



A STORY
FOR CHILDREN.

FROM THE FRENCH.

IN a distant country lived a young shepherd named Kletch. Although poor he was not unhappy, for he was good and generous.

One day, as he was with his flock upon some waste ground, an old woman came along.

When Kletch saw her he took off his cap politely and said: "Good-day, mother!"

"You are a well-mannered youth," returned the old woman, in a cracked voice. "Now, give me one of those sheep; you will never repent it if you will oblige me by doing so."

"Very well. Choose for yourself," said Kletch.

The old woman chose a sheep. Then, drawing from under her cloak an exceedingly large umbrella, which had evidently been mended many times, she said: "Here is something in return for your kindness. At the right time, and in the proper place, don't forget to use it, and be sure *never to promise anything unconditionally.*"

With that the old woman went off. Kletch was greatly mystified by her peculiar behaviour and strange speech, but he took care of the umbrella.

Another time Kletch was pasturing his sheep on a lonely plain when another old woman came along.

The young man removed his cap as before. "Will you be kind enough to give me two sheep?" said the old woman.

"Choose them for yourself, mother," replied Kletch. The woman quickly chose two sheep. As she was going away she turned to the shepherd and placed in his hands an old handkerchief big enough to serve as a tablecloth. "Here," remarked she, "is something in return for your generosity. Use it at the proper time and place, but *never promise anything unconditionally.*"

Kletch took care of the handkerchief.

Another day, as he was taking his sheep up a rugged cliff, a third old woman made her appearance. After being saluted most politely by Kletch she coolly asked him for three sheep.

"Dear me," thought the poor fellow, "if this kind of thing goes on much longer I shall soon be rid of the whole flock."

But he could not refuse to do a kindness, so again he said: "Choose, good mother."

Without the least hesitation the old woman chose three sheep. Then, before she disappeared with them, she gave Kletch a common-looking bottle, saying as she did so: "Take this in return. At the proper place and time don't forget to use it, and be sure that you *never promise anything unconditionally.*"

Kletch put the bottle in his but by the side of his other queer presents, and thought no more of the matter.

About this time the King's daughter attained the age at which Princesses are usually married. She was extremely beautiful, but had the not uncommon desire that everybody and everything should be subject to her wishes.

When the King proposed a powerful Prince as a possible husband for her she said, "Sire, I have made up my mind to marry no man who cannot command the rain."

The King was very angry. "Where do you imagine I am to find such a man?" he exclaimed. "You may just as well say that you will not marry at all!"

"I am determined not to yield on this point," replied the Princess, in a tone which told her father that further argument would be useless.

"Very well," said the King; "I will see what can be done."

Even Kletch, in his remote country home, heard of the Princess's extraordinary idea. He left his sheep to the care of his dog and set off for town.

"Here," he said to himself, "is an opportunity for using my umbrella."

The rain was pouring down. But the umbrella was as big as a tent, and the lad thought that he should be well protected.

As he grasped the huge thing he said:—

"What a miserable day for a journey!"

The rain ceased immediately.

"How very curious!" said Kletch.

He was startled by a hoarse voice, which said:—

"I am at your service; but in return you must promise to marry my daughter."

"All right!" answered Kletch; "I promise, but only on one condition."

"What is that?" asked the voice.

"That I will tell you at the proper time."

Kletch continued his journey. Having reached the Royal castle he heard a herald announcing, with a flourish of trumpets, that any man who could make the rain fall or cease at pleasure should be the Princess's husband. No man offered himself. Then Kletch stepped forward and was brought into the courtyard. Rain was pouring in torrents. The King and his daughter were looking down from a grand balcony. When the Princess saw the poorly-dressed young man she called out:—

"What does this beggar want? Give him

his alms and send him off about his business."

"I am not a beggar," said Kletch.

"Well, what do you want?" inquired the King.

"To be your Majesty's son-in-law."

"Are you mad?"

"No, I am thankful to say."

"Be off!" roared the King.

The rain had ceased, and at this moment the sky was clear. But Kletch opened his umbrella, and again the rain fell in torrents.

"Wonderful!" remarked the King.

"Dear me!" exclaimed the Princess.

Kletch closed his umbrella, and the rain



stopped at once. The Princess was rather frightened. Her father began to scold her.

"You see now," he said, "into what a scrape your ridiculous notion has brought us. Here am I pledged to take this man into our family."

"Don't worry," said the Princess. "No harm is done yet." Then, turning to the young shepherd, she asked:—

"What is your name?"

"K l e t c h, madam, at your service."

"Well, Kletch, I admit that you have an exceptional power, but I have decided only to marry a man who can govern the wind."

Then she and her father retired from the balcony and Kletch had to go away.

He felt sad. All night long instead of sleeping he thought of the beautiful Princess. At an early hour the next morning he returned to the town. This time he brought with him the handkerchief which he had received for the two sheep.

As he walked quickly along a strong wind began to blow. "What miserable weather for a journey!" thought Kletch, and it so happened that at that moment he took from his pocket the enormous handkerchief.

