The Hope of the Katzekopfs

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Title: The Hope of the Katzekopfs; or, The Sorrows of Selfishness. A Fairy Tale.

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Release date: December 26, 2016 [eBook #53808]
Most recently updated: October 23, 2024

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/53808

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THE JUVENILE

Englishman's Library.

II.

"Not so Master Marmozet, sweet little boy,
Mrs. Danglecub's hope, her delight, and her joy.

* * * * *

His jacket's well laced, and the ladies protest
Master Marmozet dances as well as the best;
Yet some think the boy would be better at school."

Anstey.

THE

HOPE

OF THE

KATZEKOPFS;

OR, THE

SORROWS

OF

SELFISHNESS.

A Fairy Tale.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
JOSEPH MASTERS.
JAMES BURNS.
1846.

· LONDON ·
PRINTED BY JOSEPH MASTERS,
ALDERSGATE STREET.

PREFACE.

The former edition of this little tale was put forth with an Introduction (which was intended to be in keeping with it) from the pen of an imaginary author,—that William Churne, of whom Bishop Corbet writes, and who, two centuries since, seems to have been the great authority on all matters connected with Fairy-land.

In this introduction, the object with which the "Hope of the Katzekopfs" was written was stated. It was an attempt, under the guise of a Fairy-tale, to lead young minds to a more wholesome train of thought than is commonly found at the present day in popular juvenile literature. The Author's aim was to excite the sympathies of the young in behalf of *others*, and to set before them in its true colours the hideous sin of *selfishness*. And the book was put forth as an experiment, to ascertain whether the youth of the present generation had patience to glean the lessons which lurk beneath the surface of legendary tales, and the chronicles of the wild and supernatural; whether their hearts could be moved to noble and chivalrous feelings, and to shake off the hard, cold, calculating, worldly, selfish temper of the times, by being brought into more immediate contact with the ideal, the imaginary, and the romantic, than has been the fashion of late years,—whether, in short, a race that has been glutted with Peter Parley, and Penny Magazines, and such like stories of (so called) useful knowledge, would condescend to read a Fable and its Moral, and learn wisdom from a tale of enchantment.

The early call for a Second Edition seems to show that the experiment was not made in vain, and at the request of the Publisher, the Author appends his name.

FRANCIS E. PAGET.

Elford Rectory,

September, mdcccxlvi.

CONTENTS.

Page.

INTRODUCTION xi.

CHAPTER I.

The Heir and many Friends 1

CHAPTER II.

The Hunting of the Heir 23

CHAPTER III.

Another Heir started 55

CHAPTER IV.

A Hashed Heir 79

CHAPTER V.

The Heirs on their Travels 121

CHAPTER VI.

Experiments on the Heir 163

Introduction.

"'A Fairy tale, by William Churne of Staffordshire!' And who may he be? I am sure I never heard of *him* before."

"Say you so, gentle Reader? Well, perhaps, after all, there is nothing very extraordinary in the fact that a man who was born some two hundred and fifty years ago should be forgotten. Well I wot that William Churne is not the only one who is in that predicament. And yet my name has had a better chance of being remembered than that of many of my cotemporaries, who, in their day, were more illustrious than ever I was; for it has been wedded, look you, to immortal verse. Doctor Corbet, Bishop of Norwich,—'the wittie Bishop,' as King James the First was wont to call him—conferred on me the title of Registrar-General to the Fairies. Have you never read his 'Fairies' Farewell'? They say, indeed, that his poems, like many better things, are little read now-a-days; but you will find it among the ballads collected by a congenial spirit (a prelate likewise), Bishop Percy of Dromore. His 'Reliques of Ancient Poetry,' you are surely conversant withal? But stay, I see you have forgotten the passage, which my vanity, perhaps, has preserved in my memory for so many years. Thus, then, Richard Corbet speaks of me in connection with those merry elves, whom he supposes to have taken their final farewell of that land, which, since their presence was withdrawn, has deserved the name of merry England no longer:—

'Now, they have left our quarters;
A registrar they have,
Who can preserve their charters;
A man both wise and grave.

An hundred of their merry pranks
By one that I could name,
Are kept in store; con twenty thanks
To William for the same.

'*To William Churne, of Staffordshire*,
Give laud and praises due,
Who, every meale, can mend your cheare
With tales both old and true;
To William all give audience,
And pray ye for his noddle,
For all the Fairies' evidence
Were lost if it were addle.'

There, gentle reader, that was the way in which the Bishop-Poet spake of me. I warrant you, my cheeks tingle still as I repeat the lines."

"Indeed? cheeks that blushed for the first time two centuries and a half ago, must, I should think, have nearly blushed their last by this time. I cannot read your riddle. You would not have us believe, would you, that a man who was born in the sixteenth century, was story-telling in the nineteenth? I fear you must be story-telling in more senses than one, or else that the event so much deprecated by the Bishop of Norwich, hath befallen you, and that the 'noddle' is '*addle*.'"

"Ah, gentle reader, is it even so? Can you think of no other solution of the difficulty? I fear me that you have a larger share of the unbelief of this dull, plodding, unimaginative, money-getting, money-loving nineteenth century, than of the humour, and simplicity, and romance of the seventeenth."

"Come then, I *will* hazard a solution. What if the fairies, whose official you have admitted yourself to be, carried you off some moonlight night, two hundred years ago, and hid you for that space in their secret chambers, amid the recesses of the grassy hills?"

“Hush! hush! kind reader; speak not so loudly. You know not who may be listening. However, I do not say but that it may be even as you suppose. Perhaps, while time and change have worked their will on others, I have been exempted from their influence.”

“How? What? Can such things be? Dear Sir, how much I should like to make your acquaintance. Two hundred and fifty years old! Why, your face must be a wilderness of wrinkles! And your dress, how strange and antiquated must be its cut! Are you not greatly incommoded, as you walk the streets, by the curiosity of the populace?”

“Nay, my friend, if that which I have hinted be the case, it is more than probable that I have the secret of fern-seed, and walk invisible.”

“What changes you must find among us! What advances have been made since you went to Fairy-land!”

“Changes, indeed! and advances, too, for that matter! but whether on the right road is another question. However, of this I can assure you, gentle reader, that I would I were back again in Fairy-land. I see nothing here to tempt me to linger among you.”

“Then why do you linger?”

“I only wait to see if it be a hopeless task to speak to the youth of the rising generation, as I spake to their forefathers. I would fain learn whether it be possible to excite their sympathies in behalf of anything but *themselves*; whether they have yet patience to glean the lessons of wisdom, which lurk beneath the surface of legendary tales, and the chronicles of the wild and supernatural; whether their hearts can be moved to noble and chivalrous feelings, and to shake off the hard, cold, calculating, worldly, selfish temper of the times, by being brought into more immediate contact with the ideal, the imaginary, and the romantic, than has been the fashion of late years.”

“In plain English, then, good Master Churne, you desire to ascertain whether a race that has been glutted with Peter Parley and Penny Magazines, and such like stores of (so called) useful knowledge, will

condescend to read a Fable and its moral, or to interest themselves with the grotesque nonsense, the palpable, fantastic absurdities, the utter impossibilities of a Tale of Enchantment?"

"Such is my object."

"Well, we have lived to see a tunnel under the Thames, and they are talking of a canal across the isthmus of Darien. But your scheme is a wild one."

"I do not think so."

"And suppose you can find readers, is it your object to retail those 'hundred merry pranks' of Fairy-land, of which Bishop Corbet tells us that you are the depositary?"

"I shall be better able to answer your question, gentle reader, when I know how far your patience has carried you through the ensuing pages. Till then farewell."

CHAPTER I.

The Heir and many Friends.

"This little one shall make it holy day."

Shakespeare.

"Unheard and unespied,
Through keyholes we do glide;
Over tables, stools, and shelves;
We trip with our fairy elves."

Poole's English Parnassus.

CHAPTER I.

Never were such rejoicings heard of before as those which took place at the Court of King Katzekopf when it was announced that Queen Ninnilinda had got a little boy. It was what everybody had been wishing for, hoping for, expecting, year after year, but no little boy came; and so, at length, folks began to despair, and to settle it in their own minds that, whenever King Katzekopf died, the crown would go to his second cousin nine times removed, one of the Katzekopfs of Katzenellenbogen-Katzevervankotsdarsprakenluftschlosser, whom nobody knew or cared about.

So when Queen Ninnilinda had an heir, the nation almost went beside itself with joy. The church bells rang till they cracked; the guns of the citadel were fired till they grew so hot that they went off of themselves; oxen were roasted whole in the great square (my dear reader, never attempt to roast an ox *whole*, either on your own birthday, or on that of anybody else; the thing is an impossibility, half the meat is sure to be raw, and the other half burnt, and so good beef is spoiled); the two chief conduits of the city no longer poured forth water, but one spouted out cowslip-wine, and the other raspberry-vinegar; the lake in front of the palace was filled with small beer (this, however, was a failure, as it killed the fish, and folks said that the beer tasted muddy); an air-balloon hovered over the principal streets, and showered down carraway comfits and burnt almonds; Punch was exhibited all day for nothing; the prisons were all thrown open, and everybody paid the debts of everybody else.

Such being the state of things out of doors, you will readily believe that within the palace, the joy was of the most exuberant kind. Everything was in confusion; people ran up-stairs and down-stairs, jostling against one another, and always forgetting whither they were going, and for what they had been sent. Some were laughing, and some were crying, but the greater part were all talking at once, each making his own remarks, and nobody listening to his neighbour. The lords of the bed-chamber were laying wagers upon the likelihood of a new creation of peers; the maids of honour were discussing the probable colour of the infant prince's eyes; the pages were speculating upon an increase of salary; nay, the very scullions were counting on a brevet for the kitchen.

But if all his court were thus in such a frenzy of pleasurable emotion, what must have been the condition of King Katzekopf himself? It must be confessed, that, in the main, his Majesty was one of those easy, indolent, careless sort of folks, who are content to let things take their own course, and who can very seldom be roused to make an exertion of any kind. But the birth of an heir had thrown even him into a state of excitement. Happily, he was a king, and so he had it in his power to give vent to his emotions in the manner which was most agreeable to him, for

if such unwonted exhilaration had been pent up too long, there is no saying what the consequences might not have been. Fortunately, however, there was a safety-valve, through which he was enabled to let off the steaming overflow of his spirits.

So first he sent for the Yeoman of the Mouth, and bespoke a roast goose, with plenty of sage and onions, for his dinner; then he summoned the Master of the Robes, and ordered himself four new suits of clothes; then the head Confectioner was commanded to prepare materials for the manufacture of the largest christening-cake that the world had ever seen; and, lastly, he called together his Privy Council, and having created the new born infant Commander in Chief, and Lord High Admiral, Inspector General of everything and everybody, and settled on him the Crown revenues accruing from the sale of shrimps and periwinkles, his Majesty in a fervour of patriotism and paternal pride, rang the bell, and desired that the nurse, Mrs. Yellowlily, should bring the heir apparent into the Council-chamber.

Accordingly, in a few moments, the folding doors were thrown open, and nurse Yellowlily appeared with her precious charge swathed in a mantle of sky-blue taffety and silver, supported by two of the royal rockers.

“No indeed!” said the Lord Chancellor, dropping his mace and the great seal, and clasping his hands, as he fixed his eyes on the ceiling, “never was such a lovely infant seen!”

“Wait a moment, my Lord,” said nurse Yellowlily, “and you shall have a peep at his Royal Highness:”—for as yet the Chancellor had not beheld him.

With that she gently turned back the mantle, and the Privy Councillors crowded round her. “There, my Lord,” she exclaimed, “you can now see his blessed little nose.”

Everybody was delighted: it was the most exquisite nose ever beheld. The King was so gratified, that he instantly created the nurse a Baroness in her own right; upon which she curtsied three times, walked

backwards till she trod upon the Lord Chamberlain's gouty foot, and then retired with the rockers, who, as they proceeded down the corridor, chanted the softest of lullabies.

The Privy Councillors listened till the last faint echoes of the melody had died away, when King Katzekopf thus addressed them.

"My Lords," said he, "I have called you together on the present auspicious occasion, for the purpose of making you acquainted with certain measures which I am about to take with reference to the Prince, my son. And first, my Lord Chamberlain, I have to announce to you my intention of giving a most magnificent fête on the occasion of his Royal Highness's christening. You will be pleased to send out cards of invitation according to this list, which I believe contains the name of every person of reputation in the kingdom."

Here his Majesty handed a book to the Lord Chamberlain, which that functionary received with reverence, and proceeded to inspect with great attention. Having turned over five or six pages, the Chamberlain suddenly nodded his head as if a thought had struck him. This was so uncommon an event that the Lord Steward of the Household immediately inquired in a whisper what it was that had attracted his attention. The Chamberlain pointed to the list of names, and said in an under tone, "Look through the A's, my Lord, and see if there is not a very important name omitted."

At this moment King Katzekopf's attention was attracted by the whispering, and he graciously exclaimed, "Well, my Lords, what's the matter?"

"I apprehend," said the Chamberlain with becoming diffidence, "that your Majesty has caused these names to be written in alphabetical order."

"Certainly, my Lord," replied the King.

“I speak with all possible deference,” rejoined the Chamberlain, “but I presume that your Majesty did not intend that the Lady Abracadabra should be excluded from the invitations.”

“Humph,” said the King, “I never thought about her.”

“But she is your Majesty’s consort’s great aunt,” observed the Chamberlain.

“And a very powerful Fairy,” suggested the Steward of the Household.

“And, if I may say it without offence, rather capricious in her temper at times; at least she turned an acquaintance of mine into a tadpole,” remarked the Groom of the Stole.

“And your Majesty,” said the Keeper of the Records, interposing, “cannot have forgotten the very untoward event which took place in your Majesty’s family, some centuries ago, when all the misfortunes that occurred to your Majesty’s ancestress, the Sleeping Beauty, arose from her Fairy relative not being invited to the christening.”

King Katzekopf would have rather preferred the Lady Abracadabra’s room to her company, for he was very much afraid of the Fairies, but then, on the other hand, the bare thought of having the Hope of his House turned into a tadpole, or put to sleep in a castle in a wood for a hundred and fifty years, was most alarming. His Majesty grew red and pale alternately, shifted from one side of his throne to the other, and was evidently in a state of great anxiety.

“But how is the Lady Abracadabra to be found?” said he at length. “Who can tell where to look for her? One moment she may be a thousand miles off, and the next she may bob up through a crack in the floor, as if she had passed the night in the cellar.”

“He! he! he!” cried a shrill tiny voice in the distance, as though the owner of the said voice was greatly amused at something it had just heard.

“How the mice are squeaking behind the arras to-day!” exclaimed the King. “My Lord Chamberlain, you must send for a cat, and when she has caught the mice, we will set her to catch the Lady Abracadabra. Ha! ha!

ha!" continued his Majesty, laughing at his own wit.

But the Keeper of the Records, who, from his study of the archives of the kingdom, knew better than most people what a dangerous thing it is to speak disrespectfully of the Fairies, and who was supposed to have acquired a smattering of the black art himself, immediately endeavoured to repress King Katzekopf's laughter, by saying,—"So please you, my Liege, I apprehend that there would be little difficulty in sending an invitation to the Lady Abracadabra. If one of the Government messengers will bury it under a fairy-hill, next Wednesday morning, any time before noon, turning his face to the East, and calling her by her name three times...."

At this point the Keeper of the Records stopped short, for all of a sudden, a very strange sound was heard at the keyhole of the Council-chamber door, a scratching, rustling, noise, followed by a violent blast, such as might issue from the nozzle of a blacksmith's bellows.

The President of the Council looked up to see what was the matter, but was immediately struck on the nose by a pellet of closely squeezed paper, which was immediately followed by another, and another, as the blowing at the keyhole was repeated. At length, when another blast had produced a shrill whistle, which showed that the aperture was clear, a little object, about the size of a hornet, darted through it, and increasing instantaneously in dimensions, presented the appearance of an old woman, some three feet high, by the time it had reached the floor.

Whether the Lady Abracadabra (for of course it was she) had been a beauty in the days of her youth, some eight or nine hundred years before, there is, at present, no means of ascertaining; but certainly, when she stood upon the floor of the Council-chamber, her appearance was anything but prepossessing. Perhaps, gentle reader, you have been in the habit of supposing that all the Fairies are dainty, little, airy beings, with butterfly wings, and vests of green and gold, who hide themselves in a blue-bell, and lose themselves among the petals of a peony. And such, no doubt, are the elves that live among the green hills, and who love to

dance by moonlight, in the glades of the forest, or beside the pleasant water-courses. But there are others who mingle more with the human race, and adopt their habits, and hence, it may be, they become more subject to the changes which affect mortals. Perhaps this was the cause why the Lady Abracadabra's face had become so brown, and shrunken, and covered with deep-set wrinkles; or perhaps it was the having had her own way so much; or those long journeys in which she travelled at the rate of a thousand miles a minute, might have spoiled her complexion; or perhaps, having arrived at (what even among the Fairies is allowed to be) *a certain age*, she could not help looking like an old woman. But be this as it may, she did look very old, and the effect of her short black velvet jacket, and yellow satin petticoat, did not mend matters. She wore on her head a tall, steeple-crowned hat, of the same material as her jacket; had high-heeled shoes with diamond buckles, and bore in her hand a pliant rod of ebony, with a small star of living light at each end of it.

It was evident that she was very angry, for she scowled at the Privy Councillors, stamped vehemently on the floor, and every muscle of her face quivered with passion, as she addressed the King.

"So, nephew! you are determined to keep *me* out of your palace at any rate, I see. Let who will come to court, I am to be excluded. There is always greater difficulty in getting into your house than anybody's else."

King Katzekopf stammered forth an apology, assured his kinswoman that he was delighted to see her, that he had just been speaking of sending her an invitation, and that he had given general orders that she should be admitted at all times.

"No such thing!" cried the little lady angrily. "You use me abominably. You know I always make it a rule to come through the keyhole, and there it is that you always try to stop me. Either I find a plate of metal over the opening, or else the key is left in the lock, and so my ruff gets crumpled to pieces. But the insult you have exposed me to to-day is intolerable: blocking up the passage with scraps of dirty paper, squeezed together by

fingers of some greasy yeoman of the guard.—Oh it's atrocious!" And the Lady Abracadabra shook her quilted petticoat as if she never should be clean again.

The King looked at his Ministers, and the Ministers looked at the King; but neither seemed to know how to excuse themselves. At length, the President of the Council, trembling exceedingly (for he expected to be changed into a tadpole, or some such reptile), ventured to assure the Lady, that he was the person in fault; for that, finding that the door-keeper had got into the habit of applying his ear to the keyhole of the Council-chamber, and fearing lest state-secrets should thus get wind prematurely, he had himself obstructed the passage in the manner already described.

"The varlet! the knave!" exclaimed the Fairy, as she heard of the door-keeper's delinquency, "I've a great mind to hang him up by his ears to the vane of the church steeple. Go look for him, my Lord, and tell him from me, that if ever he puts his ear to a keyhole again, I'll blow mushroom spawn into his brains, and cause his ears to vegetate, instead of to listen."

Fairies, as all the world knows, are hasty and capricious; but it is only a very few who are spiteful and malignant. And to this class the Lady Abracadabra had never belonged. If she was angry one moment, she was pacified the next, and she much more frequently used her supernatural powers in acts of kindness, than to gratify her freaks of mischief.

It was so on the present occasion. After the little ebullition just recorded, she speedily recovered her equanimity. Her eyes no longer sparkled with passion, and so agreeable an expression came over her countenance, that nobody thought about her wrinkles, or the unbecomingness of her yellow petticoat.

