

FAIRY TALES OF THE WORLD;
OR,
HITHER AND THITHER ON A BROOMSTICK.

By NIMBUS.



INTRODUCTION.

A PASSING glance at the title of these papers might call forth the remark that fairy tales are mere tricks with which to silence children, or send them to sleep, but have no power to instruct or give pleasure to sensible girls.

Should such a sentence be pronounced, I should be sorry, as long observation has convinced me that the human mind is no more a despiser of nourishing food than is the stomach, and in one case as in the other, change from time to time is necessary in order to avoid weariness and satiety. To satisfy this longing let the magic of the imagination take for a time the place of heavy reading, let the weary brain be interested and amused with beautiful shadows on the wall.

The human mind is so constituted that it cannot be satisfied with facts alone—it has a love of the wonderful and the extraordinary which nothing can quench, and this love is confined to no age.

All must have witnessed how a child will leave its most interesting game of play for a fairy tale; I have seen the street arabs gather round one who had the power of telling a tale well, and listen with excited attention for an hour at a stretch, while instruction in any other form would so have wearied them that they would have taken the first opportunity of slinking away.

Fairy tales are not of such a nature that they could have taken place in the common everyday world; on the contrary, they idealise life, and represent it under certain conditions given to them by the imagination, and for just so long as it desires it.

There is no monotony in the life they describe, which varies according to the times, customs, and ways of thinking of the period delineated; and its interest depends greatly on the richness of the mind of the narrator.

What would a nation of thoughtful people be without fancy?

There are times when even our greatest

reasoners and statesmen throw aside their facts and heavy reading, to indulge themselves in the luxury of dreaming, and to give rein to their imagination.

As a rule, the tone of fairy tales is good and pleasant to every class of mind; and to those who look below the surface, a large amount of knowledge is to be gained of the struggles and temptations of the peoples in ages gone by, as well as of the character of their occupations and surroundings.

Such, I hope, may be found in the following, which in many ways of telling I have heard from very old people of the Black Forest, and which I shall call—

THE HEART OF
STONE;

OR,

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN GOOD
AND EVIL.

PART I.

IN the days of long ago, even as now, the inhabitants of the Black Forest were worth studying. They were readily distinguished from other people by their dress, their manners, and their occupations. They were somewhat rough in their ways; but they had the character of being honest, earnest, and straightforward.

Their dress was picturesque. Those who were glassblowers and clockmakers lived chiefly in that part of the Forest which belonged to Baden, and were easily recognised by their pointed hats with broad brims, long black waistcoats, enormous pantaloons, and red stockings. Many of them had that sort of education which much travelling gives, for they were compelled to visit foreign lands in order to find markets for their clocks.

In another part of the Forest dwelt people of the same race, but owing perhaps to occupation they differed greatly from those already described.

These were woodcutters and charcoal burners, and were often seen floating their rafts of long timber down the Neckar and the Rhine. As a rule, the men wore long dark linen waistcoats, green braces about the width of a hand over the breast, breeches of black leather, and boots which came up over the knee, and were perhaps the largest ever worn by man.

These two branches of the same race, differing as they did in many ways, were alike in that they had a firm belief in the supernatural; and there was not one inhabitant who did not acknowledge the existence of a good and evil influence ever active in their Forest. The first of these, whenever it took bodily shape, assumed that of a very little man whose form was

of the finest glass, and those who had had a passing glance of him averred that his garments were exactly like those of the glassblowers, only that they were made of glass. The second or evil influence went by the name of Giant Michael, and was said to move about in the dress of the woodcutters.

With these few words of explanation I beg you to come with me; the travelling shall cost you but sixpence a month, and whether it be on a broomstick or by means of a magic wand, your comfort shall be considered.

Our first resting-place shall be with a party of charcoal burners in the Black Forest, and we will listen to what they can tell us of the two spirits of the Forest, and their influence upon the inhabitants.

"Oh, yes," said one of the charcoal burners, in answer to a question put by me; "some of us are getting old now, but we could all tell you of wonderful things done by the little Glass-man and Giant Michael—not that we ever saw them, for they don't abide with us in bodily shape so much now as in the days gone by; but our fathers and grandfathers used to tell with hushed voices, as we sat round these charcoal fires, what they had seen and heard of them and their doings till we were most afraid to stir. I very well remember hearing my grandfather tell about one of his comrades, who had dealings with both of these Forest spirits; and if you would like to hear the story I'll do my best to tell it as he told it to me."

"Thank you, that is just what we should like," and having settled ourselves into an attitude of attention, the old man began—

"Just across yonder lived the widow of a charcoal burner with one son; he was a dissatisfied, discontented sort of fellow, always hankering after fine clothes and money. Instead of spending his evenings at home when work was done, he passed them at the village public-house with idle, disreputable companions.

"This foolish young fellow, whose name was Wilhelm Mummell, spent his days and nights in useless longings for money; he began to neglect his work, for which he was losing all taste, and thought over every plan for making haste to be rich.

"All at once the thought darted through his mind that he had heard his father speak of some neighbours who had become suddenly rich by appealing either to the little Glass-man or to Giant Michael; and he determined to ask his mother to tell him all she knew of the former and his power.

"She had not much to communicate, but that little was important. He dwelt in the highest part of the Forest, and would only appear to those who were born on a Sunday between eleven and two, and who addressed him in proper form; and in this respect he (Wilhelm) was a suitable person, having been born on a Sunday at midday.

"Overjoyed at this thought, they tried to call to mind the rhyme, for they certainly had heard it at some time or another, but without avail—they could only manage the first two lines.

"Nothing daunted, Wilhelm one day put on his Sunday best, and, without a word to anyone, set forth on his journey to the high firs, which occupied a space about two miles in circumference.

"There was no house near, for the people were superstitious, and considered it would be unsafe to live in the neighbourhood. The

trees here were certainly the finest in the Forest, but no one cared to cut them down, for any attempt to do so had invariably been followed by misfortune. This, perhaps, accounted for the size and thickness of the firs, which caused midday to be almost as dark as night; and, there is no denying it, Wilhelm began to tremble, and was exceedingly afraid. Not a sound of voice or footfall disturbed the silence; the very birds avoided the spot.

"At length the young man found himself before a tree of wonderful size, and concluded that this must be the dwelling-place of the little Glass-man. So he took off his Sunday hat and made a deep bow, saying, in a low and trembling tone—

"I wish you good evening, sir."

"Not a word came in answer, everything was absolutely silent.

"Perhaps," said Wilhelm, "I had better try to repeat the lines," and began—

"Keeper of treasure in the Forest so green,
Hundreds of years our king thou hast been."

Here he paused, for he knew no more, and looking up he saw a wonderful little figure peeping from behind the tree. Sure enough, he was as he had heard him described! Very small, with pale, refined face, dressed in black waistcoat and red stockings; but he had scarcely a moment to note all this, for the figure vanished, and to no entreaty would appear again. But a little squirrel hopped about from branch to branch, which, strange to say, frightened Wilhelm, for it seemed to have the face of a human being, and with quick step he turned to go. The darkness became denser, the trees seemed to have grown thicker together, and in his fright he took a wrong path. Footsore and weary, he knew not which way to turn, when the barking of a dog and the sight of a hut gave him hope.

"This hut was occupied by an old man, his son and son's wife, and their children, who made Wilhelm welcome, and offered him a night's lodging and food, without even asking his name or place of abode.

"After the evening meal the mother and daughters occupied themselves with spinning, and the boys with carving wooden spoons and forks, while the three men smoked and looked on. The room was lighted and warmed by splints of firs dipped in resin, and had altogether a very cheerful appearance.

"There was a fearful storm without, and when the boys wanted to go outside to witness it the old grandfather held them back, saying—

"If you value your lives, boys, go not out to-night, for Giant Michael is abroad and busy."

"All right, grandfather," was the answer, "we will remain in, and go on with our work if you will tell us a tale about this giant."

"This request was seconded by Wilhelm, who was anxious to know who and what he was.

