

The background of the cover is a traditional Chinese painting. It depicts a woman in a red and orange robe standing in a garden. She has her hair styled in a bun and is looking to the right. To her left, there is a red structure, possibly a pavilion or a fence. To her right, there are trees with green leaves and a butterfly. The overall style is characteristic of traditional Chinese ink and wash painting with some color.

The Chinese Fairy Book

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PREFACE



The fairy tales and legends of olden China have in common with the "Thousand and One Nights" an oriental glow and glitter of precious stones and gold and multicolored silks, an oriental wealth of fantastic and supernatural action. And yet they strike an exotic note distinct in itself. The seventy-three stories here presented after original sources, embracing "Nursery Fairy Tales," "Legends of the Gods," "Tales of Saints and Magicians," "Nature and Animal Tales," "Ghost Stories," "Historic Fairy Tales," and "Literary Fairy Tales," probably represent the most comprehensive and varied collection of oriental fairy tales ever made available for American readers. There is no child who will not enjoy their novel color, their fantastic beauty, their infinite variety of subject. Yet, like the "Arabian Nights," they will amply repay the attention of the older reader as well. Some are exquisitely poetic, such as "The Flower-Elves," "The Lady of the Moon" or "The Herd Boy and the Weaving Maiden"; others like "How Three Heroes Came By Their Deaths Because Of Two Peaches," carry us back dramatically and powerfully to the Chinese age of Chivalry. The summits of fantasy are scaled in the quasi-religious dramas of "The Ape Sun Wu Kung" and "Notscha," or the weird sorceries unfolded in "The Kindly Magician." Delightful ghost stories, with happy endings, such as "A Night on the Battlefield" and "The Ghost Who Was Foiled," are paralleled with such idyllic love-tales as that of "Rose of Evening," or such Lilliputian fancies as

“The King of the Ants” and “The Little Hunting Dog.” It is quite safe to say that these Chinese fairy tales will give equal pleasure to the old as well as the young. They have been retold simply, with no changes in style or expression beyond such details of presentation which differences between oriental and occidental viewpoints at times compel. It is the writer’s hope that others may take as much pleasure in reading them as he did in their translation.

Fredrick H. Martens.

NURSERY FAIRY TALES



I

WOMEN'S WORDS PART FLESH AND BLOOD

ONCE upon a time there were two brothers, who lived in the same house. And the big brother listened to his wife's words, and because of them fell out with the little one. Summer had begun, and the time for sowing the high-growing millet had come. The little brother had no grain, and asked the big one to loan him some, and the big one ordered his wife to give it to him. But she took the grain, put it in a large pot and cooked it until it was done. Then she gave it to the little fellow. He knew nothing about it, and went and sowed his field with it. Yet, since the grain had been cooked, it did not sprout. Only a single grain of seed had not been cooked; so only a single sprout shot up. The little brother was hard-working and industrious by nature, and hence he watered and hoed the sprout all day long. And the sprout grew mightily, like a tree, and an ear of millet sprang up out of it like a canopy, large enough to shade half an acre of ground. In the fall the ear was ripe. Then the little brother took his ax and chopped it down. But no sooner had the ear fallen to the ground, than an enormous Roc came rushing down, took the ear in his beak and flew away. The little brother ran after him as far as the shore of the sea.

Then the bird turned and spoke to him like a human being, as follows: "You should not seek to harm me! What is this

one ear worth to you? East of the sea is the isle of gold and silver. I will carry you across. There you may take whatever you want, and become very rich."

The little brother was satisfied, and climbed on the bird's back, and the latter told him to close his eyes. So he only heard the air whistling past his ears, as though he were driving through a strong wind, and beneath him the roar and surge of flood and waves. Suddenly the bird settled on a rock: "Here we are!" he said.

Then the little brother opened his eyes and looked about him: and on all sides he saw nothing but the radiance and shimmer of all sorts of white and yellow objects. He took about a dozen of the little things and hid them in his breast.

"Have you enough?" asked the Roc.

"Yes, I have enough," he replied.

"That is well," answered the bird. "Moderation protects one from harm."

Then he once more took him up, and carried him back again.

When the little brother reached home, he bought himself a good piece of ground in the course of time, and became quite well to do.

But his brother was jealous of him, and said to him, harshly: "Where did you manage to steal the money?"

So the little one told him the whole truth of the matter.

Then the big brother went home and took counsel with his wife.

"Nothing easier," said his wife. "I will just cook grain again and keep back one seedling so that it is not done. Then you shall sow it, and we will see what happens."

