Thomas Seccombe

E. Seccombe.
Boston. U.S.A
"Saxonia" May '05
from a. L.

SONGS OF THE VALIANT VOIVODE.

SONGS OF THE VALIANT VOIVODE

AND OTHER STRANGE FOLK-LORE FOR THE FIRST TIME COLLECTED FROM ROUMANIAN PEASANTS AND SET FORTH IN ENGLISH

BY

HÉLÈNE VACARESCO

WHO ALSO COLLECTED THE ROUMANIAN FOLK-SONGS PUBLISHED UNDER THE TITLE OF "THE BARD OF THE DIMBOVITZA"

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

TO MY DEAR COUSIN

ANNA MARIA VACARESCO

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR

HÉLÈNE VACARESCO

DEDICATORY EPISTLE.

DEAR COUSIN,

These tales and legends of our dear country belong to you by right of inheritance and by birthright too. For months I have wandered from village to village and gathered the strange sweet stories; they grow like flowers in the wide domains that bear our name. Besides, are they not our ancestors, and do they not still live in our blood, all the handsome and gallant Voivodes (Princes and chieftains), and the lovely Princesses whose images will adorn these pages? The great success obtained, both in England and on the Continent, by "The Bard of the Dimbovitza" has encouraged me to use the same method this time. You will not find here one single tale that is already inclosed in the books of our learned and patient folk-lore searchers. They are as new to the public as if they had not lain for centuries in the souls of our country-people. You know how peculiarly proud and graceful is the stature of a Roumanian peasant against the golden sky of our native land, and how much he still retains in his mind and his words the love of imaginative creation, of symbols and of song.

And whereas, in most parts of Europe, the simple

charms of country life, the ancient customs and rites, are fast trodden down and hushed to silence by their great foe, civilization; here you find them as alive and fresh as in the Virgilian days, when they delighted mankind. Dacia survives herself still in the very descendants of her conquerors, the Romans. These tales are therefore both Latin, Dacian and Asiatic, while the mysticism of the Slavonic race may sometimes be traced in them. When, many centuries ago, our great ancestor left his Transylvanian dukedom, and rode with his peers and warriors to take possession of this land, he not only endowed our national history with one of its most thrilling and glorious adventures, but also shed a glamour over the inspiration of our bards. To those beautiful and entrancing days we are indebted for the love of valour and the love of love you will trace in every one of our popular legends. Besides, it seems that among the hardships of a destiny which for ages has weighed heavily on this patient and ever-striving nation, through the darkness of battle and the terror of losing the unequalled treasure, Freedom, the inmates of this agitated land have found in their imagination the power to build an ideal world in which they lived far from the troubles of their real existence, and also an ideal of justice and beauty. You will note here that kings and conquerors, warriors and heiducks, empresses and fairies, are ever generous, brave, and fair to behold, and that they carefully protect from evil the high gifts they have received from nature in their very cradles. And the creature whose part

is to deal unkindly, or to bring woe and strife, wears a terrible aspect from the beginning of the tale to its end. Take then the precious book, my dear child, and may you love to read it as I have loved to hear, and may you admire, as I have admired, the spontaneous rush of such a deep and sacred fountain.

HÉLÈNE VACARESCO.

Vacaresci.

CONTENTS.

SONGS OF THE VALIANT VOIVODE.

THE HANDSOME VOIVODE;

OR,

THE GARDEN WHERE WHOSOEVER ENTERED LOOKED FAIR.

The man who sat near our gate in the dusk
Had just returned from his labour,
And twilight loves the man who has laboured all day,
And twilight said to me: "Tell him a tale,
And he will forget his weariness while thou speakest."
The corn is ripe at the foot of the hills,
But in the plain it still requires the sun.

O thou who ever dreamest in thy sleep,
And whose dreams are as numerous, love,
As the leaves on the tall nut-tree, love,
Say, hast thou never dreamt of a handsome Voivode?
Ah! how bright is his life and how handsome is he.
He sings as he goes to the battle,
And when he returneth he sings.
The women all pray for him and the virgins,
While he fights and laughs at the fight.

The road is happy where his shadow falls,
And the shadow too of his lance and horse.
Say, hast thou never dreamt of some handsome Voivode?
How oft I see a Voivode in my dreams,
The one whose tale I'll tell thee now.

Ah! love, I would have loved him had I but seen his face,
For he was brave and young and he was called Boujor,
And he never went to the battle without saying
To the flowers in his way,
"To-night ye will drink blood instead of dew."
And Stana the young maid lived not far from Boujor,
And he passed by her window every morning,
And every night he passed.
What does a young maiden when a fair prince passes?
She loves the fair prince.

Ah! how bright is the life of a Voivode, my love!
He sings as he goes to the battle,
And when he returneth he sings.

What does a fair prince when he thinks but of battles?
He passes and sees not the young maiden's smile.
And Stana night and day talked to her spindle,
To her spindle she said: "O be quick!"
To the flax in her fingers she said:
"Thou wilt be my shroud.
Thou seest Boujor as he passes,
Thus thou wilt speak to me of him in my dear tomb.'

And she said to the beads on her necklace:
"Do look well at the young Voivode,
Ye will speak of him to my sleep."

Stana was poor;
She had but her necklace, her spindle,
Her house with three nut-trees in front,
And her love for the handsome Boujor.
One day that the Voivode passed by
On his horse quicker e'en than the fire,
Stana let a warm tear fall and dance on her spindle.
The spindle stopped.
"Why stoppest thou, swift spindle?
For I am more than ever
Bent on my own little shroud.
Run on, run on, like the Voivode's high horse,
Run on, run on, like his shadow,
Run on, run on, like his eyes,
That never have looked upon me."
But the spindle stood still
Quite in the middle of the room still and straight.
And Stana wondered,
And the small spindle grew,
And the black spindle whitened,
And the small spindle grew
Till it became a beautiful young fairy.
And she wore the sun on her bracelets
And in her earrings bright;

And the sun glistened in her hair.
Her dress was made of moonbeams,
And moved on her body like water;
Her slippers were two rose-leaves,
And her arms were whiter than a turtle-dove's wing
On which fresh snow has fallen.
And Stana thought: "She's fair enough
To be loved by Boujor,"
And instead of admiring she hated.
But the young fairy spoke:
"Stana, thou lovest him," she said,
"He's a Voivode and handsome;
Thou lovest him because thy fate
Has placed thy house near his palace,
And because he is young and brave.
I know thy sadness; thou art poor,
And thy face, though sweet,
Cannot stop on his way
Boujor, whose horse is quicker e'en than fire.
So come with me, and I will give thee
A countenance so bright that he will love thee.
Thou doubtest? Why? have I not changed thy spindle slight
Into a kind young fairy?
So come with me."
And she took Stana by the hand.
They crossed the village,
Where children played around the well,

And Stana saw
That where a cross marked the place
Where the dead were at rest,
Many among the dead lifted their tomb-stone
To see them pass.
The children wondered not,
Because all children live in dreams.
And they crossed the plain and the river,
And the murmur of the green tall maize,
And the sigh of the rushes by the stream,
And the moist perfume of the pebbles,
On which the waters ever roll,
And the smell of the stones darkened by rain and dust,
They crossed the wrinkled roads
And the smooth pathways,
And Stana thought they seemed to walk so fast and straight
That they were likely
To walk into the red heart of the sun.
The fairy touched with purple wand
The red heart of the sun,
And the heart opened,
And lo! a beauteous garden was there,
Right in the red heart of the sun.
And they both entered the strange garden.
"See," said the fairy, "see this is *my* garden,
And in the languages of fairies it is called
The garden where whosoever enters looks fair.

All those who cross this threshold become fair.
Look at the flowers made—"
And Stana saw wondrous flowers;
Some were of diamonds made, others of clouds at sunset, and others seemed
Made with the purple of the morning sky,
And others shone like mirrors,
And all the beauty around
Were mirrored in them.
And Stana looked into one of the shining flowers
And saw herself so beautiful therein
That her heart cried aloud: "Where is Boujor?"
"There," said the fairy, "take the flower
That is made with the purple of dawn,
And throw it at Boujor when he passes.
He will breathe its perfume,
And give to his lords and warriors to breathe,
And he will fall asleep in his palace.
Then go to his palace by night,
Take thy beloved in thy arms,
And take his high horse more quick even than fire.
Bide here with him.
See, I give thee my wand,
Thou know'st the way,
And that the wand must hit
Just in the heart of the sun.
But don't forget to let a tear,

A tear of love, fall on the fairy wand,
Or else maids' woe to thee
And woe to thy Boujor."

Ah! how bright is the life of a handsome Voivode,
He sings as he goes to the battle,
And when he returneth he sings.
The women pray for him and the virgins,
For he is young and brave!

Boujor rode his high horse quick as fire,
He rode with his warriors and lords,
And a flower struck his white teeth,
And a flower fell on his hand,
"See how strange is this flower, my warriors!
O breathe its perfume—it is strange—
Let every man who now rides with us
Smell the flower, and wonder, and love,
Let those with whom we partake every peril
Now partake of the wonderful smell."

And the flower passed from peer to peer,
And the flower passed from warrior to warrior,
And they all slept, such a deep slumber slept all that night,
That they heard not the maid
Who crossed the threshold
Of the white palace.

She entered—
In the first chamber she saw
On the rush mattings
Fine daggers, leather belts, and lances.
And in the second chamber
On green rush mattings
Swords, silken belts, fur caps, and saddles.
In the third chamber saw she on the walls
The images of saints dressed in gold and silver mantles.
And in the fourth chamber the Prince
Slept, guarded by a golden image,
And Stana trembled
To see her belovéd's sweet sleep,
And Stana sighed
To see him thus silent and fair.
She took him in her arms, and crossed
The slumbering palace,
She went to the stables and spoke
To the high horse quick as fire.
"O help me, gentle horse,—I love Boujor,
And I must take him
To the enchanted garden,
Where whoever enters looks fair.
Fain would I be beautiful in his sight."
And she threw Boujor to the saddle,
And she sprung to the saddle with him.
When the sun rose she plunged the wand

Right in the red heart of the sun.
The red heart opened,
The sweet garden was there.
But Stana had forgot to weep that tear of love
Which the fairy had told her to weep,
She was so joyful.
When the Prince woke, "O where am I," said he,
"And what is this wonderful garden?
And who art thou, O beautiful child?
For I love thee,
And now I must know who thou art.
Let us stay here, O bright fairy,
O let us never depart."
"And thy leather belts, and thy lances,
Thy saddles, thy horses, thy swords.
Thy white palace full of great warriors,
Where the sound of thy victories floats."
"How know'st thou my palace, my warriors,
My victories, my horses, my swords?"
"I know all, yea, I know even Stana,
Who spins at her window, and sighs,
For she loves the Voivode Boujor."
"Stana! no, I do not remember,
I know nought of the sighing maid.
I love thee, the world is forgotten."
Thus three days they spoke of their love.
The sweet flowers were their servants and mirrors,
The sweet flowers were their stars and their sun.

But the third day Stana began
To become jealous
Of her own face and beauty.
"He loves me not," she said,
"He loves my visage
Which is not mine,
Which the enchanted garden gives."
The Voivode marked her sadness, and he asked,
"O why is my love sad?"
"I pity Stana, the poor maid who loves thee,
And who will die because she loves."

"Stana, my love, I cannot pity Stana,
I cannot pity any one on earth,
Except the setting sun
That for so many hours
Will not see thy bright face.
Stana, my love, I cannot pity Stana,
I cannot pity any one on earth,
But my own youth and all the years that
passed away
Before I saw thee."

"O my beloved Boujor, pity my lips,
That have tasted fresh water and hot tears,
Before thy kiss they tasted,
Pity my lips."

The high horse quicker e'en than fire
Said to the maiden the third day :
"We must ride fast and ride away,
There's a fight near the tall white palace.
And the warriors all search Boujor.
Weep not, we will return, dear maiden,
Will return to the garden dear."
And Boujor breathed the purple flower,
And the Voivode sank to sleep,
And woke in his tall white palace.

* * * * * *

Stana spins at her window, remembering
Boujor and the garden and . . . love,
And her spindle fell to the floor,
And the small spindle grew,
And the white spindle blackened,
Till it became a black dragon,
Who said to the maid: "He will die;
Yes, the Voivode will die
If thou sayest not to him
The secret of the garden.
Thou hast not wept that love-tear, girl;
So thy beloved must die.
But if thou speakest, sweet death will come
To thee alone."
And he vanished.

Ah! how bright is the life of a handsome Voivode,
He sings when he goes to the battle,
And when he returneth he sings.
The women pray for him and the maidens,
Because he is young, brave, and fair.

Yet Boujor the handsome Voivode sang no more;
Over all the earth he had searched
For the garden and his beloved.
He had burnt towns and palaces down,
And made prisoners twenty kings,
And yet he found her not.
"My lance, my saddle, and my tall horse,
Who 's quicker e'en than fire,
I give them all
To him who tells me
Where is the garden strange, and my belovéd bride."
And the Voivode was pale,
The young Voivode was dying.
"The young Voivode is dying," said his warriors,
"The young Voivode is dying," said the church-bells,
And in every church his people wept and prayed.
"I must see the Voivode, brave warriors,
I am Stana, who sighs and who spins."
"Great Prince, a young girl who 's called Stana,
Asks to see thee." "Then let her come."
"I know thy secret, great Voivode,
I know thy love.

Great Voivode, look not in my visage
While I speak soft to thee.
Great Voivode, I am thy belovéd,
I have been to that garden with thee."
"'Tis true thou hast her voice,
But her face, oh, where is her face, young maiden?
O why hast thou not brought back her face to me?"
"O Boujor, that garden 's enchanted,
And whosoever enters looks fair.
'Tis a fairy garden, my Prince.
There I took thee on thy own tall horse.
Thou hast kissed my lips, handsome Prince.
I can die, thou hast kissed my lips."

Stana spins at her lonely window.
"Turn quicker, swift spindle, O turn,
I'm in a hurry for my little shroud;
Turn quicker, I'm in a hurry."
And Stana lay dead, and the maidens
Wept round her and said: "Thou art dead—
Thou might'st have been a sight of joy and beauty,
And now thou art a sight of cold and sleep.
Thou might'st have been a happy spouse, and now
With the fresh snow thou wilt vanish, poor maid."
"For whom do the maidens, my warriors,
Sing such a sad sweet death-dirge?"
"For Stana who sighed at her window,
For Stana who died in the night."

And the handsome Voivode rushed out of his white palace,
He rushed to his fiery horse.
He rode like the wind, and alighted
At Stana's door.
"See the bright Voivode," said the maidens,
"What has he to say to the dead?"
He entered the room where she slept so deep,
And he kissed her long on forehead and lip,
And beneath his kiss Stana awoke and smiled,
And said, "I am awakened."
"Come to my white palace, maid;
Come, be the Voivode's own spouse,
For I love thee!"

Ah! how bright is the life of a handsome Voivode.
He sings when he goes to the battle,
And when he returneth he sings,
And the women pray for him and the maidens,
For he is young and brave!

MARIORA;

OR,

THE DAUGHTER OF THE WIND.

Ah! shut the door, my love,
And shut the window;
Let not the Wind come in and hear my talk.
The Wind is busy with the rushes now,
There near the river.
But if he hears my voice, he may come in
To hear my tale.
Now the poor dead would like to hear
The Wind among the rushes.

"WHY is young Stan the miller now ever sad and pale?"
Said the priest's youngest daughter
To Stan the miller by the well.
"Yes, yes, young Stan the miller is ever pale and sad,"
Answered young Stan,
"And dost thou care, O maiden, to know why I am sad?"
"Yes, pale young Stan, I care."
"One day while I sat by the water
A maiden came to me.
She was fair like the moon on the water,

Like the sun in the meadow and the fruit in the tree.
She stood between the rushes
The rushes kissed her lips.
'Young man,' said she, 'give me a new-born flower,
And I will dance for thee;
I will dance with my feet in the water,
And with my fair arms on the lips of the sun.'
Then I gave her a new-born flower,
That I wore in my belt, when the soft flower stood still,
But when the maid took the flower in her hand
The flower began to tremble
Till its leaves fell,
And she began to dance,
And all the world seemed to turn around her,
The waters, the sun, and the moon,
And my heart and my blood and my knives.
She danced so fast that birds were jealous of her swift dance.
Then she laughed, and she said, 'Handsome miller,
I am the daughter of the Summer Wind,
And I will be thy bride,
And I will wed thee,
If thou but seekest my palace in the woods.'
Then she vanished; the dead little flower
Lay at the place where she had stood and danced.
Day and night I dreamt of the maiden
And said: 'I must seek and find her.'

I left the mill one morning, and inquired of the rising sun,
'Where lives the daughter of the Summer Wind?'
But the sun was too busy to answer.
I asked the river, and the river knew naught
About the maiden.
So I started on a long journey and walked with my shadow beside me,
Till I reached a small hut near a hill;
An old woman stepped forth to receive me.
'Who art thou, O young man?'
'Stan the Miller;
I want to find
The daughter of the Summer Wind.'
'So, so, the Summer Wind,' said she,
'Has a fair daughter.
She must be proud,
For her father's kingdom is great,
He deals with the sun only,
And with golden crops and with rich foliage;
He is haughty, I can assure you,
And has no kind words for his betters.'
I could well see the old woman was jealous
Of the soft Summer Wind.
'Well, my son perhaps may have met this fair maid.
Come in, dear young man, and I'll hide thee;
My son is rather—well—cruel,
And he might do you some harm.
Though he 's more powerful by far

Than that proud creature
The Summer Wind.
I am the mother of the Northern Blast.'
She hid me beside a big log,
And towards night the cold Blast came home.
He came with a manner so savage
That all save his mother trembled.
'Dear son,' asked she of the awful Blast,
'Dear son, O do not be angry,
But tell me, hast thou heard
That the Summer Wind has a daughter,
And that she's good and fair?'
At these words her son became furious:
'Heard of that maid! Why, old mother,
I mean to marry the girl.'
And off he went, and I trembled
Till his footsteps died on my ear;
And I fled, and I tried to follow,
For I well understood the Northern Blast was gone
To the palace of my beloved.
The way was long, and I felt weary,
And stopped under a tree.
All at once on the road I saw a maiden fly;
Nearer she came and nearer,
Till she fell in my arms: 'O, save me,
I cannot love the Northern Blast,
For, O dear miller, I love thee.'
I recognized the daughter

Of the soft Summer Wind.
'My beloved! my beloved! come closer,
Rest thy head on my neck and be still.'
'I can ne'er be still, for my father
Is the Wind who is never still.'
'My beloved, my beloved, give thy lips to my lips.'
'O, young miller, I may ne'er kiss thee,
But if I kiss thee I fly,
For the Wind, the soft Wind is my father,
Who kisses and then flies away.'
'But what is thy name?' 'Mariora!'
'O Mariora, stay with me,
And I will do without thy kisses,
But stay with me.'
And I took the daughter of the Wind into my village,
Into my house I took her,
And there she smiled on me;
She had strange habits—
She just breathed on the spindle
And never touched it,
And all the flax and all the wool were spun.
She breathed on my sleep, and my sleep
Was full of white dreams.
When she passed by the tombs the tombs called her,
And she gently breathed on the tombs,
And the tombs dreamt of love and life under her breath.
Thus was fair Mariora.
She was invisible to all except to me,

And I loved her
E'en as I love her still.
One night there was a great storm on the river,
The mill was tossed away,
The tall reeds broken,
And there was no moon in the sky.
A great moan filled the earth and my heart,
My house was torn to pieces,
And when I ran to rescue Mariora
My wife had disappeared,
The Northern Blast had carried her away.
I know she now lives in his palace,
Or in his lonely hut with his mother;
I hear her cry and say:
'Come to me, Stan, young miller,
Come to me, O my husband dear,
I am the captive of the Northern Blast;
Here he has raised around me
Three high mountains of ice,
And when I weep, and when my tears fall to the ground,
They too become each a mountain of ice.'"

THE MOLDAVIAN PRINCESS AND THE FAIRY.

I have come to the well, and though my pitcher's full
I'll not return till I see the moon rise,
Because the sweet moon when she rises
Sometimes relates a tale to me,
And I love the tales of the moon.
For the moon sees the hearts of maidens and their tears,
Even more than the sun.
I love the tales of the moon,
For the moon travels far and yet always returns
To her place in the sky.
For the moon looks on cradles and looks on graves
With the same smile.
Ah! I love the tales of the moon.
This tale the moon hath told, which I will tell to thee.

THERE was a Princess in Moldavia,
In a plain where two rivers meet,
And her name was Katinka, and she danced
With a silver belt round her waist.
She loved no one and no one loved her because she was a
Princess

Who danced with a silver belt.
And she called one night on a fairy
Who lived in the dark grim woods.
The fairy crossed a torrent,
She climbed three mountains too,
And came to the Princess and asked
Why the Princess had called her.
"I want thee to make me a present,
A mirror where I can see
All the handsome Princes on earth,
And choose from among these Princes
A husband, for I am young,
And I will not wait till the silver belt
Says to me: 'Thy dance is no longer
The best a maid can dance.'"
But the fairy answered: "Beware!
Thou may'st see in that mirror
A man who's not a Prince,
And thou may'st love him.
I cannot prevent the mirror to show thee
The bravest and fairest among the sons of men."
But the Princess only laughed and said: "Give."
And the fairy gave her the mirror;
'Twas framed in ebony wood,
And it shone like the stream's pure water
Beneath the sun.
The Princess as soon as the fairy had disappeared
Went up to the mirror and saw in its depths

A tall young man who wept.
She could not ask him
Why he wept thus and sighed,
Because he was but an image in that mirror;
And then the Princess thought
"I will not hear of men who weep;
I dream of Princes fierce and brave."
And though her heart was wounded,
She said to the mirror: "Bright mirror,
Show me another face."
And she saw in the mirror a fierce heiduck;
Then a king with his warriors true;
Then a shepherd beside his flock;
Then a traveller who dreamt as he sat and rested beneath a huge oak-tree;
But still she thought: "I wonder
Whether that young man
Whom I could not love,
Still weeps."
And she asked the mirror to show her again
The strange young man.
But this time he was bright and smiling;
And she said to herself: "I'll not have him,
Because his mood changeth so."
And she said to the mirror: "Show me other Princes."
And she saw in the mirror
An Emperor whose palace was found in the East;
Then a warrior who gained as many victories

As the warm sun who fights against the clouds;
Then a bear-hunter;
Then a lute-player who sang more sweetly
Than the wind and their love
In the souls of the maidens young.
But still she thought of that strange young man.
"I wonder," she thought, "whether he still smiles."
And she said to the mirror: "Sweet mirror,
Show me again that strange young man."
And lo! she saw him.
He neither wept nor smiled;
But his hand was locked in his true love's hand,
And his face beamed like the morning stars;
And the Princess thought: "That maid is so happy,
That to look long on her would destroy her luck."
"Now show me a Prince, sweet mirror,
From whom no woman can part me."
But the mirror said: "Princess dear,
Look again at that strange young man,
And look at his true love,
How she resembles thee!"
The Princess looked, and trembled with joy,
And said: "O sweet mirror,
Where lives that strange young man?
I will to him and give him
My gold, my belt, and my kiss."
"Look again," said the magic mirror.
The Princess looked again,

And she saw the young man
Who had wept and smiled,
The young man who had loved her,
In the depths of the mirror sweet;
She saw the young man dead,
And she had seen a dream which she tried to forget.
She took her horse, and she travelled so far
That her ladies and her warriors
Thought they would touch the sun and the moon,
As they rested quite close to the earth.
And after many years she married a great king;
She had forgotten the mirror
And the strange young man
Who by turns wept and smiled,
And who had loved her.

The King was away when a messenger came,
Who told his Queen: "Mighty Queen,
There 's a strange young man,
He won't tell his name,
He stays by thy gate, and weeps."
She ran to the gate, she knew who had come,
And she called upon him: "Thou art come,
I will make thee smile,
I will make thee love,
And I know I will make thee die."
But at these words the young man answered:
"Great Queen,

I know not what these words can mean,
For I wept at your gate because my horse is dead,
And I could not find my way back to my home,
And now I smile because I see thee."
The Queen said: "Alas! he must die!"
She wore a ring so brilliant on her finger
That he stooped to look, and he stooped to kiss,
And just at that moment the great King came home
to his palace,
And said: "Who kisses my fair Queen's hand?
My Queen is too mighty, my Queen is too fair,
To allow any man on earth to touch her fair hand."
The strange young man promptly answered:
"Thou art a savage king,
And I will fight with thee
Till one of us falls dead."
They fought and the Queen turned pale,
They fought and the Queen grew faint,
They fought and the pale Queen wept
Because the strange young man was killed
By the great King before her eyes.

And she said to the King: "I'm no longer
Thy mighty Queen;
I'm again the Moldavian Princess
Who saw in a magic mirror
This thing which has happened to-day,
And long before he came I have loved this young man."

The King said to his warriors:
"My poor Queen's mind is lost,
And I'll keep her in my royal garden
And give her flowers and lutes,
But never will she speak to a living being again.'
Then the poor mighty Queen
Was imprisoned
In a garden as fair as the fairest place in our dreams;
She talked not to living creature,
But at night the fairy came,
And she said to the fairy: "Thy mirror said true.
I am happy, my fate is fulfilled;
I have seen the strange young man,
And his lips have dwelt on my fingers;
I have seen his tears, and my fate is fulfilled.
I will look again in the mirror,
And smile to see there my own tomb,
And the flowers that will grow on my heart,
The flowers red like my blood."

THE WOODEN SPINDLE AND MY LADY DEATH.

I have noticed this, that when I walk three times round my garden
Before sunset it rains;
My heart has gone with the traveller,
My heart knows not when the traveller returns.
And because I love the traveller
I say to all who pass on the road:
"My heart has gone with a traveller like you, and if you meet him,
Tell him my heart has gone with him."
I have learnt sweet tales which I'll tell to the traveller when he returns;
But as thou art so sad to-night
I'll tell one of these tales to thee."

A WOMAN lived in a village
Who had four spindles in her house,
They were swift spindles, and they were
Of hazel-wood and nut-wood;
The woman loved them well.
Her daughter died, and the woman wept,
Till all the spindles shone with her tears,

And they believed that dew and rain had come to them once more.

"O my spindles," said she, "O my spindles,
Where is my daughter sweet?
Has my lady Death such a room as this,
And such a good hut as mine?
Has my lady Death such arms as mine?
So hot with love and care
That my darling has gone,
And preferred the tomb
To my hut, and my arms, and my love.
Who now will twist her gentle hair,
And put a flower in her belt?
Who will fasten her necklace, and give her to drink
If she is thirsty in her grave?"
And the spindles said: "Thy daughter
Prefers my lady Death,
Because my lady Death spins much better than thee."
The poor mother said: "Has my lady Death
Much time to spin?
I'd like to see her work and watch her
Awhile her fingers dance."
Then there was a loud knock at the door,
And who should enter
But dark my lady Death.
She said: "Your daughter fares well,
She needs you not, poor woman, to tie her necklace, to twist her hair, or to put a flower in her belt,

She is not thirsty, either.
I tell thee she fares well.
Now give me thy distaff and spindles,
I'll spin with the four at a time."
And the spindles turned, and the spindles ran,
She spun well, my lady Death,
And though she thought of her daughter and wondered:
"How can she do without water, without her necklace and flowers?"
The old woman said: "Dark my lady Death,
It is true thou spinnest much better
Than any spinner on earth."
My lady Death smiled, and the spindles
Now rested in her lap.
"Give me to drink, old woman,
For I must soon be gone."
"O my lady Death, tell me something more
About my dear dead daughter.
How's her bed and her mattress and pillow?"
"They're hard."
"How's the lover who loves her?" "He's hard."
"How's her sleep when she sleeps, and her smile when she smiles?"
"They're hard."
"How's her hand and her lips, oh how are they?"
"They're hard."
"How's her heart and her feet, for we called her
The fleetest among all the girls?"

"They're hard."
The old woman then sank on her knees,
And prayed that the earth and the lover
Be not so hard for her child.
And when she saw my lady Death had vanished,
Taking the spindles four and leaving instead
One single brown spindle
So slow and so long that it seemed
Not the wool of a thousand flocks,
Nor the work of a thousand spinners,
Could cover that spindle so long.
But as the days went by, the woman, who had ceased spinning,
Took up the brown spindle left there by my lady Death,
And she began to spin,
And lo! as the spindle turned,
She heard soft voices around her,
The voices of the dead;
And one said: "I've come again
To smell the flowers of earth,"
And the other said: "Does the stream still run
Under the worn-out bridge?"
And she heard her own daughter say: "I am dead;
I have died because my dear lover
Had ceased to love me and I know
He'll go and marry the miller's fair daughter.
And now I am in the tomb,

My pillow's hard, my heart is hard;
But pillow and heart will soon be on fire,
The day Radu marries, and I'm in my grave."
"Ah!" thought the old woman, "it's Radu,
The shepherd whom my daughter loved.
And he is to marry on Sunday,
And that day my child
Will be burnt in her grave
By the fire of her grief."
So she took her mantle and the brown spindle
Of my lady Death.
She knocked at Radu's door, and Radu's mother
Opened the door and said: "Dear neighbour,
We scarcely can give you welcome,
As Sunday will be my son's wedding day:
And our house is so full, and our hearts are so gay."
"Dear neighbour, I must see your son Radu,
For I have a message for him."
"Radu! our neighbour has a message for thee."
And Radu came, and the old woman
Could scarcely bear to see his face so fair,
Because of her child who was in her grave.
"Radu!" said she, "my daughter is dead,
But her sweet soul has told me
That she'll burn in her grave
And put her dark grave on fire
The day that thou weddest
The miller's fair daughter."

"I loved the maiden, 'tis true, but now she 's dead;
Let the living dwell with the living,
And the dead rejoice with the dead.
Take this flower from my belt, and put it on her tomb,
And she'll forget me and sleep."
The old woman retired with the red flower,
And she went to her daughter's grave, and she told her:
"I'll kill thy beloved on Sunday
With the brown spindle of my lady Death;
I'll kill him at the church-gate,
Before he sees his bride.
I'll kill him, and thou wilt be happy,
And welcome him in the grave."
"O my mother sweet, O my mother dear,
How looked his bonny face
When thou spakest of me to my faithless lover?"
"He looked hard."
"O my mother dear, O my mother sweet,
How sounded his dear voice?"
"His voice was hard."
"O my mother dear, O my mother sweet,
Hast thou seen his smile?"
"Yes, he smiled when he spoke of his bride;
So I'll kill him."
"O my mother sweet, O my mother dear,
If my belovéd dies,
I will never again long for life and for our house,
And for my necklace bright.