"He is the evil spirit of our Forest, and not to know him proves you to have come from afar," he said, turning to the charcoal burner. "You must know that in these days we are nothing like so honourable as were our forefathers. The love of money, and the turning of our Sundays into days of drinking, dancing, and gambling have altered the character of our people for the worse; and for all this, there is no doubt about it, Giant Michael is answerable. It is he who has cast the money broadcast in the land, and the price paid for it, if all be true, is a very awful one—it is that of the soul! For hundreds of years he has made the Forest his home, and on nights such as this he is abroad and active. His strength is prodigious; he can snap a tree asunder as though it were a reed, and woe to him who puts himself in his power!"

"While talking and listening the storm abated, and they all went to rest. For Wilhelm the good-wife had placed a sack of dry

leaves by the fireplace, saying, as she wished him good night—

"I hope you will sleep well."

"This, however, he could not do, for he was harassed and troubled by dreams, which were so like realities that he knew not what to think.

"He dreamed that Giant Michael pushed open the window, and with a long arm handed him a purse full of gold pieces; and as they fell one over the other by his side the look and the sound caused him the utmost delight. At the same moment his attention was attracted to what looked like the little Glass-man riding round the room on a green glass bottle, and quietly laughing to himself. The confusion in Wilhelm's mind was very great, for two different voices were speaking to him at the same moment. One, hoarse and almost threatening, shouted into his left ear—

"The Giant has gold!"

You can have it if you will!

The price is very small

For gold, gold, gold!"

while into his right ear there came a gentle, musical voice, saying—

"Stupid Wilhelm! Stupid Wilhelm! you a Sunday child, and not able to make a rhyme!"

"The poor fellow sighed, and groaned with the struggle between the two spirits. He used every endeavour to complete the verse, with which to approach the Glass-man, but in vain, and with the dawn he awoke unrefreshed and troubled.

"After a word of thanks to the kind people who had sheltered him, he departed, determining not to return home till he had made one more trial with the Glass-man.

"As he drew near the thick trees he sank on his knees with fright, for there, approaching him with immense strides, was the Giant Michael—of that he felt sure; his face was all furrowed and wrinkled, and his dress was that of a woodcutter.

"What are you doing here, charcoal burner?" asked the Giant, in loud and angry tones.

"I am passing through the Forest on my way home," said Wilhelm, trembling in every limb.

"That is false," said Michael, looking at him in a way that turned the poor fellow to stone. "If you try to deceive me," said he, in a thundering voice, "I will strike you to the ground. Did I not hear you whining and begging to my enemy the Glass-man? Well for you you did not know the words with which to reach him. You are a poor sort of creature, and I am sorry for you. Why, you have scarcely a penny in the world."

"That's true," said Wilhelm.

"Well," said the other, "I have often helped fellows out of their difficulties. Tell me how many hundreds of pounds you want to begin with."

"As he said this he dipped his hands into his pockets, but Wilhelm bethought him of what the old man at the hut had said, and plucking up courage answered—

"Thank you, sir, but I do not want any money of you," and took to his heels, for he was frightened.

"Michael was beside him in a moment, and shouted into his ear—

"You shall repent this, and shall not escape. You are mine—I see it in your eyes, and in your lying words. I cannot follow you now, for"—pointing to a grave—"that is the boundary of my territory."

"Wilhelm in a moment leaped to the other side of the grave; and Michael attempting to strike him with the long pole he always carried with him it broke in two, one part falling just in front of the young man.

"This he took up, intending to use it as a defence; but, to his horror, he found that, instead of a stick, it was a long serpent, which

wound itself round and round his arm, and was about to embrace his head when a large mountain bird swooped down on the serpent, taking its head in its beak, and flew away with it.

"The Giant, who witnessed it, was in a frightful rage, for the serpent was destroyed by one mightier.

"More dead than alive, Wilhelm crawled on to the Glass-man. There was no doubt about it, the way thither had become steeper and more rugged, wilder and more dangerous since his last visit, and yet that was made but yesterday.

"Reaching at length the big tree, he again made his obeisance, and began—

"Keeper of treasure in our Forest so green,
Hundreds of years our king thou hast been;
Grant me to see thy friendly face—
For I am a Sunday child."

"That is not the proper form in which to address me, and rhyme it is none, but thou hast tried," said a pure and gentle voice close to him. It was a wonderful figure he beheld as he looked up—so tiny, so perfect, so bright and dazzling; his beard was of spun glass, and a pipe of blue glass was in his mouth.

"And so you met the Giant in the way, and were frightened? Well, I have crippled his cudgel; he won't be able to use that again."

"Yes, sir, I was very frightened. Were you the big bird that took the serpent away? Oh, sir, I thank you!"

"Well, what do you want of me?"

"I have come to ask advice and help of you, for I am very poor and miserable, and waiting in almost everything."

"Your father and grandfather were honest and honourable workpeople; I hope it is not love of idleness which has brought you to me."

"Wilhelm replied, hurriedly—

"No, not idleness; but I want to improve my position—I want to be more like my better-off neighbours."

"Pride comes before a fall," said the Glass-man. "Human beings are a wonderful race—they are never content with their lot. If, however, you are willing to work I can help you, for Sunday children are my special care, and it is in my power to grant three wishes to those who seek me. The first two are free, the third I can withhold if I think it foolish or hurtful."

"Well, then," said Wilhelm, "as I have three I will for the first ask that I may dance well, be admired in company, and have plenty of money in my pocket."

"Thou fool!" said the Glass-man; "shame on thee so to waste your opportunities. One wish still remains free to you—see that it be not foolish."

Wilhelm thought for a moment, and then said—

"I should like to be the owner of the most beautiful glass factory in the Black Forest, with everything proper for its working."

"Otherwise, nothing?" asked the little Glass-man, with anxious look; "nothing else, Wilhelm?"

"Well, yes, I should like a carriage and horses."

"Oh, fool, fool! To think that thou shouldst have it in thy power to get understanding, knowledge, love, happiness, and hast squandered it away for carriage and horses! Go thy way," said the spirit of the firs; "here is a purse, and with that be content, for if thou come to me again for more I will hang thee on the highest tree. Before three days are over there will be a glass factory for sale; go and make an offer for it. Be careful and industrious, be honest and honourable if thou canst. Beware of the village inn, and avoid the companions who meet there." So saying he vanished, and Wilhelm was left alone.

(To be continued.)

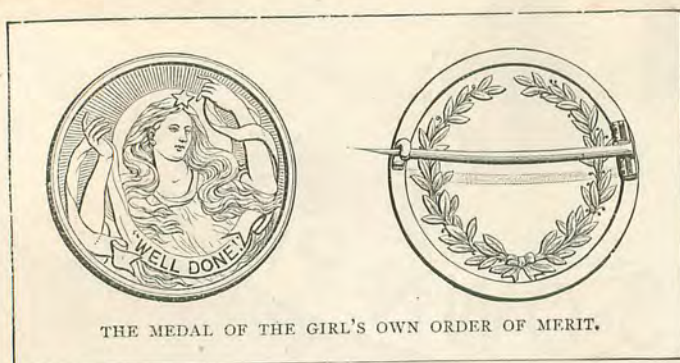
during the past twelve months) shall be entitled to vote, and to this request we have much pleasure in acceding.

our readers, and, if we mistake not, they will be delighted at it, and their voting papers will be procured and filled in with the greatest

for we shall not reveal the secret before that time.

Until then we invite all who have not contributed to this unique and useful fund to send us their subscription, for until more money be received the trustees cannot proceed with their duties.

Contributions of one shilling and over will be acknowledged by the Editor personally in course of post.



The great question is, *Who deserves our first Gold Medal?*

Next month we shall make a suggestion to

enthusiasm. It is of no use our readers writing for the name we intend suggesting to them for their votes until January 25th,

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FAIRY TALES OF THE WORLD;

OR,

HITHER AND THITHER ON A BROOMSTICK.

BY NIMBUS.

PART II.



OR a time Wilhelm took an interest in the glass factory, going there every day and all day, but he soon grew tired of it, and spent his time in the public-house, dancing, gambling and drinking; but there came a day when his pockets were

empty and his factory a failure.

It was at this crisis that, returning one night from the inn, he felt rather than saw someone walking beside him; it was the little Glass-man.

At this he broke out into angry words, declaring the whole of his failure to be due to the niggardliness of the man beside him.

"Do you not remember that you failed to ask for understanding?" the Glass-man asked.