No sooner said than done. And sure enough, a single sprout shot up, and sure enough, the sprout bore a single ear of millet, and when harvest time came around, the Roc again appeared and carried it off in his beak. The big brother was pleased, and ran after him, and the Roc said the same thing he had said before, and carried the big brother to the

island. There the big brother saw the gold and silver heaped up everywhere. The largest pieces were like hills, the small ones were like bricks, and the real tiny ones were like grains of sand. They blinded his eyes. He only regretted that he knew of no way by which he could move mountains. So he bent down and picked up as many pieces as possible.

The Roc said: "Now you have enough. You will overtax your strength."

"Have patience but a little while longer," said the big brother. "Do not be in such a hurry! I must get a few more pieces!"

And thus time passed.

The Roc again urged him to make haste: "The sun will appear in a moment," said he, "and the sun is so hot it burns human beings up."

"Wait just a little while longer," said the big brother. But that very moment a red disk broke through the clouds with tremendous power. The Roc flew into the sea, stretched out both his wings, and beat the water with them in order to escape the heat. But the big brother was shrivelled up by the sun.

Note: This fairy-tale is traditionally narrated. The Roc is called *pong* in Chinese, and the treasures on the island are spoken of as "all sorts of yellow and white objects" because the little fellow does not know that they are gold and silver.

II

THE THREE RHYMSTERS

ONCE there were three daughters in a family. The oldest one married a physician, the second one married a magistrate; but the third, who was more than usually intelligent and a clever talker, married a farmer.

Now it chanced, once upon a time, that their parents were celebrating a birthday. So the three daughters came, together with their husbands, to wish them long life and happiness. The parents-in-law prepared a meal for their three sons-in-law, and put the birthday wine on the table. But the oldest son-in-law, who knew that the third one had not attended school, wanted to embarrass him.

“It is far too tiresome,” said he, “just to sit here drinking: let us have a drinking game. Each one of us must invent a verse, one that rimes and makes sense, on the words: ‘in the sky, on the earth, at the table, in the room,’ And whoever cannot do so, must empty three glasses as a punishment.”

All the company were satisfied. Only the third son-in-law felt embarrassed and insisted on leaving. But the guests would not let him go, and obliged him to keep his seat. Then the oldest son-in-law began: “I will make a start with my verse. Here it is:

“In the sky the phenix proudly flies,
On the earth the lambkin tamely lies,
At the table through an ancient book I wade,
In the room I softly call the maid.”

The second one continued: “And I say:

“In the sky the turtle-dove flies round,
On the earth the ox paws up the ground,
At the table one studies the deeds of yore,
In the room the maid she sweeps the floor.”

But the third son-in-law stuttered, and found nothing to say. And when all of them insisted, he broke out in rough tones of voice:

“In the sky—flies a leaden bullet,
On the earth—stalks a tiger-beast,

On the table—lies a pair of scissors,
In the room—I call the stable-boy.”

The other two sons-in-law clapped their hands and began to laugh loudly.

“Why the four lines do not rime at all,” said they, “and, besides they do not make sense. A leaden bullet is no bird, the stable-boy does his work outside, would you call him into the room? Nonsense, nonsense! Drink!”

Yet before they had finished speaking, the third daughter raised the curtain of the women’s room, and stepped out. She was angry, yet she could not suppress a smile.

“How so do our lines not make sense?” said she. “Listen a moment, and I’ll explain them to you: In the sky our leaden bullet will shoot your phenix and your turtle-dove. On the earth our tiger-beast will devour your sheep and your ox. On the table our pair of scissors will cut up all your old books. And finally, in the room—well, the stable-boy can marry your maid!”

Then the oldest son-in-law said: “Well scolded! Sister-in-law, you know how to talk! If you were a man you would have had your degree long ago. And, as a punishment, we will empty our three glasses.”

Note: This is also a fairy-tale traditionally handed down.

III

HOW GREED FOR A TRIFLING THING LED A MAN TO LOSE A GREAT ONE

ONCE upon a time there was an old woman, who had two sons. But her older son did not love his parents, and left his mother and brother. The younger one served her so faithfully, however, that all the people spoke of his filial

affection.

One day it happened that there was a theatrical performance given outside the village. The younger son started to carry his mother there on his back, so that she might look on. But there was a ravine before the village, and he slipped and fell down in the middle of it. And his mother was killed by the rolling stones, and her blood and flesh were sprinkled about everywhere. The son stroked his mother's corpse, and wept bitterly. He was about to kill himself when, suddenly, he saw a priest standing before him.

