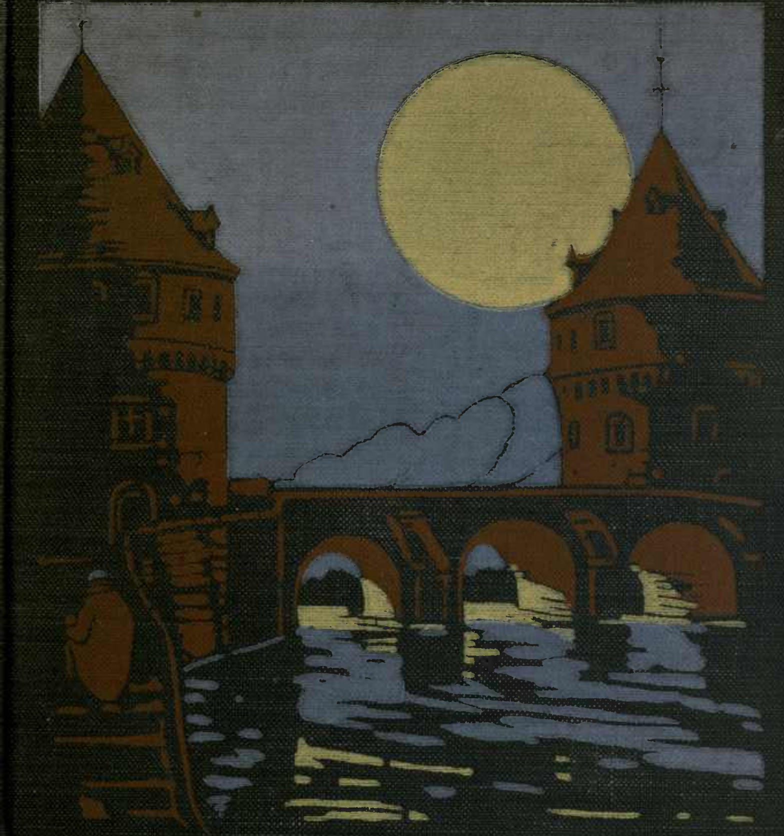

BELGIAN FAIRY TALES

WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

BOOKS BY

WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS

BELGIAN FAIRY TALES
Just such a book that the youngster will enjoy.

DUTCH FAIRY TALES
"A sheaf of delightful fairy stories from Holland, which abounds in legend and child-lore."

THE FIRE-FLY'S LOVERS; and Other Fairy Tales of Old Japan

THE UNMANNERLY TIGER; and Other Korean Stories

Each volume 8vo, cloth. Illustrated in color.

THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY
NEW YORK

THE SILVER KNIGHT *and* THE RIVER FAIRY

Belgian Fairy Tales

By

WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS

Author of "Belgium: The Land of Art," "The Firefly's Lovers," "The Unmannerly Tiger," "Dutch Fairy Tales," etc.

NEW YORK

THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

COPYRIGHT, 1919, BY
THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY

PZ
8
G875b

TO

KATHARINE AND ELLIOT
TEDDY AND MICKEY

1315803

Contents

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	A Story for a Preface	1
II.	The War Storm and Baldy the Horse	10
III.	The Swan Maidens and the Silver Knight	17
IV.	A Congress of Belgian Fairies	31
V.	The Ogre in the Forest of Hazel Nuts	44
VI.	The Fairy of the Poppies	56
VII.	The Story of the Fleur-de-Lys	65
VIII.	The Irish Princess and Her Ship of Sod	72
IX.	Wine-Crust, the Blue-Beard of Flanders	82
X.	Lyderic, the Orphan	92
XI.	The Long Wappers, and Their Tricks	101
XII.	The Pilgrim Pigeons	110
XIII.	The Fairy Queen and the Carrier Doves	121
XIV.	The Far Famed Oriental	130
XV.	Puss Geiko and Her Travels	140
XVI.	The Marriage of the Fairies	150
XVII.	The Enchanted Windmill	159
XVIII.	Turk, Turban, Tulip and Dragon	166
XIX.	Up and Down and Up Again	178
XX.	The Golden Dragon of the Boringue	188
XXI.	The Red Caps and the Hunters	199
XXII.	The Split Tailed Lion	208
XXIII.	Rinaldo and His Wondeful Horse Bayard	215
XXIV.	The Belgian Bunny	225
XXV.	The Fairies of the Kitchen	235
XXVI.	A Society to Make Fairy Tales Come True	245

Belgian Fairy Tales

I

A STORY FOR A PREFACE

(Which Tells of the People, Scenery and Animals in Belgium)

THE name which the Belgians give to their country is Belgique. The English form Belgium is that from the Latin of ancient days.

The country is inhabited by two races. Draw a line across the map of Belgium and you divide the kingdom into two regions, inhabited by Flemings and Walloons.

Let the line pass from east and west through Brussels. North of this, as a rule, there are farms, gardens and sea coast. Here the people speak old Dutch, or Flemish, and most of them are fishermen, farmers, seaport men and traders. South of this line are mines, factories, furnaces, or flax fields and their talk is French. They are

called Walloons, which is only another way of pronouncing Gaul-loons. When Cæsar met and fought with their ancestors, whom he called the Belgii, he declared them "the bravest of all."

We Americans ought to know who the Walloons are; for, in 1624, some of these people—even before the Dutch mothers and fathers, boys and girls came—settled New York and New Jersey. It was they who introduced on our soil the marguerite, or white-and-yellow daisy, and they were the first farmers in the Middle States. Moreover, when New Netherland received a civil government, it was named Nova Belgica, or New Belgium.

The finest part of Walloon Belgium is the hill country of the Ardennes. Here lived, in 1912, a boy named Emile, seventeen years old. His home was in one of those stone houses, which are common in the highlands of southern Belgium. All around him grew pine and birch trees, which made his part of the country look so different from the lowlands around Antwerp, where the tall, stiff poplars and the low branched willows abound. The one tree points its boughs up to the sky and the other down to the ground.

Emile's father was a farmer, but the land of the hill country was not rich, because it was too full of rocks and stones. The soil was quite different from that down on the flax meadows,

towards France, and the flower gardens and truck farms of Flanders. Emile's father could make more money by raising horses, for the pasture was rich and splendid horses they were, so big and strong.

The buyers, from the horse markets over in Germany, came every year into the Ardennes forest country, for they liked nothing better than to get these horses for the Kaiser's artillery regiments. For, although the animals of this breed were not as big and heavy as the Flemish cart horses, they were not so slow and clumsy. In fact, there were few places in Europe, where the horses excelled, in their power to gallop while harnessed to heavy loads. They had what jockies call good "wind" and "bottom," that is, staying power, stamina, grit, or what we call, in boys and men, "pep." Emile, with his father, learned to take good care of the mares and kept them in fine condition with brush and curry comb, until their coats were glossy. One day, an unusually fine colt was born, just before Christmas of 1909.

