up to the poor little girl; when—the match went out and nothing but the thick, cold, damp wall was left behind. She lighted another match. Now there she was sitting under the most magnificent Christmas trees: it was still larger, and more decorated than the one which she had seen through the glass door in the rich merchant's house.

[The Little Match Girl.]

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL.

Thousands of lights were burning on the green branches, and gaily-colored pictures, such as she had seen in the shop-windows looked down upon her. The little maiden stretched out her hands towards them when

—the match went out. The lights of the Christmas tree rose higher and higher, she saw them now as stars in heaven; one fell down and formed a long trail of fire.

"Some one is just dead!" said the little girl; for her old grandmother, the only person who had loved her, and who was now no more, had told her, that when a star falls, a soul ascends to God.

She drew another match against the wall: it was again light, and in the lustre there stood the old grandmother, so bright and radiant, so mild, and with such an expression of love.

"Grandmother!" cried the little one; "oh, take me with you! You go away when the match burns out; you vanish like the warm stove, like the delicious roast goose, and like the magnificent Christmas tree!" And she rubbed the whole bundle of matches quickly against the wall, for she wanted to be quite sure of keeping her grandmother near her. And the matches gave such a brilliant light that it was brighter than at noon-day: never formerly had the grandmother been so beautiful and so tall. She took the little maiden, on her arm, and both flew in brightness and in joy so high, so very high, and then above was neither cold, nor hunger, nor anxiety—they were with God.

But in the corner, at the cold hour of dawn, sat the poor girl, with rosy cheeks and with a smiling mouth, leaning against the wall—frozen to death on the last evening of the old year. Stiff and stark sat the child there with her matches, of which one bundle had been burnt. "She wanted to warm herself," people said: no one had the slightest suspicion of what beautiful things she had seen; no one even dreamed of the splendor in which, with her grandmother she had entered on the joys of a new year.

THE RED SHOES.

There was once a little girl who was very pretty and delicate, but in summer she was forced to run about with bare feet, she was so poor, and in winter wear very large wooden shoes, which made her little insteps quite red, and that looked so dangerous!

In the middle of the village lived old Dame Shoemaker; she sate and sewed together, as well as she could, a little pair of shoes out of old red strips of cloth; they were very clumsy, but it was a kind thought. They were meant for the little girl. The little girl was called Karen.

On the very day her mother was buried, Karen received the red shoes, and wore them for the first time. They were certainly not intended for mourning, but she had no others, and with stockingless feet she followed the poor straw coffin in them.

Suddenly a large old carriage drove up and a large old lady sate in it: she looked at the little girl, felt compassion for her, and then said to the clergyman:

"Here, give me the little girl, I will adopt her!"

And Karen believed all this happened on account of the red shoes, but the old lady thought they were horrible, and they were burnt. But Karen herself was cleanly and nicely dressed; she must learn to read and sew; and people said she was a nice little thing, but the looking-glass said: "Thou art more than nice, thou art beautiful!"

Now the queen once traveled through the land, and she had her little daughter with her. And this little daughter was a princess, and people streamed to the castle, and Karen was there also, and the little princess stood in her fine white dress, in a window, and let herself be stared at; she had neither a train nor a golden crown, but splendid red morocco

shoes. They were certainly far handsomer than those Dame Shoemaker had made for little Karen. Nothing in the world can be compared with red shoes.

Now Karen was old enough to be confirmed; she had new clothes and was to have new shoes also. The rich shoemaker in the city took the measure of her little foot. This took place at his house, in his room; where stood large glass-cases, filled with elegant shoes and brilliant boots. All this looked charming, but the old lady could not see well, and so had no pleasure in them. In the midst of the shoes stood a pair of red ones, just like those the princess had worn. How beautiful they were! The shoemaker said also they had been made for the child of a count, but had not fitted.

"That must be patent leather!" said the old lady, "they shine so!'"

"Yes, they shine!" said Karen, and they fitted, and were bought, but the old lady knew nothing about their being red, else she would never have allowed Karen to have gone in red shoes to be confirmed. Yet such was the case.

Everybody looked at her feet; and when she stepped through the chancel door on the church pavement, it seemed to her as if the old figures on the tombs, those portraits of old preachers and preachers' wives, with stiff ruffs, and long black dresses, fixed their eyes on her red shoes. And she thought only of them as the clergyman laid his hand upon her head, and spoke of the holy baptism, of the covenant with God, and how she should be now a matured Christian; and the organ pealed so solemnly; the sweet children's voices sang, and the old music-directors sang, but Karen only thought of her red shoes.