The latter said: "Have no fear, for I can bring your mother back to life again!" And as he said so, he stooped, gathered up her flesh and bones, and laid them together as they should be. Then he breathed upon them, and at once the mother was alive again. This made the son very happy, and he thanked the priest on his knees. Yet on a sharp point of rock he still saw a bit of his mother's flesh hanging, a bit about an inch long.

"That should not be left hanging there either," said he, and hid it in his breast.

"In truth, you love your mother as a son should," said the priest. Then he bade the son give him the bit of flesh, kneaded a manikin out of it, breathed upon it, and in a minute there it stood, a really fine-looking little boy.

"His name is Small Profit," said he, turning to the son, "and you may call him brother. You are poor and have not the wherewithal with which to nourish your mother. If you need something, Small Profit can get it for you."

The son thanked him once more, then took his mother on his back again, and his new little brother by the hand, and went home. And when he said to Small Profit: "Bring meat and wine!" then meat and wine were at hand at once, and steaming rice was already cooking in the pot. And when he said to Small Profit: "Bring money and cloth!" then his purse filled itself with money, and the chests were heaped

up with cloth to the brim. Whatever he asked for that he received. Thus, in the course of time, they came to be very well off indeed.

But his older brother envied him greatly. And when there was another theatrical performance in the village, he took his mother on his back—by force—and went to it. And when he reached the ravine, he slipped purposely, and let his mother fall into the depths, only intent to see that she really was shattered into fragments. And sure enough his mother had such a bad fall that her limbs and trunk were strewn around in all directions. He then climbed down, took his mother's head in his hands, and pretended to weep.

And at once the priest was on hand again, and said: "I can wake the dead to life again, and surround white bones with flesh and blood!"

Then he did as he had done before, and the mother came to life again. But the older brother already had hidden one of her ribs on purpose. He now pulled it out and said to the priest: "Here is a bone left. What shall I do with it?"

The priest took the bone, enclosed it in lime and earth, breathed upon it, as he had done the other time, and it became a little man, resembling Small Profit, but larger in stature.

"His name is Great Duty," he told his older brother, "if you stick to him he will always lend you a hand."

The son took his mother back again, and Great Duty walked beside him.

When he came to their courtyard door, he saw his younger brother coming out, holding Small Profit in his arms.

"Where are you going?" he said to him.

His brother answered: "Small Profit is a divine being, who does not wish to dwell for all time among men. He wants to fly back to the heavens, and so I am escorting him."

"Give Small Profit to me! Don't let him get away!" cried the older brother.

Yet, before he had ended his speech, Small Profit was rising in the air. The older brother then quickly let his mother drop on the ground, and stretched out his hand to catch Small Profit. But he did not succeed, and now Great Duty, too, rose from the ground, took Small Profit's hand, and together they ascended to the clouds and disappeared. Then the older brother stamped on the ground, and said with a sigh: "Alas, I have lost my Great Duty because I was too greedy for that Small Profit!"

Note: In China—usually on festive days or because of some religious celebration—a provisional stage is erected before the village or temple, and a play given. Permanent theaters are to be found only in the large cities.

IV

WHO WAS THE SINNER?

ONCE upon a time there were ten farmers, who were crossing a field together. They were surprised by a heavy thunder-storm, and took refuge in a half-ruined temple. But the thunder drew ever nearer, and so great was the tumult that the air trembled about them, while the lightning flew around the temple in a continuous circle. The farmers were greatly frightened, and thought that there must be a sinner among them, whom the lightning would strike. In order to find out who it might be, they agreed to hang their straw hats up before the door, and he whose hat was blown away was to yield himself up to his fate.

No sooner were the hats outside, than one of them was blown away, and the rest thrust its unfortunate owner out of doors without pity. But as soon as he had left the temple the lightning ceased circling around, and struck it with a crash.

The one whom the rest had thrust out, had been the only

righteous one among them, and for his sake the lightning had spared the temple. So the other nine had to pay for their hard-heartedness with their lives.

Note: A traditionally narrated fairy-tale.

V

THE MAGIC CASK

ONCE upon a time there was a man who dug up a big, earthenware cask in his field. So he took it home with him and told his wife to clean it out. But when his wife started brushing the inside of the cask, the cask suddenly began to fill itself with brushes. No matter how many were taken out, others kept on taking their place. So the man sold the brushes, and the family managed to live quite comfortably. Once a coin fell into the cask by mistake. At once the brushes disappeared and the cask began to fill itself with money. So now the family became rich; for they could take as much money out of the cask as ever they wished.