"What shall we name it?" asked the father of his wife; for it was her favorite mare. She drove it to church every Sunday, and when born Emile's mother had named it "Jacqueline," after the famous medieval princess.

Now, it was a day or two after King Leopold had died, ending a long reign of forty-four years,

and the present King Albert had become ruler of the Belgic country. Yet he did not call himself "sovereign," or "autocrat," like a Czar, or "emperor," as the German Wilhelm did, but "king of the Belgians." That is, he wished to treat his fellow countrymen not as subjects, but as gentlemen like himself. So, when he issued a proclamation, he addressed them, not as inferiors, but as "Messieurs," that is, gentlemen.

Emile's mother who had, years before, lost one of her baby boys, answered:

"Our dead ruler will have a great monument, but for Baldwin, his son, who was to have been king, instead of Albert, but died early, there will be few to remember him: So let us call our new colt 'Baldwin' and let it be Emile's own—his pet always."

"Good," said the father, and Baldwin it was, or "Baldy," for short; and the pretty young horse was given to Emile for his very own.

"It's yours to play with, and to work for you, all your life," said papa Henri, "but you must care for it, as your mother and I have cared for you."

"That I will, father. You may trust me," answered the boy.

As soon as the new long-legged stranger was able to cease taking refreshments from its mother, Emile fed the colt out of his hand. After Sun-

day dinner, he would go out into the garden, pluck some tops or leaves of tender plants, such as radishes, peas, or the like, hiding a lump of beet sugar under the greens. Then he would follow the path to the stable to give a treat to both mother and son. Both the old mare and young Baldy seemed to have an almost human look of gratitude, when they cast their eyes on their owners and good friends. Nevertheless, no horse ever yet learned to talk with its tail and say "thank you," like a dog.

When the time came to break Baldy to harness and for farm work, the well fed and kindly animal proved to be one of the strongest and best. It seemed equal to most horses of at least six years of age.

But it was not always sugar and young carrot tops, for Baldy! Emile usually gave it salt out of his own hand. Sometimes he loved to play a joke and even to tantalize his pet, though for a minute or two, only. When out at pasture, and its master wanted to throw the halter over its neck, Baldy would give Emile tit for tat and had his horse-fun by cantering off. Then Emile would gather up the heads of white clover and holding these, down deep in the palm of his hand, would entice Baldy near, as if it were salt. Then he would throw the halter over his neck, and Baldy was a prisoner. Emile took care not to

play this trick too often, and sometimes gave his pet real salt, even when out in the field. If horses could smile, Baldy would have laughed out loud.

There were other pets in Emile's home, besides the colt; and, first of all, his dog Goldspur, named after the trophies found on the field of Courtrai, when the Flemish weavers, with their pikes, beat the French knights, in 1302. Though he worked hard all day, outdoors on the farm in summer, and tended the cows and horses in winter, he had plenty of time to give to his hares, which were so big and fat, that they took the prize at the local fair. In his loft over the barn, he had a dozen or two carrier pigeons. Some of these had been hatched on his father's farm, but most of them had been brought from Ghent, a city down on the plain, where the two rivers, the Lys and the Scheldt join. Here, where there were plenty of canals, he had a cousin Rogier, a boy of his own age. The two lads often sent messages to each other by their winged letter carriers.

The Walloon folk pronounced the name of this city of Ghent, or Gand, in the French way, which sounds a good deal like "gong"; while the Flemings, who talk Dutch, say it with a hard *g*, and as if "gent." We Americans put an *h* in the name; for fear, I suppose, lest we should pronounce it like "gent" in gentleman.

In fact, when you get into Belgium, you find that even the laws and some of the newsapers, as well as names of places, have two forms, French or Walloon, and Dutch or Flemish. The British soldiers usually take no further trouble to pronounce foreign names, except as they are spelled at home, on their island. That is the reason why, for the name of Ypres, around which the war raged during four years, one may hear the sounds—French, eepe, or epray; Flemish, i-per; and, what the English Tommies say, "wipers."

Not long after his nineteenth birthday, Emile sent to his cousin Rogier, at Ghent, a message. It was written on a note sheet, as light as tissue paper. Rolled inside a bit of tin foil, in case of rain, and with black sewing silk from his mother's work basket, it was tied on the pigeon's right leg, between its pink toes and the first joint of the knee. Safely making the journey, the bird fluttered down on Rogier's dove cote, which was set on a post in his garden. Untying the missive very gently, and letting the bird into the cote to rest, Rogier read:

Dear Cousin:

"Crops were poor this year, and father had to sell my pet horse, Baldwin. I took it hard, and almost cried, to see a German horse dealer pay

down the money and lead it off. When out in the road, Baldy actually turned round and looked back at us. The very next day, word came from the army headquarters that I must report to camp at Ypres. From next week, Tuesday, I shall be a soldier under the black, yellow and red flag. Hurrah! Sister Yvette has been singing the 'Brabançonne,' when she isn't crying. I have only one sister, you know. I hope they'll put me in the cavalry; or, if not, assign me to the machine-gun battalion. Goodbye! We'll meet, when I get down into Flanders."

All too soon, the looming shadow, cast from the east, shortened and the war-storm broke. On Sunday night, August 2, 1914, Germany sent an ultimatum, demanding passage of her armies through Belgium to France. To the Kaiser, Belgium was no more than a turnpike road to Paris. The hero, King Albert, knowing he had his people behind him, refused to cringe and become a German slave. It was like the boy David defying the giant Philistine. The national flag—black, yellow and red—the ancient colors of Brabant, the central province in the kingdom of the nine that made Belgium a nation —was unfurled everywhere by "men determined to be free." That is what our Anthony Wayne said at Stony Point, in 1779.

By this time, in 1914, Emile was a seasoned soldier, not in the saddle, as he had hoped at first, but with the dog-drawn mitrailleuse, or machine-gun battalion, No. 40. A happy soldier he was, ready to fight "for King, for Law, for Liberty" —as the chorus in the Brabançonne—the national anthem—declared. Still happier was he to have with him in harness, drawing the revolving, quick-firing cannon, of which he was sergeant pointer, his pet dog, Goldspur. Like man, like dog was the Belgian War Department's acceptance of both—"in the first class of efficiency."