In the afternoon, the old lady heard from every one that the shoes had been red, and she said that it was very wrong of Karen, that it was not at all becoming, and that in future Karen should only go in black shoes to church, even when she should be older.

The next Sunday there was the sacrament, and Karen looked at the black shoes, looked at the red ones—looked at them again, and put on the red shoes.

The sun shone gloriously; Karen and the old lady walked along the path through the corn; it was rather dusty there.

At the church door stood an old soldier with a crutch, and with a wonderfully long beard, which was more red than white, and he bowed to the ground, and asked the old lady whether he might dust her shoes. And Karen stretched out her little foot.

"See! what beautiful dancing-shoes!" said the soldier, "sit firm when you dance;" and he put his hand out towards the soles.

And the old lady gave the old soldier an alms, and went into the church with Karen.

And all the people in the church looked at Karen's red shoes, and all the pictures, and as Karen knelt before the altar, and raised the cup to her lips, she only thought of the red shoes, and they seemed to swim in it; and she forgot to sing her psalm, and she forgot to pray, "Our father in Heaven!"

Now all the people went out of church, and the old lady got into her carriage. Karen raised her foot to get in after her, when the old soldier said,

"Look, what beautiful dancing shoes!"

And Karen could not help dancing a step or two, and when she began her feet continued to dance; it was just as though the shoes had power over them. She danced round the church corner, she could not leave off; the coachman was obliged to run after and catch hold of her, and he lifted her in the carriage, but her feet continued to dance so that she trod on the old lady dreadfully. At length she took the shoes off, and then her legs had peace.

The shoes were placed in a closet at home, but Karen could not avoid looking at them.

Now the old lady was sick, and it was said she could not recover. She must be nursed and waited upon, and there was no one whose duty it was so much as Karen's. But there was a great ball in the city, to which Karen was invited. She looked at the old lady, who could not recover, she

looked at the red shoes, and she thought there could be no sin in it;—she put on the red shoes, she might do that also, she thought. But then she went to the ball and began to dance.

When she wanted to dance to the right, the shoes would dance to the left, and when she wanted to dance up the room, the shoes danced back again, down the steps, into the street, and out of the city gate. She danced, and was forced to dance straight out into the gloomy wood.

Then it was suddenly light up among the trees, and she fancied it must be the moon, for there was a face; but it was the old soldier with the red beard; he sate there, nodded his head, and said, "Look, what beautiful dancing shoes!"

Then she was terrified, and wanted to fling off the red shoes, but they clung fast; and she pulled down her stockings, but the shoes seemed to have grown to her feet. And she danced, and must dance, over fields and meadows, in rain and sunshine, by night and day; but at night it was the most fearful.

She danced over the churchyard, but the dead did not dance,—they had something better to do than to dance. She wished to seat herself on a poor man's grave, where the bitter tansy grew; but for her there was neither peace nor rest; and when she danced towards the open church door, she saw an angel standing there. He wore long, white garments; he had wings which reached from his shoulders to the earth; his countenance was severe and grave; and in his hand he held a sword, broad and glittering.

"Dance shalt thou!" said he,—"dance in thy red shoes till thou art pale and cold! Till thy skin shrivels up and thou art a skeleton! Dance shalt thou from door to door, and where proud, vain children dwell, thou shalt knock, that they may hear thee and tremble! Dance shalt thou———!"

"Mercy!" cried Karen. But she did not hear the angel's reply, for the shoes carried her through the gate into the fields, across roads and bridges, and she must keep ever dancing.

One morning she danced past a door which she well knew. Within sounded a psalm; a coffin, decked with flowers, was borne forth. Then she knew that the old lady was dead, and felt that she was abandoned by all, and condemned by the angel of God.

She danced, and she was forced to dance through the gloomy night. The shoes carried her over stack and stone; she was torn till she bled; she danced over the heath till she came to a little house. Here, she knew, dwelt the executioner; and she tapped with her fingers at the window, and said, "Come out! come out! I cannot come in, for I am forced to dance!"

And the executioner said, "Thou dost not know who I am, I fancy? I strike bad people's heads off; and I hear that my axe rings!"

"Don't strike my head off!" said Karen, "then I can't repent of my sins! But strike off my feet in the red shoes!"

And then she confessed her entire sin, and the executioner struck off her feet with the red shoes, but the shoes danced away with the little feet across the field into the deep wood.