"It is not understanding I want, but money; and now I have you here away from your fire, I will compel you to give me what I want." So saying he took the little man by his collar, but in a moment he had become a mass of molten glass, and ere Wilhelm could remove his hands they were frightfully burnt. Of the little man nothing more was to be seen.

For days his hands reminded him of his unthankfulness and folly, but he repented not of his evil ways. It was no unusual thing as he walked about full of unholy thoughts to meet Giant Michael, who never failed to offer him help, but as yet the charcoal-burner had not availed himself of it.

There came a day, however, when his factory and its contents were to be sold by auction,

and while preparations were being made for the sale, Wilhelm resolved in his mind that as the Glass-man would give no help he would apply to Michael, and, without permitting himself time to think, off he started.

As he passed the little Glass-man's tree he thought he saw a hand held out, but he would not stop to make sure, but hurried on till he had crossed the grave into Michael's territory, when he called out, "Giant Michael! Giant Michael! Giant Michael!"

Ere the words had passed his lips the giant was by his side.

"Ah! so you have come," he said, gleefully. "Well, we will soon change all this want into plenty. Come with me to my house, where we will see if we can come to terms."

No time was allowed for thought; down a deep shaft they went, at the bottom of which was the giant's home. Spirits and glasses were brought, and while they drank, Michael discoursed of the joys of the world and the pleasures of foreign cities, till Wilhelm felt a longing to visit them, and he told the giant so.

"Well, you can do this and much more if you agree to my terms. You shall no longer be troubled with that stupid thing called conscience, nor shall your heart ever ache again. The cries of the poor shall cause you no pain, nor shall you have sleepless nights because you have driven the aged and the starving from your doors. All man's troubles reach him through his heart. I can relieve you of all these."

"I cannot make out how you mean to do all this, for, often as I have tried, I have never been able to still the beating and pain of my heart," said Wilhelm.

"Of course not," answered the other, laughing. "Just make over the stupid beating thing to me, and see how well you will get on without it."

"Do you mean to kill me, then?"

"No, I can operate without depriving you of life. If you doubt, come with me."

A great pain came into the man's heart as he stepped over the threshold, but he took

no heed of it, for what he beheld was too startling.

The room into which Michael led the way had many shelves, all of which were full of glasses containing a transparent liquid, and in each glass was a human heart, the name of the owner being written on the outside, and many of these names were quite familiar to Wilhelm.

"Look," said Michael; "the owners of these have thrown pain and care to the winds, and are well content to be rid of the restless thing out of their breast."

"But what have they got in its place?" asked Wilhelm, almost fainting.

"This," answered the giant, at the same time taking from a drawer a heart of stone.

"Indeed!" said Wilhelm, shuddering. "But surely a thing like that must feel very cold in the breast!"

"Of course, but pleasantly so. I cannot see why a heart should be warm. No stupid sympathy can set this beating," pointing to the heart of stone.

"And so this is all you can give me after all your promises of help. I thought and hoped you would have given me money."

"Well, I don't think ten thousand pounds very little, and this you shall have. If you use it cleverly and put it out to interest you may become a millionaire."

"Ten thousand pounds!" said Wilhelm, almost choked with emotion. "I agree to your terms; give me the stone and the money, and you may take this restless thing which is beating so loud that it nearly suffocates me."

"I thought you would yield, like a sensible fellow. Sit down and drink while I count out the gold." And Wilhelm drank till he fell into a deep sleep.

He awoke to find himself in a beautiful carriage on a wide road, with the Black Forest far behind him.

He would not at first believe that it was he himself who sat there in such fine raiment and grand carriage, but memory brought back the events of yesterday.

He was surprised, too, that he felt no sorrow at leaving the home of his childhood, nor that he had left his old mother in want and misery behind. Not a tear could he shed, not a sigh could he breathe, till he remembered that all these emotions were from the heart, and, thanks to Michael, his was of stone.

He looked about him, and found packed away in his carriage both money and raiment, as well as letters of introduction and letters of credit to all people and all lands. So he made himself comfortable in a corner of the carriage, and was driven on into the wide, wide world.

Here he saw beautiful pictures and wonderful works of nature; he heard grand music and visited in great houses, but nothing gave him pleasure. His eyes and his ears could convey no beauty where there was no heart to receive it. Eating and drinking and sleeping were the only things he could appreciate.

Just once and again he thought in a curious kind of way that he was happier when poor and hard at work; at all events, in the old days a very little thing would make him laugh, whereas now no power on earth would do so. He felt no home sickness, no sadness, yet was his life dreary as a desert.

After a year or two of absence he took his way back to the Black Forest; and as he saw the old spots and the familiar faces, the blood coursed quicker through his veins, and he put his hand on his breast, thinking that his heart must beat with joy; but no, hearts of stone do not laugh nor cry—they are not troubled with emotion.

One of his first visits was to Michael, who received him in a very friendly manner. Wilhelm complained to him of the entire absence of pleasure in his life, and begged that at least he would take away a little of the coldness of his heart, so that he might get some enjoyment. But Michael laughed in a grim kind of way, and told him he had only tried one side of life. "Come," he said, "and settle in the Forest; build a beautiful house, marry and set yourself something to do; get money by money; that will afford you some kind of pleasure."

Wilhelm followed this advice; he lent money at ten per cent.; he sold corn to the poor for three times its value; he showed no mercy to those who failed in their payments. He hated the poor; he allowed no beggars at his gates, but hunted them down with fierce dogs. His mother, who was old, homeless, starving, received no better treatment at his hands than other poor people.

He determined at length to marry; he knew he could pick and choose, for he was rich, but he did not find it easy to make a selection. At last he heard that the most beautiful and virtuous girl in the Black Forest was the daughter of a very poor woodcutter. Strange as it may seem, he married this girl, but she loved the poor, and had sympathy with suffering, and thought it no wrong to help them out of her husband's abundance.

For this he treated her cruelly, and peevishly forbade her continuing this practice.

One day, however, the wife, whose name was Elizabeth, in her husband's absence from home, took her spinning wheel to the door, where she sat and sang as she worked.

While thus occupied there came towards her a very old man with a large and heavy sack, under which he panted. "Have mercy, good wife," he said. "I cannot go further; give me, I pray you, a glass of water."

Without a moment's thought she ran into the house and filled a glass, not with water, but with wine, and brought it and some bread to the old man.

He was much moved, and said, "Thou art good to the poor, therefore shalt thou find thy reward."

"Not so," said an angry voice, which was her husband's; "you have dared to give my

best wine, and in my own glass, to a dirty beggar, so take thy reward." And he lashed her with the riding whip he held in his hand, till she fell bleeding and fainting at his feet.

He repented him of the deed as soon as it was done, and while bending down to see if life remained in her, a well known voice said, "Save yourself the trouble; she was the most beautiful and lovely flower in the forest; you have crushed it, and for you it will never bloom again."

"So it is you, Mr. Glass-man, is it? What is done cannot be undone, and I hope you won't accuse me to the magistrates as a murderer."

"Miserable wretch! you have a higher power to fear; you who have sold your soul to the evil one."

"It is you alone who are to blame for that," said Wilhelm. "You would not help me, and I went to one who would."

At this the Glass-man was so angry, that it is said he expanded to an enormous size, his eyes became large as soup plates, and his mouth like a furnace, out of which poured flames of fire. Wilhelm fell on his knees, and his heart of stone did not prevent his trembling in every limb. With eagle-like claws the Glass-man took him by the neck, and shook him, saying, in a voice of thunder, "Thou worm, I could destroy thee on the spot, for thou hast rebelled and blasphemed against the spirit of the forest; but for the sake of this dead woman who gave me to eat and to drink, I give you eight days' respite. If by that time you have not repented of your evil doings, I will come to you and send you hence with all your sins upon your head."

It was already evening, as some men returning from work saw Wilhelm Murnell apparently dead upon the ground; they sprinkled him with water, and at length he breathed and opened his eyes. His first question was for his wife, but no one had seen her; they sought high and low, but without avail, and Wilhelm knew that what he had thought a hideous dream was a reality, and he was alone, utterly alone!

It is true his heart of stone felt no sorrow, but he was wise enough to know that the disappearance of one so good and kind as his wife would bring him the curses of the poor, and, worse still, punishment at the hands of justice.