The wind dropped immediately.

"How strange!" said the youth.

Then a voice spoke. "I am at your service," it said; "but promise in return to marry my daughter."

"I may do so," replied Ketch, "upon one condition."

"What is that?" inquired the voice, amid shrill, whistling sounds.

"I will name the condition at the proper time."

Kletch went on until he reached the castle. When the Princess saw him coming

she called to him: "I have not changed my mind. If you cannot control the wind, it is of no use for you to come here."

The young man touched his handkerchief. Up sprang a hurricane, which shook all the chimneys and caused all the windows to rattle.

"Look at that!" said the King.

"Dear me!" remarked his daughter.

Kletch drew the handkerchief from his pocket. The storm ceased as suddenly as it had begun.

"You certainly possess a great power," said the Princess. She began to feel some interest in this young man. Looking at him with more attention than she had hitherto bestowed upon him she saw that, in spite of his rags, he was a fine fellow, straight and handsome as the greatest noble at the Court. "However," she continued, "I shall only wed a man who can command the sun."

Kletch went away in low spirits. He had fallen in love with the Princess, and thoughts of her again banished sleep from his eyes.

At daybreak the next morning he was on his way

to town. The sun shone brightly. "How hot it is!" thought Kletch. "I shall be melted before I reach the castle!"

Feeling very thirsty, he took out the little bottle which had been given him for the three sheep, intending to drink its contents. At once a thick vapour proceeded from the bottle, formed as it condensed into a big



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"AT ONCE A THICK VAPOUR PROCEEDED FROM THE BOTTLE."

white cloud, and totally obscured the sun's rays.

"What an extraordinary thing!" said the shepherd. Then a voice said: "I am at your service; but you must promise to marry my daughter."

Kletch, as before, agreed to this proposition, but only upon a condition which he refused to state.

When he drew near to the castle he saw the Princess coming to meet him. "You may as well go back," she said, "for, of course, you can't command the sun!"

The sun at that moment was covered by thick clouds. Kletch took his bottle. Immediately

her lowly lover. "I can speedily put *that* right. Will you marry me if I can prove that for your sake I refuse three wives?"

"How am I to believe you?" returned the Princess. "Certainly you are not bad-looking, but what woman could wish to bear your name?"

"Patience!" said Kletch.

He opened his big umbrella, and down came the rain.

"Bring out your daughter!" he cried.



"'I PROMISED TO MARRY HER,' SAID KLETCH,
'ON ONE CONDITION.'"

the clouds melted away and the sun shone in full splendour.

The Princess was troubled and perplexed. How *could* she marry a poor, miserable shepherd? She tried to show Kletch how impossible such a union would be.

Kletch scarcely knew what to say. "I love you," he remarked; "is not that enough?"

The Princess did not think so. She was proud of her birth and rank.

"Ah!" she exclaimed. "Am I to marry a fellow whom nobody else will have?"

"Is that all that troubles you?" said

A woman appeared. Her face resembled that of a frog; her complexion was green, her hair wet, and she shivered beneath her rain-soaked clothing.

"I promised to marry this woman," said Kletch to the Princess, "but only upon one condition."

"What was that?"

"That I liked her; I do *not* like her, therefore I reject her."

He closed his umbrella. The rain ceased to fall, and the woman, weeping bitterly, disappeared. The shepherd touched his handkerchief. Up sprang the wind.

"Bring forth your daughter!" cried Kletch.

Immediately there appeared a tremendous, balloon-like person, with ugly, inflated cheeks,

"I promised to marry *her*," said Kletch. "on one condition."

"What was it?"

"That I liked her. I do *not* like her, so I refuse to wed her."

He waved the handkerchief. The wind grew silent and the daughter flew away like an air-ball.

Kletch took out his bottle, and straightway the sun smiled.

"Bring forth your daughter!" cried the youth.

A tall woman, with red hair, a face like a pumpkin, and eyes like glowing coals, presented herself.

"The sun wishes me to be his son-in-law,"

have a son-in-law who could control the weather, was about to embrace him, when he was stopped by his daughter.

"You have great power," said she to her lover, "and hitherto you have done all that I have asked. There is just one more thing which I hope you will not refuse me."

"What is it?" asked Kletch, in great excitement.

"It is this: that when we are married I shall regulate the weather!"



"THE PRINCESS EXTENDED TO HIM HER LOVELY HAND."

said Kletch to the Princess, "but I have made one condition."

"What is that?"

"That his daughter should please me; she does *not* please me, therefore I reject her."

He waved the bottle, whereupon a dense mass of clouds covered both the sun and his daughter.

Then Kletch fell at the Princess's feet. The kind-hearted old King, who began to think that it would be rather a fine thing to

present at the wedding, which was the grandest ever known.

When the good old King died Kletch was supposed to reign in his stead. As a matter of fact, it was the Queen, his wife, who really governed.

This state of things was so entirely satisfactory to both parties, and also to all their loyal subjects, that ever since their time it has been the custom, nearly all over the world, for ladies to have the upper hand.