If my belovéd dies I will love death,
And now I love the life I've left,
And to sigh after life is my joy, mother sweet,
So do not kill him.
He'll take the miller's daughter in his arms
And call her 'Wife.'
I'll take the damp gray earth between my arms,
And say: 'I long for life.'
He'll take the miller's daughter by the stream,
And say: 'Look in the water, look on thy gentle face.'
I'll take the damp gray earth between my arms and say:
'Cover my gentle face.'
He'll take the miller's daughter in his arms, and say:
'My life, my life!'
I'll take the damp gray earth into my arms, and say:
'Death, death.'
But what is death to me,
Since my belovéd liveth,
And goes besides the stream and plucks red flowers,
And sees the sun and takes his happiness in his strong arms,
And says: 'Life, life, my life?'
O mother, let him live,
While I drink death.
For my belovéd maketh earth so fair
That I will ever weep and say in my dark grave:
'O bright earth, I must weep for thee.'"

THE SHEPHERD AND THE HEIDUCK.[1]

"Are the apples quite ripe and the nuts in the orchard?
Is thy heart, O maiden, quite pleased?"
"The apples are ripe and the nuts in the orchard,
But my heart ne'er again
Can taste joy or pain.
My heart was frozen last winter
When the winter was long and cold—
If I told thee a tale would'st thou tell me
Why the heart of a maiden
Is so tender, so soft,
That the winter can freeze, and the summer sun burn
This poor, soft heart?"
"Tell me thy tale, thy voice is warm,
And my ears love thy voice.
Tell me thy tale, the birds are all asleep,
Thy voice will be
Like the voice of a bird to me."

THERE were two brothers in the mountain village,
Two brothers handsome, good and brave,

[1] Note of the Author. Heiduck, a popular hero, a warrior and a brigand by turns.

And one became a shepherd,
And the other a heiduck at whose name
Every one trembled because he was fierce,
And lived in dark forests and had no other friends
But the sky, his horse, and the trees.
The shepherd lived on the mountain's peak
Where the snow dwelt, and the bears,
And the little fairies
Who are clad in snow and ice.
But he was happy, and he loved
His sheep, his flute, his long mantle
Of pure white fur,
And he never knew what had become of his brother,
Nor that his brother was such a fierce heiduck.
But one night a pure white fairy came to him and said:
"Rise and go!
Thy brother lives in the forest,
Thy brother lives in the plain,
And he is the fiercest heiduck
Of whom the world hath spoken hitherto.
Rise and go to him and tell him
I want to marry him,
For I'm the mountain fairy,
And I've fallen in love
With thy brother, the fierce heiduck."
The shepherd sighed and said: "'Tis a pity
I'm not like the fierce heiduck,
But I'll go to him, mountain fairy,

And tell him to come to thee."
"Fain would I go down in the valley,"
Said she to the shepherd, and sighed,
"But my dress is of snow, and the bright snow melts
When the spring comes back in the plains,
But my hair is of snow, and the bright snow melts
When the sun strokes her shining hair,
But my heart's of snow, and the bright snow melts
When a lover looks on the gentle snow."
At dawn the shepherd took his dog, his mantle,
And descended the mountain paths.
It was so long since he had been away
From his village and from the plains,
That the sight of the world was dear to him,
And yet made him weary and sad.
And he walked through wide valleys and through willow woods,
And he walked through glens where deep shadows dwelt,
And he asked the cool stream:
"Hast thou seen the heiduck, my brother?
He is a fierce heiduck."
And the stream answered: "Yesterday
Our water was red with human blood."
And the blood said: "How fierce was the heiduck
Who bid me go forth on the water
And redden the fresh stream in the glade!"

And he asked the grass:
"Dost thou know the heiduck, my brother,
Who is such a fierce heiduck?"
"No," said the grass, "I do not know the fierce heiduck,
But this morning the face of the earth where I grow grew sad,
For the earth was opened by a man's hard spade,
And a grave was made, where a man now sleeps.
And the grave said: "'Tis the fierce heiduck
Who has wounded the fair face of the earth
And taught this man to sleep."
So the shepherd continued his journey, and said in his heart:
"How will the white fairy love
Such a fierce heiduck, and tend him
When he comes back at night?"
At last he reached the mouth of a cavern
In the wide forest where his brother dwelt;
And before entering he stopped to draw
His broad mantle over his broad shoulders,
And he was about to enter when he heard the heiduck roar:
"And even if it was my own brother
Who crossed my threshold to-day,
I'd kill him!"
But the shepherd was brave and stepped forward:
"Thy brother is here, O heiduck!
And will fight with thee.
He's accustomed to the mountain bear's close embrace.

The heiduck felt abashed: "No, dear brother,
This is no time for fight.
We're born of the same mother, she still spins in her hut by the willows.
Her hair is like the wings of a gray turtle-dove.
No, brother, we must not fight."
But the shepherd said: "Keep your word;
A heiduck, a man, and my brother
Cannot thus break a promise. So come,
And if we are not both dead, we will eat together,
And after the meal I'll deliver
A good message to thee.
If I die, my dear brother, send my mantle and my dog
To my sheep who live in the mountains."
They drew their knives and gnashed their teeth,
And fought like bitter foes.
When they stopped to drink, when they stopped to breathe,
The heiduck said: "I'm proud of thee, my brother."
The shepherd said: "Brother, I'm proud of thee."
And when night came in they had more wounds on their bosom
Than teeth in their jaws.
And the heiduck said: "'Tis enough! I've tried to kill thee
Have I not kept my word?"
Then they ate and drank pure fresh water,
And rejoiced over their strange fate.
"I'm so happy to tend the sheep," said the shepherd,
"To live in the mountains high,

To see the soft white fairies
Rise from the gentle snow."
"I'm so happy," said the heiduck,
"To be an outlaw, and to frighten
Hill, wood and river, mountain and sky."
Then the shepherd delivered the message
Of the white fairy, and the heiduck laughed.
He said he cared not for women,
Nor for queens, nor for fairies either,
And he laughed till his horse neighed and asked:
"O master, why this loud laughter?"
And the shepherd sighed and he thought how the fairy
Would weep and perhaps die.
For fairies die when they love a mortal
Who loves them not.
"She's tall and slim, O fierce brother,
And the fairest on all the earth."
"Then tell her I'm dead, and take her,
Because thou lovest her."
"The fairies know all, fierce brother,
She'll know thou art not dead."
"Then tell her I'm betrothed
To the fairy who dwells in the moon."
So the shepherd returned to the mountains,
And the white fairy asked:
"What said the fierce heiduck when he heard, shepherd,
I loved him and sent him a message
That I would be his spouse."

"He wept, sweet fairy, and said, 'Alas!
I'm betrothed to the fairy who dwells in the moon.'"
The fairy wrung her hands and cried:
"Alas! alas! I cannot go
To that fairy who dwells in the moon,
And tell her of my love
For the heiduck,
For of course if I told her she'd give him up to me.
But if a human creature
Could die to-day and go
To the fairy in the moon and tell her of my grief,
I might win my beloved."
The shepherd said: "I'll die!
Give me a kiss, white fairy,
And kill me with thy kiss."
"Dost thou know the way to the moon, O shepherd?
Dost thou not regret the earth,
And thy dog, and the sheep, and thy mantle,
And the mountains where the bears are black?"
"Give me thy kiss. I'll die and take thy message to the moon;
But please, white fairy, don't tell my dog,
Don't tell my sheep and my mantle
That I am dead.
Tell them I'm betrothed to the fairy
Who lives in the distant moon,
And that I have loved her so wildly
I could not bear to think

She is weeping there
As thou weepest here
For a young and fierce heiduck."

My heart has not listened, for thy tale is too sad,
Yet I love thy voice, and the birds
Are all asleep in their nests
Awhile I hear thy voice.

THE ENCHANTED PALACE BETWEEN THE ENCHANTED TREES.

"O mother, have you seen the weary prisoners by the well?"
"I have seen them, my daughter, and O they are so weary,
And they must walk till night, and at night they will sleep in their prison,
And their souls must be e'en wearier than their feet."
"Mother, I know so many tales thou hast told me,
Shall I not tell them a sweet tale?
They would forget their weariness and their prison
Awhile I tell my tale.—
Dark prisoners, whose souls are even wearier than your feet,
I know such a sweet tale that my mother has told me
Awhile I went to sleep.
Shall I now tell you the sweet tale awhile you drink the fresh water, awhile you bless the well?"
"Yes, speak, fair maiden, for thy voice makes us forget even the water in the well,
Even our weary feet and our hearts wearier still."

THERE was once upon a time in a dark forest
An enchanted palace among the enchanted trees,

And the birds who sang in these trees they were also
enchanted,
And the pools that reflected them, and the winds
Who played with its roofs and its windows,
And in this enchanted palace a gentle maiden dwelt.
She was neither lively nor sad, she neither spoke nor
sang, but the rustling of her airy dress and of her
trailing hair
Made a noise sweeter and more deep
Than the torrent's moan on the stones in autumn,
Than the storm between the tall green maize
When the maize is so tall and green.
And the sunshine in her eyes was more burning than the
light of noon on the ripening corn,
And on the dusty road, and on the shining storm.
She lived quite alone, this strange maid,
In the enchanted palace
Where none could reach nor none could dwell,
Because the enchanted trees round the palace
Whenever the winds rose
Sang all the dirges that were sung on earth and all
the love-songs,
And the voices of the enchanted pool
Told all the tears of joy and grief
That sprang from mortals' eyes.
And when the dust rose round the palace the dust spoke
of all the dust
That lay in mortals' grave.

But to these sounds the fair maid listened
Without a tear, without a smile,
But if these sounds but one moment had ceased,
She would have died.
One day in a large distant realm
A brave young King
Was told of the enchanted palace
Between enchanted trees,
And he said: "I must see the palace
And the fair maid who neither smiles nor weeps.
I care not for the dismal sounds that winds and waters make."
So he rode his tall horse and arrived near the forest, whose dark trees said to him:
"Young King, avaunt, young King,
Return to thy fair realm; this is no place for thee."
But the young King answered: "I am brave;
A worse thing than death cannot befall me,
And death is sweet to the soul of the brave."
And he plunged into the dark forest,
Whose branches instantly became
Fiery serpents, and they clung round his neck and arms.
But the brave young King went on,
And the serpents hissed and his sword killed them,
And his armour was a mirror of blood.
He reached the enchanted palace and said to the maid:
"I'm a King;
I've come to make thee weep or smile."

The maid bade him welcome and gave him her hand,
And said: "O young King, three days and three nights
Wilt thou abide in the enchanted palace.
Three chambers will I give thee
In which each night thou wilt sleep.
In the first chamber all who enter feel happy and strong,
And achieve their highest dreams.
In the second all who dwell
Feel sad and strong,
And taste of heavenly bliss.
In the third all who dwell
Feel lonely, though there I dwell with them."
The young King said: "I would first have
The room where all who dwell
Feel sad and strong."
And the maid showed him the way.
'Twas a chamber so vast and so brilliant
That his eyes and his soul were dazzled,
And he said to himself, "How shall I ever feel
Sad and strong in this place?"
But when the maid had left him, and he undid
His armour from his breast,
He heard a great crowd coming, he heard a great crowd
moaning, he heard a sad great crowd,
Who pressed against the door.
And he heard lips and fingers
Pressed hard against the door,
And he heard tears and sighs

Pressed hard against the door.
The door he tried to open to let the sad crowds come in,
But the door was double bolted and stood on iron hinges,
And the crowd said: "Happy creature,
Thou dwell'st in the gorgeous room,
To touch its walls and its mirrors
We toil with breath and blood,
And our weary souls at night
Now press against its door."
The King said: "Walls and mirrors I do not touch nor love,
Since such a great sad crowd
Sighs and weeps for this splendour
I cannot enjoy nor give."
And in his anguish the young King
Felt sad and strong, and said:
"I will not touch them,
These things for which so many mortals toil."
And the next night the maid
Took him to the strange chamber
Where all who dwelt therein
Were strong and happy
And achieved their highest dreams.
The chamber was dark, and a low fire burnt
Upon its barren hearth.
When the King was alone in the chamber
He heard a great sad crowd
Press hard against the doors

And the sound of bewildering kisses,
And of song more glorious and purer
Than the song of the spring in a garden
Struck his delighted ear.
And the great sad crowd said: "Unhappy King,
Thou art thus alone and a captive
Alone on the barren hearth,
While here we love and sing
Though we are sad, O King.
We press on the doors to keep them
Well closed, and keep thee away.
There is no place at our banquet,
There is no kiss on our lips,
Unhappy King, for thee."
And the King answered: "I'm happy
To hear there's so much love
And so much song on earth.
Though you keep the door and bar it
You cannot keep the bewildering sound
Of joy and kisses from me."
And he felt indeed he had achieved his highest dream,
And he smiled and he went to sleep.
On the third night the room where he entered
Was low like a peasant's cot.
And the strange maid who dwelt there by him
Slept so sound, slept so long in the deep, dismal silence
That he felt lonely and sighed
Till daylight came.

Then the maid awoke and told him:
"Now which chamber would suit the best
If this enchanted palace
Belonged to thee?"
"Strange maid," said he, "the third's the brightest,
For thou wert there with me."
Then the maid wept and said: "Unhappy King,
I am the maid called Life,
And thou hast dwelt with me
In thy own grave.
And therefore thou wilt die, and I must leave thee,
Thou hast spoken thy Fate."
The young King unabashed looked her full in the face.
"Strange maid," said he, "my horse neighs at the gate.
Ride back with me on my horse.
Ride back to my realm, where thou wilt be queen."
But she said: "I'm the maid called Life."
But he kissed her lips, and he pressed her hands
Till her hands and her lips were aflame,
And he spoke such words as she herself,
The maid called Life,
Had never heard.
And now she trembled and wavered
And asked: "O who art thou?"
"I don't know, cruel maid, but I'm stronger than thou.
Where my horses' feet pass
Spring and joy swell and smile,
And my realm is greater than thine.

I've a lute, I've a sword,
I have everything fair—
In my palace and in my heart."
And the maiden called Life whispered: "O wondrous King,
Art thou not the crimson heiduck
Whom maidens call at night
Before they go to sleep,
And whose name I dare not tell?"
"Yes, I am the crimson heiduck,
And all maidens know me well,
For under their pillow at night
They put a branch of basil sweet
And dream of me.
I'm the crimson heiduck."
And the maiden called Life
Said to the glorious King: "Then take me.
I will ride thy fiery horse,
And dwell with thee in thy palace;
For thy breath is song and thy arms are joy,
For thou art the heiduck, love,
Whose name I scarce dare to speak.
Thou art the heiduck called Love."

MIHAI;

OR,

THE SON OF THE DRAGON.

This happened once which had never happened before, and will never happen again. A powerful dragon lived in a valley where the steps of a human creature could not reach, because the valley was closed in by mountains so high that the clouds themselves could not see their top. And great icicles shone at the entrance of the valley. The dragon was wealthy and hoarded immense treasure; he took from all the warriors and kings and princes whom he killed in fight, because every morning he went and waited at the entrance of the valley, beneath the great icicles, to watch the people who passed. And on their way he stopped them and said: "I'll kill you fairly in fair fight. There is but one way of escape; try to guess the questions I put to you." And the dragon said: "Try to tell me why this valley in which summer reigns is surrounded by icicles as hard as the hardest stone in winter." The dragon had a son he loved, a human boy with merry blue eyes and long golden locks. Long before this tale began he had been married to a princess who died in giving birth to this

beautiful child. She died from fright because she had never seen her husband in his real form, for whenever he approached her he wore the countenance of a warrior, but one night when he believed she was not there he took off his biggest ring and immediately became the awful red dragon of the valley. She saw him and dropped dead. "Father," said one evening Mihai to his father, who in the presence of his child was a tall stalwart hero, and wore a silver mantle, "Father, the trees in this valley tell strange tales of an awful red dragon who kills warriors and kings, and feeds on human blood. Now I am grown up and strong I want to be a hero. I want to kill the red dragon who feeds on human blood." The dragon shivered and answered: "Alas! my son, maybe the dragon is not as wicked as the trees say. Maybe his fate is to love human blood, maybe he cannot eat nor drink anything else but human blood and human flesh." "What care I for the dragon's fate, father? I care for the warriors he kills, and I must save them. Give me a bright sword, and I will find the dragon and pierce his heart." The dragon sighed and answered: "Yes, my son, I'll give thee a sword, but maybe e'en without the bright sword thou wilt pierce the poor dragon's heart." Mihai took leave of his father and left the lonely valley. The dragon saw him depart and said: "My joy is gone. O when will my fair son come back to me?" During three days the dragon sat on a cold stone and wept, and would not think of killing human beings, as he took no rest nor food. But the fourth day he felt weak and faint, and he

ran to the entrance of the valley. He saw an old Voivode ride pass, and fought with him and killed him, and devoured him on the spot. The Voivode round his neck wore an enchanted whistle, a little ivory whistle which the dragon took to his cavern, and he thought: "I will give this whistle to my son when he returns." Mihai rode fast, Mihai rode gaily, for his gay youth rode with him and laughed, and Mihai said: "O the days of youth are sunny days indeed, and the young warrior who rides a young horse is the creature on earth on whom most gaily the days of youth rise and smile." Yet he had not ridden ten miles before he heard a pitiful scream, and "Help! help! young warrior, whoever thou may'st be," was said a few steps from his ear. He rushed eagerly forward and saw a young maid whom a great brown bear was about to carry away. Mihai rushed at the bear, and the monster felt the youth's strong sword; the youth's strong sword searched for the monster's heart and . . . found it. And the monster's heart stopped its beatings, and the monster fell dead at his feet. "Thanks, handsome hero," said the trembling maid. "I had left our palace at dawn with my father, but he is now away in the forest. I stopped to play in the grass and search fresh berries. My horse is tied to a fine green tree. The horrible bear was upon me before I had time to draw my knife. Thou hast saved me. I am the daughter of the great Voivode, who dwells by the two rivers whose whisper thou canst hear. Come to our fair palace, handsome hero. My father will like to see thee, and so will our warriors

dear, and I will give thee a yellow and silvery veil and a red belt my own hands have adorned." But Mihai answered: "Fair maid, give me thy smile which with his own hands hath God adorned; give me thy love." The Princess blushed and smiled, for never in her father's palace had she seen such a handsome youth, and she had witnessed his brave deed and felt proud of his love. They rode together in silence, and looked at each other so oft that their horses reared and stumbled, till they laughed at their own neglect, and said: "These horses are maddened to carry so happy a pair." But when they came near the beautiful palace the sound of grief greeted them, and the Princess rode fast in front till she reached the marble steps. She then asked: "Why do my maidens wail? Why are our warriors silent?" At first no one dared to answer, and the maidens covered their eyes with their hands. At last the eldest among the warriors stepped forward and said: "Fair Princess, brave daughter of a brave prince, open thy tresses and spill thy hair on thy white shoulders; thy brave father is dead. The red dragon has killed him at the entrance of the valley." The Princess answered: "I will not weep; even beyond the grave may my brave father rejoice he hath a brave daughter; but my sorrow is great as the forest and the skies. Bring up my father's wildest horse and I will ride the steed, and I will ride to the place where my father lies, and bring back his body on his own fiery steed."

But instead of obeying, once more the warriors were silent, and the Princess understood and entered her bower,

where she sobbed and rent her purple mantle and her long veil. The summer night came in, the warriors had prayed for the prince's soul in the wide church, but the Princess had not left her bower nor spoken a word. At last her favourite maid knelt before her and said: "Great Princess, this man, this unknown who rode back with thee in this fearful day, desires thee to know he hath sworn on thy own sweet face and on thy silvery veil he will kill the red dragon, and bring the monster's head to thy palace gate." The Princess answered: "I must see the youth. He has saved my life, and now perhaps will revenge my father; I must see him." "Handsome hero," said the Princess to Mihai as he entered her bower, "we have given thee a sad welcome. Our souls are sad. Wilt thou leave our sad palace without gazing upon its treasures, our useless love; useless, indeed, because my father's dead?"

Mihai answered: "I would not gaze on any treasures, fair Princess, which my eyes would hold dearer than thy dear self. I love thee, and I will take thee to my father's home in the valley. It is a wild place, but lovely, and love makes everything bright." The Princess said: "I'll come to the valley and to thy father's home, handsome hero, and I will be thy bride, and I'll marry thee when the red dragon is killed. Go thou to thy father and tell him I will come in three days to visit his home and to sue for his blessing, for a happy father is he who has such a handsome and brave son." . . . The red dragon lay on the grass and gazed lazily at the sun. "Where can my son be at this

hour?" thought he; "O where is my handsome Mihai?" At this moment the sound of a horse's hoof broke on his dreams, and he quickly took up his human form as he perceived Mihai riding hastily towards him. "Father, great news! I'm in love with a fair Princess, and she will be my bride. She'll come to this wild valley and stay one whole day with thee." The dragon answered: "If she 's a prince's daughter and lives in a great palace, we must build a palace here." "Father, she comes in three days." "Never mind, boy, go and sleep on thy couch and leave the rest to me." Mihai slept, and the dragon drew a magic sword from its scabbard, and he traced on the earth and he traced in the air the form of a beautiful palace. And lo! the icicles came forth of themselves and whirled and danced and ran till a beautiful palace made of ice rose in the wild valley. The dragon itself wondered at its magnificence and said: "My boy will be well pleased and the bride happy. I'm a clever red dragon; my son may be proud of his father now." Mihai rose before dawn, for he had dreamt of his love and wished to speak of her again and hear his voice pronounce her charming name. At the sight of the splendid palace he exclaimed: "This is a wizard's work—a treasure, a joy indeed, but is my father a wizard? I would not be a wizard's son." And the trembling dragon said: "Mihai, I'm not a wizard, but a fairy who loved me when I was handsome and young l[illegible]e thee, sometimes helps me still when I call her. She has been here this night." So Mihai was quite content, and, as the Princess rode in the wild valley, he met

her with a gracious bow, he kissed her hands and lips, and said: "Here is the palace where our warm love will dwell. It is made of ice, my dear bride, but our love will warm it soon. 'Tis the work of a loving fairy who loved my father when he was handsome and young." "Handsome and young like thee, Mihai," answered his bride, and the dragon in silver vestment, the dragon in human form stepped forth to greet the fair maiden and kissed her gentle hand and kissed her gentle forehead and said: "Surely, sweet maiden, on the ground where thy soft feet tread flowers will grow by thousands and the sun love to shine." Then they entered the wonderful palace and wandered along its halls. Then they leant on the brilliant columns that bore its terraces white. All at once the Princess exclaimed: "I've lost my bird—'tis a favourite falcon, 'tis yellow! who follows me when I ride; had I but my ivory whistle I would soon call the falcon back." "Here 's a whistle for thee, fair sweet lady," answered the dragon, and he handed her the whistle he had found on the dead Voivode. The Princess grew pale, the Princess sighed and wept. "O Mihai, here 's my father's whistle, which he wore on a golden chain. O Mihai, here 's his own dear whistle which he wore in his golden belt. Tell me, whence comes this whistle, and why it dwells with thee?" The dragon trembled, for Mihai's keen eyes now rested on his father's face. "Great Princess, the wandering brook who wanders through many lands hath brought this whistle to the bank where I sat in the summer grass. Let me keep

the ivory whistle and wear it near my heart." Now there was a drop of the Voivode's blood on the ivory whistle, and the Princess kissed the purple spot. Then Mihai dismissed the sad subject, and they all sat down to eat. And the rich wine filled the diamond cups, and Mihai and his bride were so gay. The dragon himself said in his thoughts: "I was never so happy in all my life." But he trembled again when the Princess asked: "O why dost thou not eat?" He answered: "I eat only fruit that grows on the distant mountain tops." Then they spoke of warriors and horses, of falcons and wild beasts. Then they sang each a song, and Mihai asked his father to kiss his fair bride's hair. And the dragon rose, and with his lips just touched the bride's soft hair. Just at that moment the drop of blood on the ivory whistle said aloud: "How can a Princess allow her father's murderer to touch her hair with his lips?" The Princess grew faint and asked: "Whence came those awful words?" The dragon again trembled and said: "'Tis a tame sparrow, whom the fairy I loved has endowed with the gift of speech. 'Tis a sparrow, and speaks at random—let us drink the rich burning wine." Then Mihai said again to his father: "Just gaze in my sweet bride's eyes. Her eyes are as clear as the river;" and the dragon gazed, and the drop of blood on the whistle spoke once more quite loudly and said: "How can a great Princess allow her father's murderer to gaze into her eyes?" Again the dragon trembled, again the dragon said: "'Tis the wind in the willow branches. The wind sometimes

says weird tales. Let us walk by the flowing river where the long rushes sing." And Mihai then said to his father: "Father, take the Princess's hand, for I'll hold her flowers, and her dagger, and her embroidered veil." But when the dragon took the proffered hand, the terrible voice rose high: "Touch not the hand of thy father's murderer, Princess." Mihai drew out his sword to kill the invisible fiend; then he said: "It is madness, for we all know the red dragon is the Voivode's murderer. I have sworn to my bride that I would meet the red dragon and kill him as he killed her father, or die in his embrace." For the third time the ominous voice said: "Mihai has broken his promise—Mihai will not keep his word."

Then furiously Mihai took his dear bride's hand and swore a solemn oath: "I swear," said he, "that I will neither eat nor drink, nor look again into thy soft eyes, nor call myself a true warrior till I bring back the red dragon's body to this place." The poor dragon trembled and said: "My son, thy oath is rash; for what mortal can be strong without food, and attack wild beasts and dragons when he fasts?" Mihai said: "Thou art right, father; but the words are spoken, the time is spent; farewell!" The fair bride wept and the dragon sighed and pondered, for he well knew his son's proud heart, and knew Mihai would neither taste wine, water or flesh or fruit before he had killed the dragon. And he also knew the dragon would not come in his way. So he took leave also of the fair Princess, and sought his magic wand and asked counsel: "I am the murderer, magic

wand, I am the dragon. My son must kill a red dragon before the night is spent." And the magic wand answered: "Get him to break his vow and to drink a drop of thy blood; then he'll imagine he has killed the red dragon and left his body in a mighty river, and thou wilt give him one of thy dreadful teeth to bring back to his bride." Three days the dragon in his human form walked through the forest till he came upon his son. Three days Mihai had wandered without tasting water nor food, but his courage was still alive in his eyes, though his hand and his voice were weak. "Well, my son, hast thou seen the monster?" "No, my father; it goes hard with me." "Art thou hungry or thirsty, my darling?" "'Tis the thirst that burns my heart."

"Surely, my son, thou canst quench thy thirst with a drop of thy father's blood. My blood is still fresh, I will give some to thee." But Mihai answered: "No, I have sworn a solemn oath." "Thou hast sworn to drink neither wine nor water, but who thought then of thy father's blood?" But Mihai said: "No, I must ride away. O father, do not tempt me." And he rode three days, and his father followed and gazed at him from afar, and saw him tremble and droop, and ran again to his side. "Father, brave father, I'm dying, but I have kept my oath. The dragon I have not found, but no drop of wine nor water nor food hath touched my lips." "Surely, my son, this must cease. I will open my veins, my blood will flow, and thou wilt drink my blood." "No, father, I must not drink; most sacred is a hero's word, as sacred as his deeds. Most sacred is the

hero's death when he dies to keep his word." And Mihai lay at the foot of a tree and said farewell to his life. Then said his father: "My brave son, walk ten steps after sunset, walk to the banks of the river whose reeds are high and thick; there wilt thou find the red dragon, who will fight a great fight with thee." And Mihai watched his father go towards the river, and then he saw no more; but when the sun had set he tottered to his feet, and walked ten steps and saw the great river, and lo! between the reeds the red dragon, most awful to behold, rose before him. With a shout of joy and hatred Mihai drew out his bright sword, but before he had time to plunge it in the monster's jaws the dragon lay dead in the river, and Mihai sighed and thought: "How is it possible the red dragon should die thus? My father surely has killed him by poisoning his food. I will reproach my father, who has stolen a fair deed from me. I cannot boast I have killed the dragon." And he cried and his tears fell thick on his bright useless sword.

Three days and three nights in his gorgeous palace Mihai held a revel and smiled. His fair bride smiled too, and when their eyes met she said: "My handsome hero." He said: "My lovely bride." "But why is father away so long?" said she. "Why does not my father come?" he said. And by the fourth day their hearts grew dull, and they watched and hoped in vain, till Mihai said, as tears fell thick upon his handsome face: "My father's dead, I'm sure he's dead; he killed the red dragon and died from a wound which the red monster made. Or maybe he rests

in the river, where the red monster threw him. Alas! my father's dead." "O my handsome lord," answered his gentle bride, "send all my warriors to search thy father in dale and forest; surely they'll find him soon." And warriors rode in forest and dale while Mihai gazed and wept. At last sleep closed his dreary eyes, and in a dream he saw his father, who said: "Yes, I am dead, fair son; I cannot tell thee more. My crimes were great and many, but I have loved thee well. Then speak no more of the red dragon, but often speak of me, and whenever thou drawest thy bright sword in tournament or war, call on thy father's name, and he will help thee to remain a true knight, a brave warrior, O handsome hero, my son!"

This tale was told to me by a shepherd who lives in the mountains, and who knows no other tale. He said: "I give my only tale to thee."

THE WHITE SERPENT AND THE LITTLE BEGGAR GIRL.

In a village by the Danube lived a little beggar girl. She was called Mesandra, and had neither known her father nor her mother. She sang sweet songs and told bright tales, and the peasants took care she should never want a shelter or food. But Mesandra loved to sleep out in the cool summer night, and in winter, even when the nights were snowy and cold, she would not seek the shelter of a roof. As she grew old she became fair and rosy, and all the young men who saw her loved Mesandra. She would not hear a word of love nor ever sing a song where love blossomed like a flower. Mesandra was a strange girl. One night, as she sat gazing at the mighty river, she saw a white snake float on the water, and instead of wondering at this singular incident, she asked the white snake: "Where art thou going, strange white thing?" And the snake said: "Bless'd be thou, sweet maid, for those few words. Thou canst not guess what a treasure thy question is to me. I am going to my home in the river. I dwell in the waters deep; 'tis a place where the water is green and blue, because a mountain's shadow sleeps on the bosom of the wave. My house is a green palace, and there I dwell with my mother." "O strange white thing," said Mesandra, "I

would love to see thy home, I would love to see thy mother. I would love to float with thee in the arms of the great river." And the white serpent then said: "Come." And Mesandra lay on the serpent's back, and they flew with the tide, and the waters made a gurgling sound about her which pleased the fair maid well.

