



THE MAGICIAN AND HIS PUPIL

A STORY FOR CHILDREN

FROM THE GERMAN

OF A. GODIN.



HERE was once a poor shoemaker renowned far and wide as a drunkard. He had a good wife and many daughters, but only one son. As soon as this son was old enough his mother dressed him in his best clothes, combed his hair until it shone, and then led him far, far away, for she wished to take him to the capital, and there apprentice him to a master who would teach him a really good trade.

When they had accomplished about half their journey they met a man in black, who asked whither they were going and the object of their journey. On being told, he offered to take the boy as his apprentice, but as he had not given the customary Christian greeting, and would not mention the name of his trade, also because the mother thought there was a wicked gleam in his eyes, she declined to trust him with her son. As he persisted in his offer they were rude, then he troubled them no further.

Shortly after leaving the old man they came to a wide stretch of land, solitary and barren as a desert, over which they journeyed until hunger, thirst, and fatigue compelled them to rest. Exhausted, they sank on the sandy ground and wept bitterly. Suddenly, at a short distance from them arose a large stone, on whose surface stood a dish of smoking roast beef, a loaf of white bread, and a jug of foaming ale.

Eagerly the weary travellers hastened

forward. Alas! the moment they moved, meat and drink vanished, leaving the stone bare and barren; but as soon as they stepped back, the food again made its appearance. After this had happened several times the shoemaker's son guessed what was at the bottom of it. Pointing his stick of aspen wood—a wood, by the way, very powerful against enchantment—he cautiously approached the stone, and thrust his stick into that place on the earth where the shadow of the stone rested.

Immediately the stone with everything on it disappeared, and in the place where the shadow had lain stood the stranger in black who had met them earlier in the day. He bowed politely to the youth and requested him to remove his stick.

"No, that I will not do! This time the stone has met its match! You are a magician, or at least a necromancer. You locked us in this desert and amused yourself with our misery. Now you shall be treated as you deserve. You shall stand here for a year and six weeks, until you are as dry as the stick with which I have nailed you to the earth."

"Loose me, I entreat you!"

"Yes, on certain conditions! First, you must once more become a stone, and on the stone must appear everything we have already seen."

The magician immediately vanished, and in his stead appeared the stone covered with a white cloth, and bearing the hot roast beef,

white bread, and foaming ale, of which the travellers ate and drank to their hearts' content. When they had finished the stone became the man in black, who entreated piteously to be unnailed.

"I will unnailed you directly," said the youth, "but only on one condition. You must take me as apprentice for three years as you yourself formerly proposed, and give me a pledge that you will really teach me all your art."

The magician bowed himself to the earth, dug his fingers into the sand, and drew forth a handful of ducats, which he threw into the boy's cap.

"Thanks," replied the youth; "this money will be very useful to my mother, but you must give me a better pledge than that. I must have a piece of your ear."

"Will nothing else serve?"

"Nothing!"

"Well, then," said the magician, "take your knife."

"I have no knife with me," replied the youth; "you must lend me yours."

The magician obediently lent his knife, and bent his right ear towards the youth.

"No, no, I want the left ear; you offer the right far too willingly."

The magician then offered his left ear; and the youth cut off a slant piece, laid it in his wallet, and then drew his stick out of the ground.

The magician groaned, rubbed his mutilated ear, then, turning a somersault, changed himself into a black cock, ordered the youth to take his mother back, and return at midnight and await his arrival at the cross-road where they now stood, when he would take him home and teach him for three years. The cock then flapped his wings, changed into a magpie, and flew away.

When the youth had accompanied his mother to the next village he kissed her hands and feet, shook the gold into her apron, and begged her to call for him in three years at the place where he had made his agreement with the magician. He then

hastened back and reached the cross-road just at midnight.

Being very tired, he leaned against the mile-stone to await the arrival of his master. He waited long, then as no one came, he drew the piece of the magician's ear from his wallet and bit it hard. At this the mile-stone staggered, cracked, and roared. The youth sprang quickly aside, looked at the inscription, and cried: "Ho! ho! Is that you, master?"

"Of course, it is! But why did you bite me?" asked the magician.

"Take human form instantly!" replied the youth.

