

The Crimson Fairy Book



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PUBLISHER NOTES:

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Preface

Each Fairy Book demands a preface from the Editor, and these introductions are inevitably both monotonous and unavailing. A sense of literary honesty compels the Editor to keep repeating that he is the Editor, and not the author of the Fairy Tales, just as a distinguished man of science is only the Editor, not the Author of Nature. Like nature, popular tales are too vast to be the creation of a single modern mind. The Editor's business is to hunt for collections of these stories told by peasant or savage grandmothers in many climes, from New Caledonia to Zululand; from the frozen snows of the Polar regions to Greece, or Spain, or Italy, or far Lochaber. When the tales are found they are adapted to the needs of British children by various hands, the Editor doing little beyond guarding the interests of propriety, and toning down to mild reproofs the tortures inflicted on wicked stepmothers, and other naughty characters.

These explanations have frequently been offered already; but, as far as ladies and children are concerned, to no purpose. They still ask the Editor how he can invent so many stories—more than Shakespeare, Dumas, and Charles Dickens could have invented in a century. And the Editor still avers, in Prefaces, that he did not invent one of the stories; that nobody knows, as a rule, who invented them, or where, or when. It is only plain that, perhaps a hundred thousand years ago, some savage grandmother told a tale to a savage granddaughter; that the granddaughter told it in her turn; that various tellers made changes to suit their taste, adding or omitting features and incidents; that, as the world grew civilised, other alterations were made, and that, at last, Homer composed the 'Odyssey,' and somebody else composed the Story of Jason and the Fleece of Gold, and the enchantress Medea, out of a set of wandering popular tales, which are still told among Samoyeds and Samoans, Hindoos and Japanese.

All this has been known to the wise and learned for centuries, and especially since the brothers Grimm wrote in the early years of the Nineteenth Century. But children remain unaware of the facts, and so do their dear mothers; whence the Editor infers that they do not read his prefaces, and are not members of the Folk Lore Society, or students of Herr Kohler and M. Cosquin, and M. Henri Guidoiz and Professor Child, and Mr. Max Muller. Though these explanations are not attended to by the Editor's customers, he makes them once more, for the relief of his conscience. Many tales in this book are translated, or adapted, from those told by mothers and nurses in Hungary; others are familiar to Russian nurseries; the Servians are responsible for some; a rather peculiarly fanciful set of stories are adapted from the Roumanians; others are from the Baltic shores; others from sunny Sicily; a few are

from Finland, and Iceland, and Japan, and Tunis, and Portugal. No doubt many children will like to look out these places on the map, and study their mountains, rivers, soil, products, and fiscal policies, in the geography books. The peoples who tell the stories differ in colour; language, religion, and almost everything else; but they all love a nursery tale. The stories have mainly been adapted or translated by Mrs. Lang, a few by Miss Lang and Miss Blackley.

Lovely Ilonka

There was once a king's son who told his father that he wished to marry.

'No, no!' said the king; 'you must not be in such a hurry. Wait till you have done some great deed. My father did not let me marry till I had won the golden sword you see me wear.'

The prince was much disappointed, but he never dreamed of disobeying his father, and he began to think with all his might what he could do. It was no use staying at home, so one day he wandered out into the world to try his luck, and as he walked along he came to a little hut in which he found an old woman crouching over the fire.

'Good evening, mother. I see you have lived long in this world; do you know anything about the three bulrushes?'

'Yes, indeed, I've lived long and been much about in the world, but I have never seen or heard anything of what you ask. Still, if you will wait till to-morrow I may be able to tell you something.'

Well, he waited till the morning, and quite early the old woman appeared and took out a little pipe and blew in it, and in a moment all the crows in the world were flying about her. Not one was missing. Then she asked if they knew anything about the three bulrushes, but not one of them did.

The prince went on his way, and a little further on he found another hut in which lived an old man. On being questioned the old man said he knew nothing, but begged the prince to stay overnight, and the next morning the old man called all the ravens together, but they too had nothing to tell.

The prince bade him farewell and set out. He wandered so far that he crossed seven kingdoms, and at last, one evening, he came to a little house in which was an old woman.