They reached a spot by the mountain, and as dawn now came on the Danube, Mesandra noticed the water was green under the green shadow. They plunged in the deep green water, and lo! a beautiful palace was right under the maid's feet. The white serpent whistled, and his mother came forth, and Mesandra saw she was an old woman who held a distaff and a spindle, and looked at her with hatred and asked: "Who is this maid?" "I'm Mesandra, the pretty orphan who lives in the village afar. I have come to see thy palace, for thy son is kind to me." She grumbled and turned her back, and threw her spindle aside, and said: "My son, how imprudent to bring this mortal here." The white serpent answered: "Think, she may save me from my fate, O mother. Have I not the right to hope?" And he gave the maid a blue mantle, and many an embroidered veil, and he said: "Speak out thy every wish, sweet maid. We are wealthy, O wealthier by far than the wealthiest King or Voivode. Thou may'st walk all the rooms in the palace, and walk all its terraces too. There 's a garden, and there 's a great forest, and above our heads the great river will sing night and day in thy ears."

Mesandra wondered, and found the palace was fair in-

deed, such as she had never dreamt of in her fairest dreams. But no step, no sound was heard within in bower or garden, no face was seen between the lofty garden-trees. And before night she felt the pang of heartrending solitude, but spoke not of her awe and wonder, but listened to the white serpent's word. He said, when he met her at supper: "My mother lives in the tower, and rarely descends its steps. Never try to see my old mother when she calls not on thee to come." And the white serpent spoke so earnestly, Mesandra felt there must be a great secret, and that the secret of the weird dwelling dwelt with that old woman in the silent tower, where she must never go. And from that hour she thought of nothing else.

Days glided on and months; Mesandra grew sad and weary of her lonely life, and she one morning expressed the wish to return to the village. At this, the serpent hissed in wrath; then she noticed tears in his kind eyes, and said to herself: "I'll wait, some change must come. I'll bring a change. I'll find the way out of this dreary place." But she felt so sick at heart that she could neither touch her golden lute, nor play with the wonderful jewels the serpent gave her each day. Then she went to him again, and uttered a deep moan, and as he did not ask why she sighed, Mesandra broke the silence and cried in anguish deep: "I have never thought of love and a lover, but now I must think and say: 'O why art thou not, thou strange white thing, a lover tall and brave? For if the soft flame of manly love could burn within thy soul, thou would'st pity me and kiss

my lips and favour my heart's desire.'" "What," said the white serpent, and he trembled so that the palace trembled too, "canst thou swear, O maid, thou hast ne'er before sighed for love or a lover's face?" And Mesandra: "I have never loved nor ever thought of love." He trembled so that the terraces round and the garden trembled too. "Then," said he, "come quick!" and they crossed the halls till they reached a silver door. At that door he knocked with his snow-white head, and a voice cried: "Who 's there?" "I have come to say the maiden is here who hath never dreamt of love." And through the door the voice replied: "'Tis true, I see her heart. Then rejoice and be free." And instantly the white serpent became a handsome young warrior, who fell at Mesandra's feet, and said: "I love thee." And she learnt to love, for he was handsome and bright. And she no longer wished to leave the fine green palace. The old mother smiled when she saw her son resume his fair countenance, of which a bad wizard had deprived him till the day when he should find a maid who had never dreamt of love.

During the first months of her married life Mesandra felt she had found her happiness indeed. Her handsome spouse loved her, and when he returned home every night she felt her heart leap with gladness and ran to meet him. She heard his step from afar, but she knew he always first went to see his mother, so she had to wait a few minutes before he came towards her. The old woman never troubled Mesandra, nor entered her bower, nor spoke a

word of affection or hatred to her, yet Mesandra loved not her dark face and her angry eyes as they rested on the fair girl's young beauty. Then Mesandra grew to desire madly one thing which she felt she ought not to desire. Her husband had a secret; his mother knew it, and she was the only one who knew it not. Where spent he all his days? and why did he go to his mother's chamber before he met his dear young spouse? This thought kept the girl awake many a night, till she decided to watch. So she hid herself by the palace gate, and, without being seen, she followed her husband's steps. She followed him and he knocked at his mother's door. The old mother opened and said: "Hast thou found the flower that makes me glad?" And he answered despondently: "Alas! no, to-day I have not found the flower, dear." "'Tis because of thy wife, the fair Mesandra. The love of thy wife drives thee away from duty." He answered not, but rose to join Mesandra, and Mesandra in her inmost heart felt joyful he had not brought the flower, yet curious to know what that flower could be his mother thus longed to breathe. The next day and the next day he made the same weary answer, and the old woman wept, and Mesandra, though she loved her not, pitied her in her grief. But the fourth day the young man bore in his hand a blue flower, and his mother's joy was so great that she screamed and said: "O blue flower, thou art my life and my fire, my summer and my food," and she pressed the flower against her heart and lifted it to her nostrils, and all at once she became a beautiful queen with

a crown of burning red rubies on her head, and her belt and her slippers were of red red rubies, and Mesandra saw her young husband kiss her and heard him say: "My love." At this she flew away in utter grief and rage, and ran to her bower and took her dagger and rushed in the room where the beautiful Queen sat by the side of Mesandra's husband, and saying to the amazed pair: "Ye false ones, take your due," she killed them before they had time to lift up their eyes and see her; and their red blood ran warm on the crystal floor till the floor was a floor of rubies, and the red blood said: "I'm warm, but in a moment I will be black and cold; I'll speak and tell thee, Mesandra, the crime that thou hast done. This beautiful Queen who lies at thy feet was thy husband's dear sister; the same wizard who had changed thy husband into a white snake had made the fair girl an old woman. She could only resume her graceful self by breathing the rare blue flower." Mesandra wrung her hands in despair, and said: "Dear red blood, speak on, speak on and curse me"; but the blood could speak no more, as it had become black and cold. So she wandered along the desert palace and sang a death-dirge and wept. Then she mounted the highest tower and said to the Danube: "Great river, O do come to me and take me in thy arms and take me to my village small, where I was a beggar girl." And the great Danube came and took the maiden and carried her to her village again. But when she related her story they all said she was mad. She gazed all day at the river and had no other joy.

Her tears fell in the river and made the water salt.

And the Danube said: "That fair girl's tears will make all my water salt." . . . The village was gay with thousand songs, the village was gay with voices and lutes. The King of the land on his jet-black horse came to the village small. "O great King, what shall we give thee? What wilt thou take from us? Here is salt, here is bread, and a sheath of corn, and a horse as tall as thine, and three silver belts and a brown fur cap with twenty peacock plumes." "O my people, thank you all! I will take naught to-day, naught will I take from the village except the beggar girl who cries by the great Danube and will make its waters salt." So Mesandra was brought from the great river's banks. She saw and cried: "There's the dead. There's my dead love," and staggered and fell senseless at his feet. "She's mad, dear lord," said the people. "She's my wife, and I'll take her home." So he threw the girl on his saddle, and joyful rode away. She awoke in his sturdy arms. "I am in the arms of the dead. I am pleased to be dead and with thee." "'Tis true I am dead, my Mesandra. I have come to take thee away.—And those people, they will learn to-morrow that their King was dead, and his shadow came to take his beloved away. For I was thy King, my Mesandra, and now I am dead like thee."

This tale was told by a young soldier, whose horse was tied to a tree. He said he knew as many tales as he had hairs in his head, but he was in a hurry and could but tell this short and simple tale.

THE WICKED KING.

"*There is no one near the sheep.*
Where is the shepherd?"
"*The shepherd is in love with the young moon,*
And till she appears in the sky he will not listen to what thou sayest, nor look after his sheep."
"*O listless shepherd, come,*
And I will tell thee a tale that will make thee forget the hour when the moon rises, and the hour
When the moon disappears.
O why, listless shepherd, dost thou love the changing moon?
Or has the sweet spirit of thy dead mother
Gone to the white gardens in the moon?
But I'll tell thee a tale which once was told to me
By a travelling cloud in the sky.
For I talk to the clouds and they answer.
The clouds are my only friends,
So I'll tell thee this tale, listless shepherd."

THERE was a wicked King who had a beauteous daughter,
And her face was like gold, and her arms and her throat were all like living gold,
And wherever she went a golden light followed,

And her hands in the dark shone like a golden flame,
And her eyes on dark nights were like two golden stars,
And her slippers were golden, and she was called Aura, which means Gold.
And the King called a mischievous fairy:
"Why is my daughter so strangely bright?"
The fairy, who was jealous of Aura's beauty, said:
"She is the spirit of Gold, and if thou would'st kill her, all the gold upon earth and under it
Would come to thee."
Now the King loved gold much better than Aura,
But he said to himself: "I'll not kill her,
But send her to a place where she is sure to die."
So he said to Aura: "Dear daughter,
Hast thou ever heard of the handsome Voivode
Who is a captive in the palace of the Storm?
There he has languished for years; the Rain and the Hail guard the threshold,
The Wind moans all around its dismal towers,
And the brave Prince is there.
In vain has he tried with his sword and his lance
To cut the Storm, the Hail and the Rain.
He cannot get away
Unless a beautiful maid takes pity upon him and without fear enters the dangerous palace."
Aura listened, with all her soul intent on her father's words.

"Of course no King's child and no haughty maiden
would vouchsafe to deliver this Prince.
Of course, my dear Aura, you never will think of
going into the palace of the Storm.
First, I would not allow it.
But is not the Prince to be pitied;
He is so handsome and young."
Aura felt her heart beat, and her heart softly said:
"Aura, thou lovest him already,
Because he is luckless and suffers
In the dismal palace of the Storm."
No sooner was Aura by herself in her bower than she spoke to her handmaid:
"I want to go away." "Whither, fair mistress? the night is dark."
"I am bright like a flame, and I will illumine the night."
"Whither, fair mistress? the road is heavy and black."
"My golden slippers shine and will show light on the road.
Open the gates of the palace and whisper not a word of this."
And Aura went forth through the balmy air, for it was spring, and the flowers dreamt of sweet odours in their sleep,
And threw sweet odours on the air,
And wherever her feet alighted and touched the grass,

The grass shone and remained bathed in sunshine for
the rest of that dark night,
And on her way Aura noticed a thistle whose lilac flowers
were fading,
And she said to them: "Poor flowers, ye will
not see the dawn."
The flowers answered: "Pitiful Princess,
We know your errand well,
But to enter that dismal palace is such a terrible
plan
That we will do our utmost to help thee, sweet
Princess.
Here, blow on us, and thou wilt become a cloud,
a rosy cloud,
A golden cloud like the clouds that float
Above the setting sun."
Aura blew on the thistle's flowers, and felt she became a
cloud.
She was happy to float in the balmy sky,
And to rise so swiftly and high.
When morning came she saw a black form,
The form of a dungeon arise,
And the winds moaned around it, and the golden
cloud was driven away like a feather.
But ever returned and asked:
"Is this the palace of the Storm?"
"Golden Cloud, get away," said the Wind,
"This is no place for thee.

The Storm is a giant, and will disperse thee or smother thy soft vapours in his arms."

"Moaning Wind, hast thou heard of the handsome Voivode
Who is a captive here?"

"Yes, the Rain who spins by his window,
And the Hail who beats at his door
With a thousand silver hammers.
The Rain and the Hail have told me
He is a most handsome Prince.
And it is even whispered, when winter gales are strong,
That the Rain 's in love with him,
And spins night and day at his window
In order to see him smile."

"O moaning Wind, take me then near his dear window, too."

"The Rain and the Hail will destroy thee,
Thou soft and golden Cloud,
Yet I will help thee thither," and the moaning Wind blew hard till through the Hail and the Rain,
The golden Cloud reached the tower where the brave Voivode dwelt.
And the giant Storm shook the palace dark,
And the Hail's silver hammers were busy,
And the Rain's long spindles ever and anon hurt the panes of his windows, yet
The Prince still looked valiant and strong.

"Ah!" thought he, "if only I saw a little golden cloud

Amid the darksome mists."
Just at that moment the gentle Cloud
Glided before his eyes.
"O gentle Cloud," said he, "how beautiful thou art,
Methinks from thy golden depths
A maiden smiles on me.
Methinks her arms are golden, and golden her eyes and throat,
And golden the small slippers
With which she treads the sky.
Methinks her golden fingers beckon on me, methinks
I love thee, unknown maid, whose face is in that cloud.
I know love is a cloud and vanishes like a cloud in the arms of the wind.
I know a cloud can't live more than love in the heart of youth,
More than a destiny of joy whose sun must set in clouds."
And he kissed the panes of his window where the Rain's silver spindles flew.
And the Rain said to her spindles:
"'Tis well, for the fair Prince loves me.
He hath kissed my silver spindles
On the panes of his windows bright."
And the Rain saw not the golden Cloud,
For she was so busy with her spindles
And with the handsome young Prince.
And the Hail saw not the silver Cloud,

For the Hail was busy with the silver hammers that beat against the Prince's door.
But the Storm perceived the little golden Cloud,
And said: "Ho! ho! this is foul play.
How has this little golden cloud found its way to my realm?
Is it a fairy who wants to take my captive away?"
And he swore a dreadful oath at every fairy under the face of the sun,
Because the Storm had a beautiful daughter
Called Rainbow; she wore a dress made of clouds and sunlight,
Rubies and emeralds twined around her dress,
And to his daughter did the storm wish to wed the young Prince.
But in vain had Rainbow more than once danced before his windows and played with the silver spindles of the Rain.
The Prince disliked the dazzling girl as he disliked all who lived in the Storm's dark palace,
Or around it.
And now he looked at the small golden Cloud, and stretched his arms towards the sky and sighed.
And the furious Storm was about to smother the poor little Cloud in his strong arms
When a fairy came up and said to Aura:
"Now thou wilt become a red and blue flame to flicker on the hearth

While the Prince sits beside his fire."
And Aura felt she became a blue and red flame.
The Prince still stood at his window and sighed, for the little golden Cloud had vanished.
And by that time the big fire in his room was lit, and the Prince sat near the hearth,
And his eyes wandered in the fire,
And he noticed a red and blue flame that flickered and danced and turned,
And he said: "O red and blue flame,
Methinks I see a maiden smile in thee,
Methinks her arms and her eyes call on me,
Methinks she wears red slippers, and a red veil, and blue scarf,
Methinks I love her, and methinks she loves me."
No sooner had he spoken thus than the red and blue flame took a great leap and fell at his feet,
And lo! a beauteous maid arose.
And lo! he saw Aura, and she told him that she had been the little golden cloud,
And that she had pined after him from the day the King her father told her of his sad fate.
And the Prince answered, "I love thee.
I never could wed the Storm's dazzling daughter.
I love thee, and what is thy name?"
The maid answered: "I am called Aura, but thou should'st find another name for me,

Because I love thee, and will not be called as others call me.
I'm a new creature since I love, so give me a new name."
And the Prince wondered to see that wherever she walked
The ground became gold, and that a golden mist followed her steps, and that her arms were golden, and that gold fell from her long hair.
She lit up the dark room like a torch, and the Rain who peeped in
Saw the beautiful maid, and her jealous heart was awake to the peril,
And she instantly ran to Rainbow's room
And knocked at the door.
Now Rainbow was not pleased to be disturbed just then,
For young Hail had come on a visit
With his silver hammers, and was making love to her, so she said :
"Busy Rain, see I am busy too, and cannot open,
But speak thy message through the door, and I will listen."
Then Rain cried aloud, "Tell your father, my dear,
That a beautiful maid is in the Prince's room, and kisses him."
At this Rainbow laughed, and said: "Busy Rain, attend to thy silver spindles and come not to tell us thy dreams.
How can a human maid enter this palace?"

"If thou dost not believe, then come and see."
"Busy Rain, thou knowest I hate to leave my bower after sunset,
Go to my father and tell thy tale."
And the Rain went to the Storm's dark dungeon, where the giant lay enchained.
He was obliged to tie those chains around his arms and his waist himself every morning,
Because when he moved freely his strength was such that his palace was smashed to pieces
And all those who dwelt therein.
"Who 's there?" "I'm the Rain; there is a beauteous maid in the young Prince's room,
And he kisses her, and her hair is as long as her train; when she walks her hair is caught in her golden slippers."
"Another trick of the fairies," roared the Storm.
And the giant arose and the whole palace shook, while the Rain took up her spindles,
And the Hail took up his hammers,
And the earth trembled, and the sky was rent by lightning and thunder.
Aura trembled in the Prince's arms.

"O the giant Storm is coming apace,
O the giant Storm will kill thee,
I care not for life, but thy life is the life of my soul, and I will die a thousand times if thou diest,

And if I am dead before thee I will rise from the dead
And die over and over again if thou diest."
And the Prince answered: "Hush, my own love,
Love is strong, love is a tower and a sword,
Love rises much higher than the angry billows of the sea."
And Aura sobbed against his heart, and sobbed with joy also, because she heard that in his manly breast
The heart throbbed as quietly as if sore danger was not near.
And the giant Storm dashed the door open,
And the giant flew at them in his wrath.
But the Prince drew his sword, and the fairy entered and said to Aura, "Now
I will change you both into light feathers,
And you will fly away."
And Aura felt she became a white feather, and that the Prince became a proud black feather.
And before the breath of the giant Storm they flew through the Hail and the Rain,
And thus reached the azure sky and the quiet forest beside which stood the palace of Aura's father.
The palace windows were open, and Aura heard the King say:
"Alas! alas! my daughter's dead in the dark tower of the Storm.
I sent her from me because of the advice of an envious fairy,

And because my soul was thirsty for gold.
And now I am lonely, my sweet child is dead."
At that moment two feathers fell before his throne,
One was white like the pearls on his diadem, the other glossy and black.
He lifted them up and his tears fell on the feathers two, and lo! Aura stood before him,
And her young Prince.
And this poor King, whose hard heart melted, said:
"I will bless your lover's marriage
And give this young Prince my kingdom and my gold.
And I will go in his place in the palace of the Storm,
And live there in sadness till God and the good fairies forgive my wicked deed."

THE WILLOWS' DAUGHTER.

"*Dost thou remember the young willow that grew by my garden gate,*
It is dead, because a wicked spirit came and slept between its branches at night.
O how I love the willows in my garden, and the willows by the banks of the stream.
I must tell thee a tale.
It is the story of the willows' daughter,
And it was told to me by that same young willow
Who's dead, because of the evil spirit that slept between its branches at night.
The willow sighed and told the tale while I listened,
And those who passed by my garden gate said, 'She listens
To hear the young willow sigh.'"

This happened once which ne'er had happened before,
And will never happen again.
In the small forest by the stream a young girl lived;
Her sweet name was Smaranda, and she had no father and mother because
She was the willows' daughter.
Her arms were soft and supple like their branches,

Her hair like their foliage was long;
She danced when the wind touched the willows,
And she was still when at noon the silver trees slumbered and dreamed.
Her feet were white like the rays of the sun
Upon the white, silvery willows;
Her dress was made of willow leaves;
And willow leaves glistened
Around her forehead and her throat.
She wore a belt of willow leaves,
And her bracelets were willow leaves when the bright dew shone;
Her eyes were the colour of the pale green willows,
And she never moved from the banks of the stream.
Her fingers played with the water, her face
Was mirrored in the water oft.
She knew not that the world existed beyond the wood where she lived,
But the water-lily by the willows' root once spoke to her and said:
"O fair Smaranda, the earth is e'en fairer than thou.
I can peep at the plain between the slim trunks of the willows,
And I see there high churches, villages, and towns afar
I see gay Voivodes pass with their train.
I see sweet maidens dance when the summer air is full of moonlight; come and lie down by me and thou wilt see the plain."

But fair Smaranda answered: "I'm happy here, and I don't care
For what the plain can show thee.
I am the willows' daughter,
And by the willows will I dwell,
Nor stoop beside the water-lily
And peep between the trunks."
But one day a Voivode came, who was handsome and weary,
And said to his warriors: "Ye may ride home;
I feel hot and weary,
And will lie down and sleep beneath the cool trees
By the banks of the pure stream."
And he sank on the grass, took off his helmet,
And soon fell asleep.
While he slept fair Smaranda
Crept gently by his side,
And gazed upon him long,
And she said to the willows around her:
"How young and handsome is he!"
"Gaze not upon him, daughter," whispered the willow green,
"He is a brave young mortal,
A handsome and proud Voivode;
But he is like the roses and the lilies,
Who live but one short spring.
His youth will be carried away like the feather
That turns in the wind's swift hands.

Whereas thou, the willows' daughter,
Wilt remain ever young and fair,
Thou wilt live and smile as long as the trees.
Gaze not upon him, daughter, for he will take thy heart."
But Smaranda gazed on and thought: "If he loved me I fain would die for him."
She thought: "If he awoke and saw me,
Perhaps he would find me fair."
But the willows divined their daughter's thoughts
And asked of the wandering wind
To make Smaranda invisible.
And when the Voivode awoke he saw naught but the pale green willows,
But he heard a woman's voice
Whisper: "Voivode, I love thee!
I fain would die for thee."
As he saw naught but the trees and the stream
He sighed and turned away.
Still the words followed him:
"Voivode, I love thee!
I fain would die for thee."
From that day fair Smaranda pined and wept
Till the grass beneath the willows was as wet as on a rainy day,
And she said to the water-lily:
"O could I but go to him!
But the willows they cluster around me,

I cannot move, I am mad, and I'll die if I don't
hear from my handsome Voivode."
"Wait, Smaranda, don't weep," said the lily;
"I'll glide on the stream's cool breast,
I'll glide till I reach the palace
Where thy Voivode dwells and sings."
"Then O take to him this pale willow leaf
And throw it on his breast.
I know the leaf will whisper,
'Voivode, I love thee!
I fain would die for thee.'"
The water-lily glided upon the stream's cool breast
Till she reached the palace steps that descended to
the waters,
And on the threshold the young Voivode stood.
But a fair young bride
Was there by his side, and he drank her eyes and
her kisses,
And the water-lily then threw
The pale willow leaf on his breast.
Then the Voivode again heard the strange words:
"Voivode, I love thee!
I fain would die for thee."
And he then remembered
The words by the banks of the stream,
And he said to the bride: "There 's a pale green
wood not far from the palace, dear.
Wilt thou come with me and breathe the soft air

By the pale green willows?"
"Willingly," answered the young bride.
And thus the two entered the wood,
Where fair Smaranda saw them. At first she thought:
"This maid is perhaps his sister,
And I must love her too."
But the water-lily said: "He loves her; she is his bride."
Smaranda threw her arms around a tall willow-tree, and she wept against its gray bark,
While the handsome Voivode and his bride laughed gaily and plucked wild flowers
And breathed the summer breeze.
Smaranda said: "Alas! I cannot die.
I must live as long as these trees, and life is heavy and black,
More than the autumn night when the sweet stars are away. Alas! I cannot die."
She had scarcely finished speaking when she saw a woman with a distaff and four spindles
That hung down to her feet.
And her fingers knew no rest, and she threw the spindles right and left,
And whatever the spindles touched in their flight drooped and faded.
Then Smaranda said: "O touch me with thy spindle, busy woman,

So that I droop and fade,
So that I die."
But the busy woman answered and showed the bright young bride:
"I've come for her, Smaranda,
My spindle will touch her hair
Before she crosses the meadow,
Before she ties the flowers
That she's plucking for her belt."
"The Voivode will scream, the Voivode will weep."
"No matter, I've come for her."
"O!" said Smaranda, "the Voivode will weep.
What could I do for thee, O busy woman,
To prevent thee from touching the bride?"
Then she said to Smaranda: "Then cut a willow-branch,
And cut a long swift spindle,
And pierce thy heart with the spindle,
And thus thou wilt become a willow-tree, Smaranda,
A willow-tree for ever
Instead of a maiden fair."
And Smaranda cut the willow-branch,
And cut a long sharp spindle,
But before she pierced her heart
She kissed the handsome Voivode on the lips
(She was invisible), and whispered:
"Voivode, O how I have loved thee!
Voivode, I die for thee."

And Smaranda became a pale green willow
By the banks of the stream.
The Voivode and his bride were married, and wherever they dwelt a pale green willow
Grew by the window and said:
"Voivode, O how I have loved thee!
Voivode, I die for thee."

THE FOUR PRINCESSES AND THEIR CRIMSON SLIPPERS.

THERE was a mighty King who had four daughters;
They dwelt in his palace and never saw the light of day,
For a wicked fairy had said on the day of their birth that they would perish
If the sun ever caught a glimpse of them.
The four damsels were sad,
They longed to see the sun,
But they were so well guarded in the palace of the King
That they were never free except at night.
But then when night came how happy they were
And how busy,
How they ran and danced on the floor,
How they kept always crying and saying:
"I wish we could go in the gardens
And peep at the moonlight fair."
And one night the Princesses cried
Because all the doors were bolted,
And they knew they could not escape.
A handsome Prince who lived in the next kingdom
Resolved to rescue them.

He took a horse, a sword, and a small lute,
And rode to the King's bright palace.
"I'm a knight, I can tame wild horses.
King! hast thou a wild horse to tame?"
And the King answered: "Young knight,
There 's in my stables a horse so wild
That no one will come near him,
And he neighs night and day
And will never be fed,
And though he does not feed
He is the strongest among my wildest steeds."
The handsome Prince went to the stables and to the furious horse he said:
"O who art thou?
I guess thou art some god or king."
The horse said: "Do not seek to know,
But feed me,
And I will serve thee well."
And when the wild horse moved the stables trembled,
And gardens and palace trembled too.
"Well do I guess, wild horse, that thou canst eat naught but fire."
And the horse answered: "Yes, thou hast guessed right.
Bring flames to me."
The handsome Prince gave the wild horse
Great flames to eat.

Then the horse said: "I thank thee.
Now come on my back, and I'll take thee
To the Princesses' bower.
One of them thou shalt love.
She wears a sprig of pink carnations
In her black hair."
And they passed through the wondrous gardens,
Yet no one gazed as they passed,
And they entered the palace hall,
But no one gazed."
And the handsome Prince then understood that the horse had become invisible,
And had made him invisible too.
When they entered the four maidens' bower,
The maidens saw both the horse and the Prince,
And began to tremble with fear.
But the horse said: "Don't tremble, Princesses.
We will take you into the garden
When the moonlight is fair.
Put on your crimson slippers,
Put on your golden dresses,
Put on your silver veils,
And follow us in the garden."
And the four maidens followed,
And the Prince fell in love with one of the four maids;
She wore a pink carnation
In her black hair.
Lo! the doors were not bolted,

And all the attendants slept.
They reached the moonlit garden
And there found three other Princes,
And 'neath the moon till morning
They danced, till their crimson slippers
Turned pale,
Till their crimson slippers
Were torn and worn they danced.
At morning a row in the palace:
"Why are all the crimson slippers
Quite torn and faded, why?"
And the King gave his daughters new slippers,
And watched them well all day,
But when night came,
And the doors were all bolted,
Again the Prince was there.
At dawn again the slippers
Were torn and faded. Why?
And now all the knaves in the stables
Spoke of the unknown knight,
Who tamed the wild horse and had given him fire to eat.
And the King went and gazed upon the scene.
"I'll ride that horse to-day," said he, "since thou hast tamed him."
And the King tried the horse,
But the wild horse would not be ridden by an old king,

And reared and kicked till the furious King fell
to the ground.
"Let horse and knight be burnt to death,"
Ordered the furious King,
And a great pile was made of wood and straw,
Where horse and Prince at midnight
Were to be burnt to death.
Through the great palace the news flew,
Till the Princesses heard,
And they cried bitterly, and begged their father
To spare both knight and horse.
But the old King was furious,
And would not spare.
So they begged hard again
To be allowed to gaze
Upon the awful sight.
The court assembled, and the people from all the cities
Which the King ruled.
And the wild horse and the Prince were brought
forth
To share the same sad fate.
The four Princesses wept.
"We'll give our crimson slippers
To burn with them." "I forbid you
To speak to that man," said the King.
And he said one brief word, and the tall flames rose.
The flames were red and blue,
And the knight and the horse in the midst of the flames

Stood bright and fair.
Higher the flames now towered
And closed around them,
Till the Prince's belt
Was one blue flame,
Till the Prince's cap
Was a shivering flame,
Till the Prince's hand
Was a trembling flame.
And they twirled and they shrivelled,
They sank and fell.
When lo! with a sob and a cry,
The fairest of the Princesses
Threw in the fire the pink carnation
That she wore in her thick black hair,
And the lofty fire in a second
Died out as if it had never been.
The people cried: "'Tis a miracle!
The knight and his horse are saved."
But the King cried: "All right! We'll spare them.
But since that knave is so clever
At taming wild beasts,
I'll not let him go till he tames
My favourite dog."
The King's favourite dog was a wizard,
Whom no one cared to meet.
Now said the horse to the Prince:
"Take care of that gentle dog's wiles."

And the dog leapt forth and said to the Prince:
"Canst thou cross, gentle knight,
The shadow of my tail upon the sand."
The shadow of the dog's tail was but a thread of darkness upon the sand.
But when the knight said "Yes,"
The shadow grew,
Till it became a big river
All swollen with ice and snow.
And the horse said to him: "Kiss the water,
And throw thy pink flower in the flood."
But the Prince said: "The flower that comes from my beloved,
And saved my life,
I'll not give to the trait'rous waters,
But carry with me until death."
And he leapt in the rapid river
With that pink flower in his hand,
And the pink flower widened and grew,
Till it became a gentle boat,
In which the young Prince crossed the angry river.
And the King then said: "'Tis a miracle!
There must be a god by thy side."
The young Prince showed the horse, and answered: "He's the god."
And the King said: "Let the wild horse command,
And I'll obey."

"King," answered the wild horse,
"I could destroy thy palace,
And burn down all thy cities fair,
If I but neighed three times.
I will not do it, because thou hast four daughters,
And I'll deliver them.
There is a spell at work with them, I know,
But now the sun would be afraid
To harm them.
So let the damsels live their own free life,
And give this knight, who is a Prince,
Thy fairest daughter,
Because he loves her."
The King obeyed, and his three other daughters
Married the three Princes
With whom they had danced in the garden at night.
And at their wedding
The maidens wore crimson slippers,
But the wild horse was gone.

THE LITTLE BLUE GLASS RING.

If thou stoopest over the fountain
Thou wilt see the sand shine;
But from afar the sand is black.
If thou touchest my belt
Thou wilt feel my heart beat,
Though thou believest that my heart is still,
Because I ne'er lift up my eyes towards thee.

I AM the little blue glass Ring;
I am so small that a maid only
Can wear me, and three tears
Would fill me quite.
I am the little blue glass Ring.
I have betrothed the King's daughter
To the bright Sun.
For Viorica, the King's daughter,
Would marry neither warrior nor Voivode.
"I'll marry naught but the bright Sun," said she;
"Tell the bright Sun, my father, to leave the sky and to alight
Before our palace gate;
I'm fair enough for him."