And he carved out little wooden feet for her, and crutches, taught her the psalm criminals always sing; and she kissed the hand which had wielded the axe, and went over the heath.

"Now I have suffered enough for the red shoes!" said she; "now I will go into the church that people may see me!" And she hastened towards the church door: but when she was near it, the red shoes danced before her, and she was terrified, and turned round. The whole week she was unhappy, and wept many bitter tears; but when Sunday returned, she said, "Well, now I have suffered and struggled enough! I really believe I am as good as many a one who sits in the church, and holds her head so high!"

And away she went boldly; but she had not got farther than the churchyard gate before she saw the red shoes dancing before her; and she was frightened, and turned back, and repented of her sin from her heart.

And she went to the parsonage, and begged that they would take her into service; she would be very industrious, she said, and would do everything she could; she did not care about the wages, only she wished to have a home, and be with good people. And the clergyman's wife was sorry for her and took her into service; and she was industrious and thoughtful. She sate still and listened when the clergyman read the Bible in the evenings. All the children thought a deal of her; but when they spoke of dress, and grandeur, and beauty, she shook her head.

The following Sunday, when the family was going to church, they asked her whether she would not go with them; but she glanced sorrowfully, with tears in her eyes, at her crutches. The family went to hear the word of God; but she went alone into her little chamber; there was only room for a bed and chair to stand in it; and here she sate down with her prayer-book; and whilst she read with a pious mind, the wind bore the strains of the organ towards her, and she raised her tearful countenance, and said, "O God, help me!"

And the sun shone so clearly! and straight before her stood the angel of God in white garments, the same she had seen that night at the church door; but he no longer carried the sharp sword, but in its stead a splendid green spray, full of roses. And he touched the ceiling with the spray, and the ceiling rose so high, and where he had touched it there gleamed a golden star. And he touched the walls, and they widened out, and she saw the organ which was playing; she saw the old pictures of the preachers and the preachers' wives. The congregation sat in cushioned seats, and sang out of their prayer-books. For the church itself had come to the poor girl in her narrow chamber, or else she had come into the church. She sate in the pew with the clergyman's family, and when they had ended the psalm and looked up, they nodded and said, "It is right that thou art come!"

"It was through mercy!" she said.

And the organ pealed, and the children's voices in the choir sounded so sweet and soft! The clear sunshine streamed so warmly through the window into the pew where Karen sate! Her heart was so full of

sunshine, peace, and joy, that it broke. Her soul flew on the sunshine to God, and there no one asked after the Red Shoes.

TO THE YOUNG READERS

Here is another volume of Andersen's charming stories for you; and I am sure you will be glad to get it. For my part, I am always delighted to find one that I do not happen to have yet seen; and as I know the others pleased you—for I have heard so, both directly and indirectly, from a great many people, there can be no doubt that you all will be overjoyed to have a few more of these stories told you.

And there is no one who participates in this delight more than—whom do you think? Why, than Andersen himself! He is so happy that his Tales have been thus joyfully received, and that they have found their way to the hearts and sympathies of you all. He speaks of it with evident pleasure; and it is not vanity, but his kind affectionate nature, which inclines him to mention such little occurrences as prove how firm a hold his writings have taken on the minds of the young and gentle-natured. "So much praise might," he says, "spoil a man, and make him vain. Yet no, it does not spoil him: on the contrary, it makes him better; it purifies his thoughts, and this must give one the impulse and the will to deserve it all." He was so pleased to hear, and I, you may be sure, was equally pleased to tell him, what had been written to me by a friend a short time before—that several little boys and girls, Miss Edgeworth's nephews and nieces were so delighted with the "**Tales From Denmark**," that they not only read and re-read them continually, but used *to act the stories* together in their play-hours!

And a certain little dark-eyed thing of my acquaintance, "little Nelly," or "the little gipsey," as I sometimes call her, knows the whole story of "Ellie and the Pretty Swallow," by heart; and another "wee thing," that cannot yet read, but is always wanting to have stories told her, knows all

about Kay and Gerda, and the flower-garden, and how Gerda went to look for her brother, inquiring of every body she met, and how at last the good sister found him.

In Copenhegan, as Andersen himself told me, all the children know him. "And," he said, with such a countenance that showed such homage was dearer to him than the more splendid honors paid as tributes to his genius, "as I walk along the street, the little darlings nod and kiss their hands to me; and they say to one another, 'There's Andersen!' and then some more run and wave their hands. Oh yes, they all know me. But sometimes, if there be one who does not, then, perhaps, his mamma will say, 'Look, that is he who wrote the story you read the other day, and that you liked so much;' and so we soon get acquainted." And *this* popularity delights him more than anything; and you surely cannot call it vanity.