'Good evening, dear mother,' said he politely.

'Good evening to you, my dear son,' answered the old woman. 'It is lucky for you that you spoke to me or you would have met with a horrible death. But may I ask where are you going?'

'I am seeking the three bulrushes. Do you know anything about them?'

'I don't know anything myself, but wait till to-morrow. Perhaps I can tell you then.' So the next morning she blew on her pipe, and lo! and behold every magpie in the world flew up. That is to say, all the magpies except one who had broken a leg and a wing. The old woman sent after it at once, and when she questioned the magpies the crippled one was the only one who knew where the three bulrushes were.

Then the prince started off with the lame magpie. They went on and on till they reached a great stone wall, many, many feet high.

'Now, prince,' said the magpie, 'the three bulrushes are behind that wall.'

The prince wasted no time. He set his horse at the wall and leaped over it. Then he looked about for the three bulrushes, pulled them up and set off with them on his way home. As he rode along one of the bulrushes happened to knock against something. It split open and, only think! out sprang a lovely girl, who said: 'My heart's love, you are mine and I am yours; do give me a glass of water.'

But how could the prince give it her when there was no water at hand? So the lovely maiden flew away. He split the second bulrush as an experiment and just the same thing happened.

How careful he was of the third bulrush! He waited till he came to a well, and there he split it open, and out sprang a maiden seven times lovelier than either of the others, and she too said: 'My heart's love, I am yours and you are mine; do give me a glass of water.'

This time the water was ready and the girl did not fly away, but she and the prince promised to love each other always. Then they set out for home.

They soon reached the prince's country, and as he wished to bring his promised bride back in a fine coach he went on to the town to fetch one. In the field where the well was, the king's swineherds and cowherds were feeding their droves, and the prince left Ilonka (for that was her name) in their care.

Unluckily the chief swineherd had an ugly old daughter, and whilst the prince was away he dressed her up in fine clothes, and threw Ilonka into the well.

The prince returned before long, bringing with him his father and mother and a great train of courtiers to escort Ilonka home. But how they all stared when they saw the swineherd's ugly daughter! However, there was nothing for it but to take her home; and, two days later, the prince married her, and his father gave up the crown to him.

But he had no peace! He knew very well he had been cheated, though he could not think how. Once he desired to have some water brought him from the well into which Ilonka had been thrown. The coachman went for it and, in the bucket he pulled up, a pretty little duck was swimming. He looked wonderingly at it, and all of a sudden it disappeared and he found a dirty looking girl standing near him. The girl returned with him and managed to get a place as housemaid in the palace.

Of course she was very busy all day long, but whenever she had a little spare time she sat down to spin. Her distaff turned of itself and her spindle spun by itself and the flax wound itself off; and however much she might use there was always plenty left.

When the queen—or, rather, the swineherd's daughter—heard of this, she very much wished to have the distaff, but the girl flatly refused to give it to her. However, at last she consented on condition that she might sleep one night in the king's room. The queen was very angry,

and scolded her well; but as she longed to have the distaff she consented, though she gave the king a sleeping draught at supper.

Then the girl went to the king's room looking seven times lovelier than ever. She bent over the sleeper and said: 'My heart's love, I am yours and you are mine. Speak to me but once; I am your Ilonka.' But the king was so sound asleep he neither heard nor spoke, and Ilonka left the room, sadly thinking he was ashamed to own her.

Soon after the queen again sent to say that she wanted to buy the spindle. The girl agreed to let her have it on the same conditions as before; but this time, also, the queen took care to give the king a sleeping draught. And once more Ilonka went to the king's room and spoke to him; whisper as sweetly as she might she could get no answer.

Now some of the king's servants had taken note of the matter, and warned their master not to eat and drink anything that the queen offered him, as for two nights running she had given him a sleeping draught. The queen had no idea that her doings had been discovered; and when, a few days later, she wanted the flax, and had to pay the same price for it, she felt no fears at all.

At supper that night the queen offered the king all sorts of nice things to eat and drink, but he declared he was not hungry, and went early to bed.