His sleep that night was troubled; he was constantly roused by the sound of a sweet voice saying to him "Wilhelm, get thee a warm heart, get thee a warm heart."

The following day he went to the village inn, there to drown his thoughts by drink, and so the days and the nights went by till the sixth day, when, as before, he went to the inn to while it away with his usual companions, but, oddly enough, their conversation turned upon death, and Wilhelm said, "What do you think becomes of us when we die?"

"Well," answered one, "our body is buried, and the soul goes either to heaven or to hell."

"If so, then our hearts are buried with our bodies?" questioned Wilhelm again.

"Why, yes, to be sure."

"But suppose I have not got one?"

"Then don't worry about it," said another of the men, laughing with an unmerry laugh.

"But I cannot help it," said Wilhelm, "for I used to hear that after death our hearts would be weighed."

"Well, ours will be heavy enough to sink us," said one.

"Yes," said Wilhelm, "that's true, for it is a stone; but that which troubles me is what will become of the heart which I sold."

No one being able to give him the information, he went home and to bed. Sleep it could hardly be called, for the same voice repeating the same words with an earnestness which compelled attention, "Wilhelm get thee a warm heart," went on the whole night. He could bear it no longer. At the break of

day he rose and determined to see what could be done to get a warm heart, for he could not go on living in this way; so, mounting his horse, he rode away to the high firs, where once again he called upon the little Glass-man. At the summons the little figure appeared, but in no friendly or trusting mood. He looked stern and sad, and his dress was of black glass. Wilhelm knew for whom he mourned.

"What do you want of me?" was the question asked.

"I have one wish left," said Wilhelm, humbly.

"Well, you can wish for another heart of stone if you like. Be it what it may, I scarcely think I shall be inclined to grant it; as it is, you have more of good than you deserve. But ask and I shall hear."

"Oh, sir, take from me my heart of stone, and give me a warm living one in its place," said Wilhelm, earnestly.

"The sale was not between you and me," said the spirit. "I don't give riches for hearts; you must seek it of the one who holds it."

"But he will never give it up," said Wilhelm.

"I am sorry for you, evil as you are," said the little man, thoughtfully. "As your wish is not an idle one, I cannot refuse to help you. By force can you never get your heart again, but evil is not wise, neither is the prince of evil; go to him and obey me implicitly." So saying, he gave him instructions, and with these a little cross of pure crystal, which, if he held before the enemy and prayed earnestly, would preserve his life. "When you have obtained your desire return here."

So Wilhelm made his way to the giant's territory, and called to him three times.

He appeared, saying, with a horrible laugh, "So you have killed your wife! Quite right too, for she would in time have begged you to enrich the poor. Of course you will have to leave the country as soon as it is known, and you want money for this I suppose."

"You are right," said Wilhelm, "but I shall want a great deal this time."

So Michael led the way to his house, and began counting out the money. While thus employed Wilhelm said, "That was all nonsense about your having my heart and giving me one of stone. You could not possibly take out one and put in another without causing instant death."

"You are wrong," said the giant, "your real living heart is here in my possession."

"No use telling me that; those you showed me can be only of wax."

"Is that of wax?" said he, pointing to one. "That is the heart of Wilhelm Murnell, the charcoal-burner. Would a wax thing beat like that?"

"I won't believe it," said Wilhelm. "My heart is in my breast, only your influence has made it cold and heavy."

"I will prove to you that you are wrong, and that that is certainly your heart."

So saying, he opened Wilhelm's waistcoat, took out the heart of stone and showed it; then taking the living heart out of the glass jar, he breathed on it, and placed it carefully in its place, and Wilhelm felt its beating, and was able to rejoice and be glad.

"Truly, thou art right," said Wilhelm, taking carefully out of his pocket the little cross of pure crystal. "I would not have believed it possible had you not shown me."

"Ah! you acknowledge my power; that is well; now I will take back the heart." But Wilhelm drew back a step, saying, "I have used your weapon of craft against yourself; if I can help it you shall never have power over that heart of mine again." And he tried to pray as he had done in his childhood.

While the prayer went on, the giant became smaller and smaller, till he ran about the room like a worm, and all the hearts in the

glass vases began to beat so rapidly that the room was like a clockmaker's workshop.

Wilhelm became so frightened that he could stay no longer; he ran from the house, and climbed up the steep, followed by Michael's curses. As he almost flew towards the high firs, a storm of thunder and lightning broke out, but without accident he arrived breathless at the little Glass-man's tree.

There sat the little man smoking his pipe, and looking less sad than before. As he saw Wilhelm, he said, "Why art thou weeping? Have you not succeeded in getting back your heart? Is it still of stone?"

"Ah, sir, I could not have wept had I still the heart of stone. Then my eyes were as dry as a July day, but now my old heart is almost broken at the evil I have wrought in its absence. And thou knowest how my riding whip—"

"Wilhelm," said the little man, "thou hast been a great sinner. Money and idleness have been your great enemies, and have driven out every good feeling, leaving you neither joy, sympathy, nor happiness. But a man's sins are remembered no more against him if his repentance be earnest and true. If I were

sure of this being the case with you, I would still help you."

"Oh, sir, rather slay me. I have neither mother nor wife; both have been destroyed by my hand. What shall I do alone in the world?"

"Well, if thou wilt have it so, so it must be, I suppose." Thus saying, he took his pipe slowly from his mouth, and vanished behind the immense tree, leaving Wilhelm alone.

In a short time steps were heard, and looking up, Wilhelm beheld his mother and his wife both alive, and regarding him with affection. He sprang towards them, crying out, "Thou art alive! and I am forgiven!"

"They will forgive because your repentance is sincere. Go back to your father's house; be once more an honest charcoal-burner, and your neighbours will esteem you more than if you had ten tons of gold."

Thus the little Glass-man took leave of the three people, who blessed him, and thanked him, and took their way homeward to the poor hut in which Wilhelm had been born. But astonishment awaited them. A pretty, substantial peasant's house had taken the place of the hut. It was well furnished, and

everything in it was simple, clean, and good. And this they knew to be the gift of the little Glass-man.

From this time they lived as honest and hard-working people, respected and loved by all their neighbours; and when the wife gave birth to a boy, Wilhelm once again visited the firs, to ask the Glass-man to stand godfather, but no answer came, neither did he ever again appear bodily to the charcoal burner; but while he stood entreating him a wind blew a few cones to his feet, which he said he would carry home in memory of his best friend.

On Wilhelm's return home he emptied his pockets; and lo! the fir cones had become rolls of silver guldens, which the parents knew to be the little Glass-man's present to his godchild.*

"And this, ladies, is just the tale I heard when a boy," said the old charcoal-burner. "Everybody knows it hereabout, and I only hope you are not tired of my yarn."

(To be continued.)

* Hauff made use of this legend to make a charming story.



A CONFIDANT OF THE MILLION.



THIS is the story he told me. I was amused as I listened to it, for I had formerly regarded the speaker as one of the most stolid, not to say stupid, youths, officially, whom it had ever been my lot to encounter.

A circumstance which need not be repeated made us friends, and revealed that I had been greatly mistaken in my estimate of his mental powers. That he was a keen observer, and read many an unwritten story in the faces and movements of those who visited the scene of his daily labours, his own words will, I think, abundantly prove. He began as follows:—

I sit, or perhaps I should say I spend, most of my days, from early morning until past

eight at night, in a little office about eight feet square, lighted by one window. Its lower panes are whitened, to prevent curious persons from looking in, and perhaps also to save me from the temptation to waste time that is paid for by public money.

I generally communicate with the outer world by means of a little sliding shutter in the partition which separates my sanctum from an external apartment.

You will doubtless pity me when you think what a dull, monotonous life I lead as a post office clerk: the only clerk, too, in the one post office of a country town!

But I did not begin my talk with any wish to excite pity. I do work long hours. Our first mail arrives at 5.30 a.m., and our last leaves at eight in the evening. I am about the place pretty well all the while, have but a small salary, and short holidays; but I am no

grumbler. There are plenty of people far worse off than I am, and whose work is much less interesting than my own. Beside, I have a small independent income; my people are fairly well off, so that I have expectations; and, though it would not do to tell everybody this, a friend in high quarters who will help me to a lift as soon as possible.