This was Belgium at peace, under her beloved King Albert and Queen Margaret. Rich in wonders of art and architecture, in fairy, folk wonder and hero lore, in traditions of valor and industry. When, again and again, the story teller visited the country, he brought back, each time, the seed, for flowers, in the bed-time story-garden.

II

THE WAR STORM AND BALDY THE HORSE

WAR, in modern times, comes like a lightning flash. Seven thousand German automobiles, loaded with soldiers, rushed over the Belgian border. The Uhlans galloped in by other wagon roads, and twenty army corps, in swift trains, followed. Belgium was desolated by fire and sword. The Liège forts, once thought impregnable, were reduced to rubbish. Louvain was given to the flames.

What awful odds! Only 68,000 men of all arms, in the Belgian Service, to stand against the onrush of hordes! Yet they did. Day by day, the Belgians wondered! Where were the Allies, that had promised to help them? Where were the red coats, or the khaki of the English, or the kilts of the Scotch, or the "invisible blue" of the French poilus? Had any one heard a sound of the bagpipes?

During those six weeks, before the British guns fired a shot, or the French sent reinforcements, the Belgian soldiers fought on, contesting

the possession of their native soil, inch by inch. Many a time the machine-gun batteries drove off the German Uhlans and destroyed both the gunners and horses of their batteries; each time retreating in order and safety, though many a comrade of Emile's was missing. City after city fell, until Brussels was occupied. It was thought that Antwerp could be saved, though the garrison was very small. Some English marines had come to help; and more, yes, a big army, was coming. So every one said.

So Emile and the other gunners braced up. They were again full of courage, when ordered to defend a narrow road, which was really a dyke, or causeway, with mud fields on either side, but commanding the main road, over which the German artillery must come. Here, with what military men call an enfilading fire, they could open on the Germans. They were given this post the night before, with only haversack rations.

The next morning, when breakfast, and a cold one, was hardly over, and the dogs had been drawn out of the shafts and sent to the rear, the German train of guns was heard in the distance thundering towards them. The Huns must go straight ahead; for, on either side of the brick paved road, were the ditches and destruction.

" 'T will be a hot fight, but keep cool, gentle-

men," cried the officer in command, "then, at the right moment, let every shot tell."

"Crack, crack, crack!" The machine guns opened and sheets of lead and fire swept a wide area. Bullets, not by hundreds but thousands, were showered upon horses, men, caissons and guns. Within five minutes, half of that German battery was a wreck. The dead horses and men, of the three forward cannon of the six, were piled on top of each other, or were rolling and plunging over the dyke. The others behind had to halt.

Emile noticed that one of the horses, from the German battery, drawing the front gun had been stung by a ball that scraped his flank. Part of the wooden tongue and whiffle tree had been shot away. They were dangling behind him, as he dashed madly forward.

This horse was no other than Baldy. Instantly recognizing his old pet, Emile waved his hand to the gunners of his company to spare the animal. He ran forward, shouting "Baldy, Baldy."

The horse stopped and sniffed the air; but at the strange uniform, halted, even while he cocked his ear, awaiting further developments. Emile took in the situation at once, for he too had "horse sense." Jumping down along the grassy sides of the dyke, he picked off enough

white flowers to stick between his fingers and in his palm, so as to look like salt. Then in Walloon talk, he tried his old trick of enticing Baldy. As if in front of a phonograph, this four legged creature that had, for years, heard only German words, for "halt" or "back" or "get up," moved his head sideways, first to the right, then up to the left, then down, as if pondering. At last, throwing back his head he neighed joyfully and trotted forward, as if he surely recognized his old master, who now patted him as if he welcomed a human friend.

It was a family reunion, for Emile, leading his prize back, amid his admiring companions, quickly told his story in brief to his captain, who bade him to lead Baldy over to Goldspur. There was no time to unharness the dog, nor any need of doing it; for as soon as Baldy was near enough, the dog's tongue was as active as his tail. While one end of the animal was busy in licking the horse's muzzle, as in old friendship, the other terminal was wig-wagging, as if a sailor boy were signalling "I'm glad to see you."

It was many minutes before the Germans, further back, could unlimber a gun on the narrow road, point it at the Belgians and send shrapnel among them. By this time, however, the machine-gunners had made good their retreat, according to orders. The dogs pulled off the

light Belgian artillery and the whole army moved to the defence of Antwerp. Emile's battalion was soon out of range of the enemy, who wasted his shells in vain.

It would be a sad story to tell in detail of the fall of Antwerp. Against the overwhelming numbers, with few or no allies to help, and the heavy siege guns of the Huns in activity, day and night, the Belgians were no match for their foes, and the Germans entered the city.

Two mighty heroes rose out of the Belgian commonwealth during this awful, desolating war. One was that of Cardinal Mercier—bravest of the brave. The other was King Albert. He lived up to his colors, for in the Belgian flag, the king's color is black, standing for constancy, wisdom and prudence. Later, when the Americans had reached Belgium, Albert rode with his queen, Margaret, into Ghent and Brussels.

What happened later, to Emile, and Baldy, and Goldspur, is told in his letter, from Queen Wilhelmina's dominions, to his boy friend in Ghent.

"We are interned in a large camp in Gelderland, with British marines and sailors in one part and the Belgian army men in another. Baldy is rented out to a Dutch farmer near Nijkerk, till the war is over. The Dutch commandant lets me have Goldspur, and being our mascot,

is a great favorite with all the men. A prisoner's life is dull and tiresome, and we can only wait for victory, which must surely come. Queen Wilhelmina's government has cared for a quarter of a million of our Belgian civilians and Holland spends one fifth of all her revenue in feeding them. Our people are building a splendid memorial of gratitude, at Amersfoort, and I am glad of it. One of our boys got hold of the words and music of an American song, and now the whole camp has learned to sing 'The Yanks are coming,' and I believe they'll come, even beyond the Rhine."

And they came, and of the three sons of the story-teller (who was himself one of Lincoln's and Grant's soldiers, a veteran of '63), one was there; and to his grand children, these Belgian tales—mostly of the kind that have fairies in them—were first told. In these "Belgian Fairy" and wonder tales, we shall learn about the colors of the flag, and the national motto, and other things that, it is hoped, will make us Americans love Belgium the more, and all of us, at some time, see the country itself.

The little folks in wooden shoes have not forgotten how the American children sent to them a ship load of Christmas presents. Nor should we fail to remember that Belgium is one of our fatherlands, whence came the people who made

the first homes in the four Middle States. The first white children, born in New York State, were of Belgian parents.

Not all the stories in this book are fairy tales, but all tell of wonderful flowers, animals, inventions, people, things, and happenings, if not of dragons, ogres and lovely little fairy folks, who do astonishing things. In Belgium, neither fairies nor men are anything but industrious, so the fairies work hard always.