The queen repented bitterly her promise to the girl, but it was too late to recall it; for Ilonka had already entered the king's room, where he lay anxiously waiting for something, he knew not what. All of a sudden he saw a lovely maiden who bent over him and said: 'My dearest love, I am yours and you are mine. Speak to me, for I am your Ilonka.'

At these words the king's heart bounded within him. He sprang up and embraced and kissed her, and she told him all her adventures since the moment he had left her. And when he heard all that Ilonka had suffered, and how he had been deceived, he vowed he would be revenged; so he gave orders that the swineherd, his wife and daughter should all be hanged; and so they were.

The next day the king was married, with great rejoicings, to the fair Ilonka; and if they are not yet dead—why, they are still living.

[From Ungarische Mahrehen.]

Lucky Luck

Once upon a time there was a king who had an only son. When the lad was about eighteen years old his father had to go to fight in a war against a neighbouring country, and the king led his troops in person. He bade his son act as Regent in his absence, but ordered him on no account to marry till his return.

Time went by. The prince ruled the country and never even thought of marrying. But when he reached his twenty-fifth birthday he began to think that it might be rather nice to have a wife, and he thought so much that at last he got quite eager about it. He remembered, however, what his father had said, and waited some time longer, till at last it was ten years since the king went out to war. Then the prince called his courtiers about him and set off with a great retinue to seek a bride. He hardly knew which way to go, so he wandered about for twenty days, when, suddenly, he found himself in his father's camp.

The king was delighted to see his son, and had a great many questions to ask and answer; but when he heard that instead of quietly waiting for him at home the prince was starting off to seek a wife he was very angry, and said: 'You may go where you please but I will not leave any of my people with you.'

Only one faithful servant stayed with the prince and refused to part from him. They journeyed over hill and dale till they came to a place called Goldtown. The King of Goldtown had a lovely daughter, and the prince, who soon heard about her beauty, could not rest till he saw her.

He was very kindly received, for he was extremely good-looking and had charming manners, so he lost no time in asking for her hand and her parents gave her to him with joy. The wedding took place at once, and the feasting and rejoicings went on for a whole month. At the end of the month they set off for home, but as the journey was a long one they spent the first evening at an inn. Everyone in the house slept, and only the faithful servant kept watch. About midnight he heard three crows, who had flown to the roof, talking together.

'That's a handsome couple which arrived here tonight. It seems quite a pity they should lose their lives so soon.'

'Truly,' said the second crow; 'for to-morrow, when midday strikes, the bridge over the Gold Stream will break just as they are driving over it. But, listen! whoever overhears and tells what we have said will be turned to stone up to his knees.'

The crows had hardly done speaking when away they flew. And close upon them followed three pigeons.

'Even if the prince and princess get safe over the bridge they will perish,' said they; 'for the king is going to send a carriage to meet them which looks as new as paint. But when they are seated in it a raging

wind will rise and whirl the carriage away into the clouds. Then it will fall suddenly to earth, and they will be killed. But anyone who hears and betrays what we have said will be turned to stone up to his waist.'

With that the pigeons flew off and three eagles took their places, and this is what they said:

'If the young couple does manage to escape the dangers of the bridge and the carriage, the king means to send them each a splendid gold embroidered robe. When they put these on they will be burnt up at once. But whoever hears and repeats this will turn to stone from head to foot.'

Early next morning the travellers got up and breakfasted. They began to tell each other their dreams. At last the servant said:

'Gracious prince, I dreamt that if your Royal Highness would grant all I asked we should get home safe and sound; but if you did not we should certainly be lost. My dreams never deceive me, so I entreat you to follow my advice during the rest of the journey.'

'Don't make such a fuss about a dream,' said the prince; 'dreams are but clouds. Still, to prevent your being anxious I will promise to do as you wish.'

With that they set out on their journey.

At midday they reached the Gold Stream. When they got to the bridge the servant said: 'Let us leave the carriage here, my prince, and walk a little way. The town is not far off and we can easily get another carriage there, for the wheels of this one are bad and will not hold out much longer.'

The prince looked well at the carriage. He did not think it looked so unsafe as his servant said; but he had given his word and he held to it.