Now the man had an old grandfather at home, who was weak and shaky. Since there was nothing else he could do, his grandson set him to work shoveling money out of the cask, and when the old grandfather grew weary and could not keep on, he would fall into a rage, and shout at him angrily, telling him he was lazy and did not want to work. One day, however, the old man's strength gave out, and he fell into the cask and died. At once the money disappeared, and the whole cask began to fill itself with dead grandfathers. Then the man had to pull them all out and have them buried, and for this purpose he had to use up again all the money he had received. And when he was through, the cask broke, and he was just as poor as before.

Note: "The Magic Cask" is a traditionally narrated tale. In Northern China wooden casks or barrels are unknown.

Large vessels, open at the top, of earth or stone are used to hold water and other liquids.

VI

THE FAVORITE OF FORTUNE AND THE CHILD OF ILL LUCK

ONCE upon a time there was a proud prince who had a daughter. But the daughter was a child of ill luck. When it came time for her to marry, she had all her suitors assemble before her father's palace. She was going to throw down a ball of red silk among them, and whoever caught it was to be her husband. Now there were many princes and counts gathered before the castle, and in their midst there was also a beggar. And the princess could see dragons crawling into his ears and crawling out again from his nostrils, for he was a child of luck. So she threw the ball to the beggar and he caught it.

Her father asked angrily: "Why did you throw the ball into the beggar's hands?"

"He is a favorite of Fortune," said the princess, "I will marry him, and then, perhaps, I will share in his good luck."

But her father would not hear of it, and since she insisted, he drove her from the castle in his rage. So the princess had to go off with the beggar. She dwelt with him in a little hut, and had to hunt for herbs and roots, and cook them herself, so that they might have something to eat; and often they both went hungry.

One day her husband said to her: "I will set out and seek my fortune. And when I have found it, I will come back again and fetch you." The princess was willing, and he went away, and was gone for eighteen years. Meanwhile the princess lived in want and affliction, for her father

remained hard and merciless. If her mother had not secretly given her food and money, no doubt she would have starved to death during all that time.

But the beggar found his fortune, and at length became emperor. He returned and stood before his wife. She however, no longer recognized him: She only knew that he was the powerful emperor.

He asked her how she were getting along.

“Why do you ask me how I am getting along?” she replied.

“I am too far beneath your notice.”

“And who may your husband be!”

“My husband was a beggar. He went away to seek his fortune. That was eighteen years ago, and he has not yet returned.”

“And what have you done during all those long years?”

“I have been waiting for him to return.”

“Do you wish to marry some one else, seeing that he has been missing so long?”

“No, I will remain his wife until I die.”

When the emperor saw how faithful his wife was, he told her who he was, had her clothed in magnificent garments, and took her with him to his imperial palace. And there they lived in splendor and happiness.

After a few days the emperor said to his wife: “We spend every day in festivities, as though every day were New Year.”

“And why should we not celebrate,” answered his wife, “since we have now become emperor and empress?”

Yet his wife was a child of ill luck. When she had been empress no more than eighteen days, she fell sick and died. But her husband lived for many a long year.

Note: “The Favorite of Fortune and the Child of Ill Luck” is a traditionally narrated fairy-tale. The dragon is the symbol

of imperial rule, and the New Year's feasts, which old and young celebrate for weeks, is the greatest of Chinese festivals.

VII

THE BIRD WITH NINE HEADS

LONG, long ago, there once lived a king and a queen who had a daughter. One day, when the daughter went walking in the garden, a tremendous storm suddenly came up and carried her away with it. Now the storm had come from the bird with nine heads, who had robbed the princess, and brought her to his cave. The king did not know whither his daughter had disappeared, so he had proclaimed throughout the land: "Whoever brings back the princess may have her for his bride!"

Now a youth had seen the bird as he was carrying the princess to his cave. This cave, though, was in the middle of a sheer wall of rock. One could not climb up to it from below, nor could one climb down to it from above. And as the youth was walking around the rock, another youth came along and asked him what he was doing there. So the first youth told him that the bird with nine heads had carried off the king's daughter, and had brought her up to his cave. The other chap knew what he had to do. He called together his friends, and they lowered the youth to the cave in a basket. And when he went into the cave, he saw the king's daughter sitting there, and washing the wound of the bird with nine heads; for the hound of heaven had bitten off his tenth head, and his wound was still bleeding. The princess, however, motioned to the youth to hide, and he did so. When the king's daughter had washed his wound and bandaged it, the bird with nine heads felt so comfortable, that one after another, all his nine heads fell

asleep. Then the youth stepped forth from his hiding-place, and cut off his nine heads with a sword. But the king's daughter said: "It would be best if you were hauled up first, and I came after."