"I have done so!" With this the man in black stood on the cross-road. "Now we will go home," said he. "I take you as my pupil,



"THE MILE-STONE STAGGERED, CRACKED, AND ROARED."

but remember, from this moment you remain my pupil and servant, until, the three years ended, your mother fetches you away."

Thus the youth became the magician's pupil. You wish to know how he taught him his art? Well, so be it. He stretched his hands and feet, turned him into a paper bag, and then left him to return to his proper shape as best he could. Or else, he thrust his hand and arm up to the shoulder down the youth's throat, turned him inside out, and left him to turn himself right.

The youth learnt so well, that at the end of the three years his skill in magic surpassed even that of his master. During this time many parents had come to fetch their children, for the magician had quite a crowd

of pupils, but the cunning old man always contrived that they went away without them. Three days before the time appointed for the shoemaker's wife to fetch her son, the youth met her on the road and told her how to recognise him.

"Remember, dearest mother," said he, "when the magician calls his horses together, a fly will buzz over my ear; when the doves fly down, I shall not eat of the peas; and when the maidens stand around you, a brown mole will make its appearance above my eyebrow! Be sure you remember this, or you will destroy us both."

When the shoemaker's wife demanded her son of the magician, he blew a brazen trumpet towards all four corners of the world. Immediately a crowd of coal-black horses rushed forward; they were not, however, real horses, but enchanted scholars.

"Find your son — then you can take him with you!" said the magician.

The mother went from horse to horse, trying hard to recognise her son; she trembled at the mere thought that she might make a mistake, and thus destroy both herself and her beloved child. At length she noted a fly buzzing over the ear of one of the horses, and cried, joyfully: "That is my son!"

"Right," said the magician; "now guess again." So saying he blew a silver trumpet towards the corners of the earth, and threw on the ground half a bushel of peas. Then like some vast cloud down flew a flock of doves, and began eagerly picking up the peas. The shoemaker's wife looked at dove after dove, until she found one that only appeared to eat. "That is my son!" said she.

"Right again! Now comes the third and

last trial. Guess right, and your son goes with you; guess wrong, and he remains with me for ever." The magician then blew his trumpet, and immediately beautiful songs resounded through the air. At the same time lovely maidens approached and surrounded the shoemaker's wife. They were all crowned with cornflowers, and wore white robes with rose-coloured girdles.

The shoemaker's wife examined each carefully, and saw a brown mole over the right eye of the most beautiful. "This is my son!" she exclaimed.



"THE SHOEMAKER'S WIFE LOOKED AT DOVE AFTER DOVE."

Scarcely had she spoken than the maiden changed into her son, threw himself into her arms, and thanked her for his deliverance. The other maidens flew away, and the mother and son returned home.

The student of magic had not been long at home before he discovered that in his father's house Want was a constant guest. The money given by the magician had long since come to an end, for the shoemaker had spent it all in drink.

"What have you learnt in foreign parts?"

he asked his son. "What help am I to expect from you?"

"I have learned magic, and will give you help enough. I can at your wish change myself into all possible shapes, to-day into a falcon, to-morrow into a greyhound, a nightingale, a sheep, or any other form. Lead me as an animal to market, and there sell me, but be sure always to bring back the rope with which you led me thither, and never desire me to become a horse: the money thus acquired would be useless to you, and you would make me, and through me yourself, unhappy."

Thereupon the shoemaker demanded a falcon for sale; his son at once disappeared, and a splendid falcon sat on the father's shoulder. The shoemaker took the bird to market, where he sold it to a hunter for a good price, but on returning home, he found his son seated at the table enjoying a good dinner.

When the money thus gained had been spent to the last farthing, the shoemaker required a greyhound, which he again sold to a hunter, and on his return home found his son had arrived there before him.

Thus the father led his son to market again and again, as an ox, a cow, a sheep, a goose, a turkey, and in many other animal forms. One day he thought: "I should very much like to know why my son does not wish to become a horse! Surely he takes me for a fool, and grudges me the best prize!" He was half drunk when he thought this, and then and there desired his son to become a horse. Hardly had he spoken than his wish was gratified: a splendid horse stood before the window; he dug his hoofs deep into the ground, whilst his eyes shot forth lightning, and flames issued from his nostrils.