"I was taking an airing on Mount Caucasus a quarter of an hour ago," said she, "when one of our people told me of your good fortune; so here I came wind-speed to congratulate you, and to see if I could not find some lucky gifts for my great-great-nephew."

King Katzekopf thanked her for her condescension, and immediately proposed to escort her to the royal nursery.

“Ha! ha! ha!” cried the Lady Abracadabra, almost choking with laughter at the absurdity of the suggestion. “You don’t suppose I came to talk to you before I had seen the baby, do you? Why, I’ve been sitting by his cradle these ten minutes!”

“You have?” exclaimed the King in astonishment.

“Aye, marry,” said the lady, “and have pulled the chair from under the Baroness Yellowlily, and, he! he! he! have given her such a bump. She was going to feed the child with pap that would have scalded it; but it will be cool enough, I warrant me, now, before she has done rubbing her bruised elbows. Well, nephew, and so you’re going to have a grand christening, are you? Who are to be sponsors besides myself?”

It had never entered into King Katzekopf’s imagination to ask the Lady Abracadabra to be godmother to the young prince. And now she had taken it as a matter of course, and it would never do to affront her! Was there ever such a distress? And what would Queen Ninnilinda say, and what would the Arch-duchess of Klopsteinhesseschloffengrozen say, when, after a direct invitation, she found an old Fairy was to be substituted in her place?

The King was so nervous and frightened that he did not know what to answer. He could only stammer out something about final arrangements being as yet undetermined.

“Well, but, at any rate, I suppose you have settled the child’s name,” continued the Lady Abracadabra, approaching the Council-table. “Hoity toity! what is this?” she added, snatching up one of his Majesty’s memoranda: “Conrad-Adalbert-Willibald-Lewis-Hildebrand-Victor-Sigismund-Belvidere-Narcissus-Adonis Katzekopf? I never heard such a string of silly, conceited names in my life. I shan’t allow it, I can tell you that,” and she stamped on the floor till her diamond buckles glanced like lightning. “If *I* am to have anything to do with the child, I shall give him what name I think proper. Stay; I’ve watched him for ten minutes, and

can read his whole character, and a more wilful little brat I never saw. You shall call him Eigenwillig. There! that's to be his name; Eigenwillig, and nothing else!"[1]

1. It is mentioned in the Chronicle of Carivaldus of Cologne, from which this veracious tale has been extracted, that the word "Eigenwillig," in the ancient Teutonic tongue, bears the meaning of Self-willed; a statement which is the more credible, since it has a corresponding signification in the modern language of Germany.

And then, not waiting for a reply, the Lady Abracadabra gathered her yellow satin habiliments round her, threw out her arms, brought them together above her head, sprung from the floor, shrunk up to nothing in a moment, and darted through the keyhole of the Council-chamber door.

CHAPTER II.

The Hunting of the Heir.

"You parents all that children have,
And you that have got none,
If you would keep them safe abroad,
Pray keep them safe at home."

Nursery Rhyme.

CHAPTER II

And Eigenwillig he was called. There was no help for it. Even Queen Ninnilinda soon saw that. She flew into a violent passion, indeed, and called her husband an old goose, and told him that if he had as much sense in his whole body as a mite has in the tip of its tail, he would have contrived to have got rid of the Lady Abracadabra without affronting her.

"Shall I send her an excuse, my dear?" asked King Katzekopf meekly.

"Send her a fiddlestick!" cried the Queen indignantly, at the same time kicking over her footstool, and upsetting a basin of caudle, scalding hot, into her husband's lap.—"How can you make such a ridiculous proposition? What but mischief can come of offending her? Will she not

vent her spite on me, or the Arch-duchess? Or may not she make the poor dear baby a victim? May she not dart through the keyhole, and carry him off to Fairy-land, and substitute in his place some frightful, wide mouthed, squinting, red haired changeling, as much like your Majesty, and as little like me, as possible? Oh it is too vexatious, and ridiculous, and shocking, and foolish!"

And then Ninnilinda burst out a crying. But her Majesty's tears and rages were so frequent that they had lost their effect. Nobody thought much about them; and besides, King Katzekopf was trying to take out the stains of the caudle, which had sadly damaged the appearance of the pea-green brocade that covered his knees.

So when her Majesty was tired of crying, she ceased: and, in the course of the afternoon, wrote a note to her "dearest Lady Abracadabra," expressing the intensity of her satisfaction at the fact that her sweet baby had secured the protection of such an amiable and powerful patroness.

Then she sent for the Baroness Yellowlily, and told her that, as she had reason to fear that a malicious old Fairy was disposed to do the child a mischief, and, perhaps, carry him off altogether, she must immediately anoint him all over with an unguent, made of three black spiders, the gall of a brindled cat, the fat of a white hen, and the blood of a screech owl; and that his cradle must be watched night and day until after the christening. It was lucky for Queen Ninnilinda that the Lady Abracadabra wished nothing but well to the little prince, and knew nothing of these proceedings.

It is not necessary to fatigue the reader with the details of the fête, which was given a few weeks after the events which have just been recorded. There were firing of cannon, and ringing of bells, and beating of drums, and blowing of trumpets. And there were long processions of high officers of state, and nobles, and foreign ambassadors, dressed in gorgeous robes, and glittering with gold and jewels. And there was the arrival of the Fairy sponsor, in a coach made of a single pearl, and drawn by a matchless pair of white cockatrices from the mountains of

Samarcand; and there was the flight of birds of Paradise that accompanied her, each bearing round its neck a chain of gold and diamonds, from which depended a casket, containing some costly offering for the Hope of the House of Katzekopf. And there was the Lady Abracadabra herself, no longer stamping the floor with anger, and wearing that frightful, unbecoming, ill-tempered dress of yellow and black, but arrayed in the most delicate fabrics of the fairy-loom, and bearing upon her shoulders a mantle of gossamer, spangled all over with dew-drops, sparkling with the colours of a hundred rainbows. No look of age or ill-nature had she. The refulgence of her veil had obliterated her wrinkles, and as she passed along the gallery of the palace, side by side with the Arch-duchess of Klopsteinhesseschloffengrozen, even Queen Ninnilinda herself was forced to confess that she looked very amiable, that her manners were exceedingly good, and that, on the whole, she was a captivating person,—when she chose it.

When the child was to be named, the Queen gave a supplicatory glance at her kinswoman, and gently whispered in an appealing tone, “Have you *really* any objection to the charming name originally proposed? Conrad-Adalbert-Willibald....”

But the Lady Abracadabra cut the catalogue short, with saying the word “Eigenwillig” in so decided a tone, that the prince was named Eigenwillig directly, and there was an end of the matter.

And then followed the royal banquet, and then a ball, and then the town was illuminated, and at midnight the fête terminated with a most magnificent display of fireworks.

Just, however, before the amusements of the evening were concluded, the old Fairy called her niece and the King into the royal closet, and thus addressed them: “Kinsmen mine,” said she, “I have shown you this day that I bear a most hearty good-will both to you and yours; and therefore if ye be wise,—which I think ye are not—you will listen to what I now say to you. You have got a fair son: for that you must thank Providence; and your son has got the fairest gifts that were to be found in all Fairy-land:

for them you must thank me. But if, in spite of these gifts, your son turns out a wilful, disagreeable, selfish monkey, for that you will have to thank yourselves. Queen Ninnilinda, if ever I saw a mother that was likely to spoil a child, you are that person. King Katzekopf, if ever I saw a father who was likely to let his son lead him by the nose, you are that man. But attend to what I say," continued the Fairy, with a look of great severity, "I don't intend to have my godchild a selfish little brat, who shall be a bad man, and a bad king, and a bad son, whom everybody shall dislike, and whose faults shall be all attributed to his having a Fairy godmother. No: I have named the child according to his natural temper. I have called him Eigenwillig, because his disposition is to be self-willed. And of this it is fit that you should be reminded continually, even by his name, in order that you may discipline his mind, and make him the reverse of what he is now called. Poor child! he has everything around him to make him selfish. Let it be the object of your life, to make him unselfish. This is my injunction, and remember I have both the will and the power to enforce it. I am his godmother, and I am a Fairy besides, so I have a right to insist. And mark my words, I shall do *my* duty by the prince, let who will neglect theirs. I shall watch over him night and day, and shall be among you when least you expect me. If you manage him properly, you may expect my help; if you show yourselves unfit for the charge, I shall take the reins of discipline into my own hands; and if you then resist me ... but I will not allow myself to imagine that such infatuation and insanity were possible. Sweet niece, I must take my leave. May I trouble your Majesty to open the window. Kiss my godchild for me. Good night."

As the Lady Abracadabra took her leave, there was a rustling of wings in the air, the chariot of pearl, with its attendant cockatrices, appeared on a level with the window: the Fairy sprung into her seat, and, preceded by a cloud of lantern flies, each insect sparkling with a different coloured flame, blue, or crimson, or violet, or green, and followed by myriads of elves, each crowned with asteroids of lambent light, she wended on her way to Fairy-land, her track through the sky being marked by a long

train of sparks, whose dazzling brilliancy waxed fainter and fainter as she receded from earth, till it mingled with, and became lost in the pallid hues of the Milky Way.

It is needless to say that Queen Ninnilinda did not relish the parting admonitions of her Fairy kinswoman. First, she (being a Queen) did not like to submit to dictation; next, she persuaded herself that she had a full right to do as she pleased, and to spoil her own child as much as she liked; lastly, being rather timid, she felt very uncomfortable at the notion of being watched by a Fairy, and still more so at the possibility of incurring that Fairy's vengeance. So, as usual, she vented all her anger on her husband, and then went to bed and sobbed herself to sleep. King Katzekopf was not easily disturbed; and the chronicles of the kingdom assure us that he slept as well as usual on the night after the fête; but upon awaking next morning he felt the necessity of something being done, and therefore called together once more his trusty councillors, who, after much grave discussion, determined that the best method of securing the further favour of the Lady Abracadabra would be, by immediately appointing proper instructors for the royal infant.

Accordingly, a commission was issued to inquire who would be the proper persons to undertake so responsible an office, and after a year and a half of diligent investigation, it was decided that the three cleverest women in the kingdom should be charged with the prince's education until such time as he should exchange his petticoats for jacket and trousers. So the Lady Brigida was appointed to teach him how to feed himself, and to instruct him in *Belles Lettres*, and the —ologies: the Lady Rigida was to make him an adept in prudence and etiquette: while the Lady Frigida was directed to enlighten his mind on the science of political economy, and to teach him the art of governing the country.

But alas! nobody thought of appointing a preceptress, who should instruct him in the art of governing *himself*.

Meanwhile, Queen Ninnilinda, finding that her husband had become highly popular in consequence of the pains he was taking to have his heir properly educated, determined that she would do something which should set her own character in a favourable light as a wise and discreet mother. She, therefore, after much careful consideration, drew up the following rules for the nursery, which were immediately printed in an Extraordinary Gazette, and which were received with so much applause, that almost all the ladies in the kingdom adopted them immediately in their own families, and have, in fact, been guided by them ever since, even though they have not followed Queen Ninnilinda's plan of having them framed and glazed.

RULES FOR THE NURSERY.

1. The Prince Eigenwillig is never to be contradicted; for contradiction is depressing to the spirits.

2. His Royal Highness is to have everything he cries for; else he will grow peevish and discontented.

3. He is to be allowed to eat and drink when, what, and as much he pleases; hunger being a call of nature, and whatever nature dictates is natural.

4. His Royal Highness is to be dissuaded from speaking to any one below the rank of Baron; as it is highly desirable that he should acquire a proper pride.

5. It is to be impressed upon the Prince's mind continually that he is an object of the first consequence, and that his first duty is to take good care of himself.

Such being the plan laid down for Prince Eigenwillig's education, it is not to be wondered at that, by the time he was two years old, he had a very fair notion of the drift of his mother's rules, and that they found great favour in his eyes; insomuch that at three, when the Ladies Brigida, Frigida, and Rigida commenced the task of tuition, he contrived to inspire them with the notion that their office, for the present, at least, was likely to be a sinecure. He even resisted the efforts which the Lady

Brigida made to induce him to feed himself with a fork and a spoon, and adhered upon principle to the use of his fingers, lest, by yielding the point, he should seem to allow himself to be contradicted.

At four years old the precocity of his talents had greatly developed themselves. He had mingled mustard with the Lady Frigida's chocolate; he had pulled the chair from under his father, just as the King was about to sit down, whereby his Majesty got a tumble, and the Prince got his ears boxed; he had killed nurse Yellowlily's cockatoo by endeavouring to ascertain whether it was as fond of stewed mushrooms as he was himself, and he had even gone the length of singing in her presence, and of course in allusion to her bereavement,

"Dame what made your ducks to die?
Ducks to die? ducks to die? ducks to die?
Eating o' polly-wigs! Eating o' polly-wigs."

But if the truth must be told, the prince had acquired by this time many worse habits than that of mischief. And these had their origin in his being permitted to have his own way in everything. For, indeed, it might be said, that this spoilt child was the person who ruled the entire kingdom. The prince ruled his nurse, and his three instructresses; they ruled the Queen; the Queen ruled the King; the King ruled his Ministers; and the Ministers ruled the country.

O Lady Abracadabra, Lady Abracadabra, how could you allow things to come to such a pass? You must have known right well that Queen Ninnilinda was very silly; and that King Katzekopf was one of those folks who are too indolent to exert themselves about anything which is likely to be troublesome or unpleasant; and you must have been quite sure that the nurses and governesses were all going the wrong way to work; you must have foreseen that at the end of four years of mismanagement the poor child would be a torment to himself and to everybody else. Why did you not interfere?

This is a hard question to answer; but perhaps the Lady Abracadabra's object was to convince both parties of this fact by actual experience, as being aware that in such experience lay the best hope of a remedy.

A torment, however, the child was; there could be no mistake about that. Though he had everything he asked for, nothing seemed to satisfy him; if he was pleased one moment, he was peevish the next: he grew daily more and more fractious, and ill-humoured, and proud, and greedy, and self-willed, and obstinate. It is very shocking to think of so young a child having even the seeds of such evil tempers; but how could it be otherwise, when he was taught to think only of himself, and when he was allowed to have his own way in all things? Unhappy child! yet happy in this, that he was likely to find out for himself that, in spite of having all he wished for, he was unhappy! Unhappy parents! yet happy in this, that, if so disposed, they might learn wisdom, from the obvious failure of their foolish system of weak indulgence!

Prince Eigenwillig had nearly completed his fifth year, when, one day that the Lady Rigida was endeavouring to explain to his Royal Highness her cleverest theory on the subject of the Hyscos, or Shepherd Kings (he, meanwhile, being intently absorbed in a game of bilboquet), a Lord of the Bedchamber entered the apartment, and announced that the Queen desired the Prince's presence in her boudoir.

"Ha!" exclaimed the little boy, with a start of pleasure and surprise, as he entered the apartment, "what a beautiful creature you've got in that cage. Whose is it? I should like to have it."

"Well, my sweet pet," replied his mother, "so you shall, if you wish for it."

"Of course I do," said the Prince; "what a sleek gray coat! what strange, orange-coloured eyes! what curious rings of black and white fur on its tail! What is it?"

"It is a ring-tailed macauco, love," answered the Queen, "your papa has just made me a present of it. I don't know how much money he gave for it."

“Well, mamma, it’s mine now; that’s one comfort,” observed the Prince. “Let it out,” continued he, addressing the Lord of the Bedchamber.

“I am afraid, sir,” replied Baron Puffendorf, “that it might do mischief. I believe it isn’t tamed yet.”

“Oh, we’ll tame it, then,” replied the Prince; “call Lady Rigida; she’ll tame it directly, I’m sure. Lady Rigida, here’s a monkey wants taming; talk to it about the shepherd kings, will you?”

The Lady Rigida drew up with offended dignity.

“Ha! ha! my good Rigida,” said the Queen, laughing, “you mustn’t be angry with these sallies of wit. What a clever child it is!”

“Is nobody going to open the door of the cage?” asked the boy impatiently. “I want to see the creature loose.”

“Oh, my sweet child, leave it where it is. You’ll frighten me to death, if you let it out,” cried the Queen in alarm.

The Prince immediately threw himself down on the floor, and began to roar.

“Don’t cry, there’s a love,” said his wise mother, soothingly, “and the Baron shall see if he can’t hold it while you look at it. Wrap your handkerchief round your hand, Baron; it won’t bite, I’m sure.”

The Baron did as he was bid, and, in considerable trepidation, opened the door of the cage, and made an effort to seize the macauco. The animal immediately darted at his hand, bit it with all its strength, and dashed out of the cage in an instant. “Sess! sess! sess!” cried Prince Eigenwillig, springing up from the floor, and clapping his hands. “Now for a chase! Sess! macauco! Hie at them! Good monkey! Bite Rigida! Bite Puffendorf!”

Away ran the instructress, away ran the Lord of the Bedchamber, and after them pursued the macauco round and round the room, now biting at the Baron’s heels, and now at the Lady Rigida’s; while the Queen ran screaming out of the apartment, and the author of all the mischief stood

in the midst, laughing with all his might. In another moment, the agile monkey had scrambled up the Lady Rigida's back, and, having half strangled her in its attempts to tear off her head-dress, took a flying leap to the top of a cabinet, whence, having dashed down a most precious vase of rose-coloured chrystal, it proceeded to tear the cap to tatters.

But Prince Eigenwillig was too highly delighted with the more active freaks of the animal, and too much pleased at the opportunity of terrifying and tormenting the Lady Rigida, to allow it to remain long at the top of the cabinet. So snatching up a book which lay on a table beside him, he threw it at the macauco for the purpose of dislodging it.

And therein he succeeded, but at a cost which by no means entered into his calculations, for the animal, irritated by the blow, now turned on the naughty boy, and springing on his shoulders, laid hold of one of his ears with his teeth.

It was now the Prince's turn to scream, and the more he screamed and struggled, the more the macauco bit him, and the child would soon have fainted with fright and pain; but, just at the critical moment, when he had fallen to the ground, the sound of many voices was heard outside the door, which was immediately flung open, and, together with a number of members of the household, in rushed a great black mastiff, which immediately flew at the monkey, who, thereupon, quitted its hold of the Prince's ear, and retreated to its cage.

The whole palace was by this time in confusion; messengers were rushing in all directions for surgeons and physicians; and even King Katzekopf, who had now grown so fat, that he never left his arm-chair when he could help it, ran up-stairs, three steps at a time, to know what was the matter.

"Ah!" exclaimed the Lord Chamberlain, as soon as he had recovered sufficient presence of mind to shake his head. "Ah," quoth he.

"Yea, forsooth!" replied the Chancellor, with the air of one who *could* say a great deal if he chose.

The Arch-Treasurer of the Empire, who never spoke at all, if he could help it, and who never allowed his countenance to indulge itself in any particular expression, shrugged his shoulders slightly, but with what particular intention no one ventured to imagine.

The old ladies of the household (including his grace the Keeper of the Records) were, however, by no means so prudent or taciturn.

“I knew how it would be!” cried one.

“I always guessed as much,” rejoined another.

“I anticipated it from the first,” ejaculated the third.

“This comes of Fairy-godmothers,” groaned forth he of the Records.

“No doubt, it is some malicious prank of hers!” said Nurse Yellowlily, with a shudder.

“I shouldn’t be surprised if henceforth the poor child were possessed,” added the first speaker.

“Or squinting and blear-eyed,” continued the second.