This is our preface.

III

THE SWAN MAIDENS AND THE SILVER KNIGHT

THE two countries, Gelderland and Brabant adjoin each other, but their rivers flow far apart.

Once there was a castle, that stood on the banks of the Scheldt, on which the city of Brabo, named Antwerp, stands. Instead of being full of light and joy for all within its walls, there was a princess named Elsje, who was kept a prisoner there.

Her father and mother, dying when she was a little child, left her in the care of a count, who was to be her guardian. This nobleman was a selfish villain, and hoped to get her lands and estate. So he shut her up as a prisoner in the castle. If any knight should fight and overcome him, the princess would be delivered; but, as the wicked count was a man of gigantic strength and skilled in war, no one had ever attempted to meet him in battle.

The Princess Elsje was very lovely in character. In her captivity she was kind to the birds

and all the winged creatures, being especially fond of seven swans, which she fed every day. Each one was very tame and took its food out of her hand. She knew them all by the names she had given them, Fuzzy, Buzzy, Trumpet, Jet, Diamond, Whitey and Black Eye. They were her best friends, for she was very lonely and had no human companions. Nor had she any idea that they were anything but dumb creatures that never could repay her kindness. But, strange to say, these seven swans were birds only in form. They had been changed by a wicked fairy from pretty maidens into swans. It was on this wise.

Once, while the good king of Gelderland had gone out hunting in the forest, with his lords and retainers, he rode in advance, for he was pursuing a deer. He got so far from his companions that he lost his way. Coming near a hut in the woods, to inquire how he might get back to his palace, he met an old woman. She promised to show him the way out and back home. Immediately the king pulled out his purse to hand her a gold coin; but the old woman proudly waved her hand to scorn the money and said to him, "You must marry my daughter and make her your queen. If you do not, you can never get home again."

The king hesitated about giving his promise

at once, even before he had seen the lady, for he had seven motherless children, all daughters at home. Their mother, on her dying bed, had made her husband give her a promise that the children should always be first in his thoughts.

Now, if he should marry again, would his new wife be good to them? He would much rather that they should first see their future mother and give their love to her, before he took his second wife.

But now, as he was very weary and almost ready to drop with hunger, he could not hesitate. He might die of weakness, while vainly wandering in the forest. Moreover, the old woman said to him, quite sharply:

"If you refuse, you will never get out of these woods and will starve to death. Come into my hut and I will feed you well."

The king entered and found sitting by the fire a most beautiful maiden. He thought he had never seen a woman so fair, yet he did not like her.

She rose from her seat and came forward to greet him, as if she had been waiting for him. There was a table spread with plenty of good things to eat. The king sat down and the damsel herself waited upon him while he enjoyed the meal.

But all the time, the king did not like her

looks, any more than at the first. At times he shuddered, for fear she might be some evil creature in lovely human form. However, he had promised the old woman to marry her daughter and it was now death to refuse. So he took the beautiful girl on his steed and rode straight to his castle, for the horse seemed to know the right way.

That very evening, the wedding took place with great pomp. The wonderful thing was, that all the lords and ladies and servants had supposed that their master the king had purposely left them, the day before, to make a journey to get him a wife. So they were now all ready for him in their best dresses and jewels, and glad to welcome his bride. All remarked upon her beauty, but the king still feared that his new wife was wicked and cruel, and his heart sank within him.

So, to make sure, he took his seven children off into a castle that was deep in the forests and not easily found. Even he himself had trouble in getting to it, until a wise old woman gave him a ball of yarn. This ball had the wonderful property of finding paths in the wood. If one threw it on the ground it would unroll of itself. So the king had a clue to the forest palace and daily went to visit his little folks and played with them.

The new wife noticed his going away so often, and becoming jealous of her lord's absences, she scolded him, saying to him that he did not love her, to be thus away from her so many times. At last she found out, from the palace servants, where he kept the ball.

Then she made seven little coats and in each one she sewed an evil charm, which her wicked old mother had taught her. Walking in the woods until she came to the castle, she pretended to be glad to see the children, telling them that she had brought each one a present. The little folks were delighted and thought their stepmother was both lovely and kind. They put on their new coats and then gleefully danced together, joining hands as in a chorus. But in a few minutes a strange feeling came over them. Wings grew where their arms had been, their necks lengthened, while their legs shortened and became weblike. They were all changed into swans and flew out of the window. So the king never saw his children again.

The seven swans enjoyed their life in the air and soon joined the great flock that belonged to the king of the country of Brabant, where the princess Elsje was kept in the castle, on the Scheldt River. The royal swanherd, though he had a thousand or more birds under his care, when counting the cygnets, or swan babies, no-

ticed the addition of the seven pretty birds and wondered whence they had come.

The seven swan maidens soon got acquainted with all the other swans, for these birds are very sociable and talk to each other in their own language. In this way they learned the story of the captive Brabant princess. When they found they were her favorites, and she had given each one of them a name, and every day called them to be fed, their hearts were melted by the kindness of the pretty lady. Sometimes they found her in tears and heard her pray for wings to fly away. This made them wish that they could leave their swan forms and be like her again, as they once were. Or, if not thus able, they longed to help her in some way.

They all agreed that they would rather remain swan maidens and be free to fly and do as they liked, rising about and up into the air, or sailing on the water, than to be shut up for life in a prison. Even though it were in a castle with gardens and a swan lake, they would rather be birds than captives. They were filled with pity for the lonely princess thus pining away.

The oldest and the youngest of the seven swans, Fuzzy and Black Eye, both of which had snow white plumage, were especially eager to help the maiden. Of all the seven, they two were the strongest. Every day they declared

to their sisters and to the real swans that they would sometime find a way to set the princess free. The oldest of the swans only jeered at the idea or hissed scornfully.

"How can human beings fly? They have no wings like us and you boasters cannot give her yours." And they laughed a swan's laugh.

Now in one thing, at least, these seven swan sisters were different from the other birds. They were accustomed, every week or so, to make a long flight back to Gelderland, to their old forest home and playground, to take a look at their fond father, who, however, never dreamed that these winged creatures were his children.

In the times of these visits to the forest palace, but only while they were there, the enchantment failed; yet only for a quarter of an hour. During these few minutes, while in the woods, they played together as girls, as in the happy days of yore, when their father used to come and see them. But this they could not do now within the royal palace gardens, where their father walked, and when in the dense forest itself, they could not find the way out as girls, for they were swans again, almost as soon as they started to find the path.