At twenty-two, and with such prospects, one can afford to wait patiently. So I go on month after month, pounding letters, scribbling my autograph on post office orders in a fashion impossible to be read, and anticipating the request for a "Queen's head" by shoving one into the hand of every individual who raps at the shutter, and then holding out mine for the penny in payment.

Moreover, I can be as deaf as the most dignified official in Her Majesty's Service. You may hammer away at the shutter till

FAIRY TALES OF THE WORLD ;

OR,

HITHER AND THITHER ON A BROOMSTICK.

By NIMBUS.

"SOMETHING TO LOVE, IF ONLY A FLOWER."



If you were not disappointed in your visit to the Black Forest, I will ask you to mount my Broomstick once again. It is elastic, and will waft you hither and thither with greater ease than could a first class Pullman car.

If you are all agreed to trust yourselves with me, I will give the sign, and in a moment we are on a sandy plain in the neighbourhood of the town of Porzellania, in the age known as "once upon a time."

We could not have alighted on a more unlikely spot for a fairy tale; it is a vast sandy plain, desolate beyond expression, and unrelieved by tree, or bush, or flower.

And yet its very desolateness wrought a quaint and pretty picture in the imagination of a young man named Brentano, a native of Ehrenbreitstein on the Rhine, which picture I will try and paint for you as I have often had it represented to me, both on and near the spot.

Unlovely as was Porzellania and its surroundings, it yet attracted many thither, for then, as now, it was the centre of a great china industry.

I will ask your interest, however, for three only of the inhabitants—the Prince, who lived in a palace within the town, and a young man and wife who lived about a couple of miles from the town in the midst of the sandy plain, and who were occupied from morning till night in the porcelain industry.

This man and wife were honest and industrious, but they found their lives very monotonous and their home sad and lonely, for they loved children and longed for them, but as yet they had not been blessed with one.

They often talked over the Bible story of Hannah and Samuel, and they determined that night and morning when they offered up prayer and thanksgiving, to add a special petition that God would bless them with a child, even as He had bestowed one upon Hannah in answer to her prayer; and this they did for months and months, yet they were still childless.

This intense longing for children showed itself in many ways; the man, for example, would ornament his vases and cups with the heads of baby angels; the wife in her dreams beheld green fields, flowers, and trees, among which her children played.

The husband, wishing to please his wife on her birthday, made her two presents—the one a white china cradle ornamented with roses and angels' heads, the other a large flowerpot of red china on which he painted butterflies and flowers. Both were beautiful specimens of porcelain work, which he had made with his own hands.

The wife made a little bed and placed it in the cradle, and she filled the flower-pot with the best earth she could procure, and which she sought for miles round and brought home in her apron.

This done, she carried her two presents into the bedroom and knelt down by the bed, and with her whole soul offered up her prayer.

"O Lord, I pray thee if it be Thy will give me a child: I will bring it up in the love and fear of Thee. If it be a girl, I will teach her to spin, to sing, and to pray. If in Thy love Thou shouldst give us a boy, we will with Thy help bring him up to be true and honourable in word and deed, to be courageous and brave in war and in council. The cradle is here and ready for Thy gift. Should it not be Thy will, then grant me *something to love, if only a flower*, that we may tend and watch and see grow."

So prayed the woman with tears and longing, and lay her down to rest.

In the night there was a fearful storm of thunder and lightning, one flash lighting up the whole room in which husband and wife were sleeping.

The morning broke fine and cool, the sun's rays came through the open window, and the woman slept on in a sweet dream. She thought herself sitting under a myrtle tree with her husband; she heard the leaves whispering softest music; she felt them touch her cheek.

She awoke suddenly, and there on her pillow close to her face lay a sprig of fresh young myrtle. She woke her husband to show him the wonderful thing that had happened, and with heart full of joy she thanked her Heavenly Father for giving her something living to love and tend day by day.

She planted it in the beautiful flowerpot with the utmost care, and placed it where it could catch the sun's rays; she shielded it from rough winds and frosts, and the myrtle sprig grew under her loving hand in strength and beauty, and brought peace and joy into the desolate home.

It was just about this time that the Prince, in company with a scientific man, was searching the land in order to discover the special earth necessary for the porcelain works, which was gradually becoming scarce near the town.

Being close to the cottage of his workman, the Prince thought he would go in and ask his opinion about the specimens they had collected, but as he stood on the threshold his eye caught the myrtle, and he was so struck with it that the object for which he had come to the cottage went straight out of his mind, and he could only exclaim—"How lovely! how exquisite! this myrtle fills my heart with joy as nothing in this world ever did before. What can it mean? It is as though I could not live without it."

Turning to the man and wife, who were looking at him with astonishment, he said, "I must have that myrtle at any price. What will you take for it?"

"Oh, sir," said the poor woman, "I love my myrtle as though it were my child, and if you offered me a kingdom for it I could not take it in exchange."

The Prince on hearing this left the cottage in great sorrow, forgetting altogether the scientific companion and his search for porcelain material, and returned to his palace.

His grief and longing for the myrtle brought on an illness so severe that the whole land feared he would die, and ambassadors were sent to the porcelain workers desiring them to give up the myrtle and save the life of the Prince.

After reiterated commands and entreaties the woman made answer, "You say that if the Prince does not have our myrtle he will die; and I say that neither can we live if our myrtle

be taken from us. If therefore the Prince must have it he must take us with it. On this condition we will take it to him and tend it as heretofore, and will be good and faithful servants in the palace of our Prince."

With this the ambassadors were content, and sent a special messenger on to the palace to tell the Prince the success of their mission. And so it happened that the man and wife placed the beautiful plant on a truck, covered it with a soft silk handkerchief, and, dressed in Sunday clothes, took it towards the town, followed by the ambassadors.

They were met on the way by the Prince, who was driving towards them with a golden water-can in his hand, with which he desired at once to water the myrtle and feast his eyes on it.

Four maidens in white dresses adorned with roses followed the Prince, having a red silk canopy, under which the myrtle was to be conveyed to the palace. Children strewed flowers in the way, and all the people were glad as they formed themselves into procession.

There were, however, nine maidens in the town who would neither join the procession nor take any part in the rejoicings; on the contrary, they desired that the myrtle might die.

Each of these girls had formerly expected to be Princess of Porzellania, but since the Prince had seen the myrtle he had not taken the least notice of them. This explains their bitter feeling towards the innocent plant.

The Prince had the myrtle placed in the window of his own special room, and to the man and wife he gave a cottage in the palace garden, whence they could always see their beloved myrtle, with which arrangement they were content.

The Prince was soon quite well again, and felt intense delight in tending the plant, which he did with the utmost love and devotion, and the myrtle rewarded those who loved it by growing daily in strength and beauty.

One evening the Prince drew his sofa up close to the plant, that while resting he might enjoy its beauty. Hours passed by and stillness and darkness fell upon the palace, and as he slept or dreamed, I know not which, he was startled by a curious rustle in the myrtle, and as he listened he was conscious, too, of a gentle movement and a sweet perfume in the room, and he began to sing quite softly:—

"What means this rustling so sweet, my bright, my beautiful myrtle, my plant that I love so dearly?"

And there came answer in a low, gentle, and musical voice:—

"For friendship I give thee thanks, my good and noble Prince, my lord for whom I blossom."

At these words, spoken in pure music, the listener was so overcome with joy that he lost the power of utterance; but this was not all. He felt that someone was sitting on a cushion at his feet, and as he put forth his hand it was taken in one soft and delicate and carried to lips which spoke.

"My dear lord and Prince, ask not who I am, but permit me now and then, in the stillness of night, to sit at thy feet and thank thee for the tender watchfulness with which thou hast shielded me while knowing me only as a plant; but I inhabit the myrtle, and my thanks to thee for thy love and care have grown to such an extent that the tree could not contain

them, therefore heaven has granted me the privilege of appearing to thee sometimes in human form."

They talked on hour after hour, the Prince more in love than ever with his myrtle. Wise and gentle were the words she spoke, and his desire to see her face to face was almost beyond his control.

But the myrtle maiden said, "Pause till I have sung to you," and in her peculiarly soothing tone she sang, "Rustle, rustle, myrtle mine, and while the world is still and the moon chases the fleecy clouds towards the Fountain of light, do thou, my friend, sleep, sleep."