“Or if his ears mortified, and turned into pigs’ feet!” sobbed out the third.

“Oh, too true! too true!” exclaimed the Queen. “I see it all. Unhappy mother that I am! All the poor child’s misfortunes, past, present, and to come, are owing to my peevish, spiteful, malicious, capricious, old, ugly witch of an aunt, Lady Abracadabra! Oh, that I had been turned into a tadpole, and the Grand Duchess of Klopsteinhesseschloffengrozen had been the only sponsor!”

It was a long while before anything like tranquillity was restored; but when the King and the Queen had been assured by the medical attendants that the Prince’s wound was by no means serious, and the child himself had ceased screaming, and the macauco had been hanged, the black mastiff began to attract attention.

“Whose dog is it?” asked one.

“Where did it come from?” said another.

But nobody could answer the question. At this moment the King called the hound to him, for the purpose of patting it. The mastiff approached, and laid its heavy fore-paws on the royal knee, and looked very wisely at the King; and then his Majesty looked as wisely as ever he could (how could he do less?) at the dog. But what was the King’s amazement, when, all of a sudden, he perceived the tan portion of the glossy hide changing into a yellow satin petticoat, and the black part into a black velvet jacket; the canine features resolving themselves into a human countenance; the fore-paws becoming hands, and hind-paws a woman’s feet, enveloped in high-heeled shoes fastened with diamond buckles?

It was even so. The Lady Abracadabra stood before him, not, however, as when he last beheld her, all smiles and affability, but stern, grave, and angry. Her eyes gleamed like coals of fire, her wrinkles were deeper than ever, and gave her face a most harsh and severe expression,—nay, her black jacket had acquired a most ominous sort of intensity, and the yellow petticoat seemed shot with a lurid flame-colour.

“So!” said she, “you have not only disobeyed all my injunctions, neglected my advice, and thwarted all my benevolent intentions, but now, when you are reaping the fruit of your misconduct, you have audacity enough to charge me with being the cause of it!”

King Katzekopf declared that he had never suspected her ladyship of anything but good will towards the prince; and had never attributed to her agency the mishaps of a spoilt boy.

“Spoilt boy!” she exclaimed with indignation, “and how comes he to be spoilt? Yes,” she continued with increasing vehemence, “who has spoilt him? What is it that makes everybody dislike him? What makes him a plague and a torment to himself and everybody else? Why is he impatient, and greedy, and wilful, and ill-tempered, and selfish? Is it not because Queen Ninnilinda encourages him in all these vices, and because King Katzekopf, though he knows that everything is going

wrong, is too lazy and indolent to interfere and set them right? You are neither of you fit to be trusted with your own child. You are doing all you can to make him wicked and miserable, a bad man, and a bad king."

"I'm sure there's not a child in the kingdom that has such pains taken with him," replied the Queen angrily. "He has instructors in all the different branches of useful knowledge, and if he is a little mischievous, or self-willed at times, are not all children so?"

"Niece, niece," replied the Fairy, "you speak like a fool. What good is there in knowledge, unless a right use be made of it? And how is he likely to make a right use of it, if he be mischievous and self-willed? And how can you expect him to be otherwise than mischievous and self-willed, if you encourage, instead of checking, his propensities that way?"

"I'm sure I cannot check his propensities," retorted Ninnilinda in a huff.

"I never thought you could," said Lady Abracadabra quietly, "for you have not yet learned to control your own temper."

The Queen coloured and bit her lip.

"I wish, kinswoman," said the King in a conciliating tone, "since you thought the Prince was being so ill brought up, that you would have told us so a little sooner?"

"And where would have been the good of that? You know very well that you would not have listened to me. Nay, I don't believe that you will listen to me now. No, no, when I promised to befriend your child, I ought to have taken the matter into my own hands at once, and carried him off to Fairy-land, and superintended his education there."

When the Queen heard these words, she trembled from head to foot, and threw herself on her knees before her aunt, exclaiming—"Nay, Lady Abracadabra, anything but that! anything but that! I know your power, but oh! as you are powerful, be merciful likewise, and do not take my child from me!"

The Fairy saw that Queen Ninnilinda was now in a disposition to submit to any conditions which might be imposed upon her, and therefore she answered her kindly:

“I do not want to separate you from your child, if only you will do your duty by him.”

“I will do anything you desire, aunt!”

“Teach him not to be selfish, then!” replied the Lady Abracadabra. “If you really are in earnest, I will give you one more trial; *but remember it is the last*.”

The Queen grew more frightened than ever, for she felt as if she were a fly in a spider’s web; that the Lady Abracadabra was spreading toils for her, and that the little Eigenwillig was already as good as lost to her.

“But how can I teach him not to be selfish?” she asked at length.

“By making him consider others as much as himself; by teaching him to bear contradiction, and to yield up his own wishes and inclinations; and by letting him associate with his equals.”

“You forget he is a prince, Lady,” replied the Queen proudly.

“No, I do not,” answered the Fairy. “A prince may have his equals in age, I suppose, if not in rank.”

“Ah! Lady Abracadabra!” cried King Katzekopf. “I believe you have hit the right nail on the head. I’ve often wished the boy could have had somebody to play with,—somebody who would set him a good example, and would not flatter him, as these courtiers do.”

“Suppose I could find such a companion for him,” said the Fairy, “would you befriend him, and treat him as you do your own child?”

“Gladly will I,” answered the King. The Queen could not bring herself to say that she would do it gladly, but she submitted with as good a grace as she could.

“Well then,” said the Lady Abracadabra, “upon those terms I will give you a fresh trial. I know a fair, gentle boy, whose temper and disposition the Prince will do well to imitate. His father, foolish man! is anxious to get him a place at court,—little knowing what he desires for him. Methinks it would be well that he should see the experiment tried. It may be of benefit to both parties. So I shall set about it at once.”

And thereupon the Lady Abracadabra gradually faded away, or at any rate seemed to do so, till she wholly disappeared.

CHAPTER III.

Another Heir Started.

"More swift than lightning can I flye
About this aery welkin soone,
And in a minute's space descrye
Each thing that's done below the moone."

Ben Jonson.

CHAPTER III.

Many and many a mile from King Katzekopf's Court,—in a valley among those Giant Mountains, which separated his territories from the neighbouring kingdoms, stood the Castle of Taubennest, in which, at the date of our tale, dwelt Count Rudolf and his family.

And a happy family they were, all except the Count, who was a discontented man. He had spent his youth in cities, and so the country had no charms for him. He was ambitious, and a time-server. He was never so happy as among great people, and he longed to meddle with the intrigues of state, and to be talked of as among the eminent men of the kingdom.

He was a very poor man when the Castle and its broad lands were bequeathed him by a distant relation, and so he was glad enough to take possession of them, even though he found the bequest coupled with the condition that he should live on his domains continually.

Now if, on acquiring this property, the Count had set himself in earnest to the discharge of the duties for which the possession of that property rendered him responsible,—if he had turned his talents to bettering the condition of his vassals, improving his estates, and benefiting his neighbourhood generally, he would not only have spent his days happily, but would, in all probability, have arrived at the object of his desires, and acquired an illustrious name. But instead of this, he spent his years in murmurs and repinings; now railing at the blindness of Fortune, who had condemned one of his genius for rising in the world to a sphere of inactivity, now complaining that he was imprisoned for life amid the mountains. What a sad thing it is, when people neglect their present duties, for no wiser reason than because they choose to imagine that if their duties were of some different kind, they could discharge them better! Our trial in life consists in our being required to do our best in *whatever* circumstances we are placed. If we were to choose those circumstances for ourselves, there would be an end of the trial, and the main object for which life is given us would be lost.

Happily for her children and dependents, the character of the Countess Ermengarde was a complete contrast to that of her husband. She was one of those people who seem only to find happiness in doing good to those around them. Had her destiny placed her in the midst of a court, she would have added to its dignity and honour by the lustre of her example. But that example was not lost because her days were spent in comparative seclusion. The Castle of Taubennest was at a great distance from the metropolis, but it did not rear its head in a solitary desert. And the Countess, as she stood on the stone platform, which opened out of her withdrawing room, and led to the garden below, and gazed at the wide and fertile valley which lay stretched before her, could count hamlet after hamlet, the inhabitants of which were tenants to her

husband, and over whom, therefore, she felt that it was in her power to exercise an influence for good. But the Countess Ermengarde had yet dearer ties, to whom she well knew that all her care and tenderness were due. There were her two little girls, Ediltrudis and Veronica, and her son, a boy of seven years old, the gentle, yet noble-spirited Witikind. In educating these her treasures, disciplining their youthful minds, and training them for the duties and trials of active life, the greater part of her time was spent, and so fully absorbed was she in this labour of love, that never an hour hung heavy on her hands, and not days only, but months and years seemed to glide on without her having a wish or a thought beyond her children, and the vassals of her husband's house.

"What a happy family should we be!" exclaimed the Count, as, in spite of himself, he stood enjoying the evening breeze, and watching his lovely children in their play, "What a happy family we should be, my Ermengarde, if we were not condemned to wear out our existence in this dull wilderness!"

"I would you were in any place that could bring you a greater measure of enjoyment than you find here, my dearest Rudolf," replied the Countess, soothingly, "and yet, methinks, our lot might have been cast in a less fair scene than this. What if the setting sun, instead of throwing its rosy lustre on yonder mountain peaks, and illumining with its declining rays those verdant meadows, through which our glassy river flows, and the fields yellow with the ripening corn, and the purple vineyards, and the deep umbrageous forest, were to light up for us no more joyous scene than a desert of interminable sand? What if, instead of looking forth, and seeing nothing so far as eye can reach which does not call you master, we were landless, houseless wanderers, without bread to eat, or a roof to cover us, should we not have less to be thankful for, than is the case now?"

"Doubtless," answered the Count; but he made the reply impatiently, and as if his wife were putting the matter before him in an unfair point of view. Without being the least aware of it, he was unthankful for all the blessings which he actually possessed, because a single ingredient which

he supposed necessary to fill up his cup of happiness was wanting. So long as he had not *that*, all else went for nothing. “Doubtless,” said the Count; “but, say what you will, this place will never be any better than a wilderness in my eyes. Is it possible to conceive a more monotonous life than I pass? nothing to interest one, not a soul within twenty miles that one cares to speak to!”

The Countess smiled. “Nay, nay, Rudolf,” she cried gaily, “you shall not persuade me that the children and I do not make very agreeable society!”

“The children! there again! what a distressing subject is that! Poor things, they will not have common justice done them! They have not a chance of getting on in the world.”

“For my part,” replied the Countess, “I don’t see what is the necessity for their ‘getting on in the world.’ They will do very well as they are.”

“How can you talk such nonsense as that, Ermengarde?” exclaimed the Count in a tone of pique. “Why, what is to become of the girls, when they grow up to womanhood?”

“Oh,” answered the Countess, “we need scarcely make that a cause of anxiety at present. Years must elapse before they will be women, and when they are grown up, I don’t know why they may not become the wives of honest men, or why they may not find happiness in a single life, if they prefer it.”

“Really, Ermengarde, you sometimes provoke one past all patience. ‘Wives of honest men,’ forsooth! I believe you would be satisfied if you could see them making cheese on the next farm, or wedded to the huntsman, or the woodreve. You forget,” added he proudly, “that their birth entitles them to some splendid connexion, and less than a splendid connexion shall never satisfy me.”

“Why, what is it that you covet for them?”

“That they should see something of courts and cities, instead of being immured in this mountain-dungeon; that they should take that place in the world to which their rank entitles them, and that they should be

followed by a host of admirers, and that their cotemporaries should have cause to envy their good fortune. Yes," continued he, warming with his subject, and falling unconsciously into one of those day-dreams in which he was continually indulging, "I should like to waken and find myself at the court, with Ediltrudis at my side, the admired of all beholders, princes and peers struggling to obtain the honour of her hand, while I, with watchful eyes, would be ascertaining which of her many suitors it would be most prudent to encourage, and which to reject. Can you conceive anything more interesting, more delightful to a parent's feelings?"

"Yes, indeed, my Lord," replied the Lady Ermengarde, "to me it would afford more satisfaction, if I were permitted to see my child growing up to maturity, unspotted by the world, and saved from exposure to its poisonous breath, and from the temptation to yield to its evil influences. I would rather see her innocent and happy here, than the star and favourite of a court."

Had Count Rudolf listened to this speech it would have probably made him very angry, but he was too much occupied with his castles in the air to attend to it.

"And then my pretty little Veronica," he continued, "your career shall be no less brilliant than your sister's. Come hither," said he, calling the child, "and tell us what destiny you would choose. Would you not like to be a Maid of Honour to the Queen, and to be glittering with silks and jewels, and to live in a royal palace, and to spend your time in all manner of pleasures?"

The little girl seemed puzzled, and did not answer immediately. After a pause she said, "Must I leave Taubennest, if I were to be Maid of Honour to the Queen?"

"Yes, my child, that must you, for where the King lives is many a mile from Taubennest."

“Nay, then, dear father, I would rather be where I am. I should like to see the royal palace, and all the things you mention, but I should prefer to *live* here. Ah! we never could be so happy as we are here, could we, Witikind? We never could find such pretty walks as we have here among the hills, nor play such merry games in a palace, as now we do in the meadows by the river side. And besides, I dare say I should not be allowed to take my kid with me, nor my birds, nor perhaps,” added the child in a tone of dismay,—her eyes brimming with tears as the thought occurred to her—“perhaps you, and Ediltrudis, and nurse, and papa, and mamma might not be with me. Oh, no, no; I would rather stay where I am; would not you, Witikind?”

“Why, what folly!” exclaimed Count Rudolf, interposing. “Even you, Veronica, must be old enough to know that a boy cannot pass through life beside his nurse’s apron-string. Witikind must see the world, and learn to be bold and manly.”

“Can I not be bold and manly, father, unless I see the world?” asked the boy rather timidly.

“No, to be sure not!” answered the Count.

“Well then of course I must go,” replied Witikind with a sigh. “But I never can be so happy elsewhere as I am here.”

“Pooh! you are but a child;” rejoined his father, “you don’t know what real happiness is.”

“Did you find real happiness, father, in living among courts and cities?”

“Certainly, I did,” said the Count; and then, after some hesitation he added, “At least I should have found it, if I had not been a poor man, as I was in those days. Ah! what would I have given for such advantages as you have, my boy?”

“Is it possible that there can be so much pleasure to be found away from home and friends?” asked Witikind, still somewhat doubtfully, and looking up with anxiety at the expression of sadness which seemed to spread itself over his mother’s face.

“Possible, Witikind? I would I had the opportunity of enabling you to make the experiment this very moment! How I should like to see you a Page of Honour to the King, It would make a man of you at once.”

Witikind thought it would be a very fine thing to be made a man of at once, and his heart was more inclined to a change than it had yet been. “And I suppose then, father, I should ride a horse instead of a pony, and wear a sword, and be treated by every body as if I were a man.”

“Of course, you would,” replied the Count,—“at least, in a very short time.”

“Then, father, I do think that I should like to go and live at court.”—The Count kissed the boy and withdrew.

It is a very well known, but at the same time a most remarkable circumstance in the natural history of Fairies, that they are not only sure to be found in the most unexpected places, but they are certain to arrive in the very nick of time, for the purpose of overhearing some conversation which was never intended for their ears, but which they never fail to turn to account in some manner for which the speakers are wholly unprepared. It was so on the present occasion.

Our friend, the Lady Abracadabra, who had been paying a visit to some old acquaintances among the Gnomes who inhabited the silver mines in the mountains, in the immediate vicinity of Count Rudolf’s castle, had heard from her subterranean hosts such an interesting account of the goodness and benevolence of Countess Ermengarde, that she had resolved to introduce herself to her. And as she had been led to believe that to be poor, or afflicted, was a ready passport to that lady’s presence, she assumed the garb and appearance of a lame beggar-woman, and in this disguise entered the domain of Taubennest, and approached the castle. No gate was closed against her, no insolent, pampered menial thrust her from the door. The Countess had long since forbidden her servants to turn away one who sought relief at her hands. “We have enough for all,” she was wont to say, “and, therefore, if we give not

according to our ability, we may expect that the ability to give, will be taken away from us. If we do not make a good use of our money; our money is like to make itself wings, and fly elsewhere."

Of course where so much was given, there must have been some unworthy recipients of her bounty. And when this was urged upon her by some of her less liberal friends, she made no attempt to deny the probability of the assertion; "but," said she, "I would rather bestow my alms on a hundred unworthy recipients, than miss an opportunity of aiding one poor creature who needed my bounty."

And so the weary traveller, and the needy applicant, were under no fears of being repulsed when they approached the portals of Taubennest, and thus it happened that the Lady Abracadabra wandered forward unobserved, or, if observed, unchecked, until she came close to the platform on which the conversation which has been recorded, took place.

"And so you would like to see the court, would you, my pretty master?" said she, as soon as little Witikind had expressed his wish on the subject.

The boy started at the sudden inquiry, "What is it you want, good mother?" he asked after a little hesitation.

"Nay," replied the Fairy, "I have expressed no want. I desire to learn what it is that *you* want?"

"Oh! I want some good Fairy to carry me over hill and dale to the court of King Katzekopf."

"Are you quite sure of that?" asked the lame woman.

"Aye marry, am I," replied the boy, laughing. "Will you show me the way to Fairy-land?"

"May be I will, and may be I won't," answered the Fairy. "I must first see what metal you are made of. Will you go with me to court?"

"I shouldn't like your pace, mother," said Witikind. "I should never get there, if I kept by the side of your crutches."

“Don’t be too sure of that,” rejoined the beggar. “There’s many a worse hobbyhorse than my crutch. Can you ride, sir boy?”

“To be sure I can,” replied Witikind, “I were fit for little, if I could not.”

“Then let me see how you can sit this nag of mine,” said the Fairy; and seating herself sideways on one crutch, she waved the other; when, in an instant, that on which she was seated became a living cockatrice, which mounted up into the air with its burden, and, after three or four circumvolutions, descended on the platform, to which allusion has been made, and then stood still; while the Lady Abracadabra, no longer disguised as a beggar-woman, but wearing her usual Fairy garb, dismounted and approached the astonished Countess and her terrified children.

“I ought to apologize for this intrusion,” said she, “but a Fairy, who comes with purposes of kindness, can scarcely conceive herself to be unwelcome. You do not know me, Countess, for I quarrelled with your father before you were born; but your mother Frideswida and I were well known to one another. I doubt not you have heard her speak of Abracadabra of Hexenberg.”

The Countess intimated her assent.

“I recognize in you, Lady,” said the Fairy, “a transcript of her beauty of feature, and if fame do not greatly misrepresent you, the beauty of her mind has descended to you. I hear you spoken of as the blessing of these valleys, and that your days are spent in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick.”

“I live among my own people,” replied Ermengarde, “and they are a simple race, who are satisfied with little, and whom small kindnesses gratify largely.”

“You are modest,” rejoined the Lady Abracadabra, “but if, as I believe, you have the means of doing good, and find pleasure in doing it, why should you be dissatisfied with your abode?”

“I dissatisfied, Lady?” exclaimed the Countess, “I would gladly live and die here.”

“Then, what was the meaning of what I heard no long time since? Methought as I listened to your converse, your boy seemed to say that he should like to go and live at court. You would hardly send him to face such perils alone? That were as unnatural as wicked.”

The Countess knew not what to answer. The thought of separation from Witikind had already filled her with sorrow and dismay, but she was unwilling to excuse herself at the cost of inculpating her husband. She therefore remained silent, but the tears gushed from her eyes in spite of her.