They got down and loaded the horses with the luggage. The prince and his bride walked over the bridge, but the servant said he would ride the horses through the stream so as to water and bathe them.

They reached the other side without harm, and bought a new carriage in the town, which was quite near, and set off once more on their travels; but they had not gone far when they met a messenger from the king who said to the prince: 'His Majesty has sent your Royal Highness this beautiful carriage so that you may make a fitting entry into your own country and amongst your own people.'

The prince was so delighted that he could not speak. But the servant said: 'My lord, let me examine this carriage first and then you can get in if I find it is all right; otherwise we had better stay in our own.'

The prince made no objections, and after looking the carriage well over the servant said: 'It is as bad as it is smart'; and with that he knocked it all to pieces, and they went on in the one that they had bought.

At last they reached the frontier; there another messenger was waiting for them, who said that the king had sent two splendid robes for

the prince and his bride, and begged that they would wear them for their state entry. But the servant implored the prince to have nothing to do with them, and never gave him any peace till he had obtained leave to destroy the robes.

The old king was furious when he found that all his arts had failed; that his son still lived and that he would have to give up the crown to him now he was married, for that was the law of the land. He longed to know how the prince had escaped, and said: 'My dear son, I do indeed rejoice to have you safely back, but I cannot imagine why the beautiful carriage and the splendid robes I sent did not please you; why you had them destroyed.'

'Indeed, sire,' said the prince, 'I was myself much annoyed at their destruction; but my servant had begged to direct everything on the journey and I had promised him that he should do so. He declared that we could not possibly get home safely unless I did as he told me.'

The old king fell into a tremendous rage. He called his Council together and condemned the servant to death.

The gallows was put up in the square in front of the palace. The servant was led out and his sentence read to him.

The rope was being placed round his neck, when he begged to be allowed a few last words. 'On our journey home,' he said, 'we spent the first night at an inn. I did not sleep but kept watch all night.' And then he went on to tell what the crows had said, and as he spoke he turned to stone up to his knees. The prince called to him to say no more as he had proved his innocence. But the servant paid no heed to him, and by the time his story was done he had turned to stone from head to foot.

Oh! how grieved the prince was to lose his faithful servant! And what pained him most was the thought that he was lost through his very faithfulness, and he determined to travel all over the world and never rest till he found some means of restoring him to life.

Now there lived at Court an old woman who had been the prince's nurse. To her he confided all his plans, and left his wife, the princess, in her care. 'You have a long way before you, my son,' said the old woman; 'you must never return till you have met with Lucky Luck. If he cannot help you no one on earth can.'

So the prince set off to try to find Lucky Luck. He walked and walked till he got beyond his own country, and he wandered through a wood for three days but did not meet a living being in it. At the end of the third day he came to a river near which stood a large mill. Here he spent the night. When he was leaving next morning the miller asked him: 'My gracious lord, where are you going all alone?'

And the prince told him.

'Then I beg your Highness to ask Lucky Luck this question: Why is it that though I have an excellent mill, with all its machinery complete,

and get plenty of grain to grind, I am so poor that I hardly know how to live from one day to another?'

The prince promised to inquire, and went on his way. He wandered about for three days more, and at the end of the third day saw a little town. It was quite late when he reached it, but he could discover no light anywhere, and walked almost right through it without finding a house where he could turn in. But far away at the end of the town he saw a light in a window. He went straight to it and in the house were three girls playing a game together. The prince asked for a night's lodging and they took him in, gave him some supper and got a room ready for him, where he slept.

Next morning when he was leaving they asked where he was going and he told them his story. 'Gracious prince,' said the maidens, 'do ask Lucky Luck how it happens that here we are over thirty years old and no lover has come to woo us, though we are good, pretty, and very industrious.'

The prince promised to inquire, and went on his way.

Then he came to a great forest and wandered about in it from morning to night and from night to morning before he got near the other end. Here he found a pretty stream which was different from other streams as, instead of flowing, it stood still and began to talk: 'Sir prince, tell me what brings you into these wilds? I must have been flowing here a hundred years and more and no one has ever yet come by.'

'I will tell you,' answered the prince, 'if you will divide yourself so that I may walk through.'