But the Sun never answered the proud girl's summons,
And the poor King grew sad.
And the King said one morning: "Ay, I will give my kingdom
To him who would compel my daughter
To forget her wild wish."
And many a bright tourney and many a bright dance
Took place at the King's palace.
Yet Viorica
Still dreamt of the fair Sun,
And sighed and wept.
"A messenger has come; he bears a message
From the fair Sun himself."
"Let me stay with this man alone," said Viorica.
And the young man was called Ion,
He was a shepherd.
"How is it, O young shepherd,
That thou should'st know the Sun?"
"He dwells in my hut all the day,
And I talk to the Sun for hours,
And he loves well my eyes,
And he loves thee, O King's fair daughter.
This little Ring has he sent thee."
"What, only a little glass Ring
For our betrothal?"
"Yes," answered Ion, and the poor shepherd's heart
Began to beat, for he loved Viorica.

"I thank thee, shepherd sweet,
And I will wear the Ring,
And wait for my future spouse."
And when Ion had gone, "O little blue glass Ring,"
Whispered the maiden,
"Speak to me of the Sun."
"Ah, dear Princess! the Sun's great palace,
Is a big pile of gold;
He bears a silver sceptre, and his throne
Is covered with fiery emeralds."
"Like my father's, dear Ring.
And what do the courtiers who live in the Sun's palace do all day long?"
"Ah, dear Princess! they wait for the bright Sun's return;
For the mighty Sun is always away.
He only returns for an hour or so,
The time to change his golden horse and his sword,
Or give his golden horse to drink.
The handsome shepherd who brought me hither, Princess,
Dwells in a sweet green hut,
Close by the water.
He sings, and the waters weep
To hear him sing so well."
"And what says the Sun," asked the maiden,
"When he returns to his palace,
And gives his tall horse to drink?"
"Ah, Princess! he relates that the earth is so sad.

Men die on the earth, and women,
And little children too.
And the harvests he loves are cut down to the root,
And the cries of the dying and white heavy tombstones
Accompany him wherever he goes.
The handsome shepherd who has brought me hither
Knows such bright tales,
And sees the love of the flowers and the birds."
"And what says the strong Sun when he loves a young maid?"
"Ah, Princess! he says, 'Let us love,
For dear love can last but one day.
I have seen all love die away,
I have seen ev'ry kiss fall and fade
Like the leaves from an autumn tree.'
The handsome shepherd who has brought me hither,
When he loves a maiden young,
Says to her, 'O my love, love lasts
As long as death.'"
"Dear little blue glass Ring, call the fair shepherd back,
For I will in my turn send a message
To my betrothed, the Sun."
And I, the little blue glass Ring,
I called the shepherd.
And Viorica said to him: "Go, tell the Sun,
Viorica's afraid of your huge golden palace and of your eyes
That have seen every tombstone,

And have seen ev'ry love come and fall;
Viorica's afraid of your hands that have touched
The lips of all the dead.
Viorica will marry the shepherd
Who dwells in the sweet green hut
Close to the water."
"But, my beloved," said Ion, "what shall we do
With the little blue Ring?"
"We will drive a gold nail in the wall of our room,
And we will hang the small blue Ring on the gold nail,
And the little blue Ring will see our love."
Thus I dwell on the wall of their chamber,
And by my side
A little branch of basil
Makes the air soft,
And I say to the basil sweet, "Look at their love!"

THE FAIRY AND THE WATERFALL.

I have heard this tale from an eagle who lives in the clouds and sleeps on the mountain's hard breast, and the eagle told me he heard this tale from the cloud and the rainbow that dances on the waterfall.

THE dark Karpathian mountains were sad because in the solitude of their forests among the giant trees no torrent flew, no waterfall made the day joyous and the night short with the sound of life and laughter. "These mountains have no waterfall and no torrent, they are sad," said the bright hero of the mountains, the handsome Stoïca, to the fairy of the meadows, whom he often met, and to whom the handsome hero was betrothed. "If thou wert a real fairy instead of being almost alike unto all the pretty maidens of the earth, thou would'st find the means to enliven the forest." "Alas!" answered the fairy, "I have prayed hard all the rivers to run on this side, but thy forests are dark." "I tell thee thou art no fairy." At this the poor fairy grew faint with grief and shame, and said: "I will not look upon thee, nor enjoy the fair smile of the sun, nor call myself a fairy before I have brought thee a splendid wild

torrent and a savage waterfall right in the heart of thy forests."

The fairy rode her favourite steed and reached the palace of the King. It was a clear moonlight night, and she thought she might rest under a rose-tree, for she was a small fairy, and besides could get tall or tiny at her will. She soon went to sleep, and her favourite steed slept by her side in the grass, for she had changed him into a drowsy butterfly; but soon she awoke to hear a conversation above her head, on the terrace of the royal palace. She heard a woman's soft voice: "O my hair is as long as the river under the elms, and as heavy as the waterfall that bounds from rock to rock in the mountains. I will give thee my hair, great wizard, and my teeth; look how my teeth shine and glisten in the light of the splendid moon. But promise to bring my father back." Then a terrible voice answered: "Give me also thy long eyebrows." Then the fairy heard a low sob, and the soft voice said again: "Take them, but bring my father back." And the fairy, who could get wings and fly, flew to the terrace and saw a beautiful maid, who knelt before a hideous wizard, and the fairy whispered in the maiden's ear: "Refuse, refuse, and I will help thee. I am the fairy of the meadow. I can help." Then the beautiful maid sprang to her feet and exclaimed: "False monster, I will save my father and keep my long hair, my long eyebrows, and my shining teeth." The wizard stamped his foot and said: "I will put heavy chains on thy father's back as soon as I get home, and he will rue

the hour of his daughter's sad indifference to his sufferings. Farewell, maid, I will torture thy father; this I promise"— and he disappeared.

Then the fairy stepped to the girl's side and asked her: "What is the matter with thee? And where is thy father? And who has put him into the power of that false monster?" The young girl, who was a princess and the King's own daughter, answered: "Alas! beautiful fairy, whose feet make the meadow green and the forest alive, my father had entered into an agreement with this wizard. My father desired to possess a marvellous sword, a fairy sword, which flew from its scabbard whenever something unjust or some misfortune happened a thousand miles even from the spot where the sword was to be found. Thou may'st well understand, beautiful fairy, what a precious sword it might prove to a king, for kings are always swayed by what they hear and see, and the senses of a king do not reach much farther than those of any ordinary man. Now this precious sword belonged to the wizard, and the King offered him the half of his kingdom and of all he possessed for the privilege of owning the marvellous sword. But the wizard answered: 'I will have neither land nor money. I will give thee the sword, but promise me not to allow thy daughter to touch it, or to speak a word about it to anyone. If she breaks this promise, I will carry thee away to a dark dungeon, and thou wilt be a captive for the rest of thy life.' Of course the King thought he could easily promise this, and I urged him to do so, and the wizard brought the bright

sword, at which I never even gazed, and I kept away whenever my father wore it, and many years passed and the sword did as much good in this land as if it had been a good knight.

"Alas! alas! these happy years were followed by such bitter hours that I can scarcely bear to mention them. One day I stood on my balcony, where a sweet fountain plays with the plumes of a thousand birds. The King had just left me, when I noticed he had forgotten his sword, just by my side. With a cry I rose and drew my chest away from the glistening scabbard. I could not call on some one to take the sword away, as I was bound by the solemn promise never to mention its name; so I thought to retire, when a voice so pitiful and low I first took it for the beating of a broken heart, said: 'Pity, beautiful maid! pity for the fate of a valiant knight who is a prisoner in the shape of the marvellous sword. O save me! Would'st thou but touch the sword or let thy dress touch it, I would be saved from torture and resume my human form again.' I answered terror-stricken: 'O wretched, valiant knight, ask me to give thee my jewels all and my life, and even more precious than my life, a kiss on the lips of an unknown, or even on the lips of a wild monster, and I will do all to help and save. But my father would be the wizard's prisoner if I touched the marvellous sword.' 'Then, beautiful maid, breathe on the gold and the steel; surely thy breath may come near, if not thy hands and thy dress. Surely a sigh from thee

could not injure thy father, the King.' And I just came a little nearer and gave a long sigh and stretched my arms out in pity towards the unknown, who was the prisoner of the wizard. Then the sword was shattered to pieces, and for a second or two I saw a handsome young knight wave his hand and smile. Afterwards a deadly silence ensued; then my ladies and maidens all rushed to the balcony. They wrung their hands in despair. 'The King, our King, thy father and our lord is carried away in fetters by a legion of black demons.' Since that day his fate is one of darkness and terror. I have this night called the wizard to the palace. Thou knowest all, sweet fairy. Now try to save us, save my father. I am the guilty one, so thou may'st play havoc with me." "Such is not my intention, Princess," said the fairy. "We will both repair to the place where thy father's dungeon stands." The fairy mounted on her magic steed and took the Princess by her side; then as they rode through dale and forest the fairy noticed that when the Princess lost a thread of her long trailing hair, the thread immediately became a rivulet or a long garland of dew upon the branches. The fairy said naught, but thought: "I now understand why the wizard desired to possess her hair." They at last reached the place where the old King spent his time in dire captivity. The fairy sang thrice in her silver horn, and the wizard came up hastily and saluted her with courteous humility, for she was a powerful fairy.

"What shall I give thee, sweet fairy? Gold, diamonds,

rich coins from my cellar, or from my stables swift steeds?" "Give me a spare room and a couch, gracious wizard. I am tired to death, and would sleep undisturbed. And, above all, give me a glass of cool water, for I am thirsty like my meadows in June." Now all the wells and the rivers around the wizard's palace were dry, but this he cared not to own, and he was in sore perplexity; and the fairy repeatedly said: "What, not a little cold water in this place?" He went to the dark dungeon where the old King dwelt, and said: "Great King, I am going to marry thy daughter and take her away to a distant land. Thou wilt never see her more." At this the wretched King wept and his tears fell thick in the darkness, and in the darkness the wizard filled a glass with the old King's tears. He took the glass to the fairy, who drank not a drop and said: "'Tis salt water, wizard; I cannot drink, but I will take it to my bower and cool my face with the strange liquor," and she bore her glass away, for she knew she held the old King's own tears, and she said: "We shall see what a splendid thing we can make with a mortal's tears." And she blew three times on the glass, and a beautiful maid sprang out of the old King's tears. She was so beautiful that the fairy herself wondered and said in her heart: "'Tis well that my mountain hero gazeth not on this marvellous girl." And she said to the girl: "I command thee to win the wizard's heart and to love him."

The wizard came next morning and inquired how the fairy had spent the night. "Most sweetly, courteous wizard,

and my sister Marina, who plays the lute well, sang songs of love over my sleep. O, thou hast not seen Marina; she came over to me this night. Like all fairies she came in unseen. Marina! here is a young lord who desires to gaze on thy face." Marina drew back the purple curtains that hid her from view, and she did not perceive how monstrous and bad looked the wizard, but loved him on the spot, while the wizard stood transfixed and bewildered and screamed and wept in his joy: "O let this beautiful maid be mine for ever. Marina, be my wife." But Marina answered: "I am my sister's slave; my fate belongs to my sister."

The fairy gently shook her head and said: "Wizard, I'm very sorry, wizard, I must say no. A dreadful death awaits Marina if she marries a man who does not bring to the wedding a free King and a free King's daughter with her bridegroom." "I will roam, I will search," said the wizard in despair. "Give me time, sweet fairy; deny not Marina to me." "O wizard, I'm very sorry; O wizard, I must say no. Marina must be wedded the very same hour she sees the man she has to wed." Then the wizard tore his hair and his garments, then the wizard knocked his head with his golden rings. All at once he exclaimed: "Wait, sweet fairy," and ran to the dungeon and brought the old King. Then he said: "O King, where's thy daughter? I will send for thy daughter fair." But the Princess, who was beneath the window, had heard her father's voice, and she came in. Then the wizard said: "A

bridegroom is wanted," and he brought in a handsome young knight. The Princess blushed, for she recognized the knight who dwelt in the marvellous sword. And the two pairs were wedded in presence of the fairy. And as the radiant Princess fell at the fairy's feet and said: "How can I show my gratitude unto thee?" The fairy said: "Give me thy hair; it will soon grow again." And the Princess cut her long hair. The fairy returned to the mountains and threw the Princess's long hair on the brim of a rock, and a noisy waterfall rushed forth like a silver plume, and the hero of the mountain kissed his little bride's lips and said: "Thou art indeed a fairy." "No, a woman," murmured she, for she thought of the happy Princess and the old King—and the good actions she had done.

DRAGOMIRA.

Dragomira was the sweetest and fairest girl in the village; she loved God, the sunlight, and the birds; she tended all the living and frail creatures that came across her, and her heart was as clear and bright as the crystal beads of her necklace and the new-born flowers she wore every morning in her hair. Yet Dragomira died one evening when there was neither sun nor moon to mourn over her in the sky, when all the little birds were asleep. When the sun returned next morning and asked: "Where is Dragomira?" the wretched mother answered: "In her fresh young tomb!" And the maidens threw lilies and sunflowers on her fresh young tomb and said: "Alas! Dragomira, where art thou? why hast thou gone from us? what harm have we done thee that thou should'st thus be silent when we weep, nor care for our smiles and our flowers?" Dragomira had been dead ten days, and she slept as soundly in her fresh young tomb as in her gentle bed near the hearth. She dreamt of maidens with lilies and sunflowers in their hands, and with tears down their rosy cheeks, and she wondered in the eternal sleep and said: "I wonder why they weep when they are so happy, with lilies and sunflowers in their hands." But at the end of

these ten days Dragomira awoke to hear a little bird twitter beside her head. She asked: "Little bird, is it time to awake?" The little bird answered: "Dragomira, thou art dead; thou wilt awake no more to see the brightness of the sun on the water and on the leaves." "But the sun is not dead also," said the girl, "and others are happy and see it." "Yes," answered the bird. Then said Dragomira: "I will not weep because I hear I am dead." "Is there nothing upon the bright earth thou would'st have the desire to gaze upon again?" "Yes," said Dragomira, "yes, but once again, sweet bird, I would like to see my mother with her spindle on the threshold, when the fire rises high in the garden beneath the trees where we sat down to our meals. I would like to see my sisters of the village dance in the fierce midday sun, and to hear the flute of the shepherd who urges them to dance fast and well. I would like to see my dear love by the well, where I met him first and last, and speak of my love to him, for when I dwelt on the earth I was a timid maiden and ashamed to speak of my love." Then said the twittering bird: "Take these basil leaves, Dragomira, and put them in thy hair." "My hands are cold, my fingers are numb, dear bird; what shall I do?" The bird stooped and let the sweet-scented leaves fall in the dead girl's hair, and when the dead girl felt the weight of the sweet-scented leaves she rose and pushed the coffin from her limbs, she rose and pushed the earth away, she rose and pushed the stones away, and walked as in a dream. She said: "I'm as light as the white-footed

river and as the chains that fall from the moon; I'm as light as my own breath when I breathed the air on hill and in forest; I'm as light as the smoke on our cottage roof in the winter." And before she could say twenty words in her thoughts she had reached her mother's door. The dear mother, as straight as a poplar gray, stood on the threshold with spindle in her hand, her long veil on her hair, and despair in her eyes. And the mother spoke to the spindle, while in the garden beneath the trees the fire rose, and the evening meal was there to be kept warm.

And the mother said: "Where is Dragomira? My six daughters are naught to me since the seventh lies dead in her fresh young tomb. She has gone without tasting the bliss of life nor its pain. What flowers can I take to her tomb that will not be bruised by my tears? What words can I speak to the living when the dead will not re-appear? If her sweet shadow now stood on my threshold I would say, 'Sweet shadow, take me afar with thee.'" And Dragomira thought: "I must hide myself lest mother tries to follow, and if she sees my tomb open, she will go down in the earth and discover how dull and cold is my young tomb. No, mother must not die, because then if death lies heavy on her, she would break her heart to know I too am dead. Now here, when the sun shines, she may imagine I see the sun, and when she speaks to me that I hear." And Dragomira gently kissed her mother's spindle, and kissed the moss on the threshold, and kissed

the smoke as it rose from the fire, and glided into the night away.

When Dragomira's father came home to his cottage and sat to his evening meal, he saw the spindle and the moss on the threshold, and the smoke over the fire, shine like water under the moon, and he said: "Wife, the spirit of the dead hath been here and kissed the moss, the spindle, and the smoke." And the mother answered: "Surely Dragomira hath come unto me while my spindle ran, and while I spoke to my child who is in her fresh young grave." Then they prayed and made three times the sign of the cross, and sat down to their evening meal under the trees.

The villagers danced gaily in the clear moonlight, and sweet was the sound of the shepherd's flute as it urged them to dance and rejoice, and many were the hearts that bounded under the embroidered belts. All at once a maiden said: "I feel a cold hand on my hand, I feel a cold breath on my hair. Has the moon come to dance with me or the gentle spirit of a dead maiden? for I have heard the gentle spirits of dead maidens sometimes come among us and love the sound of the shepherd's sweet flute." The maiden who spoke thus was called Anca, and though Dragomira could not answer she eagerly drank in the words, and her invisible shadow turned and leapt in the wild dance full of mingled buoyancy and languor. And she listened to the glad voices, and when the dance was finished they gathered under the trees to talk and drink, and to see the moon between the leaves. The talk fell on

a wedding which was to take place in three weeks. Anca said: "My wedding-dress is ready. But as I marry a man who loved the maid that now lies in her grave, I will leave my belt open, so that the dead maid may gaze into my heart and thus read how I pity her, though I take her beloved." Dragomira's sweet shadow now trembled. She longed and feared to know the bridegroom's name. Then Anca said: "He is handsome and brave, and when he sings all the villages on the hills ask: 'Who is it that sings so well in that distant village in the plain?'" And then Dragomira knew her beloved was to wed the fair maiden whose hand she had touched.

And she bitterly felt how hard it was that the dead cannot weep, and all the softness of the moon went out of her soul, and she returned to her grave.

The next day the young man Dragomira loved was by the side of the well. He had just drawn a pail of water, and he said to the water, "Why tremblest thou, or has the gentle shadow of a dead maiden touched thee?" The water answered: "Yes, her gentle shadow's here; thou canst speak, she will hear, but what she says will not reach thine ears." Then the young man said: "O Dragomira, I have not forgotten thee, and I would fain remain without a wife to the end of my days. But thou know'st well we are poor. My mother is old and weary. The spindle falls from her hand, and she falls when she wishes to cross the threshold. Anca I do not love, but the girl knows how to spin and to tend house and field. Had

I but ten golden ducats I would not wed." Dragomira kissed her beloved's brow and his lips, and went back to her grave. Alas! she could not sleep in her grave. She thought of him and of those ten ducats, and of how sweet it might have been to feel sure he would never wed. O, were she only a living maid, how she would gain those ten ducats for him! "But here, in my grave," said she, "what can I do? My hands are numb, my fingers lazy. Alas! what can I do?" She thought and thought till she rose again, and groping through the darkness she reached another grave. There a rich woman lay with ten golden ducats round her neck, and she had left three children to her husband. And Dragomira asked the rich woman: "Is the money aught to thee?" "Yes," answered she, "even in my grave is the gold dear to my fingers, but I have left three children and my husband, and O! could I know whether they remember me." Dragomira said: "I have the power to return upon earth, I will go and look at thy children and hear thy husband talk, but I want the ten ducats from thy neck," and the woman promised. Dragomira went to her house and brought messages of love to the poor mother, and she got the ten golden pieces. Then she again sought her beloved; he was asleep when she found him, and put the ducats in his dear hand, and said: "Now thou wilt not take another girl to thy heart." He awoke to find the treasure, and ran and told Anca, and said: "We will be wealthy, my love, and buy a pair of oxen and a cart." And on the wedding day Anca wore the

ducats round her neck, but Dragomira had sunk again to everlasting sleep, and she knew not the treachery of her beloved. But the dead woman's husband recognized the coins, and he said: "The young man has stolen the coins out of my wife's grave"; and the woman was unburied and the coins were found missing; so the young man was taken to prison, and when he was released Anca had gone mad with grief and shame. Then he went to Dragomira's grave, and said: "Dragomira, I knew the coins came from thee, and I deceived thee; pardon me, Dragomira." But Dragomira could not hear as she slept her everlasting sleep.

This tale was told by two maids as they mowed the grass in the garden, and they had known Anca and Dragomira, and they wept as they spoke.

THE YOUNG PRINCE WHO, BORN OF A ROSE-TREE, BECAME A ROSE-TREE HIMSELF.

"Give me some wool, or give me flax, dear spinner,
For my distaff is bare.
I'll give thee, too, a sweet rose for thy hair."
"Hark, sister! the sweet rose whispers
And tells a tale.
'Tis the tale of the Prince
Who, born of a rose-tree, became a rose-tree himself.
Then listen while I fill thy distaff.
Listen to the strange tale."

THERE was a rose-bush in a forest, or rather a rose-tree,
For it was high and straight like any tree,
And threw a high shadow on the grass.
And the forest admired the rose-tree; the Spring admired it also,
And Spring and Autumn adorned it with fresh flowers.
And the birds all said: "What a high rose-tree!"
And the nightingale sang her best songs
In honour of its flowers.

The stream sang better as it flew
In the neighbourhood of the high rose-tree.
And the rose-tree was happy.
But one day the forest filled with human laughter and mirth;
A gay band of warriors passed by,
And one of the gayest among them was a young Prince.
He stopped, and looked around and said: "This forest
Is dark and wild."
"What! am I really dark and wild?" murmured the forest;
And for the first time since that forest was born,
The forest's heart grew sad.
And the Prince said: "The birds sing too wildly."
"Do we sing wildly?" thought the birds,
And for the first time since they were birds,
The birds felt sad.
"There 's nothing here for us, my warriors,
Nothing that 's bright and fair;"
And the Prince turned away.
But just as he spurred his tall horse,
He noticed the fair rose-tree.
The rose-tree bore beautiful roses.
"O look at the flowers, my warriors! pluck them all, they are lovely and red,
And this is the most beautiful rose-tree I have ever seen upon earth.

Sure a fairy has planted it here, a fairy must live
at its roots,
And a fairy watch every flower till it grows so
like a young queen."
The Prince rode away with the roses,
But his words remained with the rose-tree,
Who never could feel calm or happy
Since the words of the handsome Prince.
In vain the forest murmured: "He is gone, and never will
come again."
The rose-tree dreamt of huge palaces
And gardens where princes roamed.
And days passed by, and one morning
The rose-tree heard the wind, who said:
"Sweet rose-tree,
Thou wilt bear but one other flower,
And then no flower evermore.
And from that flower will be born a handsome
Prince, thy son."
The rose-tree was silent and trembled and said:
"Is it possible, O wind?"
"Wait and see, and the flower will be white,
Whereas all thy flowers were red."
The rose-tree went to sleep, and in the night awoke to
find a white flower
That had grown right up at its top.
And when the sunlight came, lo! a handsome young Prince
Sprang out in full armour from the heart of the rose,

And cried: "Here I am; I'm a Prince."
And the rose-tree instantly loved him,
More than she had loved sun and dew.
Nay, even more than it loved the sod from which it sprang.
"Holloa!" said the Prince, "I want equerries, pages;
And since the forest has none,
Why, I must go and conquer a kingdom,
Nor rest till I get them all."
"Stay, sweet boy," said the trembling rose-tree,
"I love thee, bright child of my heart."
"I'll come back, mother dear, when my crown 's on my head,
And I'll bring a proud bride to admire thee.
Now I must go; farewell!"
In vain the tearful rose-tree sued and wept,
The handsome Prince was gone.
His name was Trandafir,
Which means, born of a rose-tree.
And all the roses on the earth were his sweet sisters.
Trandafir walked through the forest till he met a fierce heiduck.
"Art thou Prince Trandafir?" inquired the heiduck.
"Yes, I am the son of a rose-tree,
I am Prince Trandafir."
"Then take this horse and follow me,
And fight with me in all my fights."
"I'm a Prince, fierce heiduck, and cannot follow,
When followers I must have.

But if thou canst serve and obey,
Then willingly will I be
A gracious Prince to thee."
"Trandafir, gentle boy, taste my sword, taste thy blood,
As it will fall from thy brow to thy lips."
And the fierce heiduck sprang upon him,
And they closed in sharp fight.
Trandafir was the swiftest,
But the black heiduck was the fiercest.
Twice they fell to the ground, and twice they rose again,
And the heiduck roared till the oaks and the elms
Were uprooted from fear.
And Trandafir laughed till the rivers
Returned to the mountains to learn
Whence came that savage laugh.
But the heiduck was strong and fierce,
And Trandafir felt faint,
When a rose fell right into his hand.
And he took the rose and threw it
At the fierce heiduck,
And lo! the gentle rose's stem
Fell on the heiduck's neck
And cut his black head off.
So Trandafir pursued in peace his journey,
Till he reached a high palace
Beside a smiling lake.
And in this palace lived a powerful king,

Who had a lovely daughter.
The maid stood on the palace tower.
Trandafir saw her there,
And said: "She'll be my bride."
The maid wept on the palace tower,
Because her fate was sad.
She had one day wounded a haughty lily
Who was a fairy, and said: "Beware!
Whatever happiness thou canst get in thy life
Thou wilt lose soon,
And thou wilt be killed by a flower,
Beware, beware!"
And Trandafir reined in his horse beneath the tower and spoke to the maid:
"Beautiful maid, I am Prince Trandafir."
"O why, O why," sighed the young girl,
"Dost thou wear such a dreadful name?
A flower must kill me, or perchance
A man who wears the sweet name of a flower."
"I've killed the fierce heiduck there in the forest,
I'm strong and brave,
And I'll defend thee against thy fate."
"The King my father is so stern.
The King my father wishes me
To marry a young Prince
Who changeth into rubies and diamonds
Everything that he touches."
Said Trandafir: "Beautiful maid,

I'll ride and seek a fairy
Who'll help us in this plight."
"Dear Trandafir, take my veil and my bracelet
In token of my love.
A flower I dare not give, a flower I dare not touch,
A flower will kill me."
Young Trandafir went back to the rose-tree
And said to the rose-tree: "Mother dear,
I'm in love with the daughter of a stern king,
And I will never be her bridegroom
Till I learn how to change
Into rubies and diamonds
Everything that I touch.
Now, canst thou find among thy friends
A fairy or wizard
Who could come to my rescue
And give me the means of conquering my joy!"
The rose-tree pondered, and asked the moon:
"Dost thou change into rubies and diamonds
All that thou touchest?"
"No," said the moon, "my wand 's made of silver."
And the rose-tree consulted every bird,
And none of them could find the wizard or the fairy
That the rose-tree meant;
But the lark cried: "Why, ask the dew?"
"The dew, yes, the dew," said the rose-tree;
And when the dew came before dawn,
She said: "Sister dew,

My son, Prince Trandafir, requires thee;
Say, wilt thou help?"
"Willingly," said the dew; "Prince Trandafir,
Go back to the King's palace,
And I will be with thee.
Unnoticed, I will help."
Prince Trandafir went back and told the maiden:
"Call the stern King and let him hear.
I can change into ruby and diamond
All that I touch."
And gently he touched the maiden's hair,
And lo! rubies and diamonds shone in her tresses fair,
And they were made of dew.
And Trandafir married fair Mariora;
They were a happy pair. At morning
Prince Trandafir went in the forest
With thirty warriors brave, and he came back at noon.
And there was scarce a day when he had not killed
A dragon, a witch, or a wicked king.
His fame spread far and wide,
And Mariora thought no more of the dark prophecy,
Nor ever touched a flower.
One evening as Trandafir wandered by himself
In his palace garden,
He heard the gentle dew whisper to him, "Go in the forest, Prince,
The rose-bush is fading, the rose-bush is dying,
Because of thee.

The rose-bush longs to see thee before it dies."
Trandafir proudly answered: "The rose-bush may fade and die.
What know I of rose-bushes
In this palace fair?"
And the gentle dew hastened to the rose-bush and said:
"Thy son is wicked e'en as the north wind, dear."
And when the rose-bush heard the message its green leaves fell, and before sunset
It was dead.
One single rose remained alive at the top of the withered tree;
She was a purple rose,
She was a vengeful rose,
And said: I'll revenge the rose-tree."
And she said to the dew: "Canst thou make me
A lady tall and fair?"
"There is a lady fair at the gate of the palace,"
Said a warrior to Trandafir.
"She says she comes from a land where young Princes
Meet fair ladies at the gate and bow low to them and kiss their slim white hand."
Prince Trandafir sprang out to meet her:
"Fair dame, what is thy name?"
"Prince, I'm called Trandafira,
Prince Trandafir, like you."
'Tis a pity I'm married to a good and handsome wife."
"Never mind your wife, Prince; we will sit here and watch

The moon walk on the trees."
" Yes, lovely lady, but at midnight, alas!
I must go and meet my Princess,
For ladies and warriors dance in our garden
Under the travelling moon."
" Never mind dance and garden, never mind warriors and dames,
The moon walks on the leaves, and walks so lightly
That not one leaf is stirred.
The stars are dead because the moon has killed them,
And yet she smiles, the murderous moon.
You see I know all the white moon's dark secrets,
It 's she herself that kills the sun,
And on the sky her knife is bloody, but the sun rises from his tomb,
And every night
She has to kill again.
Say, do you love my tale."
" I love thy tale, fair lady, and thy lips that say it
Much better than thy tale.
But hark! 'tis the summons of morning,
And in her turn the moon must hasten to her grave.
In my high halls thirty warriors are waiting,
Who long to ride away."
" O never mind your warriors, and if they were a thousand
Still would I say: 'Handsome Prince, never mind.'"
" Give me a kiss, fair lady."
" Give me thy wedding ring."

And she took the ring from his finger and disappeared.
Trandafir rode away with his warriors
Quite dazed and sick at heart.
While he rode in the forest Mariora heard a knock at her bower door.
"Push the door; lift the heavy curtain.
'Tis one of my ladies, I suppose.
O who are you, beautiful stranger?
Sit down, and tell me thy name."
"I'm Trandafira, Prince Trandafir's own wife."
Mariora got as pale as death,
Mariora gasped for breath.
"Trandafir is my husband, lady.
This is madness, foul game, or . . . a sin."
"Trandafir's Trandafira's own spouse;
Our wedding took place in the forest."
"Show a pledge." "Here's his ring."
Mariora gasped for breath,
Mariora called aloud on death;
She saw the wedding ring, and knew it,
Yet she could not believe the lady's tale.
"Come," said she, "the ring may be stolen;
Some other Prince or a King
May have given this ring to thee.
We will wait till the Prince returns."
Mariora hid Trandafira
Behind the curtains in her bower,
And Trandafir rode home;

He had killed a dragon, two witches,
And felt merry and laughed and sang,
And ran towards her, and sought to kiss her on her lips.
But Mariora smiled and said: "Dear Trandafir,
I will tell thee a tale;
It is about the moon.
The moon had killed the sun." . . . .
"But why art thou so pale, dear husband?
Why so trembling?"
"O, never mind; I'm pale because
The moon has killed the sun."
"But the sun rises every morning from his red tomb.
Now to-day I have heard a strange thing, my fair husband.
The moon still loves the sun,
And they are wedded;
They have a marriage ring.
It is made of the gold of the sun
And the silver of the moon,
Exactly like our own; but let me see
Thy wedding ring, for thy finger
Makes every ring look fair."
Trandafir answered: "I have given
The ring to my cup-bearer old,
For there was some spot on the gold."
"No, no, no, no, the cup-bearer is not the human creature
To whom thou hast given my ring.
Her name is Trandafira,
And she is hiding here.