“And how comes it that you, sir boy,” asked the Fairy, addressing Witikind, “are so eager to leave your home? Can you not be happy here?”

“Yes, Lady, I am happy as the day is long; but my father assures us often and often, that our best happiness here is grief and dulness, compared with what we should find, if we went to the great City, and lived in King Katzekopf’s court?”

“Is this true, Lady?” said the Fairy to Ermengarde. “But,” continued she, “I see it is, and will spare you the pain of answering.” She paused awhile, and then added, “Countess, I see a black spot on that child’s fair brow, that, unless we find a remedy, will spread and spread till it infects his whole nature. What his natural disposition may be I know not, but I see his father has inoculated him with one of the most dangerous of all maladies, a love of *self*. He is willing to seek for pleasure, even though it cost him separation from you. He already thinks of himself more than of you.”

“He is but a child, Lady,” said the mother apologetically.

“Aye, Countess Ermengarde, but the child is father to the man. Such as you make him now, such will he be hereafter.”

“Perhaps, Lady, if you spoke to Rudolf, he might be induced to see the matter as you do,” observed the wife.

“Nay, nay!” replied the Fairy, with an increase of sternness in her manner, “I am not one to be trifled with. You *know* even while you make it, that your suggestion is a hopeless one. To reason with your precious husband (of whom I know more than you think) is only to render him more obstinate. I must devise some other plan. Ah!” she continued, after a momentary pause, “I see my way clearly. The evil shall be made to work its own remedy. Go, tell the Count, that an ancient Fairy, a friend of your mother’s house, and who, on that account, desires to befriend you, has become acquainted with his wishes as respects his son: tell him that I have influence at Court, that King Katzekopf and the Queen are not likely to turn a deaf ear to any request I make them, and that he may hold himself in readiness to expect, ere long, a summons from his Majesty. Countess Ermengarde, tell him this; but I charge you at your peril, tell him no more than this. Meanwhile, keep up good heart, and trust me to befriend your boy. I will teach him one lesson, that shall be of more use to him than all his father’s.”

So saying, she smiled graciously on little Witikind, patted him on the head, and springing on her cockatrice was soon out of sight.

CHAPTER IV.

A hashed Heir.

"Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough briar,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire."

Shakespeare.

CHAPTER IV.

The events recorded in the last chapter took place, as the judicious reader will have anticipated, a short time previously to that visit of the Lady Abracadabra to the Court of King Katzekopf, in which she asserted her authority, and proposed the companionship of a boy of his own age as likely to form a salutary check on the growing wilfulness and selfishness of Prince Eigenwillig.

Accordingly, many days did not elapse before little Witikind was transported from the Castle of Taubennest to the royal nursery.

It was a sad business, that leaving his home. Of the trials that lay before him, he, poor child, could, of course, know nothing. He had never lived anywhere but at home, and he could not as yet imagine that any place

could be very different from home; and he had good hope, from all his father told him, that he would be happy as the day was long at the court of King Katzekopf. But when it really came to bidding farewell: when he saw his mother trying to smile and encourage him, yet was sure, by her appearance, that she had been weeping all night long; when Ediltrudis and Veronica, quite unable to bear up against this, their first deep sorrow, clung to him, and sobbed as if their hearts were breaking. Oh, how bitterly did Witikind lament the rash words he had spoken! Oh, what would he have given to recall them, and to be allowed to live on, as heretofore, with those who so dearly loved him, and whom he so dearly loved! But it was now too late.

And so it is ever with us all. The blessings which we do not appreciate are sooner or later withdrawn from us, and when, on their removal, we feel their value, and would flee after them and secure them, we find they are gone irrecoverably, and that we can never be again as we were when we possessed them. For Witikind, we trust that many happy days may be in store, that he will return to Taubennest better and wiser every way than when he left it; that his mother will fold him in her arms once more, and that his sisters will shed more tears of pleasure over him than now of sorrow; but never, never will he be again as when first he quitted home: a change will have taken place; he will be different himself; those around him will be different; fresh hopes, and feelings, and wishes will have come over them; their confidences will not be the same confidences, their love will not be the same love that it was before they knew the sorrows of separation.

Oh, reader, reader! if *you* have a happy home, and loving parents, and affectionate brothers and sisters, try and show yourself worthy of the blessing while yet it is yours. You know not how soon you may be taken from them, or they from you: strive, then, so to live with them, that, when separation comes, you may have no cause to mourn for your behaviour to them now!

Taubennest was a fine old castle in its way, but certainly not at all comparable to King Katzekopf's palace; and as for the city, it was a thing altogether beyond Witikind's conceptions. Such a labyrinth of streets and houses! such crowds of people passing and repassing! such strange, unaccustomed sights and sounds! the boy was in a state of utter bewilderment!

And before he had recovered himself, he found he was passing through marble halls, and corridors hung with silks and satins, and glittering with gilding; and then he was brought into an apartment where King Katzekopf was sitting on his throne, with a velvet nightcap on his head, and his crown over his nightcap (for his Majesty was now growing so fat and infirm, that when he was not eating or governing the country, he was usually asleep); and then, when he had been patted on the head by a real, live king, and had been told to be a good boy by Queen Ninnilinda, who came into the room on purpose to look at him, he was committed to the care of Lady Brigida, and immediately became an inmate of the royal nursery.

The Prince was quite charmed to have such a companion: he dismounted from his rocking-horse in a moment, and running up to Witikind asked whether he was the little boy (Witikind was the biggest of the two) who was to come and live with him.

And when Lady Brigida answered in the affirmative, he immediately threw his arms round Witikind's neck and kissed him.

"I shall love you so much, and we shall be so happy together," said he. "I know we shall, for you look so good-natured."

Witikind could say but little in reply, for he was quite unused to being with strangers, especially royal ones, and his thoughts were already reverting to his mother, and Ediltrudis, and Veronica, and the happy home at Taubennest; but he was grateful to the Prince for his kindness, and anxious by all the means in his power to show that he was so. He was a very gentle, amiable, good humoured boy, ever ready to oblige,

and not easily put out of temper, and though in some respects his being an only son had been to his disadvantage, he was not spoilt like the little Prince, and had even made some progress in habits of self-control.

For several days, therefore, the two boys lived very happily together, and the nurses and governesses began to congratulate themselves on the improvements which had taken place in their prospects; and that, whereas, they scarce knew what it was to have five minutes in the course of the day free from vexation of some kind connected with their royal charge, the little Eigenwillig seemed all at once transformed into an amiable child.

And so he was, as long as he continued without any temptation to be overbearing and disagreeable. His attendants, whom heretofore he had tormented so diligently, were now left in peace, because, for the time, he found more immediate amusement in Witikind than in the art of tormenting. His companion was, as it were, a new toy: so long as Witikind was new to him, things were pretty sure to go smoothly. The trial only began when the novelty ceased.

And there was a good deal in Witikind's gentle temper, and in the feelings natural to his position, which tended to avert, for some time, the explosion which, sooner or later, was inevitable.

At first, the Prince treated him as if he were his equal in rank, offered him his toys to play with, and even went so far as to say that he would allow Witikind to ride on his pony,—*when he had done with it himself*. By-and-bye, however, when he saw that his attendants paid more respect to him than to the son of Count Rudolf, he thought it would be better to assume a patronizing air, which he did very much to his own satisfaction. A few more days elapsed, and then, instead of patronizing, he was domineering.

All this, however, Witikind submitted to as a matter of course. He had been already taught to give up his own wishes and inclinations cheerfully; and his father had inculcated upon him twenty times that he never was to allow himself to think of anything save how he could best

please the heir-apparent. He felt it was his business to yield his own inclinations to the Prince's, and he invariably did yield them amiably, and as, consequently, the little Eigenwillig continued to have his own way, there could be no open rupture. It is impossible to have a quarrel, when there is nobody to quarrel with.

However, it cannot be said that at the end of a week Witikind thought his royal companion so full of good nature as he had expected, and at the end of a fortnight Witikind had begun to compare the ways of Ediltrudis and Veronica, with those of the Prince, and certainly the result of the comparison was not in his royal highness's favour. On the other hand, the Prince had made the discovery that with his nurse and instructresses, the gentle-tempered son of Countess Ermengarde was rapidly becoming a much greater favourite than he was himself.

This made him very jealous; and his jealousy became insupportable when Witikind was held out as a model for his imitation. "What a sweet little boy is Count Rudolf's son;" nurse Yellowlily would exclaim. "He always does what he is bid the moment he is spoken to: *so unlike some people*!"

"Yes;" the lady Brigida would add, "and so quick at his lessons; never stupid, never idle, never impatient. Such a contrast, you know!"

"Every body loves little Witikind," rejoined the nurse again, "he is so civil-spoken, and gives so little trouble, and isn't proud, nor quarrelsome, nor selfish, nor finds pleasure in teasing and plaguing people."

Thus these silly women took the surest means to prevent the prince from benefiting by the example of his companion.

Under such circumstances Witikind grew more and more unhappy every day. Let him do what he would, the Prince was always disposed to quarrel with him: and the more he gave up his own will to the Prince's, the more he strove to oblige him, the more the Prince seemed to dislike

him for it, for a contrast was sure to be drawn by the attendants between Witikind's good nature, and the unamiable disposition of his companion.

At length Witikind gave up the attempt to please, and would go and hide himself in some corner where nobody was likely to find him, or would sit moping on a bench in the palace gardens, thinking of Ediltrudis and Veronica, and contrasting their affection with the Prince's ill nature.

Now it so happened, that the seat to which Witikind was so fond of betaking himself was one which King Katzekopf could see out of his window as he sat in his arm chair. Witikind did not know this, or he would never have chosen it. He was thinking of watching the gold fish in the fountain, not of King Katzekopf, when he first made it his favourite haunt.

"I wonder why that boy sits on yonder bench all day," observed the King, one fine afternoon. "I wonder why I never see him playing with Eigenwillig." But nobody made any answer in reply to his Majesty's observation, and so the matter passed from his thoughts. But when another day, and another, and another, and another, had elapsed, and Witikind was still seen on his favourite bench, the King's curiosity was quite roused, and he sent for the boy. Witikind was very much frightened when he heard that the King wanted him; but he could not help hoping that, since the Prince disliked him so much, he was going to be sent home again.

"Why are you not at play with Eigenwillig?" asked the King, so soon as Witikind was ushered into the room.

"The Prince, Sire, prefers playing alone," replied Witikind.

"But don't you know that you came here on purpose to be his playfellow?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Why won't the Prince play with you?"

"I suppose it is, Sire, because he does not like me," answered the boy.

“Have you quarrelled with him?”

“No, Sire.”

“I am afraid, Witikind, you are not happy here,” said the King kindly. “It is my wish that you should be so. I gave orders that you should be as kindly treated as if you were at home.”

“Your Majesty is very good to me,” replied Witikind, and he meant to have gone on to thank the King for all the favours that had been shown him; but his heart was very full, and that one word “*home*,” which the King had used, made it overflow. Taubennest and all its dear ones, rose before his eyes, and he began to sob violently. The King saw there was something at which he had not yet arrived; but he thought it more prudent to seek an explanation elsewhere; so, with a few kind words, he dismissed the boy, telling him that he would speak to him again in a day or two.

By-and-bye, Witikind fell in with the Prince. “So!” exclaimed the latter, as soon as he saw him, “you have been complaining of me to the King, have you? You little, mean, spiteful creature!”

“No, Prince, I haven’t. The King asked me why you would not play with me, and I told him I supposed the reason was because you did not like me.”

“Well, I don’t like you. I hated you before, and I hate you now worse than ever.”

“Why should you hate me, Prince?”

“Because I do,” answered the heir of the Katzekopfs.

“But why will you hate me? I am sure I don’t hate you, Prince; I would be very glad to love you, if you would only let me.”

“But I won’t, won’t, *won’t*” shouted the Prince, clenching his fist, and striking the table with it. “I won’t let you love me. I won’t have anything to say to such a mean, sneaking creature.”

“Why do you call me mean and sneaking?” asked Witikind, the colour mounting in his cheeks.

“Because you are so,” replied the other. “Are you not always trying to show off before Nurse Yellowlily, and the governesses, in order that they may praise you, and blame me?”

“No, Prince; I would much rather they should never praise me. I would much rather they would never say a word, unless they could praise us both. Oh, Prince, you would be so much happier, if you would try and not be so—so—so self-willed. Indeed, indeed, you would!”

“How dare you call me self-willed? And what business is it of yours if I am ever so self-willed? I wish I had never seen your face. You have done nothing but make mischief ever since you came here.”

“I never made mischief,” replied Witikind indignantly, “and it is very unjust of you to say such a thing. You would not have dared to say it to one who was your equal. But it is no use talking with you. If I am what you charge me with being, I am no fit companion for you; if I am not, you are no fit companion for me. So at no rate will I stay here any longer.” And he immediately proceeded towards the door.

“Oh, you won’t, won’t you?” cried his enraged companion; “then take this with you!” And, suiting his actions to his words, the Prince seized a heavy silver inkstand, which stood upon the table, and threw it at Witikind. Had it reached him, it might have hurt him very seriously; but Eigenwillig was in too great a passion to take a deliberate aim, and the consequence was, that the missile, instead of hitting Witikind, struck the centre of a large looking-glass, which it broke to shivers.

The crash of the falling fragments was heard by Queen Ninnilinda, and she immediately entered the apartment, to see what was the matter. The first object which met her eyes was Witikind, who ran against her in his hurry to escape from the Prince.

“Ah,” said she, laying hold of him, “you need not attempt to run away. I knew I should find you out sooner or later, and now I have caught you. How dared you to break that looking-glass, and spill the ink all over the carpet, you little, good-for-nothing varlet?”

“Please your Majesty, I did not break it.”

“Not break it!” exclaimed the Queen, who was much too angry to observe that her own son was likewise in the room. “Not break it? Are you not ashamed to utter such falsehoods?” And with that the Queen struck the little boy two or three sharp blows.

“Oh, Mamma, Mamma,” cried Prince Eigenwillig, rushing forward, and seizing her uplifted arm, “it was not his doing; it was mine. I don’t like him, and I wish he had never come here; but he didn’t break the looking-glass. I broke it; do not beat him; he doesn’t deserve it. I did the mischief. He put me in such a rage with what he said, that I took up the inkstand and threw it at him; but it struck the glass instead of him.”

The Prince was a spoilt child, and full of faults; but here was an evidence that there were redeeming points in his character. Nothing could have been better than the manner in which he came forward to take the blame on his own shoulders. There was still something to work upon; and had his mother been anything but what she was, the incident might have been turned as much to his advantage as to her own. But her weakness and vanity were excessive. She saw she had been too hasty; but was unwilling to confess herself in the wrong; so she availed herself of an expression of her son, and continued to pour out her wrath on the unfortunate Witikind.

“How dared you offend the Prince?” she cried. “How could you presume to misbehave yourself in such a manner, as to put him in a rage, as he says you did? And what is the meaning of all these malicious tales you have been carrying to the King?”

“I have carried no tales to the King, Madam,” replied Witikind.

“Yes, you have,” retorted the Queen, “you have been making him believe that the Prince is cruel to you. And like a little artful, hypocritical wretch, you have been even setting his own attendants against him.”

Witikind was so bewildered with all these charges that he was quite silent.

“Yes,” continued the Queen, “no wonder you are struck dumb; now you are found out, you have not a word to say for yourself.”

“Will you hear me, Madam, or believe me, when I do speak?” replied Witikind, recovering his self-possession.

“Believe *you*? you little deceitful creature! No, that will I not.”

“Then, since your Majesty says that, when you know I have never deceived you, I had rather say nothing, except that I hope you will confront me with the King, and the Prince’s attendants.”

“Leave the room,” said Queen Ninnilinda, in still greater anger, “I am not going to be argued with by you, I promise you.”

“Mamma,” said Prince Eigenwillig, as soon as Witikind had left the room, “I don’t like him, but I don’t think he ever tells lies; and I don’t think he ever tried to set Nurse Yellowlily against me, though she often praised him, in order to plague me.”

Here again, the boy was getting upon a right path; but his foolish mother, as soon as she perceived it, lost no time in turning him into a wrong one.

“Ah, my sweetest boy,” said she, “it was no more than I expected from your noble, generous nature, that you should try and find excuses for this odious little brat. You don’t know the world as well as I do: if you did, you would find it prudent to consider others less, and yourself more. But I have my own opinion about this Witikind. Everything went on well enough in the palace till he came, and now every thing goes wrong, and I can trace his finger at the bottom of all the mischief. I always misdoubted the intentions of that cross-grained old toad, my Fairy-aunt, ever since she insisted on giving you your horrid name. I was sure her

professions of kindliness were a blind, and that she was meaning mischief all the time. And I am quite satisfied now that this creature which she brought here, is not Count Rudolf's son. Count Rudolf is a very respectable man and would not deceive us, but parents are proverbially blind;" (Yes, indeed, Queen Ninnilinda!) "and I don't doubt that this Witikind is a changeling, some imp from Fairy-land, hundreds of years old, perhaps, sly, and mischievous, and malicious, who is sent to bring some terrible misfortune on us all."

Poor Witikind! he little suspected the nature of this fresh accusation against him; and while he was weeping in his chamber over the injustice which he was suffering, and writhing under the indignity of being charged with saying what was not true, he was being subjected to an imputation, at once the most cruel, and (in his case) the most difficult to disprove.

The idea once started, every body had something to say in confirmation of it. All the courtiers discovered that, though they had never mentioned it, they had, from the first, observed something very elvish in his countenance. The Keeper of the Records had been struck with his always being dressed in green and gold,—the fashionable colours in Fairy-land. The Ladies Frigida, Rigida, and Brigida, detected something supernatural in the precocious aptness with which he received their lessons. The Baroness Yellowlily had occasionally found great entanglement in the poor child's sunny ringlets, when she combed them after he had been at play: this was a strong presumption they were elflocks. He was wont to talk with rapture of the happy home he had left; this, in the opinion of the Lord Chamberlain, was proof positive that he had come from Fairy-land, for what but Fairy-land could be preferable to a palace? Finally, even good-natured King Katzekopf, when he heard all these allegations, was fain to shake his head, and confess that there was something suspicious in the case, and that the circumstance which he had himself observed, namely, Witikind's habit of sitting moping for hours together, by the side of the fountain, was certainly very unlike the habits of other boys.

What was to be done? If they sent him back to his reputed parents, without the Lady Abracadabra's permission, they might bring all kinds of trouble upon themselves. If they kept him longer in the palace, there was no calculating the amount of mischief which might be effected by him. However, it was resolved, that of the two evils, this was the least: and so it was determined, that things should go on as usual, and that Witikind should be kept in ignorance of the nature of the suspicions against him.

Whether all those who contributed to blacken this unlucky boy's character, were sincere in their belief of his elvish origin, may be doubted. To seem so was to follow the fashion, and a ready method of getting into Queen Ninnilinda's good graces; and that was enough for courtiers.

But, though Witikind knew not of what he was accused, he was not long kept in ignorance of the fact, that he was out of favour with every body. It seemed as if nobody, from the King on his throne, to the scullion in the kitchen, could say a word of kindness to him. Some were ruder than others, in proportion as they desired to pay court to her Majesty; but all made it evident that they wished to have nothing to say to him. A thousand petty mortifications were heaped upon him. He was kept at his lessons for many more hours than heretofore, and his tasks were made doubly difficult. He was allowed, as formerly, to take his meals with the Prince, but those in attendance contrived to give him whatever was likely to be most unpalatable. He was required to be with the Prince during his play hours, but was not allowed to play with him, but only to wait on him; to run after his ball, or to fetch his hoop out of a ditch, or pick up his arrows which had fallen wide of the mark.