So they did the next best thing. They flew to the royal palace gardens and circled around his head and dropped feathers to show their

feelings. The king noticed this, and gave strict orders that no one should shoot an arrow, throw a net, or lay a trap for these birds, that he loved to welcome as visitors which gave him happiness. The wicked queen, however, knew all about these swans, but she never told her husband. She let him mourn for his children, month after month and year after year.

Now while the swan sisters were thinking of rescuing the Princess Elsje, she also was planning to save them, in order to bring them back to human form. There was a good fairy who lived on the Lek River, who hated the wicked step-mother of the swan maidens and knew how to destroy her enchantments. But this good fairy possessed her power only on the water, but she fastened on the neck of Fuzzy, the oldest of the swans, a message telling the princess how to break the charm.

The way to do it was this: The princess was to make seven little coats of swan feathers, and then she was not to speak a word to any soul, for seven months. At the end of that time, she was to put a coat on each of the swan sisters. Then, they would at once become maidens again.

Now in Gelderland there lived a handsome young knight, who wore a suit of armor of silver steel and had a plume of snow white feathers in his helmet. He was as brave as a lion and

loved to rescue poor people from robbers and to help all who were in trouble.

One day, while out hunting, he by chance reached the castle in the woods, where the king had kept his children and to which the seven swans flew every week. He drew his bow and was just about to shoot, when the birds dropped their feather suits and seven pretty maidens stood before him.

"Oh, good sir, hurt us not," they cried, "we are human, only for a quarter of an hour; but, oh, do come and follow us. We'll guide you to a princess in distress and you can save her."

The knight was delighted to hear these words, for the task the swan maidens proposed was just what he longed to attempt. They had hardly told their story, before they had to resume their swan forms. It was agreed that Fuzzy and Black Eye, the whitest and the strongest of the seven swans, should be the pilots of the knight to the well-guarded castle, where the princess was a captive. The five swans flew back to the flock, but the absence of the other two was not noticed by the king's swanherd.

So, guided by his brace of snowy white and feathered pilots, who kept in the air above him, the knight made his way through the forests and across the country, until he came to the Scheldt River. There were no boats, the current was

rapid and the river wide. How should he get across?

"Oh, how shall we help our knight down such a flood as this?" said Fuzzy to Black Eye.

While the silver knight was wondering, the good fairy who had sent the message to the princess, stepped out from among the river weeds. She had a star crown on her head and a wand of gold in her hand. She spoke thus to the knight:

"Take that dead tree trunk, which lies on the ground, all wreathed with vines, and launch it into the river, for my power extends only over the water. Because of your knightly record as a brave hero, I shall have these swans guide you to the castle. Once on shore, you must fight your own battle. Promise to rescue the princess."

The knight took oath, on the hilt of his sword, that he would. Then the fairy touched the dead tree and it became a pretty boat, shaped like a shell. She bade the two swans take their places in front. Then touching the wild vines, growing on the log, and throwing them over their long curved snow-white necks, lo! they became silver harness, to draw the boat, and silver bridles, which the rider standing in the boat, held, as the birds darted swiftly forward.

He waved his thanks and farewell in gratitude to the fairy.

"Good speed and sure success to you," cried the fairy." "You will find the princess doing my work."

It was to be a battle of enchantments, for the good fairy was trying to undo the spell, which the wicked stepmother, the king's wife, had cast over the swan maidens. Yet she could do nothing on land without the aid of a brave knight. She had been a long time waiting for such a hero. Now he had come.

To make effective the charm of restoring swan maidens to human forms, while she was making the feather coats, it was absolutely necessary for the Princess Elsje to do two hard things; one was, not to speak a word till the coats were finished, and the swans transformed; the second was not to ask the knight who he was or where he came from. Even when he was her husband, she must be silent on this matter. She had to promise this, or the good fairy would do nothing.

Into the swan boat, the young knight in his shining silver-steel armor, bravely stepped. Then with their four web feet beating tirelessly under the river waves, that curled against their breasts, the two strong birds drew the shell boat until they were near the castle in Brabant.

It was a day of tournament, and hundreds of lords and ladies were gathered together to see the knights on horseback rush at each other in

the game of friendly rivalry, as rough as war, in which sometimes men were killed. The herald sounded the trumpet to call forth a champion for the imprisoned maiden. Whosoever should vanquish the cruel count should have the lady's strong castle and her rich estate. Glorious in her beauty, Princess Elsje sat in the place of honor, crowned with flowers, as she had sat again and again before, but never a word had she spoken to a soul.

The echoes of the first trumpet blast died away. No one came.

The second summons sounded. None answered.

The third blast had not ended, before the knight in the silver steel armor stepped forward. He asked the maiden if she would accept him as her husband, if he overcame the count. She spoke not a word, but nodded her head, beaming with a joy that inspired him to valor.

The Silver Knight threw down his glove as a challenge.

Again the trumpet pealed and the two champions rushed at each other. All expected that the count, being so heavy and strong would win, but the battle was soon decided, for the Silver Knight was victorious. The count, senseless, and with a broken head, was borne off the field.

Now the knight had been told not to expect

his bride to speak to him until after the marriage, but to be content with a nod of her head and the language of her eyes. Yet those eyes spoke to him their message, and he was full of joy.

Even when he asked her whether she would marry him, without ever now, or hereafter, asking who he was, or whence he came, her answer was with a nod of the head, and a low bow, with one of her hands on her heart and the other raised to heaven. This was enough. He was satisfied.

The wedding was celebrated with great pomp and joy. For many weeks afterwards, the silent princess kept busy with her needle, making little coats of swan feathers, but of this her husband seemed to approve and gladly he praised his bride's industry.

Now on the day when the seven swans from Gelderland were accustomed to fly back to their old home, the forest castle, and before they had risen from the water to stretch their wings, the princess called them, and each by name before her. Then, in the presence of her knight, she threw the coats over them. Instantly feathers, wings, arched necks and webbed feet disappeared, and seven lovely maidens stood before them. Now, since their father had died, they all asked to stay in Brabant and serve the prin-

cess at her court. This offer she gladly accepted.

But the princess had no sooner regained the use of her voice than she seemed consumed with a curiosity she had not felt before. In the new joy of having fulfilled one promise, made to the river fairy in behalf of the swan sisters, she forgot that made to the knight, her husband. Her eagerness to know who and whence he was increased, until one day she burst out, with the questions. The knight reminded her of her vow which, with solemn gesture, she had made to him, before he risked his life for her. When she urged that his love for her could not be deep or real, if he kept a secret from her, he made answer:

"It is not I that love less, or have broken faith. It is you." Then, rushing out of the palace, he leaped upon his horse and disappeared in the forest, riding back to Gelderland, and the princess though no longer a captive, but free and rich, was sorrowful and lonely.