The stream parted at once, and the prince walked through without wetting his feet; and directly he got to the other side he told his story as he had promised.

'Oh, do ask Lucky Luck,' cried the brook, 'why, though I am such a clear, bright, rapid stream I never have a fish or any other living creature in my waters.'

The prince said he would do so, and continued his journey.

When he got quite clear of the forest he walked on through a lovely valley till he reached a little house thatched with rushes, and he went in to rest for he was very tired.

Everything in the house was beautifully clean and tidy, and a cheerful honest-looking old woman was sitting by the fire.

'Good-morning, mother,' said the prince.

'May Luck be with you, my son. What brings you into these parts?'

'I am looking for Lucky Luck,' replied the prince.

'Then you have come to the right place, my son, for I am his mother. He is not at home just now, he is out digging in the vineyard. Do you go too. Here are two spades. When you find him begin to dig, but don't speak a word to him. It is now eleven o'clock. When he sits down to eat his dinner sit beside him and eat with him. After dinner he will question

you, and then tell him all your troubles freely. He will answer whatever you may ask.'

With that she showed him the way, and the prince went and did just as she had told him. After dinner they lay down to rest.

All of a sudden Lucky Luck began to speak and said: 'Tell me, what sort of man are you, for since you came here you have not spoken a word?'

'I am not dumb,' replied the young man, 'but I am that unhappy prince whose faithful servant has been turned to stone, and I want to know how to help him.'

'And you do well, for he deserves everything. Go back, and when you get home your wife will just have had a little boy. Take three drops of blood from the child's little finger, rub them on your servant's wrists with a blade of grass and he will return to life.'

'I have another thing to ask,' said the prince, when he had thanked him. 'In the forest near here is a fine stream but not a fish or other living creature in it. Why is this?'

'Because no one has ever been drowned in the stream. But take care, in crossing, to get as near the other side as you can before you say so, or you may be the first victim yourself.'

'Another question, please, before I go. On my way here I lodged one night in the house of three maidens. All were well-mannered, hard-working, and pretty, and yet none has had a wooer. Why was this?'

'Because they always throw out their sweepings in the face of the sun.'

'And why is it that a miller, who has a large mill with all the best machinery and gets plenty of corn to grind is so poor that he can hardly live from day to day?'

'Because the miller keeps everything for himself, and does not give to those who need it.'

The prince wrote down the answers to his questions, took a friendly leave of Lucky Luck, and set off for home.

When he reached the stream it asked if he brought it any good news. 'When I get across I will tell you,' said he. So the stream parted; he walked through and on to the highest part of the bank. He stopped and shouted out:

'Listen, oh stream! Lucky Luck says you will never have any living creature in your waters until someone is drowned in you.'

The words were hardly out of his mouth when the stream swelled and overflowed till it reached the rock up which he had climbed, and dashed so far up it that the spray flew over him. But he clung on tight, and after failing to reach him three times the stream returned to its proper course. Then the prince climbed down, dried himself in the sun, and set out on his march home.

He spent the night once more at the mill and gave the miller his answer, and by-and-by he told the three sisters not to throw out all their sweepings in the face of the sun.

The prince had hardly arrived at home when some thieves tried to ford the stream with a fine horse they had stolen. When they were half-way across, the stream rose so suddenly that it swept them all away. From that time it became the best fishing stream in the country-side.

The miller, too, began to give alms and became a very good man, and in time grew so rich that he hardly knew how much he had.

And the three sisters, now that they no longer insulted the sun, had each a wooer within a week.

When the prince got home he found that his wife had just got a fine little boy. He did not lose a moment in pricking the baby's finger till the blood ran, and he brushed it on the wrists of the stone figure, which shuddered all over and split with a loud noise in seven parts and there was the faithful servant alive and well.

When the old king saw this he foamed with rage, stared wildly about, flung himself on the ground and died.

The servant stayed on with his royal master and served him faithfully all the rest of his life; and, if neither of them is dead, he is serving him still.

[From Ungarische Mahrchen.]