Thou lovest Trandafira.
Thy poor wife now must die."
"Dear wife, sweet wife, fair Mariora,
Forgive!"
But Mariora had taken a long knife,
And put an end to her fair life;
And at that moment Trandafira came up to him and said:
"I am a purple rose,
I'll revenge the rose-tree, Prince,
The rose-tree from which thou art born,
And to which thou hast shown no love;
And all the roses on the earth
Will be thy enemies for evermore."
Trandafir wept and rode away,
He found no peace by day, he found no peace by night,
Till he entered the doors of a convent,
And asked to live there as a monk.
"What will be my work here, my brothers?"
"We live with the roses and pray."
Trandafir's little garden was full of roses,
He could not look at them.
"O why does that man fear his roses?
He must be sore beset by his sins."
Trandafir could not pray.
Whenever he lifted his soul and his voice
The smell of the garden roses
Entered the darksome church,

And because of the garden roses
Trandafir could not pray.
"That man cannot pray, O my brothers!
His sins must be terrible indeed."
And one day came the convent was burnt down,
And all the monks wept, all
Except Trandafir.
Because of the smell of the roses,
Because of the garden roses,
Trandafir could not weep.
So the monks said to him: "Brother dear,
We are in fear of thee;
Go and live in the forest, brother,
Where perhaps thou wilt learn
How sweet 'tis to weep and pray."
And Trandafir went in the forest deep,
The forest where he was born,
And he said to the trees: "I'm the son
Of the fine rose-tree."
But the trees said: "The rose-tree 's dead;
Other rose-trees have come
By the banks of the stream."
And he said to the birds: "O birds, do you remember
How high the rose-tree was?"
And the birds answered: "No."
But he heard the nightingale say: "O how sad
Is the death of a rose-tree, and how strange
That a rose-tree should die;

I knew a rose-tree once
Who, instead of bearing a flower,
Gave birth to a young Prince.
The rose-tree 's dead,
And I alone am come to sing its dirge."
"O gentle nightingale, I am that rose-tree's son.
Fain would I be myself a rose-tree,
I'm so weary of life, O gentle nightingale."
And the nightingale said:
"Listen: I'll sing
Till thou becomest a rose-tree, Prince.
Listen, I'll sing."
And the gentle nightingale sang all the night,
And at dawn
At the place where Trandafir stood
There was a tall rose-tree.

"*Yes, this is the tale of the Prince*
Who, born of a rose-tree
Became a rose-tree himself.
Say, dost thou like the tale?"
"*Yes, take the flax and the wool,*
Take my spindle,
I like thy tale."

THE KNIFE AND THE WIND;

OR,

THE GIRL WHO WAS THRICE BETROTHED.

The water that thou givest me to drink is cool and sweet.
The water in the well lives so far from the sun,
So the water imagines that the sun and the moon
Dwell but for an hour in the sky.
Shall I tell thee a tale, just to thank thee for the cool sweet water,
Shall I tell thee a tale?
And the water in the well will hear my voice,
Because alike unto the sun and the swift moon,
As they rest on the water,
I will rest but one hour here;
But if I tell thee the strange tale,
Thou wilt remember the traveller unknown,
And the form of his shadow at thy feet;
And I will tell thee the strange tale without leaving my saddle,
Because my horse is swift.
And if I leave him he may run away,
And I never catch him again!

* * * * * *

THERE happened once what ne'er before had happened,
And can nevermore happen again.
A young girl lived in a village hard by the mountains,
And when she passed near, the mountain-flowers all whispered:
"O sister, stay with us,"
And at night the stars said: "Dear sister,
Come and dance with us in the sky."
The sun said to her: "Lovely sister, do give me thy hair that I may
Twine its gold between my own tresses,
And at noon the plain will not know when
I shed my hair on the forest
Which is thy own hair or my hair."
And the river said: "O swift-footed,
Cross my waters with thy swift young feet,
And my pebbles, my sand, and my flowers
Will never guess, dear swift-footed,
Which of the two have been fleetest
Of my waters, dear, or thy own swift feet."

But the young girl would not listen,
Nor dance with the stars, nor give
Her long hair to the sun,
Nor cross the bright river.
The young girl called aloud for love.
She said: "Come, love.—I want to love and be beloved,

I want great love to come to me.
Love, be as young and cruel as the young knife
That has never drunk one single drop of blood;
Love, be as mighty and soft as the wind;
As warm, as full of dreams as the warm sod
That covers the dead and wraps them in long sleep.
Love be alike unto the blessèd young eyes of the sun,—
And the knife, and the wind, and the blessèd eye of the sun heard the young girl call them all,
For she had aloud and thrice called them.
A young knife that hung on the wall marked her words,
And when night came, when the gentle stars were away
To dance and to brighten the wedding
Of a couple of distant young stars,
The young knife sprang down from the wall,
And he ran towards the house where a great wizard dwelt.
His roof was made of reeds, and these reeds closed his hut.
The young knife cut the reeds, and the reeds moaned and said: "Nevermore will the wind
Cause us to sing or sigh."
The young knife entered.
"Say, who art thou?"
"I am the young knife, wizard.

I have as yet ne'er drunk a drop of blood."
"O, then what canst thou say to me?"
"I love red tales where knifes relate their crimes."
"But thou, young knife, what canst thou say to me,
Since thou hast never killed?"
"A young girl dwells under the roof where I am a young knife.
She thrice hath said: 'The love that comes to me
Must be alike unto the knife whose blade has never tasted blood.'
And I must accomplish her fate,
Because her own mouth has called it."
"Thou art right! since it is her fate.
Then touch my shoulder, tear my white garment, tear my skin,
And with thy blade just touch my blood."
The knife tore the white garment, and tore the wizard's skin, and touched his blood,
And lo! he instantly became a fair young man,
With eyes gray as the moon at dawn,
With teeth as white as new stones on new tombs.
His black hair glittered under his black fur cap,
A leather mantle fell down to his feet, and the huge belt around his waist
Was full of glistening knives.
"Take a knife from thy belt," said the great wizard,
"And admire thyself in its blade."

And the young man took a knife for his mirror,
And he found himself fair, and he smiled.
Then he vanished gaily in haste.

* * * * * *

Stana stood by her cottage window;
Twice had her spindle knocked against her knee;
Twice had she said: "How madly spindle dances!
Is it a presage, spindle dear?
Will some unknown, fair to behold, cross our threshold?
Say will love come to-day?
And will love be young like the knife that never has drunk blood?"
That day Stana forgot
The wind, the sod, and the eye of the sun.
"Thou twirl'st too swiftly, spindle."
And the spindle sprang out and nestled among the flowers.
"Young girl, leave thy spindle alone,
Let it rest.
Leave thy spindle among grass and flowers,
And thy spindle then will believe
That it is a young tree once more,
A young branch full of joy and soft.
Young girl, leave thy spindle, I say."
Stana looked up and saw the fair young man,
"O!" said her heart, "O this, indeed, is love!"
Aloud she said: "Come in, and drink cool water,

My mother, alas! is away.
She has taken the oxen to the well that is on the other side of the plain.
My father tends the maize, for it has rained so much, and the grass around the green maize is *so* high.
And if I stay at home and spin, 'tis not because I'm lazy,
But the ripe corn is in since yestereve,
And I must watch it.
But I am strong, and can work too in the fields."
"Yes, I see thou art strong and diligent," said he,
"So I will take thee for my wife.
Thou wilt walk in the paths where I walk, and when I pillow my head on a stone to sleep
Thou wilt put thy foot on the stone,
And then that stone will be beneath my head lighter than new-mown grass."
"I love thee," said Stana;
"Thou art young and strong, and alike unto the roots of a great tree, who, invisible, follow us under ground long after we have left its shadow."
And when Stana's parents returned at eve, she said:
"I have found my fate.
This man will be my husband, and he shall call me: Wife.'"
And the days glided by and the day of the wedding was nigh.
One thing alone troubled the young girl's heart,

And lay heavy upon her soul.
Whatever her belovèd touched with his hands
Was immediately rent in twain.
On her necklace the silver coins were broken,
Her red belt torn, and the stone of the threshold was felled
As if a thunderbolt had fallen upon it.
"Touch not my smile," she said, "or thou wilt kill it."
Yet Stana loved him,
Yet their lips had never met.
And the nightingale and the moon, and the pinks and the lilies in the garden
They talked together and whispered,
"Their lips have never met."
On the day of their wedding, while the sun hastened to leave them in the dark,
They remained alone, and the young man said to Stana: "Kiss me!"
"Yes," answered she, "yes, yes, our lips must join as our destinies are now joined for evermore."
And in the garden the moon,
The nightingale and the lilies said soft:
"Their lips now meet."
But when Stana felt on her lips the lips of her belovèd spouse
She also felt
That her heart broke in twain

Just like the stones of the threshold,
And she said aloud: "'Tis a knife!"—
And her arms were empty because the young body she pressed against her bosom was gone,
And she saw a knife only that glittered at her feet.

* * * * *

Stana dreamt long of her lost love and could not bear the sight of young men
Whose belts were full of glittering knives—
"Shall I allow Stana to die without love?" thought the wind;
"She has called thrice upon me too."
And in his turn the wind entered the wizard's hut.
The broken reeds still lay upon the floor.
"Who art thou?" "I'm the wind!
Let me become if only for an hour
A fair young man most wondrous to behold."
"What, art thou not content with thy dear power, O wind,
That bringest warmth and coolness to the earth?"
"No, no! I wish to be a fair young man
And taste sweet love."
"Then," said the wizard, "just soothe these broken reeds;
They are now pining for a breath of thee."
And the wind wandered among the reeds,
And soothed them and spoke of their pain,
Till he drew from their dead leaves a murmur
As soft as the rush of their native stream.
And while the wind whispered and rustled

He felt as hot as his own breath
In the hot summer days,
And then he knew he had become
A young man fair and strong.
His brow was fresh like the poplars in the morning glow,
And a lute trembled in his hands;
Three peacock's feathers adorned his gray fur cap;
On his white tunic
A belt of gold and silver.

* * * * *

Stana was plucking the new-born basil flowers from her garden,
The basil flowers for the young girls that went to dance swift dances;
But Stana danced no more.
"Give me a sprig of the new-born basil," a voice said.
Stana trembled.
It seemed the new-born basil himself had spoken,
For the voice was so like the murmur of the wind.
"Give me the new-born basil, sweet young girl,
And I will sing for thee.
I know but one short single song,
That will I sing."
She saw that he was handsome like the poplar in the glow of the morrow,
And she gave him the basil and he sang.
He sang of the sadness of the moon

When she looked down on the corn
And guessed that he would be cut before dawn.
He sang of souls that lay like cut corn never to rise
and hail the sun again!
Veils, necklaces, and daggers passed lightly through his song,
And the spirits of the dead and their shadows who come at night
To kiss their belovèd and to weep,
And the smell of every living flower enveloped the wind's song.
And Stana listened standing in her garden
With both arms folded on her breast,
While beside the fence the wondrous stranger sang.
When the crescent began to twinkle he had vanished.
And Stana cried aloud: "Where is he?
O my wild love has gone, and I must follow;
O, I must hear that song once more."
Before leaving she said to her parents:
"Father and mother, forgive, I have to go."
And they said: "Daughter, where hast thou been these ten years?"
"I have been but for an hour in the garden
To hear a traveller sing."
"Daughter, it is ten years that we are weeping,
And have searched thee in every place."
"O father, an hour only."
"O daughter, ten long years."

She looked upon father and mother,
They had grown weak and old.
She had listened, and it had seemed an hour,
And he had sung ten years!
And she went from village to village,
From plain to plain she went and asked:
"O have ye seen the traveller
Who sang ten years near my heart,
So that I deemed I had listened but an hour?
He wore a belt of gold and silver, and his forehead was gay like the poplar in the morning glow."
"Oh, yes! ten years ago a young man fair indeed, and who sang marvellous songs
Hath passed this way,
But we have never heard from him since then.
Oh, yes! sometimes his song wanders still by us.
Cannot you mark it now?
But he remains invisible and gives naught but his song." . . . .
The wizard slept deeply.
He heard a step beside his door:
"Who's there?"
"Open quick! I am the deep dark sod,
The sod that will be a tomb to-morrow."
"What is thy wish?"
"I want to become a fair young man, if only for one hour."

"Then promise, fearful earth, that thou wilt feed my
hair with soft earth when I am lain in thee,
And fill my ears, too, so that I mark no more
The song of birds, the sound of lovers' lips."
"This all I promise."

* * * * *

Stana was watching her pale face in the stream.
"I wonder," said she, "whether he saw my face
While he sang that short song."
When suddenly upon the water
She saw a young man's visage,
A bold fair face
Touch her lips and her brows.
And a voice said: "Come with me,
Pale young girl, come.
Follow and I will lift thee to the saddle.
My horse is swift,
He can travel over the whole earth in a second.
Palace and hut vanish before us
When my horse neighs.
So follow!"
"And if I do shall I find the young traveller
Who sang beside my heart,
Shall I find him and hear
His long-lost song."
The young man hesitated.... "Sometimes, in winter,
It will creep around thy knee;
But come—my horse is swift."

But during that time the blessèd eye of the sun
Had seen the wizard and become a marvellous young warrior.
Three white feathers fluttered on his white fur cap,
And his spurs were sharp and his sword shone like water;
He wore a belt of blue beads, and he ran hard to rescue Stana.
The bold stranger had lifted her to his dark horse's saddle.
The eye of the sun looked and laughed,
And cried: "Stop one second, thou bold one!
This maiden is mine,
And we will fight for her."
And the two fought under the trees by the stream till the stream vanished,
Till the leaves of the trees fell from fear,
And the eye of the sun was the victor,
And said to Stana: "Come!"
But pale Stana then answered: "Oh! no.
Thou art too bright, too fair, and I am weary;
I love the other best, because his horse is swift, and because huts and palaces must vanish
When his dark horse neighs!"

THE EMPEROR AND THE MOUSE.

THIS happened which never had happened before, and will never happen again. An Emperor and his Empress pined because no children were born unto them. They had gone on several pilgrimages, and wept at the shrines of saints, till at last they gave up the fond hope, and when they talked together they sighed and said: "Alas! who will throw flowers upon our tombs when we are dead, and pray for our poor souls?" One evening, as they sat on the balcony of their palace, they saw a little mouse carrying a bit of straw. The Empress was good and helpful, the straw was big and the mouse very small, so with the tip of her slipper she helped the mouse by lifting up the straw. At this the mouse said: "Kind Empress, thy wish will be fulfilled; a son will be born to grace thy days, but he will be cruel and haughty; he will throw his father in a dungeon and his mother in a dry well." "Yet I will love him," said the Empress, "for he will be the child of my desire. So I thank thee for the good news, little mouse." But the Emperor got very angry, and said: "How can I forgive the mouse for telling me that the son of my pride and of my heart will be cruel and bring such calamities upon us?" And the Emperor caught the mouse in his hands and had her im-

prisoned in a cage, and said: "This cage must ever hang above the balcony where the mouse has had the impudence to bring such tidings." Then he turned to the Empress and said: "My dear, I don't believe the desire of our soul will ever be fulfilled." The Emperor was therefore much astonished when he had the joy of publishing over all his wide realms the birth of a son, and for some time the dire prophecy was forgotten. The young Prince was called Zador, and for some time he grew in mind and beauty, and no one could approach him without wondering at his fine looks, his bold demeanour, his long golden locks, and his tranquil gray eyes. At eighteen Prince Zador was the handsomest young man in his father's wide realms; the Empress simply adored him, and the Prince never gave any sign of wickedness or even ill-temper. He spoke very little, and went about the glorious gardens and the magnificent palaces without deigning to notice their splendours. His soul appeared to be rivetted on one mysterious dream. When he reached his twentieth birthday he stepped into his father's room and said softly: "Great Emperor, I am now a man, and cannot spend my life in revels and idle dreams. Give me one of thy kingdoms; give me wild horses and a host of wild warriors. I cannot stay in thy court under the gentle gaze of courteous damsels, and to see thy courtiers smile or yawn." This speech was delivered in a low, even voice, but the young man's hand was on his sword, and his eyes looked a thousand swords, and though the Emperor found his wish very natural, and im-

mediately acquiesced, a creeping sense of cold gathered round his heart as he saw his son's gray eyes glitter and his nostrils distend. He said nothing of this to the Empress, but simply told her he had given Zador his southern kingdom, where palm-trees waved by crystal fountains and where the nights were as clear as the broad light of day. "Zador will love his southern kingdom," added the Emperor. "The evenings here are raw, and it is sad to see the leaves fall in autumn, and to believe nature is dead till spring returns." The Empress wept over her son's departure, but when she saw how beautifully he rode his fiery black horse at the head of his valiant army, her heart danced with a fond mother's pride, and she waved her silken handkerchief and cried from the golden balcony: "Come back soon, my Zador, come back victorious and full of glee." "Ay," said the Prince, and uncovered his glossy locks and bowed to his imperial mother till his brow seemed to touch his horse's black mane. "I will come back, mother, and you will then live a day of wonder indeed." The beautiful court damsels kept the dainty kerchiefs to their eyes and threw their blue silken scarfs after him, and soon the gallop of the fiery horses was lost in the distance, and the Empress found the glorious gardens and the magnificent palace were lonely and dark without Prince Zador, and she assembled her maidens and told them: "Let us sit down to our work and talk of the Prince and tell me all he said and all you have heard about him." So the beautiful maidens brought the big tapestry, on which the Empress

and her ladies traced with skilful needle and varied silks the love-story of the red dragon and the fair Princess, and while their nimble fingers chose the coloured silk in the rich skeins they talked and the name of Prince Zador fell from their charming lips, and the Empress sighed and smiled by turns.

Good tidings came from Prince Zador at first; he rode and fought the enemies of the land, and was always victorious; but his subjects he ruled with iron rod, and the Emperor received secret messengers from the southern kingdom, who said to him: "Not the breath of the waving palm-trees, nor the sound of our crystal fountains, can console us for the loss of thy fatherly sway. Thy son is haughty and cruel, and he breaks the spirit of man and the heart of woman. Every woman and every maid who sees him must love the Prince Zador; he encourages the foolish wench till she verily believes he loves her too, then he laughs and scoffs, and the poor creature pines and the poor creature dies. O great Emperor, why is not thy son alike unto thee and the sweet Empress, thy imperial wife?" Then another messenger came in secret and said: "Great Emperor, thy son, the handsome Prince Zador, speaks slightingly of thee and of the sweet Empress, thy imperial spouse, and when thy health was drunk by his warriors as they rode their fiery horses before going to the battle, he struck down the cup from the oldest warrior's hand, and laughed to see the wine spilt on the gauntlet and on the horse's mane, and said: 'When I am present the Em-

peror's name must nevermore be mentioned.'" The Emperor sighed and moaned, and said to himself: "What if the words of the little mouse should come true?" The little mouse still lived confined in the golden cage above the balcony, and patiently awaited the day her words would be fulfilled. Soon tidings followed each other quick. First Prince Zador wrote a haughty, cold letter: "Father," said he, "I am getting tired of this, my southern kingdom. I will keep it and return here from time to time, but I would now have thy larger kingdom in the north." And the Emperor gave in and wrote back to his son: "Princely son, I give thee my kingdom in the north, where the snowy swans wander on the glittering lakes, and where the birds sing like the soul of an amorous maiden. But one thing I ask of thee: my old mother, who was my father's Empress, lives in a palace of ivory amid the great pine-trees on the border of a glittering lake. She is insane, and loves to gaze night and day upon the swans and the waters. O do not trouble her repose nor seek to see her, nor wander near the palace with armed warriors." Prince Zador answered not, nor sent a messenger to thank his father, but started in great pomp from his southern kingdom to his new kingdom in the north. The insane Empress who dwelt in the ivory palace saw the swans cease to swim, and their plumage got dark like the night, and she opened the windows of the Palace and asked: "O gentle swans, why do ye cease to swim, and why do ye become as dark as the night, ye whose whiteness made

the snow feel jealous?" And the swans answered: "Prince Zador is on his way to this his northern kingdom." The insane Empress then asked: "Who is Prince Zador?" And the swans again answered: "He is a terrible Prince; at his sight the spring forests become sere, and the swans' plumage becomes as dark as a moonless night." And the insane Empress said to herself: "There is no ruler in this land but the Emperor, my son. These swans must be insane." And she closed her windows and took up a broken lute. In the meantime Prince Zador came into the neighbourhood of the ivory palace. For his first thought had been to see the mystery of its walls, and to intrude upon the solitude of the insane Empress. He knocked loudly at the gate. There was no answer, and he mounted the ivory staircase and wandered on the ivory terrace, and found no one to whom he could speak; so he called his warriors, and with pickaxe and sword they threw the wide doors down, and in the hall they saw the tall Empress, who looked as young as in her youthful days. "Surely," said Prince Zador, bowing down his proud head before her, "thou art not the insane mother of the wise Emperor my father?" At this the Empress flew into a rage, and cried, "Who said I am insane? Who dare mention the word in my presence? The swans on the lake are insane, because their plumage is dark like the night since they dream of a certain Prince Zador, and the world at large is insane. Insane the birds who build nests and sing when they know winter is apace, and will break

their nests and their song. Insane the men and the women who love when the form of their own tomb stares them full in the face in every tomb they see. And insane the foolish young Prince Zador; he believes he frightens *me*, and he will die by a woman's will and by a woman's hand." She looked at him with fiery eyes, and for the first time in his life Prince Zador was cowed and trembling, and yet he could not get away, and the insane Empress again said: "Thou art handsome and graceful, lad. Thou must love fine revels and beautiful maidens. Stay here till the evening, and I will show thee something thou hast never seen." Then she retired, and Prince Zador bade his retinue to wander in the beautiful gardens, as he desired to remain alone. And he spent the whole day by himself in the ivory palace, and he went like a ghost from chamber to chamber, seized with astonishment and with something akin to fear, as in the mirrors which adorned the ivory walls, instead of perceiving his own image reflected, he saw strange scenes and personages who seemed to live. He saw crimes committed, and true love pledged and false love avenged. He saw fierce battles fought, and all took place in silence, and when he tried to speak to the beings that passed before his eyes he heard naught but the echo of his own trembling voice, and when he tried to seize their hands or touch their raiments his fingers felt the cold of the crystal mirror, and he went from one scene to another like one in a dream, and dizziness and sickness of heart came upon him, but he could neither stop from walking nor from gazing. At last

twilight arrived; as the gentle sun fell on the golden waters of the lake Prince Zador heard the swans sing and their plumage was black that in the morning had been white. The last rays of daylight faded, and then the insane Empress came in, bearing in her uplifted hands two burning torches, and she beckoned to Prince Zador: "Come out to the balcony, handsome Prince. I will show thee a sight thou hast never seen." And she held the flaming torches higher than her head, till their red glare illumined the waters of the sleeping lake, and the swans, whose plumage had been white in the morning and dark in the day, now glared like fire and blood, as if they were dyed by the hand of a murderer. And Prince Zador saw a stately barge advance on the waters, and in that barge he saw himself in glorious attire seated by the side of a tall woman whose visage he could not perceive. And he held her hands, and she sang to him till they reached the shore; then the Prince's image fell to the ground, for the tall woman, whose visage remained invisible, had stabbed him in the back with a long dagger. Zador shuddered, and asked the insane Empress: "Will this be my fate?" She answered: "Yes. Hadst thou not come to my ivory Palace, thou would'st have walked the earth unscared by the awful sight of the future. Here the future is revealed in all the mirrors; things that will be one day, and creatures yet unborn or in their cradles start to life. Farewell, Prince Zador. One word yet—spare thy father and mother. I read thy thoughts." But Prince Zador turned his back upon her,

and in high wrath called his warriors and rode away. She is insane, thought he, and what I gazed upon was only clever acting, and his fearful fate did not stand in his way that night, nor in any succeeding days.

The great Emperor and the sweet Empress, his spouse, were enjoying the evening breeze in their garden, when an affrighted page ran to tell them a great army was marching towards the palace, and the sky was red with the fires lit by their torches as they burnt every tree and every house they met. The great Emperor took his heavy sword and the sweet Empress helped him to close the girdle, while he said: "Who can this be? What unknown chieftain? What terrible king? I had no enemy till this time." And the great Emperor fought with all his warriors; he fought bravely and heartily, and victory seemed to waver and even to favour him, when he asked one of the assailants: "Brave warrior, what is the name of your leader?" And the warrior answered: "Thy own son, Prince Zador." The great Emperor let his sword fall, and said: "Take me a prisoner to your chief." And the warrior, who pitied and blamed Zador in his heart, accompanied the Emperor to the place where his son stood on a fiery horse, and said: "Prince Zador, here is thy father; he wishes to be thy prisoner." Without deigning to address a word to the unhappy Emperor, the Prince said: "Bring me the Empress, his spouse, and throw them both in the darkest prison under the palace towers." The great Emperor said: "One favour must I ask of thee. There is a little mouse confined in a

cage above the golden balcony; give the small mouse her liberty on the spot." "Very well," answered Zador, "I will have thy ten kingdoms, and thy palaces, and thy gold, what care I for the little mouse?" The warriors ran to the golden balcony, and the little mouse was set free. The little mouse asked: "Are the Emperor and the Empress in the dark dungeon?" and the warrior answered, "Yes," and wondered how such a little mouse could guess so right. The mouse ran nimbly down the marble steps, and when she reached the last step, she became a beautiful maid, and immediately fell asleep, her graceful head resting on the balustrade, her two white naked feet whiter than the marble which reflected their smallness. Prince Zador walked proudly through his father's halls. Never had he found the palace where he was born so vast and so magnificent, never had he so enjoyed its splendour as in the hour of his sin. And he said to his warriors: "Drink, and hold high revel under the trees, and ascend the marble steps, and fill the palace with laughter and song." He said this because he noticed that when the wind rose through the open windows, he heard a murmur come, and he recognized the wailing of his mother, who was imprisoned in the dark dungeon. And he would not close the windows nor be suspected of remorse or fear. The warriors obeyed; they laughed and sang and wandered, admiring the beauty of the halls, when all at once Prince Zador heard the sound of an angry quarrel, and soon the clash of swords. He went towards the place whence the noise came, and saw

his men fighting together at the bottom of a big staircase, and some of them were already dead, and others wounded, and a large pool of blood came down the marble steps. "What 's this, my brave warriors?" asked the Prince. "Are you not tired of swords and blood?" At the sight of their leader they shamefully turned away, but one of the elderly warriors took the Prince's hand and pointed to the place where the sleeping maiden lay. "There 's the cause of the mischief, great Prince, and she sleeps as softly as in her mother's arms, a new-born babe. These men are fighting for this girl." Zador felt his heart stand still. Never had he seen anything more graceful and more beautiful than this young and innocent creature, with her bare arms and naked feet; and the pangs of jealousy entered his soul. And what right had those men to fight for her, and to gaze upon her slumber? He knelt by her side and tried to awaken her, but though he could hear her gentle breath, and feel her hands were warm, she did not stir, so he lifted her softly and laid her on a rich couch, and spent his day in wonder and love by her side. Then, as night drew on, he sighed and said: "Alas! wilt thou never open thy eyes and let me hear thy sweet voice?" And from the depths of her sleep the maiden said: "I cannot open my eyes till the great Emperor and the sweet Empress, his spouse, are seated here with thee, in glorious apparel." And the Prince quailed and shuddered, but at first did not give in. Dawn found him still staring at the bewildering beauty of the unknown, and he shed tears on her white hands and her arms,

and said: "Awake! awake! I will give thee my love, and magnificent palaces, and hot-blooded horses, and gorgeous belts and diadems. I will give thee a golden barge to glide in while the lake glitters in the moonshine. I will give thee all my kingdoms, and my whole heart. Thou art fairer than the fairest dream of a fairy; thou art sweeter than the scent of the summer flowers and the little green flower of the basil that I wear in my cap to bring me luck. Awake, or else I will sleep for ever." And again she murmured: "Call the great Emperor and the sweet Empress back." At last Zador gave in, and ordered the imperial couple to be drawn out of the dark dungeon; he bestowed gorgeous garments upon them, while the Emperor and the Empress lifted their hearts to Heaven in fond prayer, saying: "Our son has recovered his senses." They came in with joyful steps and words, and kissed the young Prince's brow, forgetting all they had endured through him, and he led them to the couch where the beautiful maiden slept, and the sweet Empress, with a cry of tender admiration, touched the sleeper's bare arm, and the fair girl slowly opened her wide blue eyes—eyes so wide and so blue, Prince Zador said to himself he had never gazed upon such a broad expanse of light. And she spoke and said: "I have come to soothe and to deliver, and now I must be gone." And she rose, while Zador in tears kissed the hem of her floating vestment and said: "O, do not leave me! If thou goest I will become wicked again. Now I feel my heart soften like grass under the rain." But the maiden

smiled and said: "My name is Slaava. I cannot stay. Dost thou not remember, brave Prince, that evening in the palace of the insane Empress, and the woman whose face thou didst not see? *I* am that woman, and if I stayed I would be obliged to accomplish the dictates of destiny, and to kill thee in a treacherous way. So spare me." At this Prince Zador remained like one struck by a thunderbolt. Slaava glided away from their presence, and he did not find the courage to raise a finger and to stop her. Seeing his grief, the Emperor and the Empress said: "Try to forget the lovely vision, Zador. Perhaps she was not a creature of this earth. She perhaps dwells with fairies. And if she was fated to kill thee, it is better the beautiful being has gone." But Prince Zador would neither eat nor drink, nor taste one moment's sleep. And he assembled his valiant warriors and said to them: "I must leave ye. My place is no longer among those who live in mirth or strife. A great love hath entered my soul. I will disappear, I will lose myself in a wide forest and dream of my love." And he gave up his sword into the care of his warriors, and kneeling before the Emperor he said: "Great Emperor, forgive my wrongs. Thy son is now punished by this great love, which devours his heart." For many a year Prince Zador was heard of no more. The wild beasts alone could tell the trace of his steps and the sound of his voice. He had built himself a cell made of branches, and with him dwelt a small mouse, whom he had caught the very first night he spent under the sky. And to the

small mouse he told his grief and spoke of his love. He felt sure the mouse was a good fairy, for she looked at him with compassion and nestled to his breast, and so much was Prince Zador taken up by despair and fervour that he wondered how he had ever found the time long before at an epoch of his existence when he lived in a perpetual strain and ran from hunt to battle, from battle to revel, and drank off the cup of maddening pleasure. Sometimes, when he approached the road where men and chariots pass, he heard warriors gaily trooping by, he heard his own war-songs sung in the wind, and he saw his banners float between the trees. He even heard his faithful equerries say, "Alas! where is our Prince, the bravest of the brave, whose helmet shone like the moon and whose blows dealt death as surely as the cloud gives rain and the sun gives light?" But for these things there were no regrets in his mind. He only remembered his days of wickedness, and how he had plunged his father and his mother in the darkness of a dungeon, and how Slaava had gone away because she would have had to bestow his punishment upon him. One night, while he was as usual running after the strange maid in his dreams, he was awakened suddenly by the roar of water quite close to his humble couch. Prince Zador sprung up bewildered, and when he tried to get out of his cell, the water rose to his knees, and beyond his cell the forest was but one vast ocean, where the tops of the trees seemed to float. How he had escaped being drowned Zador could

not guess. He set to work, and out of the bark of a big oak, spared by the flood, he made a barge and oars, and soon followed the current that bore him away. In his bosom the little mouse trembled, and they were taken afar without knowing whither they went. Sharp rocks from place to place stood out of the waves, and soon on one of these rocks Zador perceived a female form, with hands outstretched asking for help. He recognized the woman he had seen that evening from the balcony of the insane Empress. "So Slaava has deceived us," thought Zador; "this woman, my future murderer, is not the beautiful maid I love. I know she will kill me, I know the hour of my death has come, but shall I, from fear of that hour, leave a woman exposed to the dreadful flood?" And Prince Zador steered towards the rock where the woman still kept her attitude of supplication.