In the account he has written of his life, he relates a circumstance that happened to him at Dresden; and it is so pretty that I insert it here. He writes: "An evening that for me was particularly interesting I spent with the royal family, who received me most graciously. Here reigned the same quiet that is found in private life in a happy family. A whole troop of amiable children, all belonging to Prince John, were present. The youngest of the princesses, a little girl who knew that I had written the story of 'The Fir-tree,' began familiarly her conversation with me in these words: 'Last Christmas we also had a fir-tree, and it stood here in this very room.' Afterwards, when she was taken to bed earlier than the others, and had wished her parents and the king and queen 'Good night,' she turned round once more at the half-closed door, and nodded to me in a friendly manner, and as though we were old acquaintance. I was her prince of the fairy tale."

But it is not the praise of the great, or the admiration of a court, on which he sets most value, as you will see by the following extract from a letter which I received from him to-day, only an hour or two ago. It is about his stay in England, and his visit to the north, after I had left him, and I am sure he will not mind my sharing thus much of what he writes

to me with you. "The hearty welcome I met with in Scotland moved me greatly. My writings were so well known, I found so many friends, that I can hardly take in so much happiness. But I must relate you one instance: in Edinburgh I went with a party of friends to Heriot's Hospital, where orphan children are taken care of and educated. We were all obliged to inscribe our names in the visitors' book. The porter read the names, and asked if that was Andersen the author: and when some one answered 'Yes,' the old man folded his hands and gazed quite in ecstacy at an old gentleman who was with us, and said: 'Yes, yes! he is just as I had always fancied him to myself—the venerable white hair—the mild expression—yes, that is Andersen!' They then explained to him that I was the person. 'That young man!' he exclaimed; 'Why generally such people, when one hears about them, are either dead or very old.' When the story was told me, I at first thought it was a joke; but the porter came up to me in a most touching manner, and told me how he and all the boys entered so entirely and heartily into my stories. It so affected me that I almost shed tears."

This is indeed popularity!

Now I dare say you thought that the little princes and princesses in a king's palace had tastes and feelings very different from a poor charity-boy; but you see, although so different in rank, they were alike in one thing—they were both children; and childhood, if left to itself, is in all situations the same.

And do you know, too, my little friends, that you are very excellent critics? Yes, most sage and excellent critics; though I dare say not one of you even ever dreamt of such a thing. But it is, nevertheless, true; and not some, but all of you, whether in England, Scotland, or Ireland—the little boys in Heriot's Hospital, and the little princess at Dresden who knew the story of "The Fir-Tree." For without one dissentient voice you have passed favorable judgment on these stories: in your estimation of them your were unanimous.

Yet when they first appeared in Denmark some of the critics by profession found fault with them, and wondered, as they said, how an author who had written works of greater pretension, could think of making his appearance with something so childish as these tales. And some kind friends, grown-up people, whose opinion was not unimportant, advised him by all means to give up writing such stories as he had no talent for them; and it was only later, that, to use Andersen's own words, "every door and heart in Denmark was open to them." But all of you, not critics by profession, you welcomed them at once; as soon as you saw them you perceived their beauty—you cherished and gave them a place in your heart. And this is the reason why I say that you are sage and excellent critics; and if you can preserve the same simple-heartedness, finding pleasure in what is natural and truthful, and allow yourselves to be guided by the instincts of your pure uncorrupted nature, you may always be so.

You will like to know that Thorwaldsen, the great Thorwaldsen, loved to hear Andersen repeat these tales. It is true he has quite a peculiar way of relating them, which adds greatly to their charm. I begged him one day to tell me the story of "The Top and Ball," and he immediately sat down on the sofa and began. Though I knew it by heart from beginning to end, so often had I read it over, yet it now seemed quite new, from his manner of telling it; and I was as amused and laughed as much as though I had never heard it before. That very pretty one, "Ole Luckoie," was written when in the society of Thorwaldsen; and "often at dusk," so Andersen relates, "when the family circle were sitting in the summer house, would Thorwaldsen glide gently in, and, tapping me on the shoulder, ask, 'Are we little ones to have no story tonight?' It pleased him to hear the same story over and over again; and often, while employed on his grandest works, he would stand with a smiling countenance and listen to the tale of 'Top and Ball,' and 'The Ugly Duck.'" The last is my favorite also.