The Hairy Man

Somewhere or other, but I don't know where, there lived a king who owned two remarkably fine fields of rape, but every night two of the rape heaps were burnt down in one of the fields. The king was extremely angry at this, and sent out soldiers to catch whoever had set fire to the ricks; but it was all of no use—not a soul could they see. Then he offered nine hundred crowns to anyone who caught the evil-doer, and at the same time ordered that whoever did not keep proper watch over the fields should be killed; but though there were a great many people, none seemed able to protect the fields.

The king had already put ninety-nine people to death, when a little swineherd came to him who had two dogs; one was called 'Psst,' and the other 'Hush'; and the boy told the king that he would watch over the ricks.

When it grew dark he climbed up on the top of the fourth rick, from where he could see the whole field. About eleven o'clock he thought he saw someone going to a rick and putting a light to it. 'Just you wait,' thought he, and called out to his dogs: 'Hi! Psst, Hush, catch him!' But Psst and Hush had not waited for orders, and in five minutes the man was caught.

Next morning he was brought bound before the king, who was so pleased with the boy that he gave him a thousand crowns at once. The prisoner was all covered with hair, almost like an animal; and altogether he was so curious to look at that the king locked him up in a strong room and sent out letters of invitation to all the other kings and princes asking them to come and see this wonder.

That was all very well; but the king had a little boy of ten years old who went to look at the hairy man also, and the man begged so hard to be set free that the boy took pity on him. He stole the key of the strong room from his mother and opened the door. Then he took the key back, but the hairy man escaped and went off into the world.

Then the kings and princes began to arrive one after another, and all were most anxious to see the hairy man; but he was gone! The king nearly burst with rage and with the shame he felt. He questioned his wife sharply, and told her that if she could not find and bring back the hairy man he would put her in a hut made of rushes and burn her there. The queen declared she had had nothing to do with the matter; if her son had happened to take the key it had not been with her knowledge.

So they fetched the little prince and asked him all sorts of questions, and at last he owned that he had let the hairy man out. The king ordered his servants to take the boy into the forest and to kill him there, and to bring back part of his liver and lungs.

There was grief all over the palace when the king's command was known, for he was a great favourite. But there was no help for it, and they took the boy out into the forest. But the man was sorry for him, and shot a dog and carried pieces of his lungs and liver to the king, who was satisfied, and did not trouble himself any more.

The prince wandered about in the forest and lived as best he could for five years. One day he came upon a poor little cottage in which was an old man. They began to talk, and the prince told his story and sad fate. Then they recognised each other, for the old fellow was no other than the hairy man whom the prince had set free, and who had lived ever since in the forest.

The prince stayed here for two years; then he wished to go further. The old man begged him hard to stay, but he would not, so his hairy friend gave him a golden apple out of which came a horse with a golden mane, and a golden staff with which to guide the horse. The old man also gave him a silver apple out of which came the most beautiful hussars and a silver staff; and a copper apple from which he could draw as many foot soldiers as ever he wished, and a copper staff. He made the prince swear solemnly to take the greatest care of these presents, and then he let him go.

The boy wandered on and on till he came to a large town. Here he took service in the king's palace, and as no one troubled themselves about him he lived quietly on.

One day news was brought to the king that he must go out to war. He was horribly frightened for he had a very small army, but he had to go all the same.

When they had all left, the prince said to the housekeeper:

'Give me leave to go to the next village—I owe a small bill there, and I want to go and pay it'; and as there was nothing to be done in the palace the housekeeper gave him leave.

When he got beyond the town he took out his golden apple, and when the horse sprang out he swung himself into the saddle. Then he took the silver and the copper apples, and with all these fine soldiers he joined the king's army.

The king saw them approach with fear in his heart, for he did not know if it might not be an enemy; but the prince rode up, and bowed low before him. 'I bring your Majesty reinforcements,' said he.

The king was delighted, and all dread of his enemy at once disappeared. The princesses were there too, and they were very friendly with the prince and begged him to get into their carriage so as to talk to them. But he declined, and remained on horseback, as he did not know at what moment the battle might begin; and whilst they were all talking together the youngest princess, who was also the loveliest, took off her ring, and her sister tore her handkerchief in two pieces, and they gave these gifts to the prince.