And yet nothing was said or done in such a manner that Witikind could lay hold of it. He felt that every body was against him, though it was their general manner, rather than any particular act, that gave him the impression. It seemed to him, as if his feet had become entangled in a net, and that some unseen hand was preventing his escape. And all this while, Prince Eigenwillig was growing more and more unkind,

sometimes not speaking to him at all, and other times loading him with abuse and reproaches. For weeks and weeks, this state of things continued, and Witikind was nearly broken in spirit, and would have been quite so, had he not been able to cheer himself, by the thought that sooner or later, he would be sent home, and that the Fairy had promised to befriend him.

Yet still as time passed on, and he heard nothing from Taubennest, and his father never came to Court to inquire after him, and the Lady Abracadabra failed to appear, he grew more and more downcast. Sometimes he thought of running away; but whither should he run, and how could he find his way home? Sometimes he resolved to entreat the King to dismiss him; but then he remembered the Fairy's commands, that let what would happen, he must not leave the Court, without her permission.

However, when things are at the worst, they usually begin to mend; and just as Witikind began to despair, the crisis came which he feared would never come.

In obedience to his mother,—for sometimes, when he had no temptation the other way, even Eigenwillig could be obedient,—the Prince had carefully abstained from letting fall any expression which should convey to Witikind the knowledge that he was suspected of being an elf in disguise; but at length it happened, as might have been expected, that the boy forgot his secret.

It fell out, upon a summer's evening, that the Prince and Witikind were alone together in one of the apartments of the palace, which opened out of the Queen's sitting-room, and which had a door of communication with the gardens.—The Prince was amusing himself with a game of battledore, and Witikind stood near to pick up the shuttlecock for him as it occasionally fell. But the Prince was expert with his battledore, and would keep the shuttlecock bounding in the air for a long time together. Consequently the services of Witikind were not often needed.

No wonder, therefore, that he crept towards the window to look at the gay flower beds, and to watch the waters of his favourite fountain as they rose sparkling in the air to a vast height, and then fell into various fantastic basins, from which they issued into the grand reservoir below; and no wonder, as he listened to the soothing plash of the waters, and watched the clouds, painted with all the gorgeous hues which the setting sun threw over them, that his thoughts reverted to Taubennest, and that fatal evening when he had expressed a wish to quit it. Surely the error had brought its recompense of punishment! If he had done wrong, he had suffered for it, and had learned a lesson which would last him his life. Oh bitter and sincere was his repentance! What would he not now give to turn his back for ever on the hateful palace! What would he not give to see the towers of Taubennest, and look from its ramparts on the mountains, barren as they were; and the valley, and the winding river! What would he not give, were it but for a few brief minutes, to hear the sweet voices of his sisters, and to be clasped in his mother's arms!

The shuttlecock had fallen, but he heard it not, and remained inattentive to his duties. How could it be otherwise! he was hundreds of miles away.

"Why don't you pick up the shuttlecock?" cried the Prince, in a sharp, impatient tone.—Witikind started, and ran forward in a random way; but he could not see it: tears were blinding his eyes.

"Not there, blockhead!" shouted the Prince "look behind the statue." There were two statues; Witikind went towards the wrong one.

"What a stupid *elf's-brat* you are!" cried the Hope of the Katzekopfs to the child of Countess Ermengarde, when he brought back the shuttlecock.

"What did you call me, Prince?" said Witikind with a look of surprise and anger.

"I called you what you are,—what all the world knows you to be—an elf's-brat: the good-for-nothing, impish son of some malevolent old Fairy, or some old hag of a witch!"

“How dare you call my mother evil names?” exclaimed Witikind, his eyes sparkling with anger, and his whole frame quivering with emotion. His patient endurance and gentleness seemed to have fled from him for ever; his entire character appeared altered on the instant. Anything personal he had long since proved that he could submit to, but the insult to his mother called forth in a moment the long-sleeping energies of his character. “How DARE you to abuse my mother?” he cried in a still louder tone. “How dare you utter such a base, cowardly lie?”

The Prince, wholly unprepared for such an outbreak, was too much terrified to answer. He saw that in Witikind’s gleaming eye which told him, boy as he was, that Countess Ermengarde’s son was not to be trifled with. The Hope of the Katzekopfs turned pale, quailed, and continued retreating towards the corner of the room nearest to his mother’s apartments.

“Unsay what you have said,” cried Witikind, following close upon him as he retreated step by step. “Unsay what you have said, and beg my pardon on your knees for this insult to my mother!”

Down sank the Prince on his knees in the corner of the room, while over him stood Witikind, pale with anger, his arm outstretched, and his fist clenched, repeating in tones hoarse from excitement, but waxing louder, and louder every moment, “Unsay what you have said, unsay what you have said!”

Such was the sight which presented itself to Queen Ninnilinda’s wondering eyes, when she issued from her boudoir to ascertain the cause of the noise which had alarmed her.

“Take him away! take him away!” cried the Prince, as soon as he saw his mother. “Take him away, or he will kill me!”

“Help! help!” shrieked the Queen, “or the Prince will be bewitched by this spiteful elf—this Fairy’s changeling.”

Her screams brought one of the yeomen of the guard into the room, who instantly seized Witikind.

“Hold him fast!” exclaimed her Majesty. “Get ropes and tie him hand and foot, and then flog him till he faints. He has been trying to bewitch my son!”

But the Queen’s commands were not destined to be obeyed. Even when the hubbub was at its height, a pause ensued, for the well-known whistle of the Fairy at the keyhole, loud and shrill above all other sounds, was heard. Forth from the aperture the Lady Abracadabra sprung, and with a single bound darted into the midst of the group. Her expression was that of the deepest indignation, and her robe seemed glowing with living fire. Throwing her wand down upon the nearest table, she caught hold of Witikind with one hand, and with the other sent the burly yeoman of the guard reeling to the extremity of the apartment, from whence he rushed forth in an agony of terror.

“And this is the way you keep your promises, is it, Queen Ninnilinda? This is the way you treat the poor child whom you engaged to bring up with the same kindness which you exhibit to yonder unhappy boy? Think not that I am not cognizant of all your proceedings! Think not that I have not witnessed the indignities and unkindnesses you have heaped upon him! Think not that I have not overheard your shameless words of ingratitude towards myself. Think not, above all, that I, his friend and protector, have kept Witikind an hour longer than was necessary for his future happiness, in this abode of folly and weakness: think not, that I, your own child’s sponsor, will allow him to be longer exposed to your mismanagement, and evil influence. I gave you a fair warning; and you must now take the consequences of having neglected it. You have had your trial. It is over. Now comes your punishment.”

The Queen threw herself on her knees.

“No:” replied the Lady Abracadabra; “it is too late now. The sooner you take leave of your son the better. But first, Prince Eigenwillig, come here to me.”

“I won’t!” cried the Prince doggedly.

“It will be the worse for you if you don’t,” said the Fairy.

“I won’t, I tell you!” repeated the Prince.

“Oh Eigenwillig,” cried his mother, “for mercy’s sake, do as you are bid; you know not what the consequences of disobedience may be!”

“Come, when I call you!” said Lady Abracadabra calmly, but fixing her eye upon him, “come here and beg Witikind’s pardon for all your abominable conduct towards him.”

Eigenwillig approached Witikind, who had already a smile of reconciliation on his face, expecting that the Prince would now gladly make up for his error. But the Hope of the Katzekopfs had no such intention. He advanced indeed close to Witikind, and stretched out one hand towards him, but with the other he snatched the Fairy’s wand off the table, and before she could prevent him, he struck Witikind over the head, and exclaimed, “Detestable creature! be thou turned into a timid hare! Mays’t thou be hunted to death by dogs and men!”

In another instant he was gazing in amazement at what he had done; for such was the portentous power of Abracadabra’s wand that, even in his hands, it failed not to work the required transformation. Witikind was crouching before them, a terrified trembling hare!

“Well!” cried the Fairy, “be it so. You have but anticipated my purpose, evil-minded child that you are!” She opened a door that led into the garden, and said,

“Hare! Hare! hurry away!
Neither halt nor rest,
And at Taubennest
You shall safely be, by the break of day.
No huntsman harm thee!
No hound alarm thee!
From evil I charm thee!
Bound forth! away! away!”

She paused a moment to see the little creature safe on its route, and then closed the door.

“And now,” said she to the author of the mischief, “I come to settle my account with thee. But first surrender my wand.”

“I’ll turn you into a toad first,” shouted the Prince, striking at her; but with indecision in his voice and manner; for, in spite of his recent triumph, he was utterly terrified at what he had done, and at what he was doing. He already had a misgiving that Fairies are not to be trifled with.

The Lady Abracadabra was, as may be supposed, in no humour to be turned into a toad. She, therefore, merely stretched out her hand, and caught hold of the extremity of the wand as the Hope of the Katzekopfs struck her with it.

“Give me the wand!” said she.

“I shan’t!” cried Eigenwillig.

“Give it me directly!”

“I won’t, won’t, WON’T!” screamed the naughty boy, clinging fast to one end of the wand, while the Fairy held the other.

“I shall make you glad enough to loose it before I have done with you.”

“Leave it alone, Eigenwillig,” cried his mother, clasping her hands.

“I won’t,” exclaimed the boy, “I won’t do anything you tell me. If you had not spoilt me, I shouldn’t be in all this trouble now! I *won’t* give it up, I say!”

“Then take the consequences!” said the Lady Abracadabra. As she said these words, she darted up into the air, still keeping hold of the wand, and lessening in size, as she rose, made her way towards the keyhole. By the time she had reached it, dragging the Prince after her, she had shrunk to the size which enabled her to go through it. But she paused for a moment before she disappeared, and, standing on the handle of the door, she cried out in a shrill, thin voice, such as might be expected to issue from one of her diminutive size:—

“Follow wand,

Follow hand."

Then she sprung through the keyhole, and in another instant her wand was seen following her.

"Drop it now, my darling!" exclaimed the Queen. "Let her take her wand, if she'll only take herself off, too!"

All this time the wand was passing through the keyhole. Less and less of it was left in sight. Now not more than an inch; now not half an inch; now the tips of the Prince's fingers seemed sucked up towards the keyhole.

"Drop it," cried the Queen, "why don't you drop it?"

"Oh, mother, mother!" screamed the struggling, breathless boy, in an agony of terror, "I can't, I CAN'T; it has grown to my fingers; it sticks to them! Oh dear! dear! what shall I do? my fingers are being dragged through the keyhole! they are being stretched into strings! Oh help me! help me!"

The Queen rushed to the door, before which her son was kicking and writhing. But his efforts to escape were fruitless. To her horror, the Queen beheld each joint tapering and elongating itself, till it could pass through the narrow aperture; now, the wrists had disappeared; now, in a twinkling, the elbows were out of sight; now the upper portion of the arm was gone.

"Surely," thought Ninnilinda, "she will never attempt to drag his head through." But she was wrong; the boy's hair was rapidly sucked through the keyhole, and the head began to lengthen itself out for the purpose of following.

This was too much for endurance. The Queen strove with all her power to open the door; but it was as fast as if it formed part of the original wall. Then, in her dismay, she seized hold of the body of the Prince, for the purpose of dragging him back; but a miserable, elongated drawl from the other side of the door conveyed the boy's entreaty that she would not hurt him.

“Never mind what he says, niece,” cried the voice of the Fairy. “Hold his legs tight, and in half a minute I shall have finished my work, and wound him up!”

The Queen was so transfixed with dismay, that she stood motionless, watching the receding body of the Prince, till the soles of his feet caught her despairing eyes.

“There! ‘tis done now,” cried the Lady Abracadabra. “He makes a very compact ball, and will travel well!”

The Queen, in her despair, now rushed to the door leading into the flower-garden; but she was too late.

The Fairy had reached the extremity of the terrace, kicking before her something that seemed like a ball of rope; but which ball was, in fact, the convoluted form of Prince Eigenwillig.

In another moment, the lady Abracadabra and the Hope of the Katzekopfs had bounded over the parapet, and were lost to view; and Queen Ninnilinda fell, for the first time in her life, into a real swoon.

CHAPTER V.

The Heirs on their Travels.

"O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset with thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Though after it but few inquires.

"And see ye not that braid, braid road,
That lies across that lily leven?
That is the path of wickedness,
Though some call it the road to heaven.

"And see ye not that bonny road,
That winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elf-land,
Where thou and I this night maun gae."

Thomas the Rhymer.

CHAPTER V.

How is it that the faithful hound succeeds in finding his way back to his master's house, from a distance of many miles, and through a country which he has never been permitted to see? How is it that the carrier-

pigeon, when loosed from the bag in which it has been confined, mounts up into the air, makes one brief circuit, and then pursues his way, through an unknown region, in a straight line homeward? Mysteries these, which the more we attempt to investigate them, the more do they bewilder us, and, in the attempt to elucidate which, the learned and the ignorant are alike at fault.

However, our daily experience of the fact that such things are, at once removes any antecedent improbability which might otherwise suggest itself to the sceptical, when it is mentioned that Witikind, though transformed into a hare, found little difficulty in discovering his route to Taubennest. Had he been even a hare only, his instinct would probably have guided him in the right direction; but being a sharp-witted boy, as well as a hare, there seems little cause for wonder in the matter. The circumstance most worthy of remark is, that he should have performed his journey of many hundred miles in the course of a single night. The spells of the Lady Abracadabra had secured him from the perils of huntsmen and hounds; but how had she bestowed upon him such marvellous speed of foot? The sun was setting, as we know, when the son of Count Rudolf received his unexpected dismissal from the Court of King Katzekopf: ere the moon had risen, the towers and cupolas of the city scarce broke the line of the distant horizon: by midnight, a distance which, to the ordinary traveller, would have been equivalent to a six-days' journey, had been mastered, and when the chilliness of the first grey dawn refreshed the heated frame of the breathless quadruped, the giant forms of his own loved mountains were looming dim and indistinct in the shadowy distance. What was it that gave to Witikind the speed of the winged wind? Was it solely the boon of his patroness? or was it not the magic of deep affection,—of filial and fraternal love, and the spells of *home*—which infused into his tender frame a vigour with which even the supernatural gifts of Fairy-land would have been unable to inspire him?

"Over the mountains,
  And over the waves,
Under the fountains,

And under the graves;
Over floods that are deepest,
Which Neptune obey;
Over rocks that are steepest,
Love will find out the way.

"Where there is no place
For the glow-worm to lie;
Where there is no space
For receipt of a fly;
Where the midge dares not venture,
Lest herself fast she lay;
If Love come, he will enter,
And soon find out his way."

And thus it was that Love urged Witikind on his way, and inspired him to task to the uttermost the extraordinary powers with which he had been endowed. No loiterer, nor lingerer was he; "he stay'd not for brake, and he stopp'd not for stone," till the turrets of his happy home at Taubennest caught his eyes, glittering in the brightness of the morning sun.

But Taubennest, whatever it might be in his imagination, had scarce deserved the name of *happy* Taubennest, since the day he quitted it. It was not that his sisters had not had many a pleasant walk, and played at many a merry game together, during his absence. It was not that no smiles had ever lightened his mother's brow of care. Things had gone on much in their usual course; a year (for it was no more) of separation had not wrought many obvious changes, save that Count Rudolf's health was declining; disappointed hopes, and ungratified ambition are worse diseases than fever or consumption, and they were wearing his life away. Countess Ermengarde had spent many days in calm content, and in active usefulness, and these things bring their reward of peace with them. The little girls had not lost the gaiety of disposition which is

natural to their years, and their minds were in a process of training, which is sure to produce a happy temper. So Taubennest seemed to the friends of the family the same bright joyous scene as ever.

And yet they who watched closely, would see a tear falling at times, from the mother's eye, or mark that now and then an involuntary sigh would escape from her. And they who looked for it might observe, that ever and anon some game was laid aside by the children, because *two* felt that they could find no pleasure in it, when the *third*, who had been used to join in it, was absent. And walks were chosen, because they had been favourites with some one who was no longer of the party. And every thing that awakened an association of this description was most dearly prized. Surely they did not err who deemed that at such seasons Witikind was foremost in his mother's and his sisters' thoughts.

"I wonder," said Veronica to Ediltrudis, "whether we shall find the rosebud blown this morning. Mamma said she thought it would not be out for three days. What a pity he planted such a late-flowering rose in his garden. It would have been such a nice present for Mamma on his birthday."

"Dear Witikind!" exclaimed Ediltrudis, "how few besides himself would ever have thought of such a delicate attention to Mamma, as his choice of that tree involved! 'What kind of rose shall we plant against the trellis which surrounds your garden?' asked the gardener. 'Shall it be the blush-moss from Candahar? it is the choicest rose grown; but I have a promise of one for you, if you wish it.' 'No, Florian, that will not suit me, unless it be the latest, as well as the choicest rose that grows. I do not care for a rose that I can gather when roses are in plenty; you must find one for me that will be in flower when all others are gone. You know how the Countess loves flowers. I want to be able to provide her with a nosegay, when nobody else can do so.'"

"Ah!" replied Veronica, "that was just like Witikind. A more affectionate heart than his never beat. How I hope we shall find one of his buds in flower! It is quite too soon to expect it; but that was a chance cluster

which we observed yesterday, and, perhaps, one of the buds may be far enough advanced by this time. If it be open ever so little, I would gather it for Mamma."

"How I wish some good Fairy would touch the buds with her wand, and provide us each with a full-blown rose; one for Mamma; one for you; and one for me."

"Nay," said Veronica, "I shall be satisfied if only a few petals of that single bud be open. I shall hail it as a good omen that we shall have Witikind himself among us before the year is over."

"What a fanciful notion!" answered Ediltrudis, laughing. "There is no end to your romantic imaginations. Now, I confess that, for my part, I shall be quite surprised if I find that——why look here!" she suddenly exclaimed, as, being a little in advance of her sister, she caught the first glimpse of the rose-tree. "Look here, Veronica; make haste, make haste, a Fairy must have been here."

"How very extraordinary!" cried the child, running up. "Four full-blown roses on this cluster! And yet, when we were here yesterday, there was but one bud at all advanced, and the others were tiny, tiny things, which I thought would not be in bloom for months to come! You may say what you will, Ediltrudis, but this *must* be a good omen. There is not only a rose for Mamma, and for each of us, but one for Papa likewise."

"You forget that Papa does not care for flowers."

"Ah, poor Papa, the smell is too strong for his head now; but, perhaps, he would not dislike a rose if he knew it was gathered from Witikind's tree."

Ediltrudis shook her head.

"But what if it should be for Witikind himself?" cried Veronica with eagerness, as so pleasant a thought struck her. "Depend upon it, this is a token that Witikind will be here before long, to gather his own roses!"

"I hope you don't mean to leave these ungathered till he comes. Why, if you don't cut them now, they will shed their leaves with the noon-day heat. You are not hesitating about gathering them, surely, Veronica?"

“Why I don’t know what to think,” replied Veronica doubtfully. “Suppose we wait till we come in from our walk.”

“Nonsense!” said Ediltrudis; “lend me your knife, and let us carry them in to Mamma at once.”

“Very well,” answered Veronica; “only let me tie up this clove-gilliflower first. How sadly,” she continued, “its leaves have been eaten. I wish we could keep those tiresome hares out.”