"No," said the youth. "I will wait below here, until you are in safety." At first the king's daughter was not willing; yet at last she allowed herself to be persuaded, and climbed into the basket. But before she did so, she took a long pin from her hair, broke it into two halves and gave him one and kept the other. She also divided her silken kerchief with him, and told him to take good care of both her gifts. But when the other man had drawn up the king's daughter, he took her along with him, and left the youth in the cave, in spite of all his calling and pleading.

The youth now took a walk about the cave. There he saw a number of maidens, all of whom had been carried off by the bird with nine heads, and who had perished there of hunger. And on the wall hung a fish, nailed against it with four nails. When he touched the fish, the latter turned into a handsome youth, who thanked him for delivering him, and they agreed to regard each other as brothers. Soon the first youth grew very hungry. He stepped out in front of the cave to search for food, but only stones were lying there. Then, suddenly, he saw a great dragon, who was licking a stone. The youth imitated him, and before long his hunger had disappeared. He next asked the dragon how he could get away from the cave, and the dragon nodded his head in the direction of his tail, as much as to say he should seat himself upon it. So he climbed up, and in the twinkling of an eye he was down on the ground, and the dragon had disappeared. He then went on until he found a tortoise-shell full of beautiful pearls. But they were magic pearls, for if you flung them into the fire, the fire ceased to burn and if you flung them into the water, the water divided and you could walk through the midst of it. The youth took the pearls out of the tortoise-shell, and put them in his pocket.

Not long after he reached the sea-shore. Here he flung a pearl into the sea, and at once the waters divided and he could see the sea-dragon. The sea-dragon cried: "Who is disturbing me here in my own kingdom?" The youth answered: "I found pearls in a tortoise-shell, and have flung one into the sea, and now the waters have divided for me." "If that is the case," said the dragon, "then come into the sea with me and we will live there together." Then the youth recognized him for the same dragon whom he had seen in the cave. And with him was the youth with whom he had formed a bond of brotherhood: He was the dragon's son.

"Since you have saved my son and become his brother, I am your father," said the old dragon. And he entertained him hospitably with food and wine.

One day his friend said to him: "My father is sure to want to reward you. But accept no money, nor any jewels from him, but only the little gourd flask over yonder. With it you can conjure up whatever you wish."

And, sure enough, the old dragon asked him what he wanted by way of a reward, and the youth answered: "I want no money, nor any jewels. All I want is the little gourd flask over yonder."

At first the dragon did not wish to give it up, but at last he did let him have it, after all. And then the youth left the dragon's castle.

When he set his foot on dry land again he felt hungry. At once a table stood before him, covered with a fine and plenteous meal. He ate and drank. After he had gone on a while, he felt weary. And there stood an ass, waiting for him, on which he mounted. After he had ridden for a while, the ass's gait seemed too uneven, and along came a wagon, into which he climbed. But the wagon shook him up too, greatly, and he thought: "If I only had a litter! That would suit me better." No more had he thought so, than the litter came along, and he seated himself in it. And the bearers

carried him to the city in which dwelt the king, the queen and their daughter.

When the other youth had brought back the king's daughter, it was decided to hold the wedding. But the king's daughter was not willing, and said: "He is not the right man. My deliverer will come and bring with him half of the long pin for my hair, and half my silken kerchief as a token." But when the youth did not appear for so long a time, and the other one pressed the king, the king grew impatient and said: "The wedding shall take place to-morrow!" Then the king's daughter went sadly through the streets of the city, and searched and searched in the hope of finding her deliverer. And this was on the very day that the litter arrived. The king's daughter saw the half of her silken handkerchief in the youth's hand, and filled with joy, she led him to her father. There he had to show his half of the long pin, which fitted the other exactly, and then the king was convinced that he was the right, true deliverer. The false bridegroom was now punished, the wedding celebrated, and they lived in peace and happiness till the end of their days.

Note: "The Bird With Nine Heads" is a traditionally narrated fairy-tale. The long hair needle is an example of the halved jewel used as a sign of recognition by lovers (see No. [68](#), "Yang Gui Fe"). The "Fish" in the cave is the dragon's son, for like East Indian *Nagaradjas*, the Chinese dragons are often sea-gods. Gourd flasks often occur as magic talismans in Chinese fairy-tales, and spirits who serve their owners are often imprisoned in them. See No. 81.