Night had set in, so he saw not her features as he approached, but extended a friendly hand, and said: "Come in my boat and rest." She descended into the boat, and Zador had already taken up his oars to row away when the stranger exclaimed: "One moment, please; I have forgotten my dagger on the rock. I cannot be without my dagger." "So," thought Zador, "the dagger is there, and the hand and my heart; let my destiny be accomplished." And he stopped again beside the rock and the woman seized her dagger; then came towards him and said: "How brave thou art, my love, my only love! Light a torch and gaze on my features, and what thou wilt see must rejoice thy soul."

And Zador hastily lit a torch, and lo! as the fire fell on the stranger's face, he recognized Slaava, and sobbed for joy, and exclaimed: "Yes, even if thou art come to kill, blessèd be thou for thy eyes, and thy lips, and the sweetness of thy presence." "To kill," answered she, and threw the dagger into the water; "to kill, no, I have come to love. Thy faults are erased, thy courage hath triumphed over fate." And the boat bore them gently to the steps of the Emperor's palace, and then Prince Zador was wedded to Slaava, who then told him she had never been absent from his side, as she was the dear little mouse that nestled in his bosom.

By a monk this tale was told who dwelt in the cell made famous by the legend of Prince Zador, and, in remembrance of Slaava, the monk always kept a little mouse in his cell.

THE LEGEND OF THE LILAC FLOWER.

The lilac flower might have graced the summer days and blossomed even in autumn, but the lilac flower can bloom one short month only, because she has given herself away to save her beloved. She was once a fresh maid who lived on the border of a forest and talked to the birds and the bees; she drank the water from the running stream, and twined the gentle foliage over her head to avoid the hot rays of the noonday sun. One evening an old woman passed before the place where Liliaca dwelt. Liliaca noticed the old woman looked weary, and said: "Wilt thou not come and rest? I possess a small hut made of the gentle foliage; I eat fruit and drink the water from the stream, but I can give thee a good couch and a sure shelter. The sky darkens; the birds are hastening to their nests, and on my hand already a moonray hath fallen. It is late." The old woman answered: "Fair girl, I thank thee, and must accept thy kind offer, as I have walked many a long mile and I am very old." Liliaca ran to get fresh fruit and to smooth the couch, where the old woman now sank to a profound sleep. But Liliaca never slept when the moon was strong in the sky, but gazed at the moon till her eyes ached; once or twice she heard the old woman

sigh in her slumber, and as dawn approached, and as the moon got feebler and became gradually only a white plume lost in the vapours of the rising sun, Liliaca in her turn closed her eyes and beckoned to her innocent dreams. No sooner had Liliaca become insensible to all that passed around than the old woman rose and said to herself: "She is too fair and too pure to serve my purpose. Yet she may help me unwittingly," and she passed her fingers over Liliaca's white eyelids and over her lips. Liliaca sighed deeply, moved restlessly in her sleep, then murmured: "Love, my love." The old woman said: "All right!"—and the sunbeams in their morning glory invaded the forest. Liliaca rose in haste. "Pardon me," said she to her guest, "I have overslept myself. I had such a lovely dream, but I cannot tell you what my dream was. I wish I could dream it over again every night." The old woman smiled, and muttering a few words of gratitude disappeared. All that day Liliaca forgot the many little trifles which made her life cheerful, and though the wood was full of perfume and song she went not into the wood, but throwing herself on her couch tried to sleep in the vain hope of seeing the dream she loved again. But the dream had deserted her sleep, and for weeks she pined; the colour faded from her cheek, she lost all interest in birds and flowers, and often said: "O, I would like to die!" And the fair maid would indeed have gone to an early grave but for a happy circumstance which changed her present existence completely. She was gathering fruit from a high plum-tree when she

saw between the branches the whiteness of the road, and along the road a chariot jogged, in which a man lay in a trance or asleep. But his face was so pale, Liliaca thought he was dead. A poor old pilgrim he seemed to be, with a worn-out, haggard visage, and a pool of blood round his body, and his mantle was red with blood. "Surely some one has wounded or killed the poor thing," said Liliaca, "and how comes it to pass he should be left there alone on the road, and the oxen have no guide? O, I must see; he is perhaps alive yet, and needs help." She tripped lightly to the side of the huge chariot; she looked into the face of the wretched man; she stopped the oxen in their walk; she touched the poor man's heart, and under her soft fingers his heart began to beat. "He is not dead," said she, and in her feeble arms she took him; then laid him tenderly under the trees on a couch of tender grass, and washed his wounds and tended him marvellously till he opened his eyes and said: "Bless'd be thou, fair maid; the murderers are far now and I am in Paradise." Liliaca stayed by his side nor ever left him, and the moon began to rise. "O gentle maid," said the wounded man, "let the moon's first rays fall on my brow. Put these branches away that I may catch the moon and lay her light against my hair and lips." And Liliaca did as she was bidden. No sooner did the moonbeams glide on the old man's face and hands than his whole countenance changed and he became a handsome youth in the vigour and pride of his young beauty, and though his wounds still bled, there was a look of joy in his eyes, and as Liliaca

saw him she exclaimed: "Dear youth, I know thee, thou hast already visited me in my dreams. But why art thou condemned to wear a pilgrim's garb and an old man's visage during the daytime, and why canst thou become so fair when the moon shines on thee?" The young man did not answer this question, and Liliaca felt she had been indiscreet, and she loved so much to gaze on his features, to admire his glossy hair, his demeanour, his lustrous eyes and his lips swollen with the blood of valour and of daring, that she prayed in her heart the night would last for ever, for the sight was most precious to her heart.

And somehow she understood this young man would always be mingled with her life, or else she would not have seen him in her dream, nor pined after the return of that blissful dream. His wounds were still very bad, though Liliaca tried to quench the blood with leaves and pure linen. He moaned in his slumbers and pronounced strange words; she could not know to what language they belonged, nor from what land he came.

With the daylight he resumed his withered visage, and Liliaca then spoke more freely, and again questioned him; he answered: "Alas! I am an Emperor's son, and in a bad fight with some enemies of my father I killed the brother of a witch. She came up to the palace and said she wished to speak to Prince Oprea; that is my name. I thought she was poor, and took some gold to give her, but as soon as she saw it she sprang upon me and stabbed me thrice, and as my body lay almost senseless on the steps of the palace,

as no one was near, I suppose she bore me away and threw me in the chariot thou hast seen, and also threw a spell upon me. In the light of day I am an old man, and only as the moon rises can I become Prince Oprea again. So I dare not return to the palace of my father, nor show myself to my dear bride, Princess Thisca, and she must believe I am dead." "Ah!" said Liliaca, "thou hast a bride!" "Yes, the fairest girl upon earth, and she would die to save me. O my wounds would cure could but Thisca hear that I am alive." "I will go to tell her," said Liliaca. And tying her belt close to her breaking heart she set off with quick pace, as she desired to return before evening and behold Prince Oprea in his glory once more. On her way to the palace she met the old woman who had spent a night in her hut. The old woman greeted her warmly, and Liliaca told her all about Prince Oprea's strange adventure. The old woman then said: "I am the bad witch who thus punished the Prince for having killed my only brother. He will never recover his own visage during the daylight unless an innocent maid gives up her life for him; not her whole life, I mean, but she must promise to disappear during the summer, the autumn and the winter, to lie invisible and in deep slumber. Spring time will belong to her entirely." Liliaca said: "Prince Oprea is betrothed to the beautiful Princess Thisca. Surely she will give up three seasons of the year for him,"—and with double haste she pursued her way. Princess Thisca was winding her golden hair round a diamond comb when the simple maid entered her bower,

and in a few brief words told her of Prince Oprea's fate and of the witch's proposition. "He lies on a bed of foliage near my hut. His wounds are numerous, and his blood makes the grass warm all around. He murmurs thy name in his dreams. He is so handsome during the night, and so wretched during the day." Her young heart trembled with hidden love, and she stretched out her lovely arms towards the Prince's happy bride. Princess Thisca drew the folds of her white garment around her. "Tell the Prince," said she, "I would fain go to him, but the grass is wet and my garment white. Tell the Prince I would fain send him a lock of my golden hair, but I have lost my scissors, and my hair is so thick and my teeth so delicate that I cannot bite them through. Tell the Prince I would fain give him a bride's long kiss, but his lips must be cold, or his lips must be hot, and my lips are afraid of fever and blood. Tell the Prince I would fain save him from his dire fate and give up three seasons of the year for him, but in summer I dance to please the roses, in autumn I twine vine leaves round my neck to please the sun, and in winter I sit by the fire to please the gentle flame dear to the heart of rich and poor. How would the sun, the roses and the flame do without me?" Fair Liliaca sighed and said: "Were I his bride I would lie in my grave and be trampled upon by the fiery horses of his warriors to save him." Princess Thisca laughed: "Thou simple maid," said she, and waved her hand in sign of adieu, and began to twist again her golden hair round her diamond comb. Liliaca returned

to the forest, and the moon now shone full on Prince Oprea's handsome face. She knelt by him and said: "Thy bride loves thee, Prince. And she will save thee." And in his joy Prince Oprea kissed Liliaca's soft hands, and she felt the kiss that was on her hands dart straight across her soul. Next day she went to find the witch and said: "I give up three seasons of the year to save Prince Oprea. I will sleep like a corpse during the summer and the autumn and the winter and be invisible, but give him back his joy and his fair visage." The witch answered: "Alas! love is stronger than my power; I thought I would never find a woman to do this, but since thou art ready to save Prince Oprea I must obey thy wish. Yet thou hast given me shelter and pitied me in an hour of weariness and need. I will change thee into a fair flower—in spring days only will thy smile and thy freshness appeal to the heart of man and make him happy, and lead the young to dream of love and the old to remember their youthful days." And as the witch spoke thus Liliaca felt she became a gentle bough of green foliage, and she became a fair flower whose clusters were wild with perfume and joy. She instantly forgot Prince Oprea and his bride, the joy of the perfume that filled her soul and the joy that hung over her were almost too much for her senses. Prince Oprea returned to his palace and married his beautiful Princess, but under the window of their bower a lilac-tree grew, whose flowers in spring sent an odour so strong that Prince Oprea grew sad; he then remembered Liliaca, the maid of the forest, and said to

himself: "Where is she? She was fairer than Thisca, and so good. I will never see her again." And Prince Oprea covered his handsome face with his hands, while the lilac flowers waved to and fro and murmured: "Liliaca has loved thee, but rejoice, she is happy; she is wild with perfume and love." And because of the lilac-tree Princess Thisca violently closed the windows. "I love not the ways of that flower; 'tis well it blooms in spring only, or else I would have that tree cut down."

This tale was told by a girl who wore lilac flowers in her hair, and a sprig of lilac in her belt, and who thought of Liliaca and Liliaca's love while she drank their wild perfume.

THE TWO ROBBERS AND THEIR BROTHER THE DEVIL.

Two robbers lived not far from a big city. They were not wicked, and never killed, but when rich merchants passed at night on their horses they stepped to the side of the road and said courteously: "Sir, will you kindly alight and take supper with us? We are the famous robbers, Damian and Peter." The poor merchant trembled, and in general both invitations were declined. Then Damian, who spoke better than his brother, said even more politely: "If you are neither hungry nor thirsty, nor tired, surely your horse must feel the want of food and water, and you could not deprive the honest brute of our hospitality, and surely the load you have put on the honest creature's back is too heavy for him. We could not allow you to torture your horse in this way." And the merchant had to give in, as the glitter of a knife accompanied the reasonable words of Damian. The horse was taken to a fresh litter, the goods to the robbers' den, and the merchant, well pleased to get off, resumed his journey on foot, while the two brothers made him all kinds of good wishes he was obliged to thank them for. So clever were Damian and Peter that for years every

attempt to catch them had been unsuccessful, and sometimes they were themselves astonished at their good luck. "I am afraid," said Peter to his brother, "the devil must in some way approve us, and even help us in our enterprise." "Hush, brother," answered Damian, "if I thought this I would take our adventurous life quite in disgust. No, no, the devil is far from us. What harm do we do? The things we take away from these men are but material goods, and in the long run they would harm their possessors—the wealthy easily get proud and hard-hearted; we save these people from the worst sins; we teach them the frailty of Dame Fortune, and we keep their souls as pure as might the preaching of any good pulpit bird." To this speech Peter found no reply, but he kept dreaming of the devil, and saying to himself: "I would like to know the old fellow; how clever he must be, since we are more and more clever because he stands by us. Damian is wrong. Our tricks are rich with the devil's knowledge." And with these and many other reflections of the same sort he went into the wood to gather mushrooms for their supper. He passed under the trees bent on his task, his young face glowing in the sun, when all at once he heard a shrill laugh behind the boughs; he started and asked: "Who is there?" No answer came; a few seconds elapsed, and again the weird sound struck his ear, and came quite close to him now. An elf, a spirit, or the devil himself, thought Peter, and as the word devil flashed through his mind, he saw a beautiful girl, dressed in a blue

gown, and with silver earrings in her ears, stand in front of him. "Here I am," she said, "I am the devil." "O, how can that be?" said Peter, "a maid so fair hide the devil himself behind her smile? I will never believe thee." "No! how then have I read thy thoughts and divined thy wish to know me? Thou art a good lad, Peter, and thou hast done me some justice, whereas thy brother Damian, who will not credit me with his cleverness, will pay a heavy forfeit for his foolish language." "Please, Mr. Devil, or Miss Demon," said poor Peter, folding his hands in contrition and fear, "do not heed my brother Damian; he speaks rashly, but means well. We are two such honest robbers, and we achieve all our business with hands as pure as our hearts." "I will not kill him, but suffer he must, and as thou would'st be likely to prate about all this, Peter, I order thy lips and thy tongue to become as dumb as the mushrooms in thy basket." Peter tried to implore again, and to his great terror he found his mouth could utter nothing but unintelligible sounds, and besides the fiendish damsel had disappeared, while the same shrill laugh filled the forest, and made all the trees around him shiver. Alas! how should he tell Damian of his horrible adventure, how put him on his guard? Peter knew not how to read and write; so he took a big mushroom, and with his knife cut into the soft brown flesh the face of the beautiful maid, and over it he cut the form of a big flame to figure the devil. Sore was Damian's grief when he discovered his brother's misfortune; he shed tears of despair, and asked

in vain to learn what had happened. Peter gave him the mushroom with the wicked girl's pretty face upon it, and Damian then believed he understood that love had played havoc with poor Peter; the big flame meant his burning feelings for the young girl, and Damian thought her very lovely indeed, and did not wonder that a man could lose the use of his tongue from sheer admiration of such a winning visage. Their life was no longer gay, as Peter could not speak, nor could Damian love to confide his plans to one who never answered but by signs. Weeks flew away as rapidly as days, and in his soul Peter felt some relief to see the devil had not kept his infernal promise. "The devil has too much to do with the world at large; he must have forgotten us by this time, and O, could I regain the use of my tongue, I would not breathe a word of the whole tale." "Damian, thou should'st go to the fair," said Damian aloud. Now he spoke to himself for the pleasure of hearing his own voice. Peter, as usual, sat absorbed in a vague dream, but they had robbed three priests and a rich widow the night before, and they were content and eager to exchange the priest's golden chains and the widow's rings for a winter mantle, new knives, and a small image of the Virgin. This last purchase seemed to Peter absolutely necessary, and he insisted on the necessity of buying the holy emblem, as he was still in fear of the devil. Damian returned from the fair late in the night, and Peter rose with a lantern to guide his brother's horse through the intricacies of the forest. As

he lifted up his light he saw the horse was so laden that the animal could scarcely walk. "Why, brother, thou hast brought all the fair," said Peter, but his tongue could not articulate the words, yet Damian understood his meaning. "Most unexpected goods have I purchased, brother; look!" And then only Peter perceived across the saddle the form of a young priest, whose face and floating green garments were covered with blood. Terror-stricken Peter stood, and the lantern fell to the ground as his arms and his whole body trembled, for he was afraid Damian had done some foul deed by this wounded man. But Damian reassured him. "I found this wretched being three miles from here, gasping for breath and begging hard for a glass of water. I alighted and gave him water from a neighbouring well; then he said in broken sentences one of his enemies had met him in the dark and dealt these hard blows on him, and he could not return to his village in this state, because his home is very distant, and, besides, his mother and his sister, with whom he lives, would die with grief at the mere sight of him. How could I leave the young priest on the road? I have not bought that image of the Virgin; somehow it was driven out of my mind, but this good action will serve us as well as the Holy Mother's sweet presence." Peter nodded and pressed his brother's hand; then they laid the wounded man in the hut, dressed his wounds, and wrapped him in a fur mantle. Damian, as he thought the young priest was asleep, told Peter all the pieces of good luck that had befallen him.

These were numerous indeed. "I have brought the priest's chain and the widow's ring back, and yet I have a long red mantle for thee and a white one for myself, and four knives with scabbards that shine like gold. Every one in the fair was drunk but myself, and I pretended to be more drunk than the rest and to fall to the ground, and to grope along like a blind man, though all the time I held a good eye on my horse. But as the merchants saw me in such a state of stupidity they paid no attention to me when I asked them to show me their goods, and turned their backs upon me and looked to the other customers, but, as I tell you, they were drunk. So I just crept behind the stalls and played the merchant myself. In the crowd no one noticed that after I praised the red mantle or the beautiful knife I paid them the lasting compliment of bearing them away; moreover, I had been so fussy over them, so eager to sell them, some believed I bore them to another stall. In short, the day has been an excellent one. Brother, the sole idea of buying the Holy Virgin's image has brought us this wealth, and now here we are entertaining a holy man, a priest; look at him, he is saying his prayers." The young priest was wide awake and made strange gestures with his hands. Damian said: "Father, you mean to cross yourself, but that is not exactly the sign of the cross you are making." "I know," answered the priest. "My hands are too weak, and, besides, unworthy to trace the sacred emblem on my heart." Then he drew from his belt a large yellow kerchief and opened it, and

the kerchief was full of golden coins, and they rolled on his couch and on the earth with a sound of laughter, and Damian said to Peter in a low voice: "The temptation is sore, but the man is our host and wounded; we will not touch one single piece of his gold."

They carefully picked up each coin and did not rest till all the gold was put back in the priest's yellow kerchief, and the priest said: "Ye are honest chaps. I will remember Peter and Damian in every one of my prayers." To their great astonishment the brothers perceived that at every place where the gold coins had fallen there remained a red lurid light, at which they got rather frightened, but the priest said to them: "Go and rest in peace; this money has been gained in church and by the bedside of the dying; it is divine money, and cannot fall without leaving a trace of its divinity." Satisfied with this explanation, Peter and Damian stretched their mantles on the ground, lay down upon them, and went to sleep. The young priest stayed with them eight days, during which time his demeanour and his words were most touching, and his saintly presence seemed to have thrilled all the forest around and called every object to life. The flowers whose blooming season had passed blossomed again; the new-mown grass took root on the very stem from which it had been broken; cherries and plums appeared at the same time in the cherry-trees and the plum-trees; fruit gave a perfume as strong as the scent of wild flowers, and as to the flowers themselves their beauty and their colour in-

creased to such a degree, they seemed to look up to the trees and the sky with such a passionate gaze that Peter and Damian felt their veins glow when they breathed the early wind and said: "This is a second Paradise." The stream sang to its pebbles strange songs and the pebbles burnt under the water like a throbbing heart. The stars as they touched the green crests of the hills kissed them with fiery kisses and the sun was one great torrent of joy over the joy of nature and her beauty.

Damian felt happy at this wonderful change, but Peter got restless in his heart and said to himself: "There must be some devil's work in all that now takes place around us, because to the souls whom the love of God makes radiant such excessive luxury is not needed; the man who possesses God does not expect any other bliss, nor is he placed in conditions to find it." But he could not speak his thoughts, and in order to soothe his feelings he went near a large oak-tree and with his knife began to carve the image of the Virgin in the strong wood. He remembered well the divine features, but to his dismay, when he had finished his work, he saw the face bore a striking resemblance to the fearful maid with the blue mantle who had told him she was the devil.—The young priest at last said: "I must return to my home, and I will leave my gold with you, as I am still weak and unable to carry such a load. I know you are honest, so I have not counted the golden coins. I will send my sister to fetch the yellow kerchief and its contents in eight days." And with many warm

words of gratitude he was gone. As soon as he had left Damian said: "Brother, we will not take this man's wealth from him, but his gold possesses the strange gift of leaving red light on the ground wherever it falls; this may be of the greatest use to us and serve us to trace our way back at night, and replace a lantern. Let us put a piece of our money in the kerchief and take one of the priest's instead." At first by gesture Peter protested, but then he thought Damian's desire was very innocent indeed, and he let him have his own way. Damian got the coin he coveted, and was so amused with it that he spent almost the whole night to mark the forest with red traces of its fall.

A week had elapsed since the priest's departure when his sister came on a black horse and, without alighting, asked for the gold her brother had left behind him. She had long fair locks and green eyes, and when she smiled her teeth shone between her lips like a cluster of wild lilies. Damian insisted much on her coming to their hut, but she refused and bowed her head to them, and as long as the gallop of her horse was heard among the trees he listened; then he said: "Peter, that girl has taken my heart with her on her black horse—I must follow and find her," and before Peter could protest he was off on his chestnut mare he had stolen from a rich farmer while the latter was asleep. The next day Damian returned haggard and worn. He had gone to the village where the priest had said he dwelt, but no priest of that name lived there, and the two brothers were in sore perplexity, and Damian

could do nothing else but sigh. The autumn came; they led the same existence, but sadness had set upon them, what with Peter's tied tongue and Damian's unhappy love; even the old game seemed to have fallen off, and the fine mantles and carved whips they took from the passers-by brought them no pleasure. A feeling of impending misfortune grew upon them. And at last one night the men from the neighbouring town found their way to the brothers' hut, and, headed by the beautiful maid whom Damian had sought in vain, took hold of him and of his brother and led them both to prison. The maid had no difficulty to show one of the priest's golden coins had been robbed, as it was found in Damian's belt. From jail they went before the judge, and their case was found to be such a bad one that they were condemned to cut salt in the mines for ten years, where they would never look upon the dear light of the sun. Damian said when he heard his sentence: "O ye wicked men, what have we taken away from you but earthly goods which money can purchase? and now ye take from us a thing no one but God can give—the blessed light of the sun." Into the white mine they descended, and their chains clinked so as to remind them at first of the cattle-bells in the woods, but afterwards they well knew it was the murmur of their chains—a dreary, monotonous sound they would have to hear for days and days, and months and months, and years and years. The whiteness of the mine made their senses sick, and the cutting taste of the salt bruised their

lips. From time to time a fellow-sufferer spoke to them in a low voice: "I have been here twenty years, and here shall I finish my life—I have killed a man because he hated me and had killed my horse. We were very unfortunate here, all of us. But now the devil has come, and we are happy." "Where's the devil?" asked Damian. "There, that man who works like the others. He is the devil. Look! the salt glows like fire under his pickaxe. He gives us wine and money." Damian went straight to the man, who nodded familiarly, and Damian said: "Pardon me, I hear you are the devil. I would rather you were some messenger of God, but since we have no choice I would like to be friends with you." "O," said the devil, "I have known thee a long time. I have slept under thy roof and shown thee my money, and I have taken thy heart away on the black horse, for I was the young priest and the fair maid, and I have brought thee here. Dost now believe in my power, young fool? Thy brother is mute by my will. Don't doubt again; I exist." "Yes," said Damian, "I doubt. And no, I don't believe in thee, for thou hast not been able to take away from my soul the conviction that thy works are foul and the works of God are good." No sooner had Damian said these words than with a great crash the whole mine vanished, and he found himself in his hut with Peter, and Peter, who had recovered the use of his tongue, exclaimed: "Brother, it was perhaps wrong to steal these people's goods; we must choose another work and bless God."

THE STOLEN PIG.

Two tziganes, two famous thieves, Neagoe and Barbu by name, one night crept stealthily along the hedge of a neighbouring farm and succeeded in getting a small pig, whose screams they stifled by wrapping the noisy creature in the folds of a big mantle. Though dogs barked and the farmer and his servants ran to overtake the robbers, Neagoe and Barbu soon got safely under the shelter of a wood. The pig gave them great satisfaction, but it was very small, and Neagoe said: "Now to whom does the little thing belong?" Barbu answered: "True, friend, we have run the same risks, we both deserve one half of the profit." "Yes," retorted Neagoe, "but the half of such a pig would be no profit at all. One of us must get the whole pig." "And the other be wronged!" said Barbu. "This I will not suffer. We are honest fellows. I propose an excellent plan; let us tie the pig to a tree and then go to sleep and try to dream. We will relate our dreams to each other the next morning, and the pig will belong to the one who has had the fairest dream." "Right," answered Neagoe. And they tied the pig to a tree, and laying their mantles on the ground fell both into a deep sleep. The night was balmy, the little pig had ceased to whine, so they could sleep in

peace. When the sun rose up started the honest tziganes and rubbed their eyes and stared at each other. Then Neagoe said to Barbu: "Friend, as thou art the eldest speak first, and tell me thy dream." "O," said Barbu, "haven't I made a splendid dream! I am still dazzled by its magnificence, and I can hardly realize it is all over and was naught but a dream; so listen, dear Neagoe." And Neagoe put both his hands round his knees and said: "Speak, dear Barbu, I listen." "Well," said Barbu, "I dreamt I had been long dead, not of some stupid vulgar death as mortals daily die, but a death so sweet, so charming! I thought I was drunk, like on that night at the fair when four men could not carry me back to my hut. An angel, with wings as bright as the fire when our bellows blows, came to me and said: 'Master Barbu, thou art too meanly dressed. Thou art going to meet a great lord and dine with him and with his guests. It suits thee not to wear thy brown mantle and thy leather girt.' I answered: 'Master Angel, tzigane is poor after death as he was in life; I possess but this mantle and this leather belt.' The angel said: 'Master Barbu, we all know in Heaven what an honest tzigane thou wast on the other side of the grave, never stealing by moonlight, nor during the days when the Virgin and the higher saints are honoured; so here is thy reward.' O Neagoe, the angel put a magnificent mantle of gold and purple on my shoulders, and gave me a silver belt and a long knife in a silver scabbard, and a pair of top boots as black as thy eyes, after which he said, 'Follow me.' And

though I asked: 'Master Angel, where are we going?' he did not answer, but showed the way, and went on passing compliments upon me.

"He knew all about me, that devilish angel, and how clever I am in every kind of theft, but especially when I take away a horse from its unlawful possessor, because, O Neagoe, the man who pays for an object or a brute is an unlawful possessor, and the said thing only belongs in reality to those who run some risk in getting it. But I return to my dream. We walked through a forest; then we reached a splendid garden where, instead of fruit on the branches of the trees, heavy purses full of white coin hung lazily, and my hand itched to snatch them, my hand was thirsty for the fruit. And the angel said: 'Take!' but all the pleasure of the doing was then cut off. At last we found ourselves face to face with a great lord. He was dressed in red garments and had top boots even blacker than my own. The angel introduced us to each other: 'Saint Peter, here is Barbu the tzigane, who has come to dine at thy table.' And Saint Peter took my hand and we sat down at a large table where many people sat, but as they were all drunk they paid little attention to us. I saw Saint Peter treated his guests well, and I began to drink and to eat. The meat and the wine were as abundant as thy hair, and I ate and I drank till my senses reeled, and all the time Saint Peter said, 'Ah! Barbu, how pleased I am to see thee. Drink, my dear friend, drink and eat.' Now, Neagoe, is not my dream very beautiful indeed, and is not

the pig mine? But I will listen to thee first, and we will judge, for we are very honest fellows, that we are." Neagoe took a long breath and said: "Friend Barbu, my story is short. In my dream I saw thee revel by the side of Saint Peter, and eat the viands and drink the abundant wine, so I said to myself, 'Barbu is happy, Barbu is well fed, he does not require the little pig.' So I awoke, killed the animal, and ate it while you were at Saint Peter's table."

THE MANTLE.

A YOUNG heiduck who had fought bravely and yet possessed naught but his horse, his sword, his whistle, and six knives in his silver belt, sat by a large fire in the wood and gazed into the flames and said in his thoughts: "If the fairy that dwells in this fire was a generous fairy and could read my thoughts, she would appear before me in her beauty and make me a present. I would like to possess a mantle of fire, as red as the flames and as supple, and walk with my mantle on my shoulders over the whole earth. The forests would wonder and say: 'He is the brother of the storm-cloud.' And the mountains would say: 'Look! the son of the burning stars is walking the earth.'" Scarcely had the young heiduck finished to dream these things when he saw a slender form beckon to him from among the flames, and it slowly rose before his eyes till a graceful maid stood at the very top of the topmost spark. She said to him: "Young heiduck, thy wish shall be fulfilled. But beware! the mantle of fire must never leave thy shoulders, or else it will spring upon thee and devour thy flesh." She disappeared, and at the same moment the young heiduck heard a murmur grow around him, and he soon stood in the midst of towering flames, and then they fell

to the ground, and he found he wore a mantle of moving fire, and he ran to the neighbouring stream and saw himself in its water; the light cast a lurid glow on his handsome visage, and his mantle was as red as the sky at sunset. . . .