The shoemaker mounted and rode into the town. Here a merchant stopped him, admired the horse, and offered to give the animal's weight in gold if his master would only sell him. They went together to a pair of scales; the merchant shook gold from a sack on one of the wooden scales, whilst the shoemaker made his horse mount on the other. As he was starting in amazement at the heap of gold in the scales, one of the chains broke, and the gold pieces rolled over the street. The shoemaker threw himself on the ground to pick them up, and forgot both the horse and bridle.

The merchant meanwhile mounted the horse, and galloped out of the town, digging his spurs into the poor animal's sides until the blood flowed, and beating him cruelly

with a steel riding-whip, for this merchant was none other than the magician, who thus revenged himself for the piece cut from his ear.

The poor horse was quite exhausted when the magician arrived with him at his invisible dwelling; this house, it is true, stood in an open field, yet no one could see it. The horse was then led to the stable, whilst the magician considered how he might best torture him.

But while the magician was considering, the horse, who knew what a terrible fate awaited him, succeeded in throwing the bridle over a nail, on which it remained hanging, thus enabling him to draw his head out. He fled across the field, and changing into a gold ring, threw himself before the feet of a beautiful Princess just returning from bathing.

The Princess stooped, picked up the gold circle, slipped it on her finger, and then looked around in wonder. In the meantime, the magician—changed into a Grecian merchant—came up and courteously asked the Princess to return the gold ring he had lost. Terrified at the sight of his black beard and gleaming eyes, the Princess screamed aloud, and pressed the ring to her breast.

Alarmed by her cries, her attendants and playmates, who were waiting near, hastened up and formed a circle round their beloved Princess. But as soon as they understood the cause of her distress, they threw themselves on the importunate stranger, and began tickling him in such a manner that he laughed, cried, giggled, coughed, and at length danced over the ground like a maniac, forgetting through sheer distress that he was still a magician.

When, however, he did remember it, he changed himself into a hedgehog, and stuck his bristles into the maidens until their blood flowed, and they were glad to leave him alone.

Meanwhile the Princess hastened home and showed her father the ring, which pleased her so much that she wore it on her heart finger night and day. Once when playing with it, the ring slipped from her hand, fell to the ground and sprang in pieces, when, oh, wonder! before her stood a handsome youth, the magician's pupil.

At first the Princess was very troubled, and did not venture to raise her eyes, but when the scholar had told her everything she was satisfied, conversed with him a long while, and promised to ask her father to have



" HE DANCED OVER THE GROUND LIKE A MANIAC. "

the magician driven away by the dogs should he ever come to demand the ring. When in the course of the day the magician came, the King, in spite of all his daughter's entreaties, ordered the ring to be given up.

With tears in her eyes the Princess took the ring (the scholar had resumed this form immediately after relating his adventures) and threw it at the merchant's feet. It shivered into little pearls.

Trembling with rage, the merchant threw himself on the ground in the shape of a hen, picked up the pearls, and when he saw no more, flew out of the window, flapped his wings, cried: "Kikeriki! Scholar, are you here?" and then soared into the air.

Having been told by the scholar what to do should she be compelled to return the ring, the Princess had let her handkerchief fall at the same moment she threw the ring on the ground, and two of the largest pearls had rolled beneath it. She now took out these pearls, and they immediately called, in mocking imitation of the hen's voice:—

"Kikeriki! I am here!"

They then changed into a hawk and chased after the hen. Seizing it with his sharp talons, he bit its left wing with such force that all the feathers cracked, and the hen fell like a stone into the water, where it was drowned.

The hawk then returned to the Princess, perched on her shoulder, gazed fondly into her eyes, and then became once more the young and handsome scholar. The Princess had grown so fond of him that she chose him as her husband, and from that moment he gave up magic for ever. In his prosperity he did not forget his relations—his mother lived with him and the Princess in their magnificent palace, his sisters married wealthy merchants, and even his father was content.

When the old King died the magician's pupil became King over the land, and lived so happily with his wife and children, and all his subjects, that no pen can write, no song sing, and no story tell of half their happiness.