VIII

THE CAVE OF THE BEASTS

ONCE upon a time there was a family in which there were seven daughters. One day when the father went out to gather wood, he found seven wild duck eggs. He brought them home, but did not think of giving any to his children, intending to eat them himself, with his wife. In the evening the oldest daughter woke up, and asked her mother what she was cooking. The mother said: "I am cooking wild duck eggs. I will give you one, but you must not let your sisters know." And so she gave her one. Then the second daughter woke up, and asked her mother what she was cooking. She said: "Wild duck eggs. If you will not tell your sisters, I'll give you one." And so it went. At last the daughters had eaten all the eggs, and there were none left.

In the morning the father was very angry with the children, and said: "Who wants to go along to grandmother?" But he intended to lead the children into the mountains, and let the wolves devour them there. The older daughters suspected this, and said: "We are not going along!" But the two younger ones said: "We will go with you." And so they drove off with their father. After they had driven a good ways, they asked: "Will we soon get to grandmother's house?" "Right away," said their father. And when they had reached the mountains he told them: "Wait here. I will drive into the village ahead of you, and tell grandmother that you are coming." And then he drove off with the donkey-cart. They waited and waited, but their father did not come. At last they decided that their father would not come back to fetch them, and that he had left them alone in the mountains. So they went further and further into the hills seeking a shelter for the night. Then they spied a great stone. This they selected for a pillow, and rolled it over to the place where they were going to lie down to sleep. And then they saw that the stone was the door to a cave. There was a light in the cave, and they went into it. The light they had seen came from the many precious stones and jewels of every sort in the cave, which belonged to a wolf and a

fox. They had a number of jars of precious stones and pearls that shone by night. The girls said: "What a lovely cave this is! We will lie right down and go to bed." For there stood two golden beds with gold-embroidered covers. So they lay down and fell asleep. During the night the wolf and fox came home. And the wolf said: "I smell human flesh!" But the fox replied: "Oh, nonsense! There are no human beings who can enter our cave. We lock it up too well for that." The wolf said: "Very well, then let us lie down in our beds and sleep." But the fox answered: "Let us curl up in the kettles on the hearth. They still hold a little warmth from the fire." The one kettle was of gold and the other of silver, and they curled up in them.

When the girls rose early in the morning, they saw the wolf and the fox lying there, and were much frightened. And they put the covers on the kettles and heaped a number of big stones on them, so that the wolf and the fox could not get out again. Then they made a fire. The wolf and the fox said: "Oh, how nice and warm it is this morning! How does that happen?" But at length it grew too hot for them. Then they noticed that the two girls had kindled a fire and they cried: "Let us out! We will give you lots of precious stones, and lots of gold, and will do you no harm!" But the girls would not listen to them, and kept on making a bigger fire. So that was the end of the wolf and the fox in the kettles. Then the girls lived happily for a number of days in the cave. But their father was seized with a longing for his daughters, and he went into the mountains to look for them. And he sat right down on the stone in front of the cave to rest, and tapped his pipe against it to empty the ashes. Then the girls within called out: "Who is knocking at our door?" And the father said: "Are those not my daughters' voices?" While the daughters replied: "Is that not our father's voice?" Then they pushed aside the stone and saw that it was their father, and their father was glad to see them once more. He was much surprised to think

that they should have chanced on this cave full of precious stones, and they told him the whole story. Then their father fetched people to help him carry home the jewels. And when they got home, his wife wondered where he had obtained all these treasures. So the father and daughters told her everything, and they became a very wealthy family, and lived happily to the end of their days.

Note: "The Cave of the Beasts" is traditionally narrated.

IX

THE PANTHER

ONCE upon a time there was a widow who had two daughters and a little son. And one day the mother said to her daughters: "Take good care of the house, for I am going to see grandmother, together with your little brother!" So the daughters promised her they would do so, and their mother went off. On her way a panther met her, and asked where she were going.

She said: "I am going with my child to see my mother."

"Will you not rest a bit?" asked the panther.

"No," said she, "it is already late, and it is a long road to where my mother lives."

But the panther did not cease urging her, and finally she gave in and sat down by the road side.

"I will comb your hair a bit," said the panther. And the woman allowed the panther to comb her hair. But as he passed his claws through her hair, he tore off a bit of her skin and devoured it.