And the myrtle did rustle, and the fountain splashed softly in the garden, and the song was so soft that the Prince fell into a sweet refreshing sleep, and the maiden rose from the cushion and entered the myrtle.

When the Prince awoke in the morning he saw that the cushion at his feet was unoccupied, and he could not tell whether the myrtle maiden had actually been there or whether it were a dream, and looking up at the myrtle he saw that it was covered with blossoms, all of which had opened in the night, and he believed, therefore, that the vision was real.

With intense longing he waited for the coming night, and as it drew on he moved up his sofa, sat on it, and waited; and when all was still and dark the myrtle rustled again, and the maiden sat at his feet, and related such wise and wonderful stories that he thought he could never tire of them, and he entreated her again and again to permit him to get a light that he might behold her; but for answer she sang him to sleep as before.

For seven nights the same scene was re-

peated, and so wise and charming was her conversation that the Prince determined in his own mind that he would see with his eyes what manner of person this was that so fascinated him.

Therefore, after the seventh night had passed, he had a fine silk net stretched across the ceiling which he could lower without difficulty, and then with impatience he awaited the night.

As the myrtle maiden sat once again at his feet conversing upon the duties of a good Prince, she thought once more to sing him to sleep, but he prevented her, saying, "This time it is my turn to sing to you." And after much entreaty she yielded.

In a low lullaby tone he sang:—

"Dost hear how the fountains ripple and the grasshoppers chirp? Be still and listen. Happy are they who die in their dreams; happy when the clouds rock them and the moon sings them a lullaby. Sleep, dream on. I will awake thee and bless thee."

So dreamily did he hum these disjointed sentences that the maiden slept at his feet. Quickly he lowered a net over her and lighted a lamp! What did he see? A maiden more beautiful than in his wildest imagination he had pictured—the face gentle and pure, her golden hair crowned with a myrtle wreath; her dress was of soft green material embroidered with silver, and her hands folded on her breast.

He could scarcely breathe for astonishment and rapture, as he stood and looked at the beautiful being who had been both friend and teacher to him, and cried aloud, "O virtue, O wisdom, how beautiful is thy form. Having once seen thee I cannot live without thee."

Gently he raised her hand and placed his

signet ring on her finger, saying, "Awake, my love, my friend, share my throne, take my hand, and never leave me more."

The girl awoke, and as she saw the light she blushed intensely, and feeling herself entrapped she uttered a complaint, and said, "Be sure unhappiness to us both will be the result of your action."

But the Prince besought so earnestly for forgiveness that she not only forgave him but promised to be his wife, subject to the approval of her parents.

He was to make arrangements for the marriage and obtain the parents' consent; until these were accomplished she would not see him again.

"But," said he, "how shall I let you know when all is ready?"

"Fasten a little silver bell on the topmost twig of my tree, and as it rings I will be with thee." So saying, the net was removed, the myrtle rustled, and she disappeared.

Scarcely had the day dawned when the Prince in his impatience called his ministers and councillors together, and made known to them that he intended shortly to marry, and that it was his wish that the arrangements for the wedding should be on the grandest scale possible.

All expressed their delight at the news, and begged to know the lady's name, that they might work her initials into the illuminations.

"The first letter of her name is M, and it is my wish that sprigs of myrtle shall form the chief portion of decorations for the festival," was the Prince's answer.

(To be concluded.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

EDUCATIONAL.

MURIEL AND A DELICATE GIRL had better join a correspondence class. The St. George's Hall Classes in Edinburgh would answer. Write to Miss Walker, secretary, St. George's Hall, 7, Randolph Place; for ascertaining your status, they would be very valuable to you, we think.

AN IRISH GIRL.—We know of no way save to make inquiries at the War Office on the subject.

HISTORICAL ENQUIRER.—"Fifth monarchy men," about 1645, believed the millennium to be just at hand, when Christ should descend from heaven and erect the fifth universal monarchy. They proceeded so far as to elect Christ "king" in London. Cromwell dispersed them in 1653. Another rising was suppressed with great loss of life January, 1661, and Thomas Venner, a cooper, the leader and founder, with sixteen others, were executed soon afterwards.

ONE EAGER FOR WORK is yet too young for a hospital training. There are children's hospitals in Aberdeen and Glasgow. We do not know whether there be one in Edinburgh. The matron at the hospital, or the secretary, is the person to whom application should be made.

A WOULD-BE STOIC.—The velocity of light is about 190,000,000 of miles in sixteen minutes, or nearly 200,000 miles in a second, which is a million times swifter than a cannon ball. The light of the sun takes eight minutes eight seconds for its transmission through the intervening space to the earth. There seems no doubt that there are other systems besides our own in God's universe. Who can set bounds to His Almighty power?

K. MACK.—The Seismometer (from the Greek word for "earthquake") is an apparatus for measuring the force of the shocks. You will find one described in Mallet's work on earthquakes, 1858.

A JERSEY GIRL.—We do not advise you to have anything to do with such advertisements. Home employment is the most difficult to obtain. We believe the London Hospital, E., takes ladies to train for three months. And at the Rhyl Alexandra Hospital in North Wales, they also receive ladies to be trained. Address the matron in both cases.

SORROWFUL PAULINE.—All such appointments are obtained by influence, although, of course, fitness must be considered. We regret we cannot help you further.

OTTILIE VON RADWITZ.—The original composer of "God save the Queen" was Dr. John Bull. The

name you mention is from the Latin, and means the eighth born. It is a diminutive for Octavius and Octavia.

HOPE COTTAGE (New Jersey, U.S.A.)—We think that now the education is finished, your children should read with you for an hour or two in the day, history, poetry, and biography. In America, where you are, books are so cheap, you will have no difficulty in procuring them, and then you had better try to get them to study history by periods, and write compositions on the persons and events in them, so as to comprehend what has made history, and what events have led to other events. Take Green's smaller History of the English people to begin with.

MISCELLANEOUS.

PRINCESS CATERINA (Marseilles).—Many thanks for your letter, and your kind words about the "G.O.P." 2. In England we should call them "Night Refugees." You will obtain the fullest information on the whole subject by writing to A. J. S. Maddison, Esq., secretary of the Reformatory and Refuge Union, 32, Charing Cross, S.W., London, which is the central agency for all such good works.

A POOR WIDOW.—The only method would be to show the picture to several picture dealers, and try to arrive at some idea of its value by their offers. You will find their addresses in a "London Directory."

A STRANGER has our thanks for her kind letter. The boxes could be got at a good toy-shop, we should imagine. In pressing flowers, it is needful to have a sufficiently heavy pressure on them; and also to change the blotting-paper every day or so. We think you have not done this.

VIOLET.—Amidst a heap of letters we find one thus signed, complaining that, "not being gifted with talkative powers," and "having met with a gentleman, been out three times, and does not seem to give satisfaction in the way of conversing with him, he has written to say that he will discontinue to meet her" until such a date a month later. We confess we have no experience in such circumstances and arrangements. If your parents approve of your engagement to any man, go out for a walk with him. Not otherwise. And if you be dull and uninteresting, read some nice book on natural history, or of missionary travels and adventures; and tell him some stories if you fear his finding you "heavy on hand." Make an effort to be agreeable.

DAISY.—Refer to the index in the volumes you have.

A slight touch in the centre once a day, with a fine camel's hair brush dipped in acetic acid (burning, so be careful not to leave the poison about, and have a label on it), the excrescence will be destroyed. Remember that the acid will spread, so do not wet the whole surface, or you will burn the skin immediately surrounding it.

A LOVER OF BOOKS.—Any clothing for destitute children would be gratefully received at "Dr. Barnardo's Homes." Send to Dr. Barnardo's office, 18 to 26, Stepney Causeway, E.

A HAPPY GIRL has written a very nice account of her holiday, and we regret we have no room to insert it. DAWKINS.—Your two poems are religious in tone, and have some merit.

IVY GREEN'S impromptu is very good in ideas, but not correct in the rhymes.

ALLYNE.—There is a Convalescent Home for gentlemen of the clerical and professional classes at Worthing, called the Banting Memorial Home. Address the secretary, Parade Lodge, Marine Parade, for information.