“It won’t be easy to do that while they are as bold as they are at present. See there! there is one coming now to the bed, though we are standing here. I wonder what people mean by talking of timid hares. I am sure here they are as bold as lions. Sh! sh! get away with you!” cried Ediltrudis, clapping her hands, and making a noise which was likely to have put any ordinary hare to flight.

But the little animal made no attempt to retrace his steps.

“Sh! sh!” cried Ediltrudis once more; and taking up a pebble, made as though she was about to throw it.

“Nay,” said Veronica, “do not hurt it. See how weary the poor creature looks; how faint and breathless; and how soiled is its fur! It has been hunted, and has fled here for succour. Come here, poor thing. I will protect you!”

The animal approached Veronica, and crouched at her feet. “Get some water, Ediltrudis! it is going to die; I am sure it is; its eyes look so dim and glassy.”

Ediltrudis ran to a fountain close at hand, and brought some water in a shell which lay at its side. Veronica stooped down to place the water within reach of the exhausted animal, and, as she did so, she was about to pat it gently; but no sooner did her hand light upon its head, than a shock like that from an electric battery, ran through her frame, and made her start violently. Before she could recover herself, the hare had disappeared, and Witikind was in his sisters’ arms.

For a time, the children were too much overwhelmed with terror and amazement, to be able to speak. Veronica would have fainted, but for the timely supply of water which was close at hand; and even when she came to herself, she could not persuade herself that she was not dreaming. But there was something too hearty in the embraces of Witikind, and his kisses were altogether too vehement to have come from Dreamland. Briefly, but clearly, he made them acquainted with the events which had befallen him, and when, by degrees, they began to comprehend the reality of what they saw, he sent them into the castle, to prepare the Countess for his arrival.

Poor children! it was an arduous task. The excess of their joy made them as timid and afraid to speak, as excess of sorrow might have done. However, the roses helped them, and, as it were, prepared the mother's mind for some unexpected intelligence of her boy; for, in those days, people thought more about the unseen world, and the interference of spiritual beings in men's affairs, than they do now. And so, at length, the Countess Ermengarde, and the other inhabitants of Taubennest, were brought to understand that Witikind was once more among them.

Oh! how vain it were to attempt to describe the scene which then ensued!—

> "Eager steps the threshold pressing;
> Open'd arms in haste advancing;
> Joyful looks through blind tears glancing;
> The gladsome bounding of his aged hound,
> Say he in truth is here! our long, long lost is found."

The reader's imagination must delineate to him the ecstatic joy of that meeting; how embrace followed embrace, and a thousand questions were put to him, ere Witikind had time to answer ten: how Count Rudolf, having first forgotten his ambitious schemes, in the joy of seeing his son, soon began to express his belief that the Lady Abracadabra had mismanaged things shockingly; that she was a Fairy without either talent or discrimination; that she ought not to have allowed the boy to quit the palace till she had secured a handsome pension for him; and

that it was quite inexcusable of her to allow a child of Witikind's high rank to return home in the form of a hare, and to be liable to be barked at by every village cur; how Witikind poured forth his regrets that he had ever been selfish enough to desire to leave his home; how ardently he hoped that all he had gone through had cured him of some of his worst faults; how useful a lesson he had been taught; how truly he appreciated the blessing of a home; and how earnestly he trusted that his future life would be spent in doing good to his neighbours and dependants at Taubennest.

"I have seen enough," said he, "young as I am, to cure me of ambition. I would rather pass my days in retirement here, striving to benefit those among whom I dwell, and to repay, so far as I can, my dear parents' care of me, than have the highest place and the highest honours, in the greatest kingdom in the universe."

"Wait a few years, and we shall see!" said Count Rudolf.

"May Heaven strengthen you to keep to such a determination, my dearest Witikind," exclaimed the Countess Ermengarde. "The Fairy has proved herself a true friend to us, by giving you an opportunity of learning, by your own experience, to estimate, at their proper value, those things which are so commonly looked on as advantages, and which the world so earnestly covets. How I long to express my thanks to our kind patroness! How earnestly I hope she will continue to help you with her counsels and advice!"

"Mother," replied the boy, "I am as grateful to her as you could wish me to be; but so long as I can be guided by *you*, I will seek no other counsellor!"

As he said this, he threw himself into his mother's arms, and mingled his kisses with her tears of affection and joy.

And thus engaged we must leave them for the present.

Bump, bump, bump! never was ball so elastic and springy. Caoutchouc was as lazy and lumpish as lead itself when compared with it! Bump, bump, bump! and a bound of twenty feet between each bump. Down to the ground as light as a feather, and then up in the air again, ever so high, almost before you could say it had touched the earth. A single kick from the Lady Abracadabra, and away it went, down the broad gravel terrace, as if it took pleasure in its feats!

Poor Prince Eigenwillig: it was lucky for you that that same process of drawing you through the keyhole, which, so to speak, had elongated you into a coil of living catgut, had also transformed your bones into gristle. Had there been any brittle material left in your fabric, it must have been fractured; but you were more mercifully dealt with than, considering your conduct to little Witikind, you deserved. The Fairy had no malevolent intentions towards you, though she did not choose that your audacious misbehaviour should go unpunished. She made a foot-ball of you, and kicked you before her, which was very much the kind of treatment you had bestowed upon all your attendants; but she had no wish to do you a mischief in life or limb; she only desired to administer some wholesome discipline.

Down the broad terrace bounded the involuntary traveller, and over the parapet in which it terminated. Fifty feet and more did the contorted Hope of the Katzekopfs traverse in the air before a bed of nettles received him. Over and over did he turn, to escape the stinging torment, but in vain: even the most elastic of balls cannot raise itself out of the bottom of a ditch.

Another kick from the Fairy was necessary; and as she kicked him, she exclaimed, “This is your punishment for having endeavoured to turn me into a toad: you may thank your lucky stars, and my good-nature, that this ditch is filled with nothing worse than nettles: it would have served you right had it been full of vipers.”

The Prince was smarting all over, so, perhaps, he did not feel as grateful as the Lady Abracadabra seemed to expect. But however that might be, there was no time for talking. Up the bank he flew, and pursued his painful way, “through bush, and through briar,” now over a wide expanse of gorse, now over thistly wastes, till there was not a quarter of an inch on the whole surface of the ball which had not received its share of castigation.

“Stop!” cried the Lady Abracadabra at length; and the Prince was but too glad to obey. “Come hither!” she continued. The Prince rolled towards her. As soon as he was within reach, she slipped off her girdle, and passing it through two or three of the living coils, lifted the ball from the ground, and threw it over her shoulder with a jerk, much in the same manner that a porter raises a sack on his back. Then she whistled three times; her cockatrice appeared at the sound; she sprung on her embroidered saddle,—her burden still suspended from her shoulder:—she gave the word; the monster spread forth his wings, and rose in the air; and in a few seconds the Hope of the Katzekopfs was far away from the scene of his errors, and from the influence of those whose weak indulgence had contributed to confirm him in them.

Darkness was now coming on apace, and the Prince was too much entangled in his own circumvolutions to be able to see very accurately whither he was wending, even had he known the country; but he was conscious that he was mounting higher and higher, and that he was being borne along with such increasing rapidity, that he thought within himself that they would certainly reach the world’s end by sunrise. On, and on, and on. The moon rose and set. The night air grew colder and colder: the clouds among which they travelled seemed denser and denser. Shivering at once and smarting; exhausted and hungry; terrified and indignant, the unhappy son of Queen Ninnilinda at length sunk into a state of apathy or unconsciousness.

How far, therefore, or in what direction he had been conveyed he knew not, but when he came to himself, morning had dawned, and he was aware that the Fairy was hovering at no great distance above the summit

of a grassy hill, in the midst of a wooded country.

“Stop!” cried the Lady Abracadabra to her steed. The cockatrice poised in mid air. “Now, Eigenwillig,” said she, “you are going into Fairy-land. Take care how you behave there, for my countrymen are not to be trifled with.”

As she spoke she slipped one end of her girdle, and at the same moment the Prince became conscious that he was falling as rapidly as he had risen. But this was not all, for still, as he fell, he was conscious that he was no longer a compact ball, but that he was unrolling—yard after yard—with the greatest velocity; and not only so, but that his elongated form was shrinking back again to its original dimensions.

No sooner was he aware of this than a fresh terror seized him. “I am being restored to my natural shape,” thought he, “only to be dashed to pieces when I reach the summit of the hill beneath me.”

In a few moments he touched the earth; but instead of receiving a concussion which shattered him to atoms, he fell as lightly on the summit of the grassy knoll, as if a featherbed had been placed there to receive him; and, stranger still, the green turf immediately parting asunder beneath him, he continued to fall through a chasm which opened below him, and closed above him, till suddenly he found himself once more emerging into daylight, and entering into a country altogether new to him, in the bowels of the earth.

A single glance sufficed to show that he was in Fairy-land; for where else grow trees with fruits that gleam like precious stones? where else is the whole surface of the country covered with flowers of the most dazzling hues, and most delicious fragrance? where else is every dwelling a palace, and every palace built of gold and silver, and mother-o’-pearl? and of what but Fairies could those troops of delicate, ethereal forms consist, some of which were chasing each other in mid air, and some, with robes as green as the grass upon which they scarce deigned to tread, were hurrying hither and thither to discharge the various tasks assigned them by their sovereign?

Prince Eigenwillig had scarcely reached the ground before he was surrounded by a crowd of them, while, in a moment, scores more were swarming over him in the air.

“Ho! ho! who are you? How came you here?” cried a little sprite, who, by his crabbed face, and the bullrush which he carried in his hand like a mace, was probably the holder of some such office among the elves, as, with us mortals, is occupied by the parish beadle. “Ho! ho!” said he, poking the Prince with his staff of office. “Who are you? How came you here?”

“The Lady Abracadabra, whom perhaps you know, dropped me just now from the clouds,” replied the Prince.

“Ha! ha! ha!” shouted the whole troop laughing immoderately, “what a comical lady she is! Why, how come you with such fine clothes? Who are you?”

“I am the Prince Eigenwillig, eldest son of King Katzekopf,” replied the boy, throwing as much dignity into his manner as possible, for he was altogether unaccustomed to such interrogations, and had no idea of not being treated with profound respect.

“Ha! ha! ha!” laughed the elves louder than ever. “What a *very* comical fancy! Why this is the spoilt boy, that gave himself such airs, and was so selfish that nobody could endure him! What a strange choice to fix on *him* of all people! To think of sending us a prince for our new apprentice! Well, Prince, what can you do?” asked he of the bullrush.

“*Do!*” said the Prince. “I don’t know what you mean. But I wish, gentlemen, you would let me have something to eat, for I am very hungry.”

“Ha! ha! ha! how very ridiculous, the apprentice wants something to eat! I tell you what, my young friend, you must take care what you are about, or you’ll make some of us laugh till we go into fits!”

“I don’t see anything laughable in asking for food when one’s hungry!” observed the Prince rather sulkily.

“No, no;” answered the first speaker as soon as he recovered breath, “the oddity consisted in the notion that you could get it by asking for it, and without doing anything to earn it. Nothing for nothing, is the rule here.”

“Well, I’ll pay for it honestly,—I’ll give you money for it,” said the Hope of the Katzekopfs.

“Money! what is money?” inquired a very young Fairy.

The man in authority laughed louder than ever. “Little bits of the stones we build our houses of, my child,” said he. “No, Prince, you must offer us something more to our taste than money, before we can find you provisions. Money is of no use here: we often mend the roads with it.”

“Then what is it you require of me?” asked the Prince, in a perturbed and astonished tone.

“Why you must work, work, work, like a dutiful apprentice, and then, as often as it is proper, you shall have something to eat.”

“Who am I to work for? what work am I expected to do?” inquired the scion of royalty.

“Oh you’re to work for me!” answered a shrill voice.

“And for me.” “And me.” “And me,” added a hundred more.

“Why, of course, you are to work for all of us,” observed the bearer of the bullrush gravely, “how could you be our apprentice else?”

“My chimneys want sweeping,” cried one.

“My garden wants digging,” said another.

“My house wants scouring,” observed a third.

“My ditches want cleaning,” remarked a fourth.

“I’m sure I shan’t clean ditches, or sweep chimneys for anybody,” said the Prince, in a most resolute tone.

“Ha! ha! ha! nobody asked you!” shouted the sprites, and away they all swept like a flight of starlings, making the air ring with their shrill laughter, while some of them sang,—

"Our apprentice has got an obstinate fit;
Hunger and thirst shall cure him of it.
He shall not eat
A morsel of meat,
He need not think
A drop to drink,
Till he works and earns it every bit!"

The Prince was now left alone. Not a Fairy remained in sight. So long as there was a single spectator, the boy's pride enabled him to seem bold and unyielding; but when he was sure that no eye was upon him, overcome with weariness and vexation, he threw himself down upon the ground and sobbed as though his heart would break.

Poor child, he was to be pitied! There he was, without a friend—so far as he knew—near him; unable any longer to command attention on the score of his exalted rank; conscious within himself that all his misfortunes were the consequences of his own errors; and yet, at present, so rooted in his bad habits, that he was rather disposed to punish himself to any amount, than do anything which seemed to imply a disposition to yield and submit.

Long and sore he wept; but, in the end, hunger and thirst prevailed, and induced him to dry his tears, and to endeavour to obtain for himself that sustenance which the inhospitable Fairies would not provide him withal.

And he did not long hesitate as to the quarter whence he would seek refreshment. Those trees, laden with glittering fruits, had caught his eye the moment he entered Fairy-land, and he now resolved to help himself. To be sure the trees were high, and he was unused to climbing, but he did not feel much apprehension of not being able to get as much fruit as he needed; but he soon found greater difficulties than he expected. The first tree which he attempted to ascend had such an unctuous, slippery bark, that he only mounted a few yards, before he involuntarily slid to the ground. And this happened again and again. The next tree he approached had the most luscious-looking pears imaginable, hanging quite within his reach; but when he had advanced within a few yards of

it, he beheld a tiger, glaring at him with blood-shot eyes, from within the tangled thicket. A third tree offered him its fruits, but the rind was so hard that his teeth could not penetrate it: in a fourth, the products, though beautiful to the eye, seemed to the taste like liquid fire;—his lips scarce touched them before they were blistered.

So he soon gave up the fruit trees in despair, and hastened towards a lake, which seemed at an inconsiderable distance, in order to satisfy his thirst with its sparkling waters. But soon he discovered that, as he advanced, the lake retreated, and that a shadowy vapour was mocking his aching sight.

Faint and weary he threw himself upon the ground once more and wept. But his tears this time were not those of offended pride, but of real suffering and distress.

"Alas!" thought he to himself, "how much I wish that I had considered more about the sufferings of those beneath me,—the poor, and sick, and hungry, and thirsty in my father's kingdom! If I die here of hunger and thirst, nobody will miss me; nobody will mourn for me! Even Nurse Yellowlily, and the governesses, will be glad to find that they are not to see me any more; and no wonder! for I used to plague them shamefully."

Thus did self-reproach mingle with the bodily discomforts of Prince Eigenwillig. Ah! if those whom he had most wearied and irritated with his naughty tricks, could have seen him now, they would have pitied and soothed him! And what a lesson would it have been for silly Queen Ninnilinda, could she have witnessed the end of her foolish indulgences!

It was a happy thing for the Hope of the Katzekopfs, that he *had* no one to pity and soothe him. The bitterer his pains now, the more hope that he would escape them hereafter. The more searching and nauseous the medicine, the more hope that he would be careful not to render it necessary again, the more prospect that it would work an entire reform in his constitution. The experience of the last twelve hours was doing more for Prince Eigenwillig, than could have been acquired in as many years at his father's court. The course of self-examination upon which

the usage he had received in Fairy-land had caused him to enter was of more real value to him than all the jewels in his future crown. The sharp and trying process by which he was now in progress of being taught the defects of his character, was a more certain evidence of the good-will of his Fairy-godmother towards him, than all the precious gifts which she had heaped upon him, on the day when she named him Eigenwillig.

There is no night in Fairy-land; for elves have no need of that rest and sleep which are indispensable to more gross and corporeal forms; so the Prince knew not, save by the increase of his hunger and thirst, that another day (as we mortals count time,) was drawing to its close. Hour after hour he had lain upon the grass, alternately weeping and meditating, and still uncertain what to do. Once or twice he felt disposed to remain in his obstinacy. “I’m not going to be a slave,” thought he, “and nobody shall compel me to work for them.” But then, after a while, he reflected that there was no compulsion in the case. So, when he got very hungry indeed, he determined he would apply to the first Fairy he saw, for some job of work which should be worth a good meal to him. No sooner had he made this resolution, than he felt rather more comfortable in his mind, than when he was struggling with his self-will; but his appetite was by no means relieved. “I shall see a Fairy, no doubt, very soon,” said he. But he waited a long time, and not one appeared in sight. “I wish I could see a Fairy!” he cried, after a while. “What a terrible scrape I shall be in, if they have left this part of the country! Perhaps I had better get up and walk onward!”

Up he got: but he was so faint and exhausted, he was obliged to rest at the end of half-a-mile. “Alas! alas! how rash was I to offend them: how wrong to give way to my pride and bad temper! But what a terrible punishment they are inflicting! They have certainly left me to starve!” And the Prince buried his face in his knees, and wept once more. He had not sat long, when he heard a rustling in the air above him, and, looking up, he beheld, within a few yards of him, two Fairies, bearing between them a basket laden with most delicious-looking grapes.

“Gentlemen,” said the Prince, “can you set me to work? I should be very glad to earn a meal.”

“Who are you?” asked the first.

“Oh,” replied the second, “he’s our new apprentice; the self-willed Prince, who expected to live among us in idleness.”

“No, my little master,” said the first, addressing himself to the Prince, “I’ve no work for you. You should have asked me when I was going to the vineyard, not when I was coming from it. Let me find you here twelve hours hence, and I dare say we can find you something to do.”

“But I shall be dead in twelve hours; I am so faint for want of food now, I can hardly walk.”

“I am sorry for that,” observed the second Fairy. “What a pity you didn’t sweep the chimneys, and clean the ditches, when you had the offer. But it can’t be helped. Nothing for nothing is the rule here. Farewell, Prince Wilful. Come, Tomalin, forward with our burden.”

“Nay, nay,” replied Tomalin, who was the more amiable-looking of the two; “if it be as he says, and if he be willing to work, we may as well do somewhat for him. Maybe he is inclining to mend his ways.”

“You are the ruin of our apprentices with your good-nature,” replied Claribel, “but I suppose it must be as you wish. Suppose we give him the grapes to carry. Come Prince-Apprentice, here’s work for you, if you want it. Carry our load for us over the hill yonder, and you shall have some of the fruit for your pains.”

The Hope of the Katzekopfs came forward with alacrity: at least, with all the alacrity in his power.

“Take care you don’t drop any!” said Tomalin, helping him to throw the basket over his shoulder. “Now, then, away with you!”

The Prince bent under his burden with hearty good-will. The elves had seemed to bear it through the air without the slightest difficulty, and he anticipated that, after all, he had got an easy task. But he was wofully

disappointed. The grapes might have been bullets, to judge from their weight. The basket, instead of resting easily on his shoulder, nearly dragged him backwards. He was tempted to relinquish his task almost at the outset. Fortunately, however, his natural resoluteness of character, which so often had assumed the shape of obstinacy, now displayed itself in a more praiseworthy form; he determined to prove his sincerity, by doing his best.

And he was rewarded. For, after reeling and staggering a few steps, the burden at his back seemed somewhat lighter. At first the relief was almost imperceptible, but the further he advanced, the more his load was lessened, so that, at the end of two or three hundred yards, he found he was getting on with tolerable ease.