From Rome, where this occurred, you must now take a jump with me to Hamburg; for I have to tell you an anecdote that happened there to Andersen, also, about his stories which he relates in his "Life." He had gone to see Otto Speckter, whose clever and characteristic pictures most of you will certainly know, and he intended to go afterwards to the play. Speckter accompanied him. "We passed an elegant house. 'We must first go in here, my dear friend,' said he; 'a very rich family lives there, friends of mine, friends of your tales; the children will be overjoyed—' 'But the opera,' said I. 'Only for two minutes,' he replied, and drew me into the house, told my name, and the circle of children collected round me. 'And now repeat a story,' he said: 'only a single one.' I did so, and hurried to the theatre. 'That was a strange visit,' I said. 'A capital one! a most excellent one!' shouted he. 'Only think! the children are full of Andersen and his fairy tales: all of a sudden he stands in the midst of them, and relates one himself, and then he is gone—vanished. Why, that very circumstance is a fairy tale for the children, and will remain vividly in their memory.' It amused me too."

You will be getting impatient, I am afraid. However, before I finish I must tell you something about the stories in this volume. The translation of them I had begun in Andersen's room, and when he came in we began talking about them, one of which, "The Little Girl with the Matches," I had read in his absence. I told him how delighted I was with it—that I found it most exquisitely narrated; but that how such a thing came into his head, I could not conceive. He then said, "That was written when I was on a visit at The Duke of Augustenburg's. I received a letter from Copenhagen from the editor of a Danish almanac for the people, in which he said he was very anxious to have something of mine for it, but that the book was already nearly printed. In the letter were two woodcuts, and these he wished to make use of, if only I would write something to which they might serve as illustrations. One was the picture of a little match-girl, exactly as I have described her. It was from the picture that I wrote the story—wrote it surrounded by splendor and rejoicing, at the castle of Grauenstein, in Schleswig."

"And Little Tuk," said I.—"Oh! 'Little Tuk,'" answered he, laughing; "I will tell you all about him. When in Oldenburg I lived for some time at the house of a friend, the Counsellor von E***. The children's names were Charles and Gustave (Augusta?) but the little boy always called himself 'Tuk.' He meant to say 'Charles,' but he could not pronounce it otherwise. Now once I promised the dear little things that I would put them in a fairy tale, and so both of them appeared, but as poor children in the story of 'Little Tuk.' So you see, as reward for all the hospitality I received in Germany, I take the German children and make Danes of them."

You see he can make a story out of anything. "They peep over his shoulder," as he once wrote to me, a long time ago. And one time, when he was just going to set off on a journey, his friend said to him, "My little Erich possesses two leaden soldiers, and he has given one of them to me for you, that you may take it with you on your travels."

Now I should not at all wonder if this were the very "Resolute Leaden Soldier" you read of in the "**Tales From Denmark**;" but this one, it is true, was a Turk, and I don't think the other was. And then, too, there is nothing said about this one having but one leg. However, it may be the same, after all.

As to the tale called "The Naughty Boy," that, it is true, is an old story. The poet Anacreon wrote it long, long ago; but Andersen has here re-told it in so humorous a manner, that it will no doubt amuse you as much as though it had been written originally by him. He has given the whole, too, quite another dress; and "the naughty boy" himself he has tricked out so drolly, and related such amusing tricks of him, that I think Mr. Andersen had better take care the young rogue does not play him a sly turn some day or other, for the little incorrigible rascal respects nobody.

Before I say farewell, there is one thing I must tell you; which is, there are two persons you certainly little think of, to whom you owe some thanks for the pretty tales of Anderson that have so greatly delighted you, as well as for those he may still write. You will never guess who they are, so I will tell you. They are Frederick VI., the late, and Christian VIII.,

the present King of Denmark. The former gave Andersen a pension to relieve him from the necessity of depending on his pen for bread; so that, free from cares, he was able to pursue his own varied fancies. Though not much, it was sufficient; but the present king, who has always been most kind to your friend Andersen—for so you surely consider him—increased his pension considerably, in order that, he might be able to travel, and follow in full liberty the bent of his genius.

Now do you not like a king who thus holds out his hand to genius, who delights to honor the man who has done honor to their common country, and who is proud to interest himself in his fate as in that of a friend? And this King Christian VIII. does. Am I not right, then, in saying that you owe him your thanks?

Farewell, my little friends, and believe that I am always ready and willing to serve you.

Charles Boner.*

Donau Stauf, near Ratisbon.

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* By whom several of the stories in this volume were translated

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