But alas! wherever he went the flowers shrivelled and faded on his passage, the forests were reduced to ashes and the grass became as gray as if the moon looked down from the sky. Cries of despair from animals and birds followed his steps. The young heiduck took his fiery horse and rode away from the spot, and as the mantle flew about him he seemed to ride in a glory of courage and beauty, yet he was sore at heart, because he had a loving soul, and more than once had the smile of a fair maid moved him and made him find the sun brighter and his own lot very good. . . . How would any maid dare to approach him, even if from afar she gave him her smile? He entered a village at noon; it was almost deserted, because all its inhabitants were at work in the fields, but his mantle touched a high poplar tree and it immediately began to sigh and blaze. A maiden was spinning beneath its branches; she rushed to the side of the young heiduck's fiery steed, and said: "Thou art the son of the burning stars. Thou art no mortal surely, and I love thee although thy mantle burneth and can kill." And he stooped to touch her hand and to pluck a flower from her hair, but a fold of the awful mantle danced against the fair maiden's cheek, and she was instantly devoured by the burning tide.

And the young heiduck rode on. He said in his thoughts: "Ah me! how rash was my wish and how cruel the fairy who gave me the mantle I wear; no maid will step forward to look on my face, no roof will be happy to cover my slumbers. I am an alien whom mankind and nature must hate." And he drew his powerful sword and gazed at himself in its blade, and saw the mantle flying round his shoulders, and it cast a lurid glare on his brow. At night he reached a sweet meadow, where under the weak rays of the new-born moon shepherds and maidens danced; a well rose there tall and slim, where the cool water slept awhile the shepherds danced, and a soft flute, the stem of some wild reed, floated on the gentle breeze and said their hearts were full of youth and love. A lonely maid stood by the tall pure well. "Why, Mariora, wilt thou not dance too?" "I am awaiting," said she, "though I know not what will come." The heiduck's fiery horse, the heiduck's mantle of fire was seen on the top of the hill. And the shepherds in awe dispersed and flew along the meadow—in one moment they had vanished. Alone the lonely maiden called Mariora stood by the tall pure well. The heiduck came up, and he said: "I am thirsty, maiden, but I will alight and drink. I cannot take the cool water from thy pitcher nor touch thy fresh young hand, because this mantle of fire would burn thy fair young life out of thy gentle veins." Mariora smiled and said: "My heart is more burning by far than thy red mantle, heiduck, so take me to thy breast; I fear not the mantle

of fire, I fear not thy perilous kiss." And he lifted her to his saddle and said: "We shall visit the whole earth." . . . And together they went and the mantle fanned Mariora's cheeks and her hair without daring to burn their colour off, and like a red whirlwind they passed. And the heiduck sang in the joy of his heart: "We are the wonderful light of Love; the forests sink and shrivel wherever we pass, and the flowers die because they know not the true fire of Love. Alone the sun, the moon and our own hearts are unscathed; our love is more burning than fire, and the sun and the moon know our love." Thus it came that when the storm-cloud passeth Mariora and her young heiduck ride in the sky, and wrapped in their mantle of fire they pass through the clouds and they laugh.

By a maid called Mariora this tale was told to me as she stood in the weak rays of the new-born moon.

THISCA;

OR,

THE MARVELLOUS STONE.

"WHAT shall I give thee for thy birthday, darling daughter?" said the old Emperor to his only child, the beautiful Thisca. Thisca was only sixteen, and already many kings and princes had sued for the honour of her hand. "Father," said she, "swear that what I ask from thee, thou wilt give." The Emperor laughed and answered: "Quite willingly, I swear." Then Thisca said: "Give me the marvellous blue stone whose rays pierce the triple iron casket in which it is locked." "Alas! my dear child," said the Emperor, while tears rolled down his cheeks, could'st thou not desire the largest among my kingdoms and the most fiery among my steeds, instead of that fatal stone? Well, since I have given my word thou wilt possess it, but listen to my fatherly advice: hide it well from the light of day, and never wear it either in thy belt nor in thy hair when thou art in the midst of human beings." Thisca smiled and said: "Quick, give me the triple iron casket!" and when the casket was put into her gentle hands, she ran up to her secret bower, opened it, and beheld the splendid stone, whose thousand rays dazzled her eyes and seemed to burn into her brain.

She lifted it to her forehead; then held it to the light and then closed the casket, and again the blue stone lay buried in the iron recesses, but its brilliancy pierced the metal, and made the room as clear as if sunshine ever dwelt therein. "This is delightful indeed," thought Thisca, "I have the sun and the moon for ever in my chamber." And she kissed the Emperor's hand and his lofty brow, and thanked him rapturously for the magnificent present.

By the banks of the river not far from the imperial palace, a young fisher called Dimitri dwelt. He was handsome and brave, and sang from morning till night, nor knew of trouble and care. . . . He was well aware that in the same stretch of land a mighty Emperor and his daughter lived, and a great court held revels and tournaments, but he did not mind the distant murmur of music and dance. Close by his hut a large forest ran to the very end of the horizon, and no one ever dared to enter its precincts because a dragon, his wife and his son lived in a cavern under the trees; the Emperor himself and his warriors kept aloof from the awful neighbours who devoured every man audacious enough to enter the forest. Now Dimitri's sole dream was to kill the dragon. This he had desired from his childhood, and one day on the banks of the river he had found a large sword, who when he approached stood erect before him, and said: "Young fisher, wash me well in the tide of the river every morning when the sun rises, and when it sets every night, and it will help thee to kill the dragon, and spring myself out of

my scabbard when the day to accomplish this deed has arrived." Dimitri for more than three years had washed the sword and cherished its brightness, and he kept it carefully hidden in his hut. But the sword had remained quiet in its leather scabbard, and he did not dare attack the dragon without the sword's consent. At that time when Princess Thisca had obtained the blue stone from her father, great consternation was thrown upon the court by the fact that the dragon and his family had killed three of the Princess's own ladies as they wandered along the forest border in search of wild berries. And the Emperor issued a proclamation to say he would give the hand of his only daughter to the king, prince, or duke who would bring him the dragon's awful head! And this message was taken to every king and prince and duke.

Dimitri in his humble hut knew naught of this. At first many suitors came with numerous retinues and warriors and lances, but no sooner did they see the dragon than some fled, others fought desperately till the monster finished by vanquishing them, and soon the forest paths were strewn with dead bodies. Dimitri heard the sound of fight; he heard the dragons fret and roar, but as his sword remained unmoved he dared not go forward. . . . The Emperor began to repent his decision; first he regretted the death of so many brave princes; then his darling Thisca ran the risk of becoming an old maid, and his heart grew heavy within him. One morning a page stepped forward, knelt before the Emperor, and said: "Rejoice,

great monarch, Prince Zaltuhin, who is renowned for his valour and for his good looks, is hard upon the dragon just now; the earth trembles all round; and every one thinks that before sunset Zaltuhin will have cut the monster's awful head." And the Emperor awaited in hope and anxiety, and went out to his balcony to hear tidings of the struggle. The dragon had thrown Prince Zaltuhin down from his saddle, and his flaming paws were on Zaltuhin's breast; all the Prince's warriors had run away or were burned to death by the flames that issued from the dragon's body, and the Prince thought his last hour had come, when up springs a young man with a large sword. He pushes Zaltuhin back, and attacks the dragon breast to breast. It was a jolly and wonderful sight; Zaltuhin praised each blow. The dragon bit furiously into the young man's bare arms, but Dimitri would not give way. His good sword had sprung out of its scabbard. He would win the day. The duel lasted three hours, and at the end of those hours the dragon fell, the flames that oozed from his body died away, and he lay a hideous corpse at the young hero's feet. Then Zaltuhin congratulated and questioned him, and learnt how simple the life Dimitri led, and how simple his mind. A sudden inspiration seized upon him, and he struck his forehead in his great glee at the good idea. He would have Thisca's hand and her dowry and her beauty, and the credit of having killed the dragon. The lad knew no one belonging to the court; no one had been present at the fight. So he turned to Dimitri

and said: "Young fellow, allow me to cut the dragon's awful head; his body and his skin will I leave to thee, but I want to put up his head in my royal hall. Here is a purse full of gold for the dragon's head." Dimitri had never seen gold in his life, and he did not care for the dragon's head; so he allowed Zaltuhin to cut it off, while the young fisherman took the skin. When he got home the sword said: "I am going to cut thee a splendid mantle out of the dragon's skin"; and the sword was at work all night, and on the morrow Dimitri found a splendid mantle on his couch, and when he put the mantle on his shoulders, he looked like the Emperor himself, and even better, because he was handsome and young. The court assembled to receive Prince Zaltuhin, and Thisca, who knew she would meet her affianced husband, was curious to look upon his face. She wore a rich tunic of silver, and in her hand she took the blue stone, as she had noticed how beautiful everything appeared when she gazed at the skies and the woods through the wonderful stone. Prince Zaltuhin entered the palace hall, and a flourish of trumpets greeted him; then he advanced towards the throne where the Emperor was seated, while Thisca stood gracefully at her father's side. She cast a keen glance on his visage, and began to tremble, and she said in her heart: "He is not like the man I saw in my dreams." Then she lifted up the blue stone to her eyes, and looked around the assembly, and to her great surprise she saw the thoughts of every person present written in words of fire upon their foreheads.

Then Thisca understood the fearful power of the marvellous stone. And for this reason had her father hesitated to make her the present she so desired. For base and so different from their attitudes and their words were the thoughts she read on the brow of courtier and page—envy against the Emperor and herself, jealousy of each other, dark schemes to destroy the friends to whom they smiled. A faintness came over her which she vanquished, because at that very moment, on a huge silver tray, the dragon's head was brought in. She looked at Prince Zaltuhin as he offered the monstrous trophy to the Emperor, and on his brow she clearly read this: "How kind of young Dimitri, the handsome fisherman who killed the dragon, to give me all the benefit of his victory! It is true he knew not its price, and no one will ever be aware of my treachery, and Princess Thisca is mine." Thisca, with a deep voice, answered: "No, Prince Zaltuhin, thy thoughts I have read one by one. Princess Thisca will never be thine. Thou hast not killed the dragon, and I want to see Dimitri, the handsome fisherman who has allowed thee to cut off the dragon's head." Great surprise fell on the unhappy Prince at these words, and he hastened away vowing vengeance; while the Emperor said: "Alas! dear child, thou hast used the power of the marvellous stone. Alas! this will embitter thy whole life, as it did mine till I had the courage to shut it up in an iron casket and never take it out of its hiding-place." To his utter amazement that very evening Dimitri was called upon by two officials from the palace.

"Princess Thisca wishes to see thee," they said. He followed them, and on his shoulders he wore the splendid mantle cut out of the dragon's skin. The Princess was on the palace balcony waiting for him, and when he entered her presence the mantle threw a lurid light like a fire all around. The Princess asked: "Whence comes this mantle?" "It is made of the skin of the dragon I killed." "Take it off," ordered the Princess, "for its glow is too strong, and prevents me from seeing thy visage." Dimitri obeyed, and Thisca looked into the frank clear visage, and she said: "He singularly resembles the man I so often see in my dreams. Yet he is only a fisher-boy, what a pity!" Then she bade Dimitri relate all about his meeting with Prince Zaltuhin and the dragon's death, which Dimitri did with words fiery and simple. Then a long silence ensued, and the Princess took up the blue stone and looked at Dimitri and read his thoughts, and in his thoughts the young man said: "She is the Emperor's daughter, alas! for me. I love her, and would like to take her away on the spot and wrap her in my flaming mantle and in my burning arms. Alas! for ever will my heart be broken because I have looked upon her beauty and heard her voice. I will lie down in the river and allow the river to carry me away. I must die." "No, no!" said Thisca; "thou must not die, Dimitri. No, no, I am not an Emperor's daughter to thee; I am thy bride. Thou hast killed the dragon—my father must keep his word." She flew to her father's chamber, and said: "Great Emperor,

give me the largest of thy kingdoms, and I will give the largest of thy kingdoms a king." And she told him the great desire that had risen in her soul, and how Dimitri had killed the dragon, and the passionate thoughts she had read on his brow. And thus it came to pass the Emperor's daughter married the handsome fisher-boy.

And the old woman who told this tale to me added: "You see this cannot happen now, nay, even if you find a fisher-boy as handsome and brave as Dimitri and a Princess as lovely and true as Thisca. The blue stone is lost, and also its power. This will never happen again."

THE SHIRT.

A TZIGANE TALE.

In a wretched hovel by the side of a river two tziganes dwelt. They earned their living by sundry thefts and the making of wooden spoons, which they sold at the neighbouring town. They were called Zamfir and Trandafir. Zamfir was the younger, and Trandafir the more lazy of the two brothers. They had never seen enough money to buy garments, and possessed only one single shirt, which they wore alternately, eight days each; while the one whose body was covered went on all the errands of the household, the other stayed in and worked, or wandered in the forest, where no one could see him. This went on very well for a long year; during the winter months the tzigane who remained naked gathered straw and dried grass over him, and then felt very comfortable, but Zamfir being younger, soon began to desire more liberty, and, on the other hand, he could not present himself in villages and in fairs for a space of time longer than eight days, as he knew that on his return his comrade would find fault with him and taunt him for not keeping his promise. One day Zamfir came home in a state of dreadful emotion: "Only think, dear Trandafir, only think of the terrible

thing that has happened to me. Not far from here, on the very border of the little wood, I have met a woman with spindle in hand and a red poppy in her hair. And I said: 'Who art thou?' and she answered: 'I am Sister Death.' When I heard these words I began to tremble, but she reassured me, and said: 'Thou art a handsome tzigane, 'tis true; so handsome that I would fain marry thee, but I will leave thee to spend a few more years in the hovel with Trandafir. On one condition though: thou must come to me every Sunday, and wear thy white shirt, and kiss me so that I do not get too impatient of the wedding, and twice a week too thou must come.' And only think, Trandafir, I have been obliged to promise, and what shall we do, as we have got but this one shirt? Surely, if Sister Death should come to know this, and hear of our poverty, she would marry me on the spot. Alas! alas! wilt thou allow thy dear Zamfir to become the husband of Sister Death, and live in a place even smaller than this?" "Alas! alas! don't weep and scream, dear Zamfir," answered his companion. "I will give thee the shirt twice a week, and even on Sunday, and Sister Death will never see thee naked." Zamfir thanked Trandafir with all his might and even gave him a bit of cigar he had found on the road. So for many a Sunday, and for many a day, the younger tzigane would walk from place to place, while the older one stayed at home, and all had happened according to Zamfir's fondest wishes. But Trandafir became bitter in his soul while he worked at his wooden spoons. He thought Sister Death

must by no means be such a disagreeable person, since Zamfir goes to their meeting with such a beaming face. "Happy fellow, she may prove a pretty tzigane with copper skin. I must get to know her some day when I have my shirt on, and do not risk to be taken away by the wicked wench." And he laughed to himself, but never said a word on the subject to Zamfir. One Monday evening, when it was Trandafir's turn to wear the shirt, he stayed out all day, and came home very late at night, so that Zamfir was already afraid something might have happened to his companion. At last he heard his footstep along the path. Trandafir entered the hut with sighs and moans, and Zamfir asked: "Brother, what is the matter with thee?" But Trandafir could not answer, and sank to the ground, and sobbed and wrung his hands. Whenever Zamfir tried to soothe and to approach him, his shrieks became dreadful, and he even, once or twice, rushed to his knife and menaced Zamfir with the naked blade. "Heavens," thought Zamfir, "my poor friend Trandafir is mad. I must let him sleep this night, and to-morrow we will see what is to be done." . . . The next morning Zamfir said: "Well, Trandafir, art thou better now? or shall I take thee to the wizard who can cure of any illness?" "Alas!" answered Trandafir, "I will never be well again. Imagine, brother, I have also met Sister Death. As soon as the wench saw me she exclaimed: 'O what a handsome tzigane! what a splendid tzigane! white teeth, black cheeks, glossy hair, and hairy hands. God! I have never met such a handsome tzigane

before. I wish I could marry him on the spot, but I am betrothed to another—Zamfir by name. He always wears a nice white shirt, and when next I meet him so fairly dressed I will marry him on the spot.'" Zamfir stared hard at Trandafir. His face had blanched, and his lips had become as blue as the young plums on the old plum-tree: "Hast thou really met Sister Death?" And in himself he said: "Trandafir has ever been more truthful than myself. He has seen her." "Alas! alas!" cried Trandafir, "the next time, the very next time, if she meets thee by day, she takes thee, and she said the big crow she loves will be the priest, and the owl sing during the marriage, dear. Alas! alas!" And Trandafir shed tears. "Brother," said Zamfir, "I will never wear the shirt again in the day-time," and from that moment Trandafir had the shirt all to himself.

THE CHURCH BUILDER.

Ionita was a famous church builder whom every one envied and revered for his great talent. Emperors and kings had called him whenever a famous church was to be built in their realm, and Ionita in his pride said once: "I am sure I could build a palace a thousand times fairer than the palace of the sun, and more beautiful than the balconies of the moon's white dwelling." Now a powerful Voivode, who dwelt in a convent and wanted to have a fine palace built, called Ionita, and said, "I will give thee as much gold and silver as thou hast ever dreamt of in thy wildest dreams, but I want thee to build a fair palace for me."

"Great Prince," answered Ionita, "in a year's time the palace will be ready and smile on thee from the top of the hill." And Ionita assembled the most skilful masons in all the land and set to work heartily. At first all went on well. But the moon just whispered a few words to the sun before the sun had sunk to rest. "Glorious sun," said the moon, "wilt thou allow this fellow to build a palace on earth as fair as thy own palace and as the balconies of my dear white dwelling? Why, what difference will there be between the Voivode and thyself when his palace is like

thine? As to the Voivode's wife, she'll surely toss her head at the moon and say, 'The balconies of my palace are exactly like those of thy white dwellings.' Sister Moon and I can't put up with any such impudence from the daughter of a mortal, and who is a mortal herself."

The glorious sun, who was dying with sleep, drew his purple curtains around him and answered lazily: "Beautiful white moon, I am indignant with the man, but still thou knowest how busy my life is and how I long for a good night's rest. Take thou this matter in hand, and deal harshly with Ionita the church builder. I will lend thee my bow and my arrows." "No need," said the moon, and spitefully hid her face behind a cloud. The sun was gone, but the moon walked softly to the place where the walls of the wondrous palace rose, and there became a beautiful white maid, and began to sing so sweet a song that all the workmen rose to listen, and when they saw her they fell in raptures over her beauty and her grace.

At midnight she took leave. "Come back to-morrow evening," they all said. "O do come back, fair maid." "I promise to come back and sing again," said she, "if you give your master Ionita this draught when he joins you to-morrow morning. O no, I'm not in love with him, but I send him this draught which will make him joyous and strong. Don't tell him I have come. Good-bye." And she disappeared. When Ionita arrived at dawn one of his favourite mates sprang up and said: "Master, drink, for this is a marvellous draught. 'Twill make thee gay and

strong." "Is no wench's design mixed up with the liquor? I have loved no woman till now." And as Ionita was reckless and thirsty he drank the whole cup and laughed.

Now the Voivode's wife was sweet and fair, and he loved her well, but the Voivode knew not the ways of love, and he spoke rudely, and the rude gauntlet had made his fingers rude. And the rude wind that blows on battle-fields had made his cheek and his lips rude, and the rude light that burns in a warrior's eyes had made his own eyes rude.

His wife was called Marita; she was slender and weak, and it was less easy to blow off the petals of a fading flower than to smite her dear soul and to wound her soft heart. Now Marita's heart was sore wounded because the Voivode was so rude, and she lay in her silver couch awake every night, and sighed and wondered how a woman must feel who is loved by a lover true.

The wily moon stepped in through the stained glass of her window and crept to Marita's side, and sat on Marita's couch and said: "Though thou art a Prince's daughter and the wife of a great Voivode, O thou art poor and pitiful, because thou never hast heard a word of love. Shall I tell thee what lovers say who wander under my beams?" And Marita sighed and whispered: "Dear moon, is it right to listen to thee?" And thus the night passed, and all day Marita sat dreaming of the time when the moon would return and tell her the dangerous tale of universal love in which she had no part.

Ionita could no longer sleep. Since he had drunk the moon's secret draught, he wandered beneath the moon. He waited and knew something would come and change his life. The moon said to Marita: "Dear Princess, there is a young man down in the Prince's garden who has drunk a love-draught and will love the first fair woman he sees." "What care I for young men who walk in my husband's garden?" answered the sweet Princess, but to herself she said: "How he must wait and pine! O if the moon could vanish I would just step out and see him, but of course without being seen." Just at that moment the moon disappeared, and Marita hastened to the garden and perceived Ionita, who wandered and sighed. She pitied him in her heart and thought: "The night is dark. He will not see my face, nor without seeing can he love, but I must speak to him." So she said: "O what ails thee? What can I do to soothe?" "Thy voice is like a cold rose-leaf, lady, that falls and refreshes my blood. My lips would like to touch the lips from which such a fresh voice has come, for do we not touch the rose-tree when we have to pluck its flowers?" Marita would have answered: "I am thy Prince's wife," but she felt he was sad and weary, and he did not see her face. "The night is so dark I can't see thy face. Shall we pray the beautiful moon to return and shine in the garden, and then I will see thy fair face." "Beware, sad young man, beware of my lips and beware also of my face." "O to drink death upon thy lips, to drink death in thy eyes, I wish for no other bliss."

Now Marita began to tremble because he had taken her hand, and her hand began to tremble because he was taking her heart. And she thought: "The Voivode's asleep, he has been away with his warriors and ridden his horses all day."

Now the Voivode had a friend, a fearful old dragon, whose whole body was made of green crystal and who dwelt in a sandy plain. No one but the Prince could approach and feed him, and he fed him with fire and with snow. The old green dragon would eat nothing but fire and snow. He loved the Voivode deeply, and to him the Voivode related all his plans, all his joys and his cares. The dragon had a magic garden whose trees always whispered what was going on in the different parts of the world. When the dragon walked in his garden he was better informed than if he travelled for years. The old dragon was sleepless just on the very same night when Princess Marita met Ionita in the dark, and as the dragon wandered beneath a tall elm the tall elm said: "Master Dragon, at this very moment the Voivode's sweet wife is allowing a man to speak of love to her." "What, the Prince's own wife? I'm astounded, tall elm, the fair Marita is pure like the green crystal of which my body is made. Look again, thou may'st be mistaking some tirewoman for the sweet Princess." But the tall elm answered: "Master, have we ever made a mistake? He touches her hand, her heart is aglow, they sigh and they say: 'This is love!'" At dawn the Voivode received a message. The green dragon bade him come in all haste. "I will not say

the truth to him," thought the kind dragon. "What husband could hear of his wife's deceit without shame? I will find some means of frightening Marita out of her sin." The wondering Voivode arrived before dawn. "Three men have saddled my horses, three men have thrown my mantle on my shoulders, three men have stuck the princely peacock plumes in my princely cap, for great was my haste to come to thee, dear friend. Is some bad wizard astir, does some black dwarf thwart thee, or art thou in love with the fairy who dwells in the silver well?" "Thou hast guessed aright, great monarch, I'm in love with the silver fairy who dwells in the well by thy palace. She only appears at night. O give me the key of thy garden, and give me permission to stay by the well till the fairy comes, till I see her fairy face." "Here 's the key," said the Prince, "but be sure, my green dragon, to make thyself invisible, lest all my warriors take fright, however brave they be, for thou art a handsome dragon, but a green dragon still is no sight for the eyes of mortals except for my princely eyes." The second night Marita saw the moon ascend the sky, and the moon came in through the stained window and sat on Marita's couch, but Marita pretended to sleep till the moon left her side, and then she rushed to her golden mirror and combed her beautiful hair. She stood by her golden mirror and donned a beautiful dress; then she ran out on the terrace, she ran to the place in the garden where she knew young Ionita stood. He saw, and mad with love he knelt at her feet and said: "Now I behold

thy fairness, and I weep because thou art the fairest thing on earth, and because thou must suffer not to see anything that is fair as thee." And she stooped towards him as he knelt, and she stooped towards him and said: "O thou art handsome, and who would blame my heart to follow the laws of my eyes? Our eyes are made to take in all that's fair, our hearts are made to love all that our eyes deem sweet." And she stooped towards him to kiss him, but the invisible dragon, who had seen and heard everything, at that moment became a cloud of fire in the sky, and the earth shook and the palace trembled. And the Voivode and all his warriors, together with equerries, pages and servants, came out on the balconies high, came out on the terraces broad, came out to the marble stairs and shrieked and asked: "What is this awful cloud and why does the earth shake thus?" But Marita and Ionita were so rapt in each other that their lips did not part, nor knew they aught of what happened. Then the dragon became an immense river and lashed their feet and hurled them along till the waves rolled round their heads. But their fond lips parted not, nor did they know what happened, nor even cared to know. Then the green dragon, who was a fearful dragon, came before them in his true form, and hissed and threw great flames from his nostrils, but they took no notice of him. Seeing how deep their mutual love now proved, the dragon said to himself: "I will once more spare useless shame to my friend the Voivode," and with the flames from his nostrils he made a beautiful woman

who resembled Marita as if she was Marita herself, and he put her gently on Marita's couch and breathed a few words over her sleep. Then he took the ardent lovers on his green crystal wings; he took them to his garden, whose gate he guarded himself. The Voivode saw no change in his life, but his new spouse, being of dragon blood, was wicked and impatient, and noticing her quick mood, he often sighed and thought: "What can have thus altered my sweet Marita?" and whereas when Marita was always content, his spouse led a weary life, he now ordered great feasts to be given at court, and lavished jewels and gold on the imperious dame.

In the meantime Marita and Ionita dwelt in the dragon's garden, but their happiness did not last long. For they heard the trees relate to each other all that took place on earth, and one morning Ionita learnt how his mates had found another church builder who was gaining great fame in the whole land, and how he was himself forgotten by his friends and former companions. And Marita, to her deep surprise, heard the sound of revels in the Voivode's hall, and the merry laughter and the haughty speech of a woman whose voice was so like hers that she thought it might be an echo of her own voice. And Ionita, on whom the love-draught had ceased to work, sighed and said: "Fair Princess, I wish I had not seen thy beauty nor touched thy gentle hand." And Marita answered: "I wish I had ne'er descended the steps that led to our garden that night." The old dragon watched them

and rejoiced, for they were tasting the bitter fruit of sin; then, when he believed they had suffered sufficiently, he carried Ionita back on his own green wings, and Ionita awoke among his mates.

But before he could carry Marita back to the palace, the false Marita, who was born of dragon blood, had to be taken away from the place she occupied, and many difficulties now rushed in the dragon's way. He took the form of a humming-bee, and buzzed in the Princess's ear till she turned and said: "This bee is certainly a fairy. I never heard a bee like this." Then the bee said: "I am thy sister. I'm born like thee of dragon blood." "Then," answered the false Princess, "thou must be immortal." And at this the bee felt disturbed, because only then the dragon was reminded that he could not destroy what he had created with his own blood. He answered simply: "Sister, thou need'st a maiden who may sit by thy side and sing. No great Princess is like thee by herself in her bower, while to other Princesses sweet maids relate fine tales and sing."

"'Tis true," said the ambitious dame; "canst thou bring such a maid to me?" "Certainly," answered the humming-bee, and vanished. The dragon changed Marita's face, the dragon changed Marita's voice, the dragon changed Marita's steps, and told her: "Wilt thou win thy lord back? Obey me, and go in thy own palace and serve the new Princess." At this Marita got pale: "A servant in my own palace, and a servant to my rival, too!" "Then lose the Voivode for ever." Marita said: "I will obey." When she

entered the garden, she smiled; when she mounted the steps, she sighed; when she pushed the door open, she wept, for, in the middle of her own chamber, and on her own husband's knee, a proud dame dressed in gorgeous attire stood and said: "Come here, poor maiden! What is thy name?" "Smea," answered Marita, and the name which meant a dragon's daughter had come uncalled to her lips. "O husband, noble husband, I too might wear the pretty name of the poor maiden," and she turned her face towards Marita, and then Marita stared as she held her breath, for she saw her own former self stand before her, and she understood the kind dragon's trick, and forgave her dear husband for the love he showed the dame who was her own image and had her own voice. Days of sore trial were in store for her. The false Princess was a wicked dame, who scolded and fretted from morning till night, and never gave poor Smea one moment's peace. One day she spoke so harshly that Smea let big tears roll down her cheeks. The Voivode entered and asked kindly: "Why does poor Smea weep?" and the furious Princess got into a hot rage and said: "Husband, don't interfere." The Voivode said: "Ah! those were happy days, Marita, when thou wast as soft as the wool on thy distaff. What has altered thy mood?" and Smea sprang up and said: "I, too, know a good Princess, Prince, and now the Princess is wicked." And three months glided on and in sore grief and pain Smea who was once Marita watched the day when her dear husband would take her back to his bosom

and discard the hateful stranger. And still that day did not come. She tried to keep cheerful, but sore was the task. One morning the wicked Princess went out to a big hunt with the Voivode, for he so pitied Smea that he took his wife away from the palace as long as he could. Then Smea, in wild joy to be by herself once again in her own palace, ran to her mirror, and lo! as she looked into the mirror, she gradually resumed her former features. And she put on her golden chains and began to cry and to sing aloud. "O, hast thou come back at last?" said the little mirror. "How pleased I am to reflect thy image! Thou canst not imagine how mirrors hate cross faces, and the new Princess's face is always cross. But tell me why thou hast been away." And Smea sang to her mirror her sad, sad tale. And between each sentence she said: "O, if the Voivode could know, the Voivode would forgive." Now it so happened that the Voivode and the wicked Princess came home much earlier than they had said they would, and they heard some one sing in the Princess's bower. The Voivode heard the voice, and heard the words; he entered and saw his real wife, and clasped her to his breast, while the dragon's daughter raged and fumed and scolded dragon-wise. The Voivode stood perplexed; what could he do with the wicked creature who had embittered his days? Now his gentle wife had returned, he was happy, but sore perplexed. The old green dragon arrived and said: "Alas! she is immortal, because she 's of my blood. I'll marry her to some bad wizard; she'll drive him mad, but she 's fair."

BARBU AND THE RAVEN.

A TZIGANE TALE.