He ventured to remark the change to his companions. They only smiled, and said, "It is ever so when folks are in earnest." It was a long tug up the hill, and the Prince was a good deal out of breath; but he did not lose heart, and, before long, had arrived at a mansion built of mother-o'-pearl, and adorned with cupolas and domes of silver, according to the usual form of Fairy architecture. Here, still bearing his burden on his back, he passed through a tennis-court of ivory, thence through a hall of blue sapphire, down a long corridor of agate, into a kitchen of crystal, with doors of nutmeg, and pillars of green ginger. Here he was bidden to set down his load, and was allowed to refresh himself with the grapes.

"You have worked hard and shown hearty good-will," said Claribel, "so you may eat as many grapes as you like, while we take our own repast." And a strange repast it seemed. If the Prince had not been too much occupied with the grapes, he might have ventured to ask its nature, and perhaps would have received some such reply as the following:—

"A roasted ant that's nicely done,
By one small atom of the sun;
These are flies' eggs, in moonshine poach'd;
This a flea's thigh, in collops scotched—
'Twas hunted yesterday i' the park,
And like t'have 'scaped us in the dark.

This is a dish entirely new—
Butterflies' brains, dissolved in dew;
These lovers' vows, these courtiers' hopes,
Things to be eat by microscopes;
These sucking-mites, a glow-worm's heart,
This a delicious rainbow tart."[2]

2. King's Works, Edit. 1776, vol. III., p. 112.

"I begin to have hopes of our apprentice," observed Tomalin, when he had finished his supper. "There's plenty of work for him in the meadow yonder. I want to have all the worm-casts stopped. You had better go and set about it, my little master."

Prince Eigenwillig coloured, and, for a moment, he had a struggle with himself not to say that as he had now got a meal, he did not intend to do any more work; but experience had taught him wisdom; so he expressed his willingness to do what he was bidden, only hinting that he should be better up to his work, if he could be allowed a few hours' sleep.

"Oh, true," said Claribel, "I forgot that;" Then he showed the Hope of the Katzekopfs a soft bed of moss, and bade the weary child rest himself.

Prince Eigenwillig—king's son as he was—had never eaten so delicious a meal as those few bunches of grapes, earned with the sweat of his brow, and never had he slept so sound between sheets of the finest cambric, as now on that mossy couch.

And better still, when he woke, he woke with a light heart—light, though he was far from home, and forced to work for his bread, as the Fairy's apprentice. From the moment in which he made up his mind to take his trial cheerfully, and do what he was bidden, the whole prospect seemed to brighten before him.

And the Fairies, who, at first, appeared cross, and spiteful, and capricious towards him, by degrees softened in their manner. The feeling that he was at every body's call, and that he had more masters to please than he could count, was certainly very disheartening at the outset; but in a few days he got reconciled to it. And then, moreover, he had the

satisfaction of finding that the kind of labour to which he was put was changed. At first, and while the Fairies thought him disposed to be obstinate and self-willed, and inclined to rebel, they set him to all the dirtiest and hardest tasks they could think of; but, as they observed him growing more willing and good-humoured, they made more of a companion of him than a servant, and at length he became such a favourite, that he was allowed to join in their sports.

Hitherto he had seen nothing of the Lady Abracadabra; but when the Prince had thus gained the regard of her countrymen, she suddenly appeared among them, and inquired how their apprentice had conducted himself.

All were open mouthed in his praise. Even the beadle with the bullrush, had a word to say in his favour, and Claribel declared that he thought the Lady Abracadabra's object was accomplished, and her godchild might be allowed to revisit his family.

But the Lady Abracadabra, though smiling kindly on him, shook her head. "Alas," said she, "you know not how much he has to unlearn every way, and how great are the trials to which he would still be exposed at home. But so far, so good. He has learned to obey orders. We must now see whether he has learned to govern *himself*."

CHAPTER VI.

Experiments on the Heir.

Portia.——"Now make your choice.

Morocco. "The first of gold, who this inscription bears:
'Who chuseth me, shall gain what many men desire.'
The second silver, which this promise carries:
'Who chuseth me, shall get as much as he deserves.'
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt:
'Who chuseth me, must give and hazard all he hath.'
How shall I know if I do chuse the right?"

Shakespeare.

CHAPTER VI.

The Hope of the Katzekopfs was alone once more: the Lady Abracadabra had brought her countrymen another apprentice, in his place, and Prince Eigenwillig's term of servitude was ended. But, as has been already intimated, this measure was only the prelude to a further trial; for his Fairy-sponsor had no intention of allowing him to quit Fairy-land, till

his mind had been so far disciplined as to give every reasonable hope that in spite of the temptations to which he was likely to be exposed at home, he would turn out a good man and a good king.

The Prince was once more alone; for the Lady Abracadabra had suddenly transported him to a district in Fairy-land, which he had not hitherto seen; but instead of being, as on a former occasion, an ill-tempered, unhappy, weary, hungry boy, he was there with a light heart, expecting companions whom his godmother promised should meet him, and anticipating no small pleasure, from being allowed to roam at will through the realm of the Fairies.

The part of the country in which he found himself was even more beautiful than that with which he had been made acquainted at first. The flowers were of a more dazzling brilliancy, and more perfect fragrance. The fruits upon the trees were even more tempting in their appearance. The waters sparkled like diamonds, and the mingled forms of hill and valley arranged themselves into the most exquisite landscape imaginable.

While the Prince stood gazing on the scene, listening to the enchanting songs of the birds, and watching the flight of butterflies, each more delicate in form and colouring than the other, he observed a figure approaching him out of a neighbouring thicket. The form was that of an aged man, with white hair, and white beard, and a long grey robe reaching down to his feet. He was very pale, and very thin, and his shoulders were rather bent. He was not different in height and size, from the generality of the inhabitants of Fairy-land; and so the Prince supposed, at first sight, that, in spite of the stranger's unusual dress, he was one of the ordinary inhabitants of that country. And so, perhaps, he might have been. But there was a gravity in his manner, and calm severity in his eye, which was unlike other Fairies, whose countenances have generally a merry, sly, or mischievous expression.

The Prince continued to gaze on him, and as he gazed, their eyes met. Immediately, and without being able to account for the feeling, the boy felt himself fascinated. The old man's expression was stern and even repulsive. Under ordinary circumstances, the Prince would have said to himself, "What an odd, disagreeable face is that!" would have turned away from it, and never thought of it again. But now the face rivetted him, and as he looked on it, its severity seemed to relax, and the mouth had something of inexpressible sweetness in it.

"Good-morrow to you, my Prince," said the old man, "I have been long looking for you, and am glad to have found you at last."

There was nothing peculiarly attractive in his voice, which, indeed, to Eigenwillig's ears, sounded rather harsh and grating; but the old man's manner was very kind and winning, though his words surprised the Prince not a little.

"I thank you, good father," said he; "but how is it possible that you should have been long looking for me? Are you a friend of King Katzekopf, or of Queen Ninnilinda?"

"No, my son. I knew them once for a short time; but they have long since forgotten my very existence."

"Then who are you, aged man?"

"Never mind who I am. I am not wont to tell my name at first. I have found that it raises a prejudice against me. But you may be satisfied of my good-will towards you, since it was by the Lady Abracadabra's direction that I came to seek you here. I am ready to be your companion, if you are willing to accept my services."

"I fear I should weary you out in a few hours," replied the Prince, "you forget that I have the active limbs of youth, and that you, my father, guide your steps with a staff."

"Nay," answered the old man, "the fear is on the other side. I am more like to weary you, than you to weary me."

"Have you ever travelled with any as young as I am?"

“I have set out upon pilgrimage with multitudes such as you are,” answered the stranger with a sigh, “and some,” he added, “have I accompanied to their journey’s end. And dearly have they loved me.”

“I think I should love you, too, and like you for a companion,” said the Prince, “for though you look severe, and speak gravely, your manner bespeaks kind intentions.”

“Stay,” said the old man, “perhaps you choose me because no more acceptable guide appears at hand. The Lady Abracadabra did not mean to restrict you in your choice. If I mistake not, we have another companion hard at hand. Lo you there!”

The Prince following the direction of the old man’s eyes, turned himself a little to the left, and there, close by his side, he perceived a tiny sprite, scarce a span high, who was eyeing the old man with a most malevolent and insulting expression of countenance.

The Prince gazed at him in wonder; he had never seen a creature so small, wearing the human form. “Surely!” he remarked to his aged companion, “this must be the most diminutive of elves.”

“All persons think him so,” replied the old man, “when first they see him; indeed, many declare that, except in a strong light, and after a good deal of exertion, they are unable to see him at all. And what is very remarkable, he never appears alike to two persons at the same time. For instance, I will be bold to say that he looks quite different in your eyes and mine at this very moment. I think him a very hideous little ape.”

“An ape!” exclaimed the Prince, “how you surprise me! To me he seems to have the features of a good-looking boy.”

The old man gave a glance of peculiar meaning at the Prince, and smiling, said, “Did you ever see any boy like him?”

“No!” answered the Hope of the Katzekopfs.

“There is nothing remarkable in that,” replied the grey-robed stranger, with the same smile, and quiet tone, “some persons are more quick at finding resemblances than others. What think you of his dress?”

“Oh,” said the Prince, “I see nothing to find fault with in that; it is just like *my own*.”

The old man smiled once more.

Meanwhile the little Sprite was fidgetting about uneasily, endeavouring to attract attention, as it should seem, and provoked at not finding his efforts more successful.

“Good day to you, my fair and gracious Prince,” it said at length, in tones which, to the Prince’s ear, sounded the softest and most agreeable he had ever heard; “may I venture to address your royal highness?”

“Wait a moment longer,” said the old man, waving his hand. The Sprite made a movement of impatience, which the Prince, involuntarily and unconsciously as it were, repeated. The old man saw it. “Bear with me, Sir, for a single instant. I was only going to say this to you. I am aware that the merry gentleman yonder is more likely to find favour in your eyes than I am. I can only engage that I will be a safe and faithful friend to you, and that I ever keep the promises which I make. If *he* makes large professions to you, perhaps you will do well to consider his probable ability to fulfil them. I will now leave you to make your decision. I will not interrupt your colloquy, nor attempt to bias your judgment. You have heard me without interruption. You will now have an opportunity of hearing him. It may be that I already anticipate your decision; but of that I say nothing at present. If, hereafter, you find yourself in trouble or difficulty, and have need of me, I shall not be so far off as not to be within call. Clap your hands thrice, and I will speedily be at your side.”

There were some things in this speech which the Prince did not like, and others which he did not understand. But he felt that, at any rate, the old man’s intentions towards him were kind, and, therefore, he was about to express his thanks; but, as he turned to do so, the aged stranger had vanished.

“Ehem!” said the little Sprite, resolved to gain the Prince’s attention at last; “did your royal highness speak? Perhaps you wished that that venerable gentleman should be called back; shall I run after him, and

endeavour to find him?”

“Why, no,” replied the Prince, with a little hesitation, “it is unnecessary; but perhaps you can do me the favour of informing me who he is?”

“He was an entire stranger to your royal highness, was he?”

“Yes,” answered the Hope of the Katzekopfs, “I am pretty sure I never saw him before.”

“Just what I apprehended,” observed the Sprite; “he is an old fellow of the most insufferable presumption; one who is continually endeavouring to obtrude himself into the best society; and if by any chance accident he gets admission therein, he is sure to meddle with matters that don’t concern him, to volunteer advice when nobody wishes for it, and to throw a restraint and gloom over any company into which he is allowed to enter.”

“His name?” inquired the Prince.

“Ah,” responded his companion, “it has escaped me; but I shall recall it presently. Meanwhile, allow me to tender my own allegiance, and to assure you that if you should so far condescend as to choose me for the companion of your leisure, your royal highness—”

“I observe that you have given me that designation very frequently,” observed the Prince, “what reason have you for supposing it belongs to me?”

“My Prince,” replied the Sprite; “had I never set eyes upon you till this moment, there is that in your form and figure which could not have failed to betray to the most unobservant that you could be sprung from none but the very highest. You bear that in your eye, and on your brow. But, my gracious Prince, though you see me now for the first time, you are no stranger to me. I am of a race who walk invisible, and, if I may be allowed to say such a thing without presumption, you have been the object of my tender regards since the very hour of your birth. In fact, I may say that I have never been parted from you during your whole existence.”

“You amaze me,” said Eigenwillig; “explain, I pray you, how such a thing can have happened without my being conscious of it.”

“I would gladly do so,” replied the Sprite; “but it is among the mysteries which we are forbidden to reveal to mortals.”

“But may you not tell me who you are? How call they you, and what is your name?”

“Selbst, at your service,” answered the tiny elf.

“And why have you sought me here?” asked the Prince.

“Because our interests are identical, and because the Lady Abracadabra, being well aware of my anxiety to befriend you, permitted me to offer myself as a companion to you on your travels.”

“You know this country then?”

“Intimately, my Prince; and I flatter myself that I am sufficiently conversant with your tastes to be able to make myself agreeable to you, which (I say it with all diffidence) is a great deal more than our friend in the gray habiliments undertook for himself. I can fly, while he can only creep. I am ready to join in any merry sport; but he seems fit for nothing but a hermitage in a desert. I can watch over you, and defend your interests; he, poor old gentleman, is fit for nothing but a scarecrow.”

“Why certainly,” answered the Prince, with a smile, “there is no denying that externals are in your favour. He looks so austere, and his dress and appearance are so unlike those of the rest of the world, that if I was to ask him to accompany me, every body would think I was travelling with an old schoolmaster.”

The sprite laughed contemptuously at the notion of the Hope of the Katzekopfs being so attended. And that laugh settled the matter, for the Prince was not accustomed to be laughed at, and the thought of appearing ridiculous to anybody was what his pride would not brook for a moment. So he said, “Well, Selbst, I fix my choice on you. Will you be my companion?”

“With the greatest pleasure imaginable, my gracious Prince, if you will grant me one condition.”

“And what will that be?”

“Oh, it is by no means an onerous one,” replied Selbst. “My limbs, though active, are so slight, that I am a bad walker, and soon wearied. Have you any objection to taking me on your back. I am as light as a feather.”

“None in the world,” answered Eigenwillig, “I can stow you away in my pocket if you like it. Come, jump up.”

The sprite waited for no second bidding.

“You’re heavier than I expected,” exclaimed the Hope of the Katzekopfs in some surprise.

“You’ll soon get used to it,” returned Master Selbst, in the most nonchalant tone imaginable. “Thank you, I’m quite comfortable now,” he continued, clasping his arms round the Prince’s neck.

“Why, Sprite, Sprite, how have you contrived to make your hands reach in front of my neck? A moment ago, and your arms scarce seemed two inches long?”

“Oh, I’m obliged to stretch them to the utmost; but I’m comfortable now,” replied the Sprite with an air of great self-satisfaction.

“Yes, but you are throttling me,” said the Prince, “unclasp your fingers.”

“No, I can’t do that, my Prince: you’ll soon get used to the pressure; and I am sure you would not wish me to be uncomfortable.”

“Let go your hold, I say,” cried the Prince angrily, “you are suffocating me;” and he endeavoured to unloose the tiny fingers which clutched round his throat. The sprite only increased his pressure.

“I shall be strangled,” cried the Prince, gasping for breath.

“Oh no, you won’t,” replied Selbst; “do not struggle, and you will be as comfortable as I am directly. Why should not we both be comfortable? It is useless to writhe about in that way, my Prince. See, it forces me to drive my knees into your side.”

And suiting the action to the word, the sprite contrived to shoot down those knees which, but a minute before, were so tiny as to be scarce perceptible, and to give them a very firm hold on the Prince’s ribs.

Now, if Prince Eigenwillig had only possessed the courage and resolution to have continued the struggle, and had remembered to have called the old man to his aid, he would have been able to master Selbst, to shake him off, and prevent him from gaining the upper hand. To be sure it was a grievous oversight to have allowed such a mischievous-looking elf to get upon his back at all; but for this there was now no help; the only question was, how to get rid of him. If the Prince had given himself time for consideration, it might have occurred to him as probable that such a boastful little creature, as Selbst had already shown himself to be, was not likely to have much resolution about him when fairly encountered. Selbst, in fact, was little better than a cowardly bully, full of presumption and bravado, who was in the habit of endeavouring to carry matters with a high hand, by using great swelling words, and who, when persons yielded to him, tyrannized over them more and more, the more they yielded. But though there was a good deal of obstinacy and importunity in his character, he was very mean and pitiful when he met with a determined opponent.

Unhappily for himself, Prince Eigenwillig was soon cowed. When he found that he could not shake off the sprite at once, his heart failed him, and he thought within himself that, having given Selbst such an advantage over him, there was no help for it, and he must e’en make the best bargain he could for himself.

“There!” cried the Sprite, as, breathless and exhausted, Prince Eigenwillig desisted from further efforts to free himself, “There! now I hope you will be satisfied. It is no use struggling with me. I am sure to

carry the day. So, that point being settled, we shall be good friends directly, and I will see if I cannot make my weight less of an incumbrance to you."

This was said so pleasantly that the Prince felt disposed to be appeased; and being immediately followed up by an effort on Selbst's part to sit more lightly, and by an apparent relaxation of his hold, the royal traveller became much better reconciled to his companion, and proceeded cheerfully on his way, Selbst directing him as to the route which would prove most agreeable, and beguiling the path with narrative and song.

They had not gone far together before the Prince became so well used to his burden, that he would have disliked the thought of being released from it. He ceased to find it troublesome, and grew so intimate with Selbst, that he felt as if he must needs consult him, and take his opinion upon every thing, and that there would be no getting on without him.

This was precisely the object at which the sprite was aiming: he desired to make the Prince wholly subservient to him, but he did not choose that his victim should become aware of the extent to which he was enslaved, and therefore he contrived to appear to submit, when, in fact, he was dictating.

The Hope of the Katzekopfs was travelling with the object of seeing all that was most remarkable in Fairy-land, and he had been particularly anxious to witness the process by which dew-drops were crystallized into diamonds, and also to learn the method by which sunbeams can be extracted from cucumbers. Remembering how much his mother was apt to suffer from cold in the winter season, he felt desirous to be able to carry home a recipe which might materially increase her comforts, and also, being aware of her strong penchant for diamonds, he affectionately proposed to himself to acquire the secret by which diamonds could be made as plentiful as blackberries.

The sprite made no sort of opposition to the Prince's proposal that they should visit these manufactories; but, while secretly resolving that he should see neither, this sly elf affected to give his cordial consent to the scheme. However, what with enlarging on the length of the journey, and the difficulties to be encountered, he contrived so effectually, though so skilfully, to work on the Prince, that his royal highness gave up the scheme in the full belief that the change of plan originated in himself, and that it was owing to himself only, that the evening found them in the self-same spot from which they had started in the morning.

Throughout the course of his long day's walk, the Prince had been carrying Selbst on his back, and very much surprised he felt that the sprite had never offered to get down, and allow the Prince to rest himself. But no: no such thought ever seemed to enter his mind; he pointed out the road, complained, now and then, of the roughness of the ways, and expressed his own great satisfaction at finding himself in such a comfortable position; but he evidently thought of nobody but himself. If the wallet of provisions was opened, Selbst, while appearing anxious that the Prince should take refreshment, contrived to lay his own hands on the delicacies which were choicest: if the flask of wine was produced, Selbst drained it all but a few drops. And what was stranger still, even the little which the Prince secured seemed of no service to him, it appeared to refresh the sprite, and not himself; he continued as hungry and thirsty as if neither victuals nor drink had entered his mouth. And yet, all the while, Selbst talked so pleasantly, and was so amusing, and there was so little appearance of intentional greediness or ill-breeding in his manner, that the Prince did not feel that he had any cause of complaint.