IV

A CONGRESS OF BELGIAN FAIRIES

THERE was great excitement in the Belgic fairyland at the wonderful things that men were doing in the world. The new inventions for flying, diving, racing, and what not, were upsetting all the old ideas as to what fairies alone could do.

It used to be that only fairies could fly in the air, like birds, or go far down beneath the waves and stay there, or travel under water, or move about near the bottom, like fishes.

In old times, it was only the elves, or gnomes, or kabouters, or it might be, dragons, that could find out and possess all the treasures that were inside the earth.

Only the fairies of long ago could rush along alike the wind, anywhere, or carry messages as fast as lightning, but now men were doing these very things, for they could cross continents and oceans.

"We'll hear of their landing in the moon, next," said one vixen of a fairy, who did not like men.

"By and bye, we fairies won't have anything to do," said another.

"If men keep on in this way," remarked a third, "the children will not believe in us any more. Then we shall be banished entirely from the nursery and the picture books, and our friends, the artists and story-tellers, will lose their jobs."

"It is just too horrible to think of," said one of the oldest of the fairies, "but what are we going to do about it? Why, think of it, only last week they crossed the Atlantic, by speeding through the air. Before this, they made a voyage over the same mighty water by going down below the surface."

"True, but I know the reason of all this," said a wise, motherly looking fairy.

"Do tell us the reason and all about it," cried out several young fairies in one breath.

"Well, I do not wonder at what they have been able to do; for long ago, they caught some of our smartest fairies, harnessed them and made beasts of burden of them, to do their work."

"They lengthen their own life to shorten ours, that's what they do," said the fairy, who was very wise, but did not always have a sweet temper.

"How, what do you mean?" asked a couple of young fairies, that looked forward to an old age of about two million years.

"I mean what I have just said. These men

are like kidnappers, who first steal children and then give them other names, or alter their appearance. They change their dress, or clip their hair, and even mar their faces. They make them look so different, that even their own mothers, if they ever saw them again would not know them."

"For instance? Give us an example," challenged one incredulous, matter-of-fact fairy, who was inclined to take the men's part.

"I will," said the old fairy. "We used to have among our number a very strong fairy, called Stoom. Now, in his freedom, he used to do as he pleased. He blew things up whenever he felt like having a little fun, and he made a great fuss when affairs did not suit him. But, by and bye, the men caught him and put him inside of their boilers and pipes. They made stopcocks and gauges, pistons and valves, and all the things that are like the bits, and bridles, and traces, in which they harness horses. Now that they have got him well hitched, they make him work all day and often all night. He has to drive ships and engines, motors and plows, cars and wagons, and inventions and machinery of all sorts. They use him for pumping, hoisting, pounding, lighting, heating, and no one knows what. A windmill or a waterfall nowadays has no chance of competition with him.

They call him Steam now. .At any rate, he

is no longer one of us, for men have caught and tamed him. They have all sorts of gauges, meters, dials, regulators, and whatever will keep the poor fellow from blowing things up; for, they can tell at once the state of his temper. He cannot do as he pleases any more.

"Well, they won't catch me, I can tell you," said one big fellow of a fairy, whose name, in Flemish, is frightful, but in English is 'Perpetual Motion.' These men have been after me, for a thousand years and I call them fools; but, just when one thinks he has me, I give him the slip, and this every time. As soon as I see that they are ready to cry 'Eureka,' I'm off."

"Don't be too sure," said another big fairy. "Look at our old pal, we used to call Vonk. In playful moods, he liked to rub the cat's back on winter mornings, and make sparks from poor pussy fly out. Or, with bits of amber, in friction, he could draw up a hair, or a scrap of paper; but when mad, would leap out of the sky in a lightning flash, or come down in a fire-bolt, that would set a house in flames."

"Who ever thought that a fairy, with such power, could be caught? But he was. First they put him in a jar. Then they drew him from the clouds, with a kite and key. Then they made him dance the tight rope on wires, and carry messages a thousand miles on land. Now, they

stretch an iron clothes-line under the sea, and keep him all the time waltzing backwards and forwards between Europe and America. Now, again, they have made a harness of batteries and wires, and, with his help, they write and talk to each other at the ends of the earth. They gabble about 'receivers' and 'volts' and a thousand things we cannot understand; but, with their submarine cables and overland wires, and wireless stations, they have beaten our English neighbor Puck; for they have 'put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes.' Besides this, they make this fairy, who was a former member of our family, do all sorts of work, even to toasting, cooking and scrubbing and washing and ironing clothes. Worse than all, where we used to have control of the air, and keep men out of it, now they have put Vonk in a machine with wings, and a motor to drive it through the sky and across the ocean.

So it went on, in the fairy world. First one, and then the other, told how human beings were doing what, long ago, only the fairies and none else could do. Things were different now, because men had kidnapped some of the fairies, and harnessed them to work, as if they were horses or dogs, or donkeys; that's the reason they are so smart.

"We shall all be caught, by and bye," grumbled

a young and very lazy fairy. "Men will catch and drag us out, just as fish are caught in nets, or pulled out by hook and line. Who can, who will escape these mortals?"

"There won't be any fairies left in Belgic land," wailed another who seemed ready to cry.

"We'll all be no better than donkeys," sobbed another. "I know we shall."

So after a long chat, it was proposed that a delegation should wait on the king of the fairies, to ask him to call a convention of all his subjects, of every sort and kind, to see what could be done in the matter. It would not do to let things go on at this rate, or there would not be one fairy left; but all would become servants, slaves, or beasts of burden for human beings. They might even make the fairies wear iron clothes, so they should have no freedom, except as their masters willed: and, even women would be their bosses.

They agreed unanimously to hold the Congress, or Convention, at Kabouterberg, or the Hill of the Kabouters, near Gelrode. All promised to lay aside their grudges, and forget all social slights and quarrels. Even the sooty elves, from the deep mines, were to be given the same welcome and to be treated with the same politeness, as the silvery fairies of the meadows, that were as fresh as flowers and sparkling as

sapphires. It was agreed that none should laugh, even if one of the Kluddes should try to talk in meeting.

The invitations were sent out to every sort of fairy known in Belgium, from Flanders to Luxemburg, and from the sandy campine of Limburg, to the flax fields of Hainault. Over land and sea, and from the bowels of the earth, from down in the coal and zinc mines, to the highest hill of the Ardennes, the invitations were sent out. Not one was forgotten.

Of course, not every individual fairy could come, but only committees or delegations of each sort.