"Stop!" cried the woman, "the way you comb my hair hurts!"

But the panther tore off a much larger piece of skin. Now the woman wanted to call for help, but the panther seized and devoured her. Then he turned on her little son and

killed him too, put on the woman's clothes, and laid the child's bones, which he had not yet devoured, in her basket. After that he went to the woman's home, where her two daughters were, and called in at the door: "Open the door, daughters! Mother has come home!" But they looked out through a crack and said: "Our mother's eyes are not so large as yours!"

Then the panther said: "I have been to grandmother's house, and saw her hens laying eggs. That pleases me, and is the reason why my eyes have grown so large."

"Our mother had no spots in her face such as you have."

"Grandmother had no spare bed, so I had to sleep on the peas, and they pressed themselves into my face."

"Our mother's feet are not so large as yours."

"Stupid things! That comes from walking such a distance. Come, open the door quickly!"

Then the daughters said to each other: "It must be our mother," and they opened the door. But when the panther came in, they saw it was not really their mother after all. At evening, when the daughters were already in bed, the panther was still gnawing the bones he had brought with him.

Then the daughters asked: "Mother, what are you eating?"

"I'm eating beets," was the answer.

Then the daughters said: "Oh, mother, give us some of your beets, too! We are so hungry!"

"No," was the reply, "I will not give you any. Now be quiet and go to sleep."

But the daughters kept on begging until the false mother gave them a little finger. And then they saw that it was their little brother's finger, and they said to each other:

"We must make haste to escape else he will eat us as well."

And with that they ran out of the door, climbed up into a tree in the yard, and called down to the false mother:

"Come out! We can see our neighbor's son celebrating his wedding!" But it was the middle of the night.

Then the mother came out, and when she saw that they were sitting in the tree, she called out angrily: "Why, I'm not able to climb!"

The daughters said: "Get into a basket and throw us the rope and we will draw you up!"

The mother did as they said. But when the basket was half-way up, they began to swing it back and forth, and bump it against the tree. Then the false mother had to turn into a panther again, lest she fall down. And the panther leaped out of the basket, and ran away.

Gradually daylight came. The daughters climbed down, seated themselves on the doorstep, and cried for their mother. And a needle-vender came by and asked them why they were crying.

"A panther has devoured our mother and our brother," said the girls. "He has gone now, but he is sure to return and devour us as well."

Then the needle-vender gave them a pair of needles, and said: "Stick these needles in the cushion of the arm chair, with the points up." The girls thanked him and went on crying.

Soon a scorpion-catcher came by; and he asked them why they were crying. "A panther has devoured our mother and brother," said the girls. "He has gone now, but he is sure to return and devour us as well."

The man gave them a scorpion and said: "Put it behind the hearth in the kitchen." The girls thanked him and went on crying.

Then an egg-seller came by and asked them why they were crying. "A panther has devoured our mother and our brother," said the girls. "He has gone now, but he is sure to return and devour us as well."

So he gave them an egg and said: "Lay it beneath the ashes in the hearth." The girls thanked him and went on crying.

Then a dealer in turtles came by, and they told him their tale. He gave them a turtle and said: "Put it in the water-

barrel in the yard." And then a man came by who sold wooden clubs. He asked them why they were crying. And they told him the whole story. Then he gave them two wooden clubs and said: "Hang them up over the door to the street." The girls thanked him and did as the men had told them.

In the evening the panther came home. He sat down in the armchair in the room. Then the needles in the cushion stuck into him. So he ran into the kitchen to light the fire and see what had jabbed him so; and then it was that the scorpion hooked his sting into his hand. And when at last the fire was burning, the egg burst and spurted into one of his eyes, which was blinded. So he ran out into the yard and dipped his hand into the water-barrel, in order to cool it; and then the turtle bit it off. And when in his pain he ran out through the door into the street, the wooden clubs fell on his head and that was the end of him.

Note: "The Panther" in this tale is in reality the same beast as "the talking silver fox" in No. [49](#) , and the fairy-tale is made up of motives to be found in "Little Red Riding-Hood," "The Wolf and the Seven Kids," and "The Vagabonds."

X

THE GREAT FLOOD

ONCE upon a time there was a widow, who had a child. And the child was a kind-hearted boy of whom every one was fond. One day he said to his mother: "All the other children have a grandmother, but I have none. And that makes me feel very sad!"