But as he continued plodding on his way, wondering why it was that his food did him so little good, a circumstance occurred which afforded him a probable, though certainly a very strange explanation of his difficulty. Happening, while the sun was shining brightly, to catch a glimpse of his own shadow on an opposite rock, he perceived that Selbst had increased in bulk to such a degree that, instead of being any longer a span high, he

was now larger than the Prince himself. By some mysterious process he was not only absorbing all the nourishment in the Prince's body, but was intercepting, as it were, the supplies on which existence depended.

No wonder the Hope of the Katzekopfs felt low and sinking.

"Why, Selbst," exclaimed he, "how enormously you are increased in size, since you mounted on my shoulders! I shall never be able to carry you."

"Go on, go on," answered the sprite. "I am quite comfortable. I dare say you will do very well."

The Prince was very much alarmed when he perceived that Selbst was growing so rapidly, and that all the sustenance which he himself took was turning to his companion's nutriment. But the excitement and alarm passed off almost immediately; somehow or other he got reconciled to the state of things, and grew quite apathetical about it. If he felt any increase of weight on his shoulders, he speedily became indifferent to it, and he even ceased to wonder that his food seemed to do him no good.

Thus they went on roaming about, with no particular object in view; Selbst directing the Prince to go in this direction or that, as the fancy happened to take him, and the Prince obeying implicitly, in a sort of listless, unresisting manner.

"Go to yonder fountain," said the sprite, after they had journeyed some hours longer. "Your body is so warm it quite heats and fatigues me. Why don't you keep yourself cool?"

"How can I," asked the Prince, "under such a broiling sun, and with you on my back? I wish you would get down for a little while."

"No indeed," answered the sprite, "I shall do nothing of the kind. I am quite comfortable, all except the heat, and I shall be cooler when you have stood a little while in the fountain."

"Oh, Selbst, surely you forget how hot *I* am: to stand in a fountain would kill me."

“And what does that matter to me, so long as I can keep myself comfortable? I am master now, and intend to remain so.”

“Master!” exclaimed Prince Eigenwillig, his natural disposition breaking out for a moment, “Tyrant, you mean.”

“Well, tyrant, if you like,” said the sprite. “Call me what you please, I care not; only do what I tell you. Go into the fountain.”

The Prince groaned, but obeyed mechanically, for resistance seemed to be useless; but when he approached the water’s edge, he saw a sight reflected on its glassy surface which made him start back. Selbst had become double the size which he was when the Prince had seen his shadow on the rock.

“What’s the matter? why don’t you go in?” cried the sprite impatiently.

Fear, and the strong impulse of self-preservation now aided the unhappy victim, and he replied, “Look at your own reflection in the water. How can you expect me who am but half your size, to carry you in there? Your weight is enough to drown me.”

“Do as you are bid, slave!” cried the sprite angrily, giving the boy a violent kick in the side. Hitherto he had contrived to keep his limbs out of the Prince’s sight, but Eigenwillig had now the opportunity of observing that his tormentor’s foot was the size of that of a full-grown man.

“You may drag me into the water if you will: you are stronger than I am, and I can’t help myself, but go, of my own free will, I won’t.”

The Prince spoke these words in a tone of resolute determination, and the sprite seemed to hesitate for a moment what he would do; but his mind was soon made up, for he gave the boy another kick, and much more severe than the first. It quite took the Prince’s breath away, and he was very near falling.

“If you kick me in that manner,” said he, “you will break my ribs, and then I shall be unable to carry you at all.”

“Go into the water, slave, or it will be the worse for you!” rejoined Selbst, and tried to force him forward. The Prince threw his arms round a young tree, and clung to it with all his strength.

“You’re as obstinate as a pig,” exclaimed the sprite, “and I have a great mind to throw you into the water, and hold you there till you are drowned,—only I don’t choose to make myself hotter than I am already.”

Thus he yielded the point, and proved himself a mere blustering bully.

As for the Prince, he was so amazed and confounded at so unexpected a change, that he was unable to avail himself of his own victory. Had he been sufficiently self-possessed, he would have reflected that now was the time to follow up his advantage, and never to rest till he had shaken off his troublesome companion. But the boy had been so cowed and alarmed at the sight of the prodigious size of his adversary, that he felt it would be hopeless to prolong the struggle,—that he must be worsted,—and so he hesitated and lost heart, at the very moment when Selbst was beginning to fear that his tyranny was at an end.

He, the crafty elf! had no lack of self-possession; and so, though foiled in his object, he contrived to make it seem as if his yielding was rather the result of good-nature than necessity, whereby he hoped that, before long, he should reduce the unfortunate Prince to his former condition of listless docility.

But if young Eigenwillig had not yet acquired sufficient resolution to enter on a further struggle with his oppressor, he was no longer inclined to look on him in the light of an agreeable companion. He had now learned the falseness and hollowness of his professions; he began to see through his artifices; he was no longer unconscious of his unwieldy size; he had contrived to catch a glimpse of his features, and to see that they were hideous and ape-like, and to perceive that his very breath was loathsome and pestilential.

And this was a great point gained, though much more remained behind to be accomplished. It set the Prince upon reflecting on the Lady Abracadabra’s last words to him, and on the ill-considered haste of his

recent decision.

But why did he not summon to his aid the venerable stranger who had first appeared to him, and who had promised to be close at hand to help him?

It is not difficult to find an answer to this inquiry. Greatly as Prince Eigenwillig had been improved by his recent trials, he had a good deal of false pride still hanging about him, which disinclined him to own himself in the wrong; and then, though the old man had been so kind to him, it is sometimes difficult to get over first impressions, and the stern, austere countenance, and grave manners of that venerable person, rendered him unattractive. The Prince was afraid of him, and he felt as if he could not make a friend of any one of whom he stood in awe. Still he had grateful feelings towards the grey-robed stranger, and desired to have an opportunity of seeing more of him.

Moreover, he had a secret conviction that the old man was the only person who could protect him against the tyranny of Selbst, and he determined upon any fresh act of tyranny, to call the old man to his aid.

It was not long before his resolution was put to the test.

Though Selbst, like a cowardly bully, had given way when he found he was manfully resisted, and though, like a cunning knave, he had endeavoured to make his defeat appear like a voluntary concession, still he was too fond of having his own way, and of domineering upon all occasions, to go on for long without further exasperating his victim against him.

When he yielded the point upon the fountain, he commanded the Prince to carry him to the top of a hill at some distance; the air, he said, would be less hot and oppressive there than in the valley. This was his nominal reason; his real object was to punish the Prince, by wearing him out with fatigue and exhaustion.

The Prince, bending under his burden, accordingly set forth towards the hill; but he had now been on foot many hours, and every step he took, Selbst seemed to grow heavier and heavier; however, he contrived, though very weary and breathless, to reach the bottom of the hill; but there he stopped.

“Prithee, Selbst,” said he, “let us rest awhile.”

“Rest forsooth!” cried the sprite in a tone of surprise, “what should we rest for? I am quite comfortable. I am not at all tired.”

“Likely enough!” replied the Prince, “for you have not walked a step all day. But I, who have had to carry you, am quite tired out; so rest I must.”

“Get to the top of the hill first, then,” answered Selbst. The Prince, dispirited and unwilling to begin a fresh contest, made an effort to ascend the precipitous bank; but he had not gone many yards before he stumbled and fell. Nor was it a simple fall; for he continued rolling over the sharp stones, Selbst and all, till he reached the bottom of the hill.

He was not much hurt himself; but Selbst was a good deal scratched and bruised. This misfortune, however, as might be expected, threw the sprite into a great rage. He abused the Prince, called him all manner of evil names, declared that he had fallen on purpose, and ended by bestowing on him a shower of blows.

“Get up again, you idle hound,” cried he, “and mount the hill directly. I’ll soon teach you who is master.”

“Indeed I would get up if I could,” said the Prince, “but you know, Selbst, how weary I am.”

“Get up, or I’ll strangle you,” screamed the malicious sprite, tightening his hold round the Prince’s neck.

The poor boy made an effort to get up, but fell backwards. Harder and harder, tighter and tighter, grew the grasp upon his throat. His eyeballs seemed ready to start from his head; his ears were tingling and his veins swelling through the impeded circulation of the blood. He struggled, but his struggles were powerless; he endeavoured to shriek for help; but a

gasping, gurgling sound was all that proceeded from his lips. In another minute he would have been strangled. Hitherto his hands had been employed in vain endeavours to wrest the sprite's fingers from his throat; on a sudden, however, he looses them, and leaving his adversary to do his worst, claps his hands once—twice.

Selbst sees his object, and looses his hold round the boy's neck, in order to secure his hands, and prevent his making the signal a third time.

The relaxing of the monster's grasp enables Prince Eigenwillig to draw his breath, and with his returning breath, returns, in some measure at least, his strength. It is a struggle for life or death; long it continues. Longer far than could have been expected from the exhausted powers of the boy. But in his struggles lay the secret of his strength. The more he struggled, the stronger he became, and the weaker waxed his adversary, and not only weaker, but smaller. He shrank and shrank at each fresh effort of the Prince to master him, till from the size of a full-grown man, he became no bigger than a dwarf.

Who could fail to be encouraged to persevere in such a contest? Each effort of the Prince became more vigorous and effectual, till, at length, after a violent exertion, he contrived to liberate both hands, and, for the third time, made the required signal. The sprite no sooner heard the sound, than he howled like a maniac, and gnashed his teeth with disappointed rage.

The Prince had scarcely clapped his hands for the third time, when there seemed a change in the appearance of the air before him, as when a shadow is cast: and then the shadow assumed the form and consistency, as it were, of a thin vapour; and the vapour thickened and thickened till it became a dense grey cloud; and the outline of the cloud grew sharper and more defined, till the form of the old man with his white hairs and flowing beard, and long sombre robes, were developed, and Prince Eigenwillig saw before him the companion he had rejected, and whose aid had now come so opportunely.

“Well, my son,” said the old man, “you are now able to judge who was your truest friend; he who made few promises, and kept them; or he, who after multiplied professions of regard, has made you first his slave, and who then nearly destroyed you.”

No sooner had the old man begun to speak, than Selbst shuddered from head to foot, and ceased to struggle with the Prince, who now, breathing freely once more, looked up timidly at the old man, expecting to see nothing but severity depicted on his countenance. How was he surprised! Gravity, indeed, there was in the old man’s face and manner; but all sternness had passed from his eyes, and a smile of the utmost gentleness and benignity lit up his features.

“Oh, my kind friend and protector!” exclaimed the Prince, “how little have I deserved such a timely interference from you,—*you* whom I treated so unthankfully and ungraciously!”

“If you *be* grateful, as you intimate you are,” replied the old man, “give me now the proof of it by following my advice.”

“Advise me, father,” said the boy, “and you shall judge whether or no I be grateful.”

“My son, you know not yet to what you may be pledging yourself. My terms are hard,—my conditions difficult to be fulfilled.”

“I will not shrink from the hardest,” exclaimed the Prince with fervour, “if you will but free me from this clinging reptile. Command him to loose his hold.”

“Ha! ha!” cried the sprite in a mocking, gibing tone, “there go two words to that bargain. Old greybeard may command if he pleases, and as long as he pleases, but he cannot force me to obey.”

“It is even so, my son,” observed the old man, “I cannot compel him; nay, I can be of no service at all, without your hearty cooperation. And, even then, the most I can do for you will be to show you how to treat him; so that, for his own sake, he will be glad to quit you.”

“Oh, good Father, prithee teach me how to gain the mastery over him!”

“STARVE him, and CONTRADICT him continually,” said the old man; “keep him from every kind of food—from all that can, in any way, nourish him. And so soon as ever you ascertain what his wishes are—be the subject what it may—make it your rule to do the reverse. Follow this plan, and he will soon be your slave; you will be no longer his. My long experience enables me to pledge myself to this.”

“Then others, father, besides myself, have been exposed to his malignant influence; and you have befriended others as well as me!”

“My son, none ever mastered that odious sprite, but he received assistance from me. It is only by the aid of DISCIPLINE that any one can hope to conquer SELF!”

Then the Prince knew the old man’s name, and he ceased to wonder why he had been so unwilling, on a former occasion, to make it known; for it has a stern, repulsive sound in it, which is sure to disgust the thoughtless and the pleasure-seeking.

“Father,” said the Prince, “if thy name be Discipline, then will I be thy Disciple. Had I known thee sooner, from what faults and errors should I have been saved! If thou hadst but taken a part in the education of my earliest years, how different should I now be from what, alas! I am.”

“Prince,” replied his venerable friend, “heretofore you have been greatly to be pitied, for you have deserved, as well as possessed, the name of Self-willed. But sharp trials have brought you to your senses, and I trust that you have already laid the foundations of a character in which shall be united all the best qualities of your race. But you have still an arduous task before you, and your first and most pressing duty is, to effect the entire subjugation of that hateful sprite whom I still see clinging to you.”

“Father,” said the Prince, “will you now be my companion, and will you advise and help me to master Selbst!”

“That will I gladly, my child,” answered Discipline, and forthwith they wended on their way.

Steep, and rugged, and narrow was the route: now among tangled thickets of thorns and briers, now over parched and arid sands, now in a waste and howling wilderness. Often, when the Prince was most hungry and thirsty, did Discipline enjoin him to go without food or drink, or, just as he was about to partake of them, to give them to some wayfarer on the road. Often, when most weary, was he advised to pass the night in watching. Often, when he desired to go one way, was he recommended to pursue another.

Now all this was done in order to master Selbst, and make him glad to relax his hold, and quit a companion who would give him nothing to eat, and who led him through thorns and briers for the purpose of wounding and hurting him.

And all this Prince Eigenwillig continued to do day after day, and still he found the wisdom of those oft repeated sayings of his aged companion: "**Learn to live hardly**; **Deny yourself in things lawful**; **Love not comforts**; **Think of others first**, **and of yourself last**." And thus, when they drew near to their journey's end, and the palace of the Lady Abracadabra was in sight, the sprite Selbst, who had exercised such tyranny over the little boy, was no longer to be seen. For some time,—much longer than the sanguine Prince had expected,—for it was when Discipline had been for some time his companion, he continued to feel inconvenience from the presence of the malicious elf. But in due time, *starving* and *contradiction* did their promised work. The evil creature dwindled, and withered, and shrank, till at length, from sheer weakness and exhaustion, he relaxed his hold round the Prince's throat, and fell to the ground.

The Prince himself was not aware of the precise moment when this event took place, and Discipline did not think good to make him acquainted with it immediately. And even when he made the circumstance known, he accompanied it with a word of caution.

“Prince,” said he, “you are released from the grasp of your adversary. He has fallen to the ground, mastered by your perseverance and resolution. But I entreat you bear this in mind, that, though invisible, he still runs at your side; and if ever you give him opportunity or encouragement, he will yet again be your master!”

They had now reached the palace of the Lady Abracadabra, and as they stood before its portals, the Fairy godmother came out to receive them. Once more she was radiant with smiles; the flame-coloured petticoat had faded into the palest primrose, and instead of seeming haggard and wrinkled, her complexion had that dazzling lustre which is peculiar to Fairy-land. She threw her arms round her godson and embraced him with tenderness.

“I have been a secret witness,” she said, “of all your trials and struggles. I have watched your endeavours to rid yourself of your selfish, and self-willed habits, and being satisfied of the pains you have taken, and are taking with yourself, I am not afraid to restore you to your family. The Court of King Katzekopf is not a wholesome atmosphere for you; but every place has its trials, and I am satisfied that you will profit by your past experience.”

“Lady,” replied the Prince, “the time has been that I have feared you, and even hated you; but I now know how much I owe to you. You have taught me that the secret of happiness is in myself, and that I am most happy when I am showing most consideration to others. I hope, dear Lady, that now you are about to send me home, you will not cease to befriend me, and that this venerable man may accompany me to the upper world.”

“Follow the rules he has given you here, and you will not need his bodily presence. They that dwell in kings’ houses, and the rich, and the indolent, and the lovers of comforts, bear a deadly hatred to him, and therefore he is not wont to expose himself to their insults. You, however, he has adopted as one of his children, and so long as you do not forget him, he will not forget you. For myself, you may count on my protection.

If I loved you because I saw the elements of good in you, when I brought you into this country seven years ago, how much more do I love you now, when I have witnessed your endeavours to become master of yourself."

"*Seven years ago!*" These were almost the only words in the sentence which the Prince heard. Why, the time he had spent in Fairy-land seemed hardly as many days. But so it was; and when he came to reflect, he remembered to have heard, over and over again, that nobody who enters Fairy-land is allowed to return under seven years.

So it was; and when he arrived at his father's court (where he found himself already expected; for, little as Queen Ninnilinda deserved it, the Lady Abracadabra had never kept her in ignorance about her son's place of abode, and general well-doing,)—when he arrived at his father's court, he saw changes which soon satisfied him that a long period had elapsed since he had quitted it. King Katzekopf had become quite childish, and Queen Ninnilinda was so occupied with her lap-dogs and parrots, that, though very glad to see her son, she was not likely to spoil him again. The Baroness Yellowlily was dead, and the Ladies Rigida, Frigida, and Brigida had quitted the court for scenes more congenial to their taste.

But the greatest surprise of all to Prince Eigenwillig, was to hear himself spoken to as if he were almost a young man. It seemed but the other day, since he was a little naughty child, and now grave counsellors were discussing the propriety of appointing him Regent of the kingdom, and easing poor old King Katzekopf's shoulders from the burden and cares of state.

Prince Eigenwillig had, however, too much distrust of himself, and felt the responsibilities of the position too deeply to desire such a charge; but when he saw that the welfare of the nation in a great measure depended on it, and found that the Lady Abracadabra heartily approved of it, he consented to become Regent.

And his first act, when he assumed the office, was to write an affectionate letter to Witikind, intreating him to forgive him his past misconduct, and come and give him his assistance in ruling the country.

Count Rudolf had been dead some years, and Witikind was in possession of his father's estates, and he found such abundant scope for the best energies of his mind in contributing to the welfare of his neighbours and vassals, that he could not (especially after his past experience,) make up his mind to quit his beloved Taubennest for a court. So he declined the Prince's offer of place and power; but was, through life, his sound adviser and faithful friend.

As for the Prince, though he could not shake off the *name* of Eigenwillig, he entirely ceased to be the *thing*: in a few years he became king in his father's place; reigned long and happily; ruled his subjects well; his family better still; and himself best of all: so that his name was cherished in his native land long after his bones were mouldering in the grave; and it is mentioned in the Chronicles of Carivaldus of Cologne, that he whose real name was Eigenwillig, and who for some years of his life was called the Hope of the Katzekopfs, is now only remembered by that name which the universal consent of his countrymen assigned him while still living, and that his designation in the annals of Christendom is that of King Katzekopf *the GOOD*.

And so my Story ends.

L'Envoy.

"If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, (and all is mended,)
Think you have but slumber'd here,
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream;
Gentles, do not reprehend,

If you pardon, we will mend."

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TRANSCRIBER’S NOTES

1. Changed all instances of 'Shakspere' to 'Shakespeare'. There was originally one 'Shakespeare' in the book.
2. Silently corrected typographical errors.
3. Retained anachronistic and non-standard spellings as printed.

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