Suddenly the enemy came in sight. The king asked whether his army or the prince's should lead the way; but the prince set off first and with his hussars he fought so bravely that only two of the enemy were left alive, and these two were only spared to act as messengers.

The king was overjoyed and so were his daughters at this brilliant victory. As they drove home they begged the prince to join them, but he would not come, and galloped off with his hussars.

When he got near the town he packed his soldiers and his fine horse all carefully into the apple again, and then strolled into the town. On his return to the palace he was well scolded by the housekeeper for staying away so long.

Well, the whole matter might have ended there; but it so happened that the younger princess had fallen in love with the prince, as he had with her. And as he had no jewels with him, he gave her the copper apple and staff.

One day, as the princesses were talking with their father, the younger one asked him whether it might not have been their servant who had helped him so much. The king was quite angry at the idea; but, to satisfy her, he ordered the servant's room to be searched. And there, to everyone's surprise, they found the golden ring and the half of the handkerchief. When these were brought to the king he sent for the prince at once and asked if it had been he who had come to their rescue.

'Yes, your Majesty, it was I,' answered the prince.

'But where did you get your army?'

'If you wish to see it, I can show it you outside the city walls.'

And so he did; but first he asked for the copper apple from the younger princess, and when all the soldiers were drawn up there were such numbers that there was barely room for them.

The king gave him his daughter and kingdom as a reward for his aid, and when he heard that the prince was himself a king's son his joy knew no bounds. The prince packed all his soldiers carefully up once more, and they went back into the town.

Not long after there was a grand wedding; perhaps they may all be alive still, but I don't know.

To Your Good Health!

Long, long ago there lived a king who was such a mighty monarch that whenever he sneezed every one in the whole country had to say 'To your good health!' Every one said it except the shepherd with the staring eyes, and he would not say it.

The king heard of this and was very angry, and sent for the shepherd to appear before him.

The shepherd came and stood before the throne, where the king sat looking very grand and powerful. But however grand or powerful he might be the shepherd did not feel a bit afraid of him.

'Say at once, "To my good health!"' cried the king.

'To my good health!' replied the shepherd.

'To mine—to mine, you rascal, you vagabond!' stormed the king.

'To mine, to mine, your Majesty,' was the answer.

'But to mine—to my own,' roared the king, and beat on his breast in a rage.

'Well, yes; to mine, of course, to my own,' cried the shepherd, and gently tapped his breast.

The king was beside himself with fury and did not know what to do, when the Lord Chamberlain interfered:

'Say at once—say this very moment: "To your health, your Majesty"; for if you don't say it you'll lose your life, whispered he.

'No, I won't say it till I get the princess for my wife,' was the shepherd's answer. Now the princess was sitting on a little throne beside the king, her father, and she looked as sweet and lovely as a little golden dove. When she heard what the shepherd said she could not help laughing, for there is no denying the fact that this young shepherd with the staring eyes pleased her very much; indeed he pleased her better than any king's son she had yet seen.

But the king was not as pleasant as his daughter, and he gave orders to throw the shepherd into the white bear's pit.

The guards led him away and thrust him into the pit with the white bear, who had had nothing to eat for two days and was very hungry. The door of the pit was hardly closed when the bear rushed at the shepherd; but when it saw his eyes it was so frightened that it was ready to eat itself. It shrank away into a corner and gazed at him from there, and, in spite of being so famished, did not dare to touch him, but sucked its own paws from sheer hunger. The shepherd felt that if he once removed his eyes off the beast he was a dead man, and in order to keep himself awake he made songs and sang them, and so the night went by.

Next morning the Lord Chamberlain came to see the shepherd's bones, and was amazed to find him alive and well. He led him to the king, who

fell into a furious passion, and said: 'Well, you have learned what it is to be very near death, and now will you say "To my good health"?"

But the shepherd answered: 'I am not afraid of ten deaths! I will only say it if I may have the princess for my wife.'