MAJOR GENERAL'S DARLING has an odd idea of her life, its duties and pleasures, if she thinks she ought to "let anyone understand she dislikes them." She actually wants us to instruct her how to do so! The very idea of such ungracious thoughts and unkind and rude manners has set all our grammar astray. Judging from her pseudonym, our correspondent is beloved, and knows the value of love. What a debt of love and kindness then she owes to less fortunate people! If we would lead the "Christ-life," we must follow Him, more in this than in anything, because "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

OSIRIA.—Such monumental figures as one of Death, or female figures bowed down with grief, or torches turned upside down, or "Time" holding an hour-glass, and such like, are emblematic, and considered suitable on such memorials of the dead. We are glad you so much appreciate our articles on "Good Breeding," "Etiquette," and duties in all conditions and relations of life. We do not know whether they will appear in separate form. Possibly.

JAMIESE.—The spots you illustrate as appearing on the surface of your mirror are apparently fly marks, and should be washed off. If dust, the wind or a draught of air blew them on the glass in the way you describe.

F. H. D. C.—You must refer to our series entitled "The Habits of Polite Society," "Good Breeding," or duties, etc., under every circumstance of life.

FAIRY TALES OF THE WORLD;

OR,

HITHER AND THITHER ON A BROOMSTICK.

By NIMBUS.

CHAPTER II.



THE gentlemen were about to take their leave when a messenger arrived with the news that a wild and savage pig had broken into the palace garden and smashed the glass house and the beautiful Chinese porcelain that was in it, and that unless the creature were killed there was no knowing what mischief it might do.

The Prince saw the necessity of this, and having dismissed his ministers, summoned the huntsmen, and they were soon in pursuit of the wild creature.

It so happened that as he started the nine maidens who had refused to join in the gladness on the occasion of the myrtle being brought to the palace were all at their window dressed in their best, in the hope that the Prince would notice them; but, alas! he saw them not, or at all events he acted as though he had not seen them.

They were very angry, and the whole nine determined upon some scheme of revenge, for, strange though it may seem, the story of the wild pig was an invention of theirs in order to bring the Prince down their particular street. They themselves had broken the glass and the china, and while consulting what the further revenge should be one of the ministers (father of the eldest girl of the nine) came in and made known to them the approaching marriage of the Prince, and that they were all invited to it.

In answer to their inquiries, he told them that the lady was a Princess M., and that sprigs of myrtle were to be used wherever possible in the decorations.

Scarcely were they alone again when their anger broke out, for each of the nine had made up her mind to be the Princess of Porzellania.

They sent for a workman, whom they bound to secrecy, to make an underground way from

their house to the Prince's chamber in which he kept his myrtle, that they might discover whom he had hidden there.

When the way was finished the nine took a tenth girl into their confidence, who joined them not at all out of ill-will, but from sheer curiosity. Her duty was to keep watch at the door while they searched the chamber. And in the middle of the night, each carrying a lantern under her cloak, they reached the Prince's chamber. They knew he had not returned, for they had sent him on a wild goose chase after the imaginary animal.

They looked into every corner, but could not, to their surprise, find anything or anyone extraordinary save the myrtle.

Upon this they expended their wrath, tearing off the branches and leaves, and using it so roughly that the little silver bell at the top of the myrtle began to ring. The myrtle maiden, believing it to be the Prince's sign that he was awaiting her, stepped out of the tree in an exquisite wedding dress.

This, then, was the Princess who had taken captive their Prince! Their anger knew no bounds; they fell upon her and murdered her in the cruellest way, cutting and hacking her to pieces. Each took away one of the poor myrtle maiden's fingers, except the tenth girl whom they had drawn into the service; she wept bitterly, and hid herself when the others returned the way they had come.

As the Prince's chamberlain entered in the morning as usual, to arrange the room and water the myrtle, what was his horror to see the hacked body of a girl lying in blood on the floor, and the myrtle broken and withered.

He could not understand, for he knew nothing of the maiden who lived in the myrtle. Then the girl who had hidden herself came forward and told him all that had occurred.

With bitter tears they collected the pieces of the unhappy Princess and buried them in the china flowerpot under the myrtle, which assumed the appearance of a grave. Together they washed the floor as clean as it was possible to make it, and watered the myrtle with the blood-stained water. Then they locked the door, and in great sorrow and anxiety they went their way, the girl taking with her a lock of the Princess's hair in memory of her.

The preparations for the wedding were proceeding rapidly, and the Prince came back from the chase without of course coming upon the wild pig.

The first thing he did on his return was to pay a visit to the parents of his myrtle, and ask for the hand of their daughter.

The two honest people nearly went mad for joy when they heard that a daughter had grown up in their beautiful plant. This, then, explained the intense love they had for it.

Certainly they would give their daughter to the Prince, and accompanied him to the palace that they might be gladdened by a sight of her.

As they entered the room a sorrowful sight indeed met their eyes—blood spots on the floor, the tree broken and faded, and close to it a grave. All three broke out into weeping, the one crying, "My love, my bride!" the others, "Oh my beloved daughter, show thyself to thine unhappy parents." But nothing stirred, neither were their cries answered.

The chamberlain had fled, and no explanation was forthcoming.

The three watched and watered it the whole day with their tears, and the land was disturbed and sorrowful.

In suffering too great for words the three who loved the myrtle tended and watched by

the sick plant, looking for some sign of returning life, but for some time in vain.

At length, to their great joy, it commenced to send out fresh shoots and gradually to return to health and beauty, except that it was quite bare of leaves on the top of the tree, and two of the principal branches lacked their points, five on one and four on the other.

The Prince bestowed much attention on these branches, and, to his great delight, he saw one morning that one of the twigs had appeared, and the ring which he had given to the myrtle maiden was firmly fixed round it as though on a finger.

His joy knew no bounds, for he believed that the Princess must still be alive.

The next night, as he was sitting with the porcelain workman and his wife by the tree, he prayed the myrtle so earnestly and tenderly to give him some sign that she lived, and as if in answer the myrtle began to rustle and to sing the following words:—

"Be merciful, dear Prince, and give me back my nine fingers. Let me not appear maimed in thy presence. There are nine myrtle plants growing near the palace; these are my flesh and bone. I pray thee, Prince, be merciful."

The three listeners were greatly moved by this sorrowful appeal, and it was made known throughout the kingdom that whoever should bring the nine myrtle twigs to the Prince he would reward them with his own hand.

This appeal reached the ears of the nine murderous maidens who had so cruelly treated the poor myrtle maiden, and they rejoiced; for they had the nine fingers, each having buried one in a flowerpot which had grown into a beautiful plant. They dressed themselves in their best, and one after another carried her plant into the palace, believing that it was the Prince's intention to marry the most beautiful of those who should bring the myrtles.

He received from each one her plant, promising to send in his own time his reward for the gift; in the meantime he begged them to prepare for the coming festival.

As the Prince placed all the nine plants close to the tree a voice spoke from out the myrtle, "Welcome, welcome, my nine little fingers; welcome, welcome, my flesh and my bone; welcome, welcome to thy old home."

But now came the youngest, or the tenth maiden, who had taken the lock of hair, and threw herself at the Prince's feet and said—"Oh, Prince, I have no myrtle, but I bring thee back this lock of hair and beg for thy forgiveness."

Her prayer was granted, and from her lips the Prince heard the whole story of the murderous deed. She besought him at the end not to let the chamberlain suffer from his displeasure, but to call him back and grant his consent to her marriage with him.

The Prince entrusting her with a letter to the chamberlain, she ran off with it to the forest, where he lay hidden in a hollow tree, and to whom she had daily carried food since that unlucky night when he had fled for fright.

The chamberlain was glad indeed to be restored to favour, and returned with the lady to the town.

As soon as the Prince had buried the lock of hair under the myrtle the voice was heard to say, "Now I am whole even as before; bring me a wreath, and lead me to the altar."

The Prince ordered a grand festival for his people in the palace gardens, and when all were assembled the myrtle was placed under a canopy, and a lovely wreath of flowers, bound

about with gold, was placed on the tree by the porcelain workers who were its parents.

Scarcely was this accomplished when the myrtle maiden stepped forth from the tree dressed in bridal attire, and appeared to the assembled multitude as the most beautiful lady their eyes had ever seen.