It would be too long a story to tell of all who did come and what they said and how they behaved; but from the secretary of the meeting, the story-teller obtained the list of delegates. The principal personages were as follows:

Honors were paid first to the smallest. These were the Manneken, or little fellows. They stood not much higher than a thimble, but were very merry. The Manneken had triangular heads, and their eyes always twinkled. They were very much like children, that do not show off before company, but are often very bright and cunning, when you do not expect them to be.

Their usual occupation was to play tricks on servant girls and lads, milkmaids, ostlers,

farmers and the people that lived in the woods or among the dunes. The general tint of their clothes and skin was brown. Sometimes people called them Mannetje, or Darling Little Fellows. They and the rabbits were great friends.

Next came our old friends, the Kabouters, whom we have met before. Living down in the earth, and in the mines, and always busy at forge fires, or in coal or ore, they were not expected to come daintily dressed. They seemed, however, to have brushed off the soot, washed away the grime, and scrubbed themselves up generally. Too much light seemed to disturb them and all the time they kept shading their eyes with their hands. The majority were dressed in suits, caps, and shoes of a butternut color. Each one was about a yard high. They were cousins to the Kobolds of Germany.

The Klabbers were easily picked out of the crowd, by their scarlet caps, and because they were dressed in red, from head to foot. Most of them had green faces and green hands. They were very polite and jolly, but sometimes they appeared to be surly and snarlish, according to the moods they were in, but more especially because of the way they were treated by others. It is said that there was more of human nature in these fellows, than in any other kind of Belgian fairies. These Klabbers, or Red Caps, were somewhat taller than the Kabouters.

There were not many of the Kluddes, for these clownish fellows, who lived in the Campine, among the sand dunes, or by the sea shore, or loafed along country roads, or by the side of ditches, with no good purpose, hardly knew how to behave in the company of well bred, or even decent fairies. Even the Kabouters, not one of whom owned a dress coat, or a fashionable gown, had better manners than the Kludde rascals, whose one idea seemed to be to tumble farmers' boys into the ditches. They had no originality, or variety in their tricks, beyond the single one of changing themselves into old "plugs," or broken down horses; and they possessed no more powers of speech, than cows or cats, that say "moo" and "miouw." They could understand the talk of the other fairies, but could not themselves speak, having no tongues.

When a fairy stood up that was fluent, and entertaining, and made a good speech, these sand snipes applauded so loudly, and kept on crying "Kludde" so noisily—the only word they knew—that the president of the meeting had to call them to order. He sternly told them to be silent, or he would have them put out. Notwithstanding this, they kept on mumbling, "Kludde, Kludde" to themselves.

The Wappers were out in full force, or at least a dozen of them. At first they sat folded

up, like jackknives; and all occupying one place together, like a lot of beetles; but when the place of meeting got crowded, by others wanting their room, the Wappers stretched themselves out and up, until they looked like a crowd of daddy long-legs, with their long, wiry limbs and their heads and bodies up in the air. They were told not to talk gibberish, except among themselves; but to address the chair, and speak in meeting only in correct and polite fairy language, which even then had to be interpreted.

No jokes or tricks, such as the different kinds of fairies play on human beings, were allowed during the meeting of the Congress.

Two big, fairy policemen, called Gog and Magog, dressed in the colors of the Belgian flag, black, yellow and red, were posted near the door, to make all Kabouters, Kludde, Wappers and Mannekens, behave. If any member of the Congress got too "fresh," or obstreperous, he was immediately seized and thrown out of doors.

Both the policemen's clubs, which were longer than barbers' poles, were made of Flemish oak, wrapped round with black, yellow and red ribbons. Besides these bludgeons, each carried at his belt a coil of rope, to bind any of the big fairies that might give trouble.

No wash or bath tubs, aquariums, hogsheads, or barrels, having been provided, nor any salt

water being at hand, there were no mermaids or mermen present.

No ogres or giants came, for it could not be found that any of these big fairy folk lived in the Belgium of our time. Formerly, they were very numerous and troublesome, not only to men and women, but even to the pretty and respectable fairies.

As for old Toover Hek, and his wife, Mrs. Hek, they had never been heard of, or from, for hundreds of years. Much the same report concerning dragons was given by the registrar, or secretary, who knew all about the different kind of Belgian fairies.

At the name of a certain mortal, Balthazar Bekker, the Dutch enemy of all fairies, every one hissed, the Kabouters howled, the Wappers banged tin pans, and the Kludde yelled. One fairy proposed the health of Toover Hek, as an insult to Bekker's memory, but this was voted down as an extreme measure. Then it was suggested that the memory of Verarmen of Hasselt be praised, but those present in the Congress, being modern fairies, cared nothing about anything so far back.

As for the regular attendants at the Congress, they were many and interesting, and some were very lovely; yet, altogether, they were much, in their looks and manners, like the fairies in other

countries; so that there is little advantage to be gained in describing them, or their dresses and ornaments. Some had wings, some had not. They looked very gauzy, and most of them were as tiny as babies, but there were some larger ones also.

One of the first laws passed at the Congress was a Foreign Fairy Exclusion Law! This was done at the suggestion of a member of the Kabouters' Guild, who was afraid the Belgian fairies would be ruined by the cheap labor imported from other countries, like Ireland or Bulgaria.

It was also unanimously decided that no foreign fairies, even if they applied for membership, or wanted to attend as visitors, should be admitted to the Congress. So all the German kobolds, English brownies and nixies, Japanese oni, the French fee, Austrian gnomes, and the Scotch and Irish fays and fairies, of any and all kinds, were kept out. Though these might envy the fairies of Belgium, and their happy lot, they could not even sit as delegates, or be allowed the usual courtesies due to visitors.

This the story teller heard afterwards, when a fairy maiden let out the secret of this, one of the proceedings of the Congress, after they had gone into executive session! She just couldn't keep a secret, that's all!

And why do we not report especially more of what was said and done behind the closed doors, or tell about the social side of the Congress," does any one ask. Or why does he not tell more about the amusements, the receptions, and the fine clothes of the prettiest fairies?

Well, the American man was vexed enough, when the president of the Congress ordered all human beings and strangers of every sort to leave the house, and then locked the door, so that everything was done in secret.

This was the only time in Belgium, that the story-teller was not courteously treated. Yet the reason is plain. The President and secretary were both afraid that this tourist, who had really, many times visited Belgium, just to get better acquainted with the fairies, was a prude, who didn't believe in letting children know anything about fairies. In other words, he was suspected of wanting to abolish all books of fairy tales from the libraries.

But you know better.