'Then go to your death,' cried the king; and ordered him to be thrown into the den with the wild boars. The wild boars had not been fed for a week, and when the shepherd was thrust into their den they rushed at him to tear him to pieces. But the shepherd took a little flute out of the sleeve of his jacket and began to play a merry tune, on which the wild boars first of all shrank shyly away, and then got up on their hind legs and danced gaily. The shepherd would have given anything to be able to laugh, they looked so funny; but he dared not stop playing, for he knew well enough that the moment he stopped they would fall upon him and tear him to pieces. His eyes were of no use to him here, for he could not have stared ten wild boars in the face at once; so he kept on playing, and the wild boars danced very slowly, as if in a minuet, then by degrees he played faster and faster till they could hardly twist and turn quickly enough, and ended by all falling over each other in a heap, quite exhausted and out of breath.

Then the shepherd ventured to laugh at last; and he laughed so long and so loud that when the Lord Chamberlain came early in the morning, expecting to find only his bones, the tears were still running down his cheeks from laughter.

As soon as the king was dressed the shepherd was again brought before him; but he was more angry than ever to think the wild boars had not torn the man to bits, and he said: 'Well, you have learned what it feels to be near ten deaths, now say "To my good health!"'

But the shepherd broke in with, 'I do not fear a hundred deaths, and I will only say it if I may have the princess for my wife.'

'Then go to a hundred deaths!' roared the king, and ordered the shepherd to be thrown down the deep vault of scythes.

The guards dragged him away to a dark dungeon, in the middle of which was a deep well with sharp scythes all round it. At the bottom of the well was a little light by which one could see if anyone was thrown in whether he had fallen to the bottom.

When the shepherd was dragged to the dungeons he begged the guards to leave him alone a little while that he might look down into the pit of scythes; perhaps he might after all make up his mind to say 'To your good health' to the king. So the guards left him alone and he stuck up his long stick near the well, hung his cloak round the stick and put his hat on the top. He also hung his knapsack up inside the cloak so that it might seem to have some body within it. When this was done he called out to the guards and said that he had considered the matter but after all he could not make up his mind to say what the king wished. The guards came in, threw the hat and cloak, knapsack and stick all down

the well together, watched to see how they put out the light at the bottom and came away, thinking that now there really was an end of the shepherd. But he had hidden in a dark corner and was laughing to himself all the time.

Quite early next morning came the Lord Chamberlain, carrying a lamp and he nearly fell backwards with surprise when he saw the shepherd alive and well. He brought him to the king, whose fury was greater than ever, but who cried:

'Well, now you have been near a hundred deaths; will you say: "To your good health"?''

But the shepherd only gave the same answer:

'I won't say it till the princess is my wife.'

'Perhaps after all you may do it for less,' said the king, who saw that there was no chance of making away with the shepherd; and he ordered the state coach to be got ready, then he made the shepherd get in with him and sit beside him, and ordered the coachman to drive to the silver wood. When they reached it he said: 'Do you see this silver wood? Well, if you will say, "To your good health," I will give it to you.'

The shepherd turned hot and cold by turns, but he still persisted:

'I will not say it till the princess is my wife.'

The king was much vexed; he drove further on till they came to a splendid castle, all of gold, and then he said:

'Do you see this golden castle? Well, I will give you that too, the silver wood and the golden castle, if only you will say that one thing to me: "To your good health."'

The shepherd gaped and wondered and was quite dazzled, but he still said:

'No; I will not say it till I have the princess for my wife.'

This time the king was overwhelmed with grief, and gave orders to drive on to the diamond pond, and there he tried once more.

'Do you see this diamond pond? I will give you that too, the silver wood and the golden castle and the diamond pond. You shall have them all—all—if you will but say: "To your good health!"'

The shepherd had to shut his staring eyes tight not to be dazzled with the brilliant pond, but still he said:

'No, no; I will not say it till I have the princess for my wife.'

Then the king saw that all his efforts were useless, and that he might as well give in, so he said:

'Well, well, it's all the same to me—I will give you my daughter to wife; but, then, you really and truly must say to me: "To your good health."'

'Of course I'll say it; why should I not say it? It stands to reason that I shall say it then.'

At this the king was more delighted than anyone could have believed. He made it known all through the country that there were to be great rejoicings, as the princess was going to be married. And everyone