The parents, who had never seen her before, received her with tears of joy, and the happy Prince embraced her as his bride.

There stood the nine wicked maidens as on hot coals. The Prince addressing all assembled, asked, "What would they deserve who wilfully grievously harmed this my myrtle maiden?"

One answer after another came, each bearing a severer punishment than the last; and as the question was put definitely concerning the nine women, the answer came, with one accord—"Let the earth open and swallow them up, and let their hands grow out of the ground."

Scarcely were the words spoken than the earth opened and took them in, and on that spot a weed has grown ever since, called by the people five-fingered grass.

And now came the wedding, not only between the Prince and the myrtle maiden, but between the chamberlain and the tenth maiden.

In time a Princess was born and laid in that little china cradle which the man had presented to his wife in that cottage on the sandy plain, and the whole land rejoiced and was happy.

The myrtle tree after the Princess had left it grew so big and strong that it had to be placed in the open air near to the cottage where it was first planted. In obedience to the Princess's wish the cottage was made into a pretty country house, and in time the myrtle became a forest, in which the grandchildren of the porcelain workers played.

The Prince and Princess will be laid to rest here when their wise and beneficent rule shall have ended. May that be far distant.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES.

By THE REV. T. F. THISELTON DYER, M.A.

THE custom of celebrating the anniversary of the wedding-day has existed in most countries from an early period, and is one which is not likely to lose its popularity. Indeed, all anniversaries are important, in so far as they keep fresh in the memory the events which they record; and in our social and domestic life, any observance which helps to perpetuate the love and sacred associations of the wedding-day should be honoured with every mark of respect. That this is the popular feeling may be gathered from the fact that special titles of honour have been conferred on certain of our wedding-anniversaries, an illustrious instance of which is familiar to our readers in the occurrence this year of the "silver-wedding" of the Prince and Princess of Wales. This distinction, applied to the twenty-fifth anniversary of married life, has now become a recognised institution in this country, although, as far as its antecedent history is concerned, it would appear to be of German origin; at any rate, it is worthy of ranking amongst our red-letter days; for they who, like our Prince and Princess, can after twenty-five years of married life set forth the enviable example of maintaining a bright and happy home, most deservedly have earned the congratulations which their silver-wedding brings them. The importance attached to this eventful anniversary in Germany was very great in days gone by, and is still so. Thus, a couple who had been married as long as five and twenty years, re-celebrated their nuptial ceremonies with all the external forms, gaieties, and amusements which had been celebrated at their marriage-day. In addition to these festivities, too, occasionally they were presented with a silver gift of some kind, whilst medals were distributed to the friends on this joyful occasion. But at the present day, in Germany, the prettiest and most delicate attention shown at this season is the silver wreath which is given to the wife. Although it is true this may lack the much-prized sweet charm of the wreath of orange blossoms which adorns the youthful bride, yet its very *raison d'être* crowns it with a dignity which the other cannot possibly possess. But a more coveted anniversary still is the "golden-wedding," and one which it is earnestly to be hoped our Prince and Princess may be permitted to celebrate—the completion of fifty years of married life. This is a privilege, indeed, which although granted to some married couples on account of their having entered the nuptial state at an early period in life, is denied to the majority; thence from occurring more rarely than the "silver-wedding" its honour is enhanced; for it is unquestionably a distinction of which anyone may be rightly proud. It is celebrated in Germany in much the same fashion as the silver-wedding, golden gifts, of course, being substituted for the silver ones; while the golden wreath holds the prominent place in the honours of the occasion.

But more unusual even than this anniversary is the "diamond-wedding," being still far more difficult of attainment. There seems to be some uncertainty, however, as to what really constitutes a diamond-wedding. According to some authorities, sixty years of married life forms the term required; and some years ago the newspapers noticed the occurrence of "a diamond-wedding which was celebrated with great festivity at Shene, Kent, on July 29th, 1875, on the sixtieth anniversary of the wedding-day of Mr. and Mrs. Tickner, aged respectively eighty-three and eighty-five." Another instance was that of the eminent and well-known ironfounder and coal proprietor of Raktort, in Rhenish Prussia—Herr Franz Haniel—who with his wife celebrated his diamond-wedding with every kind of rejoicing about the year 1867. Herr Haniel, however, died a year or two afterwards, far advanced towards his ninetieth year, while the widowed companion of this long matrimonial pilgrimage survived her husband yet a short period. According to other authorities, seventy years of married life constitutes a diamond-wedding; while Her Majesty the Queen, it would seem, holds it to be seventy-five years. The following communication, sent by Mr. Edwin de Lisle, M.P., to *Notes and Queries* last year, is worthy of notice:—"About two years ago an aged couple of the name of Wortley, in the village of Sheepshed, in the Mid-Loughborough Division of Leicestershire, celebrated their seventieth wedding-day. A Roman newspaper fell into my hands commenting upon this most unusual occurrence, and I ventured to send it to Sir Henry Ponsonby, asking him to lay it before Her Majesty, and praying the Queen to send the humble couple, who were very poor, some slight token of Her Majesty's regard and interest in so unusual an anniversary as a diamond wedding-day. The Roman newspaper affirmed that seventy years constituted a diamond-wedding, and that in Italy the Sovereign was wont to testify his interest in the happiness of any couple who had dwelt together for seventy years in wedlock by some token of royal favour. I was informed that the Queen would not comply with my wish, since Her Majesty considered seventy-five years the diamond period." Mr. Lisle further adds that he did not contest the point, and ascertained that the threescore years and ten allotted by the Psalmist as the age of man upon earth is held to be the period of a true diamond wedlock. Once more, in the *Guardian* of February 23rd, 1887, we find another notice of a diamond-wedding:—"Yesterday week the Rev. T. C. Cane died at Brackenhurst, Southwell, aged eighty-six. Last year he celebrated his diamond-wedding."

In America we are informed that among other anniversaries of this kind is the "crystal-wedding," which is kept after fifteen years of married life with more or less ceremony.

Then, too, there is the "china-wedding," which is observed five years later, twenty years after the marriage-day, and is the occasion of more or less rejoicing and merrymaking.

In America, too, the fifth anniversary of the marriage ceremony is known as the "wooden-wedding." The following abridged account of such an anniversary appeared some years ago, and is too amusing to be overlooked. It appears that on the day in question a certain Mrs. Hughes was disturbed by a sharp ring of the door-bell, and the entrance of the servant with the card of an intimate friend. "Show the gentleman into the parlour," said Mrs. Hughes. "But there ain't no gentleman there, mum; it's a load of wood that's come with the card, mum, and the man is throwing the wood into the cellar, mum," replied the servant. Mrs. Hughes wondered what it all meant, and meantime the door-bell pealed again and again, and the servant for over an hour was kept running backward and forward in response to the summons. Each messenger brought one or more articles of wooden ware, and the cards of well-known friends with little congratulatory notes. In the course of the afternoon Mr. Hughes returned home, and was asked by his wife into the dining-room, which by this time was nearly half filled with wooden ware of every description—from nests of washing-tubs to salad forks and spoons. In the evening the friends and relatives thronged the house, when renewed congratulations were offered, and wishes expressed that their lives might be spared far beyond the diamond anniversary of their wedding."

Lastly, we must not omit to notice the "tin-wedding," which is the tenth anniversary of the happy day. Thus in the *Times* newspaper of September 27, 1876: "Among the birth notices occurs one of a child born on her parent's 'tin-wedding-day.' A correspondent of *Notes and Queries*, writing from the United States, informs us that cards are sent out, made of tin, on which is printed a suitable inscription, giving the year of the marriage and the current year. Each guest is expected to bring a present, which must be partly or wholly of tin, and 'maybe a tin drinking-cup worth twopence, or a costly piece of lace in an old tin mustard-box.' Dealers in tin ware prepare articles of all descriptions to cause merriment. The same correspondent further adds that at a tin-wedding which he recently attended, a guest brought a tin pail filled with lemonade, and a silver ladle to serve the beverage. Another brought a fog-horn, such as fishing schooners use on the high seas in thick weather, to give warning of their presence. In short, the tin-wedding, apart from its ludicrous character, affords an excellent opportunity for renewing the kitchen tins, and so is not without some utilitarian value."