BARBU the tzigane possessed naught but his violin and his black raven; with his violin he went playing from village to village, from door to door, till he gained a few copper pieces; his raven served him for another purpose. He called him Mihalake! and taught him all kinds of tricks. Barbu the tzigane had many defects, but he also had one great quality; he never stole big things—only here and there a small ring, a small watch-chain, a tiny purse with tiny silver coins in it. "What would be the use," said he, "to take from people the objects that are dearest to their eyes because more conspicuous? Who would miss such a little purse, such a small ring?" and Barbu felt quite innocent when he acted thus. Besides, he never roused any suspicion: he was so sweet-tempered and so jolly and so poor—he wore a shirt torn at the elbows and his fur cap had as many holes in it as the moon. He was invited in a village to play at the wedding of the priest's eldest daughter, and Barbu played the whole night till his fingers drew sparkles out of the violin, and no one could remember he had ceased playing one single minute. Yet the next day a gold ring was missing among the bride's

presents, and so one who knew not poor unselfish Barbu was rude enough to suggest he might have taken the ring again. There was deep indignation as this was heard, but the priest, a keen man, said: "Let us pay a visit to Barbu's hut; maybe he has taken the ring by mistake." . . .

Barbu saw a great number of people coming towards his hut, and he had no time left to run and hide himself underground, because in general he lived in a cave behind the hovel; so he walked up to meet the visitors, and the priest said: "Master Barbu, we have something very serious to tell you. A gold ring is missing—my daughter's ring. We well know an honest tzigane like you does not take a gold ring; but you are clever, will you help us to find it? For instance, the ring might have been curious to know your home, and have come all this way on purpose. Will you help us to seek it in your hovel and in the underground room where you sleep?" "O do not take the trouble to search in vain. I have my friend the raven, a most sagacious bird, and I will consult him about the ring." So Barbu called the raven, who, perched upon his shoulder, stooped towards his ears. The tzigane exclaimed: "A wonderful tale; the raven owns he has taken the ring, as one of his aunts, an old crow who has long remained a spinster, is going to be married to-morrow, and the raven thought he might offer her the present. I will punish the wicked treacherous brute; here is the ring"; and Barbu drew the ring from his bosom, where he said the raven had dropped it, and the priest went away well content with his day's

work, and pouring compliments on Barbu for his cleverness in getting the ring back from the bird. A few months later, at a funeral where Barbu had gone to get some of the wine distributed in memory of the dead, the very boots of the dead man disappeared, and they had to bury the corpse barefooted, and all the peasants wept and said: "Poor man, it was his only chance to wear a pair of boots." This time an angry mob assembled before Barbu's hut, and he got pale and trembled; but his wits did not abandon him on this occasion either. He stepped out and wrung his hands and said: "Good people, I know why you come and shriek. The man has gone to his grave without boots; he will not be able to reach Heaven; he will stop half-way. Alas! alas! I saw with my own eyes the devil step in while we were drinking and take his boots off. I suppose he had an old debt to the devil. But I am not a man to be outdone by the devil. I followed the wicked fellow and traced him to the banks of the river, and I was just about to lay hands on him when he plunged in the water, and was drowned. The boots are all that remain; they're in the river, friends. Swim and catch them, and I will help you to do so, and the boots will belong to him who finds them." With one shout of enthusiasm they accepted the proposition, and Barbu dived madly in the river and the others followed, and in fact they saw on the water a couple of shoes float which they tried to reach. Barbu, notwithstanding his efforts, stayed in the rear. At last one of the village youngsters got the shoes,

and was disappointed to find they were torn and useless. "Why, the dead man had a new pair of shoes he had bought years before and kept for his burial-day. He carried them in his hands on Sundays and great occasions. These are almost good for nothing. They cannot be the same shoes." "Alas!" said Barbu, "they are; but reflect, young man, the devil himself wore them; the devil has a forked foot, and the earth where he walks is on fire, so his toes came out of the leather; and, besides, the soles are burnt. Yet take these boots home and wear them in peace. It is not every one who can say he walks in the devil's old shoes." "True," shouted the peasants, and in triumph they went away. When they were out of sight Barbu drew a fine pair of new boots from his cave, and looked at them and smiled broadly, and he said: "Nay, dead man's shoes, ye are but ordinary shoes, but ye will be the devil's own shoes when Barbu the tzigane will wear ye."

SISTER LIFE AND SISTER DEATH.

Tell this tale once more before sunset.
Wilt thou tell this tale again?

Sister Life was a poor young maid whose youngest sister was called Sister Death;
They lived side by side on the banks of a river.
Sister Life was poor and had but a small cottage,
With a small garden round the walls;
The cottage was turned towards the setting sun.
Sister Death had a big, bright palace,
And a garden most pleasant and large,
And her palace was turned towards the place where the dear sun rises.
Sister Life was fair to behold, but far more beautiful was Sister Death, and far more sweet and gracious;
Sister Life had but one flower in her garden, and in the large garden of Sister Death
Thousands of flowers smiled and grew.
From the rich balcony of the palace, from the humble stone threshold of the cot,
Sister Life and Sister Death often conversed together, and as Sister Life was so poor

Sister Death sometimes gave her some work to finish and some present.
They were happy in their own way and no one interfered with them;
And they loved each other well.
But a young man came one day who asked Sister Death for a glass of water,
For he was weary and warm.
And Sister Death smiled on him and gave him the water,
And saw he was handsome and young,
And touched his glowing hair, and touched his lips,
And felt she loved him, so she said: "Stop here,
My palace is bright and my garden large, and I can quench thy thirst
With pure water from my well."
And he was fain to stay; and Sister Death from her balcony said to Sister Life:
"Sister Life, I am happy, my love now stays with me,
And I touch his glowing hair and his lips."
"I would like to see him, Sister Death."
"It is impossible just now, for he's asleep; but when he awakes I'll call thee to see my love is fair."
But Sister Death never called, and Sister Life understood she was jealous, and spoke not a word again
Of the handsome young man.
Now Sister Death's young lover stepped out on the high balcony
That o'erlooked the small garden of Sister Life,

And he saw that in the garden there was but one flower,
And he said: "I would like to breathe its perfume and to know its name."
So he went down the steps and entered the small garden
Where Sister Life slept under a high rose-tree,
And he looked not at the maiden, but breathed the flower's sweet breath, and thought he would die with joy,
So deep was its perfume.
And then he looked at Sister Life,
And instantly he loved her as he had never loved.
And when he went to the palace of Sister Death he told her:
"Under a rose-tree in that small garden there a maiden sleeps;
I know not who she is, and yet I love her and must leave thee, Lady Death."
Sister Death wrung her hands and wept and said: "Beware,
The maiden is poor; she has but one flower in her garden."
"Hast thou ever taken in that sweet flower's breath,
To know what bliss lives on earth?"
"O no," said Sister Death, "that one flower's breath
Would kill me."
But he stopped not to listen, and before Sister Death could lock the door
Her handsome lover was gone.

She wept and tore her hair, and cut down the flowers in her garden, and said:

"Ye must die because that one flower's breath
Hath taken him away from me."

And the people who passed on the road heard Sister Death cry aloud, while her palace trembled.

And she covered her face with her hair.
Her handsome lover was gone.

THE TZIGANE, THE VOIVODE, AND THE ENCHANTED WHISTLE.

MANOLE, the tzigane, wept bitterly and wrung his hands in deep despair. His tziganca, his darling wife, was dying. There she lay, on the straw he had got for her from a neighbouring stack. And he said to her: "Thou art dying. A few more minutes and thou wilt see thy dear priest, the devil, face to face. Thou wilt have a jolly time telling him all thou hast done on earth, but ah me! what shall I become? who will work for me and steal fat poultry, and arrange charms and bow the peasants down before our power when they come to ask for help, and thou givest them herbs and black water in a little bottle? Ah me!" The tziganca, though very weak, answered in a feeble voice: "Yes, Manole, I am happy to meet the devil, but wretched to leave thee, my earthly devil, my dark one. We are poor, and I cannot teach thee my art, but one thing I will bequeath that may prove precious if made good use of. Take this small whistle," and she gave him a tiny whistle made out of the branch of a hazel-nut tree, and she continued: "This whistle possesses a most singular gift: when a man who is not quite honest, a thief I mean, enters the room where this whistle is, it whistles in a low, discreet way."

"Ah!" said Manole, "now I have the explanation of the sound I ever heard when I came home." "Right," said the tziganca. "Of course to thee the little whistle can be of no use, but take it to thy master, the Voivode; he will give thee at least four gold coins for it. Another word; the enchanted whistle is rather impertinent, and at the third notice given about the same person it raises a shrill voice and cries aloud: 'Manole is a thief!'" "True," said Manole, "I have often heard the words, but thought thou wast paying a compliment to me, dear wife." No sooner was the tziganca dead than Manole put the small whistle in his bosom and resorted to the palace of the Voivode, whose servants and officials at first made great difficulty to admit him, but the tzigane said he had brought a wondrous gift to the Prince, and besides, his every step as he entered the ante-room was marked by a shrill sound which seemed to come out of his bosom, and they believed it was the voice of some strange bird their master would be pleased to possess. So he was ushered in. As soon as the Voivode perceived Manole in the crowd, he laughed and said: "Welcome, tzigane; what is thy request?" "To speak alone five minutes to thy highness, and to kiss the dust beneath thy slippers." The Voivode made a sign, and courtiers and servants vanished. "Great Prince," said Manole, "I know the difficulties of thy situation. May God uplift thy crown above all its enemies, and wash it every day with pure milk, milked by the angels from the bosom of the moon." "Amen," answered the Voivode, and crossed himself piously. "I have brought thee a

means to help thee to reign even more gloriously than thou hast done, though it seems impossible. Bless thy eyelids, thy lips and thy toes, and thy sinless brains." "Speak freely," said the Voivode. "Princes are often deceived—they are so dazzled by the light of God, their brother, who always shines before their eyes, that their eyes are sometimes heedless of grosser things. God speaks to them so often and so loud that they hear not the mean talk of the rabble." "True," said the Voivode. "Go on, tzigane." "So I have brought a most wondrous gift to thee," and he drew the little whistle from his bosom. "This whistle will whistle every time a liar or a traitor or a thief comes into thy sacred presence. It is no devil's work. It has dwelt three days in holy water." "Art thou sure of this?" said the Voivode. "As sure as that I stand an unkempt and unwashed tzigane before the face of a mighty Prince." "What shall I give thee in exchange for the wonderful present?" "Only four poor gold coins, four little gold coins, mighty Prince." "And how shall I know thou playest not a deceit upon me?" "Mighty Prince, I will go out of thy dazzling presence, and when I return, as your tzigane has his failings (God knows your tzigane is honest, but he has his failings), the whistle will whistle when I re-enter the room." And Manole went out, and as he returned the whistle in the Voivode's fingers gave a low whistle, and the Voivode, well content, handed the four gold pieces, and the tzigane left the palace in great glee. The Voivode was still happier than Manole. "Ah! my true councillors," he said, "and chamberlains and equerries, ah!

my messengers from and to the people, I will now know all the truth about your secret designs," and he rang the bell and ordered his court to assemble again round him; but when they in procession advanced towards the throne the little whistle got into such a state of trepidation and whistled so the Voivode was obliged to hide it in an iron box, and from its depths the shrill sound was still heard. The Voivode laughed to himself and then said aloud: "To-day in the afternoon I will hold council with my faithful councillors in the left wing of the palace; let the ten whom I trust among thousands attend my orders to-day." Then he retired with a smile of satisfaction on his clever face, and the councillors and the courtiers whispered to each other: "What has happened to our gracious Prince? He looks as well pleased as if a tenth son was born this morning under his princely roof, or has he dreamt that his warriors have brought him the head of his fiercest enemy, or has he found the secret of everlasting youth?" The councillors looked grim: "We tremble when our Prince is gay," said the oldest to his colleagues. As the Voivode came and seated himself at the council-table they all looked grim and anxious. The head councillor rose and made a short speech, which was more than once interrupted by a sharp whistle. "It is nothing," said the Prince, "a passing trick from my parrot," but to his own terrified surprise, before the man had finished his sayings, a clear voice said, which seemed to dart like an arrow: "Prince, your head councillor is a traitor." At which the

head councillor turned red and then pale, and swore and stamped his foot, and finally the council was broken up in the greatest confusion. Now the Prince felt somewhat annoyed; how was he to seek for another man? and the whistle had rendered him a very bad service on the whole. He would use it only in his household, and only wore it in his belt as he went to pay a morning visit to his dear wife Balasa; but no sooner did he enter her bower than the whistle again made him start! "Impossible," said he, "this cannot be. Balasa is a faithful wife"; but while the Princess greeted him, and began to praise the aspect and the doings of her lord, the whistle spoke loudly: "Prince, the Princess deceives thee; she loves another man." The Princess turned red and pale, and looked so guilty, the Prince's suspicions grew to reality, and after being cross-questioned she owned part of the truth. And in sore pain she had to leave the palace, and go to a convent for the rest of her days. The Prince wept and sighed in the bitterness of his heart; yet still he clung to the enchanted whistle, and could not part with the fatal gift.

Life had become intolerable in his palace. The servants and equerries were sent away by dozens, and the Prince never smiled, and ever and anon seemed to listen for the mysterious sound. He had got thin and restless; the gorgeous vestments he wore and his heavy rings fell from him like dead leaves, and in his black hair silver threads were seen. "All this change has come since the day when the tzigane asked to see our Prince. The tzigane must have

thrown some spell upon him." So they went to find Manole, and they promised to load him with gold if he could but cure the Voivode of his present illness. Manole went to the palace and said to the Prince: "Most enlightened and beaming highness, an it please thee, return the whistle to thy humble servant. I have heard from a very sagacious wizard, in my hut only does the whistle speak the truth; but in the palace, by the side of such great courtiers, in the belt of such a great Prince, it has lost its senses, it has learnt to lie." "What," said the Prince, "art thou sure the whistle is a liar?" "Yes," said Manole; and the Prince immediately ordered the Princess to come back, and kissed her in great glee, and he called all his courtiers around him and said: "Forgive me for having sent ye away from my service," and he felt like one mad with joy; and Manole took the whistle and said: "Foolish whistle, thou hast been mad indeed to speak the truth in the palace of a Prince. Come back to my hut, and in the red folds of my woollen belt." The whistle said: "Take me back to the court, and I will speak otherwise"; but Manole would not run the risk of another adventure, so remained quietly in his hut to rejoice over the money he had received from the courtiers. The Voivode, one Sunday morning on his way to church, passed before Manole's hut. He recognized the tzigane on the threshold, and called to him: "Where is thy whistle? Thou sayest he says the truth in thy hut. I will alight, and hear." Manole trembled while he ushered the Prince in. The little whistle was suspended on a nail over the door, and as soon as the

Prince entered it whistled thrice and said: "Handsome Prince, thou art true and brave; thy courtiers are true; thy wife is beautiful and true; thy subjects are true to thee, and thy own heart is truer even than the rays of the sun." "Verily," said the Prince, "I had often heard from pulpit and tribune that truth abides only with the humble and the poor. Now here I find this saying has not deceived me. I thank the goodness of the Lord, who teaches me to love and revere truth; the air in my Palace is polluted; whatever the enchanted whistle said then, was a lie; now in this wretched hut lives truth." And he bestowed great treasures upon Manole, and told him in gentle tones: "Come to our court, good tzigane, but leave thy whistle in this place, where I will ever run to consult its enchanted sagacity; the whistle will always prove my best and sincerest guide." Manole said: "Little whistle, thou hast won immense wealth for me; it must console thee for not being truthful." And he blessed the memory of the tziganca, his dead wife.

ILIE AND PAUNA.

THERE was sadness over all the land—the King had married for the second time, and his new wife was as wicked as the first one had been gentle. She made the court mad with her caprices, and broke the heart of her aged husband; yet he loved her, and dared not to contradict any of her whims. So every one was exposed to the ill-humour and wrath of the Queen. Her handmaid was a cunning sorceress, whom the people soon called the devil's first cousin, and with this woman the Queen spent her nights in mischievous designs, which she accomplished during the day. The Queen hated all that was young, pure, and brave; therefore she hated bitterly her husband's son, Prince Ilie, the heir to the throne, a handsome boy of eighteen, who despised the Queen and her menaces. So the Queen said to her faithful handmaid: "I must get rid of his presence, and deprive him of his rights." "But, madam, it is impossible to kill Prince Ilie. He is popular more than the King himself, and every suspicion would fall upon us, and we would be torn to pieces by the mob, or trodden by wild horses." "I know, I know," answered the wicked Queen, "but find the means to destroy him without killing." Three days the devil's first cousin reflected and wandered through

the woods, and at the end of the three days she told her royal mistress she had arranged an admirable plan in her mind. But the Queen must be cautious, and show much amiability to the Prince in order to make the plot succeed. This the Queen promised to do, and from that moment she ceased her persecutions towards Ilie, and the boy felt glad, and walked with happy visage his father's halls. "Surely," thought he, "the Queen is at heart a much better woman than we ever deemed her to be, surely we have misjudged her!" A month and more was thus spent pleasantly at the King's court, and the Queen invented all kinds of sports and revels to amuse the King and her son-in-law. At last she seemed to be at her wits' end for new devices, when she struck her forehead with her fingers and exclaimed: "Splendid idea! let us have a silver barge and a gold barge illumined, and try a race on the big river." The king hesitated: "I am afraid it would be dangerous sport, my dear. The river is swollen by recent rains, and always impetuous like a torrent. I wish thou would'st think of another pastime," but the Queen had set her heart on the matter, and the two barges beautifully ornamented soon awaited their royal occupants. In the gilded barge the Queen and the King took places, and in the other the Prince with twelve oarsmen, and before they left the Queen sent them fruit and rich wine, which they drank in high glee. Then the race began; and soon the Prince's barge got ahead of the royal boat, and the King laughed to note his son had more luck and more skill than himself, for the King steered the gilded barge with his own

hands. Then he gave the return signal and said: "Now the Prince will get a beautifully embroidered belt for his skill, and I will give each oarsman a purse full of coins and a silver bugle." But the signal flew over the waters in vain. The Prince's barge did not return. For hours the river was searched, for hours the people wept on its banks, and the King tore his gray hair and his purple vestments, and in her dainty kerchief the Queen hid her fair face and wept. No traces of the princely boat could be found, though no one could believe the Prince and his twelve oarsmen were drowned. The desolation was so great no one dared enter the King's presence for ten days, and for ten days the Queen remained shut up in her bower, and conversed with her favourite handmaid; and they whispered and said to each other: "They all slept so fast that the current has taken the boat away to a distant shore. He will never be seen again!"

Pauna, the fair daughter of the Voivode, was sitting in the moonlight on the banks of the river, her spindle in her hand, her distaff in her belt, while the maidens around her filled the silvery hours with tales of valour and love. A wandering shepherd's flute was heard from the neighbouring hill, and the water laughed and sighed by turns as it glided at their feet beneath the tall reeds. The maidens who sat around the young Princess were twelve maidens fair, but fairer than Pauna was none as she listened to their words, and sighed and laughed by turns like the water between the reeds. "O look!" exclaimed she, and

rose to her feet, "look there, a wonderful barge as silvery as the river and the moon glides swiftly." And the maidens all rose, and they saw the handsome Prince asleep among the sleeping oarsmen, and they said: "O who will stop the wandering boat? Is the young man dead, and dead his companions, the young man who must be their chief?" "Then, if he is dead," said Pauna, "let us kiss his brow and his hands from sheer pity for his youth," and she threw her spindle towards the river, and it alighted on the boat's high prow, and the boat slowly turned from its course and approached the moonlit banks. But when the boat had come quite close to them the maidens stood in confusion great and in sore dismay, for they found out the Prince and his oarsmen, though they softly breathed, could not be awakened either by gesture or word. And besides, they felt the boat would soon drift away again, as their joint forces could not retain it nor anchor it to the shore. Then Pauna said: "Bid my father fare well, and may ye too fare well, my twelve maidens, but I must away with this sleeping youth, for I feel my fate is bound to his fate." And the maidens wept and fell on their knees in the wet sand, but Pauna would not hearken tears and prayers, and stepped into the silvery barge, and soon the current carried them afar. For months she lived on the waters, kissed the sleeping Prince, for months gazed on his face and gently kissed his hands, for months she smoothed the purple pillows under his languid head, and watched his twelve companions as they

slumbered by his side. And in her palace the wicked Queen rejoiced as the mourning for the Prince was over, and the King, sad and worn, yet gracious to his wife, had ordered every one to resume his office, and her life sped gaily on. In secret the people said: "O what has become of our dear young Prince?" and looked at the Queen with angry eyes. The royal pair avoided the shores of the great river, and the river's sound was kept away from them by the murmur of incessant music. And when the year had passed and the day come which marked the anniversary of Prince Ilie's disappearance, the Queen said to the King: "We will have a large supper where all the poor in the land will be invited to eat and drink and bless thy dear son's memory." And thus it came the King and Queen were seated in their banquet hall with hundreds around them when a page came in and said: "Royal lord, a fair maid is there in the garden, and in her arms, though she is slim and weak, she bears a slumbering youth." "My lord," said the Queen, "and wilt thou allow strangers to trespass on this sacred meal?" and she made a sign, and bugles covered the page's voice. A few minutes passed; then silence fell, and the doors of the hall were thrown open, and on the threshold Pauna appeared with the Prince's slumbering head on her heart. And she laid him at his father's feet and said: "I have carried him hither from the shore, and my arms are weary. O great King, look and tell who can this young man be?" "My son, my darling, my own son, Prince Ilie," and shouts of joy

made the roof and the walls tremble, while the Queen trembled in wrath and fear.

Pauna said: "He sleeps, and his twelve oarsmen are likewise fast asleep. O how shall we awaken them to life again?" Then an old warrior who was present, and had good reason for hating the Queen, said in loud tones: "Let every one here kiss the Prince's fair hand, and when the foe who sent him to sleep will touch his fingers with traitorous lip the Prince will rise." And the procession began from the lowest beggar seated there to the highest lord till the false Queen's turn arrived, and she said: "It is useless I should kiss the Prince's hand. Am I not his friend and mother? How can I have wrought him harm?" But a cry broke out from the crowd, and she saw murder in the eyes bent on her guilty face. So she advanced and stooped towards Ilie, but her lips touched not his skin, and the trial was almost over. But the old man, who was sly and quick, came behind the kneeling Queen, and with one swift stroke on her neck forced her to kiss the Prince's open palm, and all at once the Prince opened his eyes and said: "The woman who sent me to sleep for one long year has just touched my hand with her lips." And he met his stepmother's terrified look, and he said: "Thou shalt not die, but in a dungeon dark as thy own soul for one long year must thou remain." The King said: "So be it, my son"; and the weeping Queen was borne away from the fury of the people. The King said to his son: "Rejoice, fair son, but for the treachery of that wicked

woman my soul would be as smiling as a vineyard in September." Yet Ilie did not smile. He said to his father: "Dear King, wonder not if my mouth bears no smile, if I cannot be gay with thee. Yes, here is my palace, my people, my warriors, my father, my breath. Yet in my slumber I was happier by far than now in my wakeful hours, where all I had lost is restored; for in my sleep I saw a maiden fair, who smoothed the purple pillows for my head. And she gazed on my slumbering visage and sometimes kissed my hand. I could not speak to her nor stir, but I heard her sigh and speak. I was far happier in my sleep." Then the King beckoned to Pauna, who had retired bashfully in the crowd: "Is not this maid alike unto the maiden of thy dream?" Prince Ilie fell at Pauna's feet and said: "Fair maid, I love thee, and thou shalt be my spouse in this high palace even should'st thou be a ploughman's daughter or the sister of a shepherd who lives in the mountains and sings." Pauna said: "I am the only daughter of a wild and ruthless Voivode. He lives far from here, and has conquered many kingdoms. He is cruel in war and cruel in peace, and speaks naught but of swords and wounds. But my heart is soft, and he turns to me, and his eyes then soften and dance. Take a horse, a sword, and thy richest spurs, and ride to my father's tent." And Ilie rode to the fierce man's tent, and entered with golden sound of spurs and sword and heavy armour, and looked both courteous and proud. He said: "I am a King's son and have wooed thy daughter fair." "Alas!" answered

the Voivode, "my daughter has gone for ever." "Rejoice, Voivode, thy daughter 's alive ! I have come to sue for her hand." The Voivode smiled and said: "Fair Prince, Pauna is worthy of thee."

And thus from her dark dungeon the wicked Queen heard the sound of lute and song, and in her wicked soul she said: "I should have given him poison, but the handmaid was false to me." And she drew her long hair over her guilty face, and tore her long hair with her teeth.

THE TZIGANE AND HIS WIFE.

"So, dear, I am dying," said Andreia the tziganca to her husband, Busuioc; "but never mind, I will often come back to see thee when I am in my grave. I could not bear the idea that Busuioc has made a good bargain, stolen a stout pair of horses from the farmer, or a good mantle from the merchant in town, without I am there to enjoy his pleasure. I promise thee I will come." "Do," said Busuioc, because he would not disappoint the woman by showing her he would soon get over his grief; but to himself he muttered: "Bah! once the hard stone is on her grave and the coffin lid on her face, I will be rid of her and her jealousy and her screams. I will marry Sultanica the dancer, who walks on her finger-tips and delights all the fairs in the country; Andreia will not know, as she will be counting the grains of earth that fall upon her." Andreia was a dangerous and wilful woman; she had made up her mind, since die she must, she would find some means of teasing her husband still. The first week after the funeral passed off most happily for Busuioc; his hut seemed to him a quiet, comfortable place, and he did not leave, but on Sunday morning, as he watched a group of peasant girls who returned from church, he noticed that one of

them wore a pair of glittering glass earrings as green as the new-born grass. He followed. The girls stopped under the forest trees, undid their belts, and fell to sleep in the coolness of the shade. Then it was Busuioc approached with stealthy steps, and with fingers light as the dew took the earrings from the young girl's ears. "My very first present to Sultanica," said he, and hid the earrings in his bosom, and awaited with some impatience the next day, when he was to meet the tziganca he loved.

He spent the afternoon in pleasant thought and pleasant work. Twilight came on, then darkness, and he lit his fire and sat by it, and lifted the green earrings to the light. "They shine like the eyes of a dragon," said he, and smiled to imagine how pretty Sultanica would look with the earrings dangling about her face.—Rap, rap! a loud knock at the door. "Who is there?" "Andreia, thy true wife! I have heard of those green earrings, and have come to see them." "Bother the dead creature," said Busuioc, and went to open. He trembled under his rags, for he had never seen the soul of the dead pay a visit to the living, and a kind of horror thrilled him. As the door went ajar a gust of wind entered and nothing else, but when he turned towards the fire there stood Andreia's big form, wrapped in her brown mantle; her face and her hands were invisible, and the light of the fire leapt and passed through her like a sword through the mist. "Show me the earrings," she said, and she spoke so naturally that the awe of Busuioc vanished, and he made the earrings glitter before the shadow of his dead wife.

"I will take them," said she in a greedy voice; "I must have them. My eyes have just faded in my sockets. I will put these glass beads to replace them," and though she did not stretch her hands nor make a movement, the earrings sprang up to her forehead, and Busuioc saw them glisten behind the hood, and his heart grew sick within his body, but he could not speak. "Farewell," said Andreia; "I am satisfied no woman is here; thou hast stolen the jewels for me; I thank thee, my dear husband," and she disappeared. For more than three weeks after the unwelcome visit Busuioc felt uncomfortable and scarcely left his hut; he dared not even think of Sultanica, but on the fourth week he met her, and she danced before him and delighted his eyes: "What shall I give thee for a kiss, Sultanica?" "A nice silver belt, and I will come myself to thy hut and fetch it."

He stole the silver belt from the stall of the merchant who possessed the finest merchandise in the fair, and said to Sultanica: "I will take the belt to thee myself." But Sultanica had made up her mind to visit the hut of Busuioc, as she also liked him. Busuioc hung the silver belt on a nail, and on the night of the day he had stolen it he tremblingly awaited Andreia's visit. She did not come. Busuioc was so relieved that he clapped his hands and said: "To-morrow evening I will take the present to Sultanica," and he set off the next evening with the silver belt in his hand. Now Sultanica had also set off to join him in his dwelling, but as they took another way they

did not meet. Sultanica entered the hut; it was empty. "He'll soon return," thought she, and sat down by the fire, and laughed to reflect how pleased Busuioc would be to find her there.—Rap, rap! a loud knock. "Who's there?" "Open, I am Andreia, thy wife." Sultanica almost fainted with fear: "Busuioc is not here." Andreia recognized Sultanica's voice, pushed the door and, like a winter gale, rushed in. She was wrapped in her brown mantle and her green eyes glittered, and she said: "Ah! thou hast come about that silver belt, and I am his true wife, and I wanted it to keep my bones together, as they're falling off! Ah! thou hast come to steal my true husband from me, because thou art young and beautiful, and I am dead. Come, I will take thee to the place where I dwell. Come, I say." Sultanica by this time was half mad with fear, and as Andreia's shadow said: "Come!" she fell to the ground and never rose again. Busuioc found the dead girl's body by his waning fire, and over her the brown mantle in which he had buried Andreia.

CHISWICK PRESS: PRINTED BY CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND CO.
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.

THE BARD OF THE DIMBOVITZA. Roumanian Folk Songs, collected from the Peasants by HÉLÈNE VACARESCO. Translated by CARMEN SYLVA and ALMA STRETTELL. With an Introduction by CARMEN SYLVA.

"The poems have the wild melancholy and the fierce simplicity of all true popular ballads, with an undertone of ghastly mystery that reminds one of the Highland second-sight and Irish fairy tales. . . . They are directly, passionately, fiercely human; rich with a poetic sympathy with external nature, but regarding it almost as the comrade and friend of man. . . . There are elements of the Greek joy in all beautiful sights and sounds . . . but there is also a fierce love of battle and of blood, such as rings through the Nibelungen epic."—FREDERIC HARRISON in *The Fortnightly Review*.

World.—"A real treasure-trove, a valuable addition to the literature of the world."

Notes and Queries.—"We know nothing in folk-songs and little in literature like these productions. They come straight from the heart of a people, and have a passionate intensity and poetry like nothing else with which we are familiar. . . . In the way in which they fulfil that highest function of imaginative poetry, eliciting from inanimate nature sympathetic response to human aspiration and passion, they are almost unique. Thus each poem is wrung out of the heart of a peasant—a passionate, suffering peasant—the expression of coarse enjoyment of life is marvellous, and the poignancy of anguish is expressed in language that can only be beaten, and rarely then, in the Elizabethan drama."

Manchester Guardian.—"Few translations of the same type can stand comparison with Fitzgerald's embroidery of Omar, yet one certainly receives something of the same keen impression of freshness and choiceness from these songs."

Times.—"The translation is full of poetical feeling, and does credit to its joint authors. The Dimbovitza is now a classic with which every person of intelligence ought to possess some acquaintance."