"We will hunt up a grandmother for you," said his mother. Now it once happened that an old beggar-woman came to the house, who was very old and feeble. And when the child

saw her, he said to her: "You shall be my grandmother!" And he went to his mother and said: "There is a beggar-woman outside, whom I want for my grandmother!" And his mother was willing and called her into the house; though the old woman was very dirty. So the boy said to his mother: "Come, let us wash grandmother!" And they washed the woman. But she had a great many burrs in her hair, so they picked them all out and put them in a jar, and they filled the whole jar. Then the grandmother said: "Do not throw them away, but bury them in the garden. And you must not dig them up again before the great flood comes." "When is the great flood coming?" asked the boy. "When the eyes of the two stone lions in front of the prison grow red, then the great flood will come," said the grandmother.

So the boy went to look at the lions, but their eyes were not yet red. And the grandmother also said to him: "Make a little wooden ship and keep it in a little box." And this the boy did. And he ran to the prison every day and looked at the lions, much to the astonishment of the people in the street.

One day, as he passed the chicken-butcher's shop, the butcher asked him why he was always running to the lions. And the boy said: "When the lions' eyes grow red then the great flood will come." But the butcher laughed at him. And the following morning, quite early, he took some chicken-blood and rubbed it on the lions' eyes. When the boy saw that the lions' eyes were red he ran swiftly home, and told his mother and grandmother. And then his grandmother said: "Dig up the jar quickly, and take the little ship out of its box." And when they dug up the jar, it was filled with the purest pearls and the little ship grew larger and larger, like a real ship. Then the grandmother said: "Take the jar with you and get into the ship. And when the great flood comes, then you may save all the animals that are driven into it; but human beings, with their black heads, you are not to

save." So they climbed into the ship, and the grandmother suddenly disappeared.

Now it began to rain, and the rain kept falling more and more heavily from the heavens. Finally there were no longer any single drops falling, but just one big sheet of water which flooded everything.

Then a dog came drifting along, and they saved him in their ship. Soon after came a pair of mice, with their little ones, loudly squeaking in their fear. And these they also saved.

The water was already rising to the roofs of the houses, and on one roof stood a cat, arching her back and mewling pitifully. They took the cat into the ship, too. Yet the flood increased and rose to the tops of the trees. And in one tree sat a raven, beating his wings and cawing loudly. And him, too, they took in. Finally a swarm of bees came flying their way. The little creatures were quite wet, and could hardly fly. So they took in the bees on their ship. At last a man with black hair floated by on the waves. The boy said: "Mother, let us save him, too!" But the mother did not want to do so. "Did not grandmother tell us that we must save no black-headed human beings?" But the boy answered: "We will save the man in spite of that. I feel sorry for him, and cannot bear to see him drifting along in the water." So they also saved the man.

Gradually the water subsided. Then they got out of their ship, and parted from the man and the beasts. And the ship grew small again and they put it away in its box.

But the man was filled with a desire for the pearls. He went to the judge and entered a complaint against the boy and his mother, and they were both thrown into jail. Then the mice came, and dug a hole in the wall. And the dog came through the hole and brought them meat, and the cat brought them bread, so they did not have to hunger in their prison. But the raven flew off and returned with a letter for the judge. The letter had been written by a god, and it said: "I wandered about in the world of men disguised as a

beggar woman. And this boy and his mother took me in. The boy treated me like his own grandmother, and did not shrink from washing me when I was dirty. Because of this I saved them out of the great flood by means of which I destroyed the sinful city wherein they dwelt. Do you, O judge, free them, or misfortune shall be your portion!" So the judge had them brought before him, and asked what they had done, and how they had made their way through the flood. Then they told him everything, and what they said agreed with the god's letter. So the judge punished their accuser, and set them both at liberty. When the boy had grown up he came to a city of many people, and it was said that the princess intended to take a husband. But in order to find the right man, she had veiled herself, and seated herself in a litter, and she had had the litter, together with many others, carried into the market place. In every litter sat a veiled woman, and the princess was in their midst. And whoever hit upon the right litter, he was to get the princess for his bride. So the youth went there, too, and when he reached the market place, he saw the bees whom he had saved from the great flood, all swarming about a certain litter. Up he stepped to it, and sure enough, the princess was sitting in it. And then their wedding was celebrated, and they lived happily ever afterward.

Note: "The Great Flood" is traditionally narrated and a diluvian legend seems to underlie it. Compare with Grimm's fairy-tale (No. 73) "The Queen of the Bees."

XI

THE FOX AND THE TIGER

ONCE a fox met a tiger. The latter bared his teeth, stretched out his claws, and was about to devour him. But