V

THE OGRE IN THE FOREST OF HAZEL NUTS

AGES ago, in the gloomy forests of Limburg, there lived a roaring giant named Toover Hek. Although the forest was so dense, yet there were many paths through it, for there was no other way of getting across from Germany, into Belgic Land and France and Holland. Toover Hek, the man-eating giant, or ogre, used to wait, where the paths crossed each other, or diverged, and here he would waylay travelers, seize them and run away with them, and, with his ogre wife, devour them in his cave.

This ogre, Toover Hek, roamed the woods and ate up all the people he could catch, who traveled that way. Terrible tales were told about his vrouw, also, who was reported to be even more cruel than her big husband. It was said that she was a cousin of another ogre, Hecate, who had once lived further east, in Greece. Both had been driven out by the holy saints, and had come into Belgic land, where

one of them married the man-eating giant, Toover Hek.

Sometimes the children called this big fellow the Long Man, because he was so tall, and had such very long legs. In the local dialect, this became "Lounge Man," which means the same thing.

One day, his ogre wife found some honey in the forest and brought it to him. He smacked his lips and always after that called his wife his Troetel, or Honey Bunch.

The first inhabitant of the country was a farmer, named Heinrich. He was a doughty fellow, who was not afraid of ogres or giants. He had long lived among people who celebrated the kermiss, but with such drunken brutality and coarse indecency, that he was disgusted, and went into the forest to live. Heinrich's one weakness was pea soup, and his wife thought with him and rode the same hobby. All her neighbors said that she made the best and thickest pea soup in Limburg. Heinrich believed pea soup to be both food and luxury. He thought also that water and milk, and good soup, were all the liquids nature intended ever to pass the human throat.

Finding that the soil was fertile, and that plenty of hazel nuts would fatten his pigs, Heinrich trudged with his wife Grietje (Maggie),

far into the hazel forest. He swung his axe diligently, chopped down the trees, and built a rough house of wood. This he made his home, and named it Hasselt.

Soon his goats, pigs, and chickens so multiplied that it was hard to keep them out of the house. So Grietje persuaded her husband, Heinrich, to saw the door in halves and put them on two sets of hinges. This was called a hek, or heck-door, after the name usually given to the feed-rack in the barn or stable.

In this way, the upper part of the door, when open, let in light and air, and the house was kept looking sweet and cheerful. The lower part of the door, or the heck, when shut, kept out the goats, pigs, and chickens.

Leaning over the top of the lower half, the good vrouw could throw out grain to feed the ducks, geese, pullets, hens, and roosters, and toss many a tidbit to the piggies. Farmer Heinrich was so pleased with this idea of a double door, that kept his wife in good humor, that he would always call on it to witness some act of his. He would even swear by this demi-door, as if it were something sacred or important.

So his wife often heard him say "By heck, that's a fine hazel-nut," or "By heck, what a fat pig!" or, "By heck, that pea soup is good!" and many such like expressions.

Being so extravagantly fond of the thick pea soup, which Belgians like so much, Heinrich planted a large pea patch. Every day, he went out to see how his vines were growing. When his crop was ready to be gathered, he had, besides having enjoyed a daily dish of green peas, or a good basin of thick pea soup, enough of the legumes dried, to furnish his table with thick pea soup, all winter long. He cultivated all the varieties of peas then known. The early, medium, late, and the wrinkled, smooth or split peas were, at one time or another, on his table.

One evening, after a day's work with the axe, in the forest, Farmer Heinrich came home to tell his wife about a terrible ogre, of which he had caught a glimpse, that day, on one of the hills across the valley. This monster carried an enormous fir tree club.

Heinrich seemed very much disturbed and talked volubly to Grietje. He wound up his description of the Long Man, as he called him, by adding at the end of every sentence, "By heck, he is tall; a real Toover Hek; and, by heck his club was a big one."

Now Heinrich and his vrouw feared that they could not defend themselves from the giant, if he should seek them out. Yet they did not propose to become mincemeat for an ogre. Far from it. The man knew that Toover Hek had

a big stomach, that could hold a half a hogshead full of food; and that, after all, he was very much like a man; and that the best way to divert or fool him, was by aiming at his stomach. Their surest defense would be in having a barrel of thick pea soup, kept ready and hot, for him. Fill his stomach, and he would forget everything else; for, like a pig, he thought first and last of something to eat. Whenever they saw Toover Hek coming, they could warm up the soup quickly, and set it out on the doorstep. Then they would bolt the heck door and put a notice outside inviting the ogre to help himself to the free lunch.

They also planned to drive all the cattle, pigs, goats, and poultry into the barn and lock the animals up. Of course, they would make no noise, for the roosters and hens would think it was night, and go to roost, and the four footed creatures to sleep.

In fact, these two Limburgers went on the idea that the bigger the ogre, the less brains he would have, inside his brain pan. It was the way of Dame Nature, the woman argued; that, what she put into a creature's body, she took out of his skull, whether it were a dragon, a bull, a monkey, or a giant. She didn't add "a man," but she probably meant it. Everybody knows that a smart girl, or a nimble princess, was often

HE GULPED IT DOWN AS IF IT WERE ONLY A CUPFUL

more than a match for a giant, and could usually outwit even a man.

It turned out, just as Heinrich and Grietje expected, and had planned. One day, when the farmer was far out in the fields, pulling up the vines of an old pea-patch, and grubbing up the soil to plant new ones, Grietje, the vrouw, saw Toover Hek, at a distance, coming down the hill, straight for their cabin.

At once, she set the boiler on the fire, to heat up the pea soup. Then she ran out and shooed the chickens, drove the cows into the barn, pulled the goats inside, and locked the door.

Then she poured out the hot, thick, pea soup, into the barrel outside, hung a dipper near by, for invitation, and shut and bolted both leaves of the heck door. Peeping through the keyhole, she could see the big fellow strutting forward. He was puffing, and blowing, after his long tramp.

Toover Hek seemed to sniff the good stuff from a distance. He laid down his big club, which was made of a whole fir tree, and coming up to the pea soup barrel, poked out his tongue and tasted the thick soup. He smacked his lips in glee, making such a noise, that Heinrich, in the distant pea patch, thought it had thundered.

The ogre paid no attention to the ladle; and, it may be, he did not see it; but, with both hands,

lifting up the whole barrel of soup at once, he gulped it down, as if it were only a cupful. Then rubbing gleefully the region of his swelled out stomach he licked his chops, and soon walked off, without hurting anything, not even a toad.

Heinrich and Grietje were in high spirits over all this, and congratulated each other, on not being inside Toover Hek's stomach and on their apparent escape from further danger.

But next day Toover Hek came again. Happily, the barrel of thick pea soup was again ready for him, and once more he swallowed it all down; finishing his lunch by thrusting out his tongue, which Grietje declared was a yard long, and giving a thunderous lick to his chops. Then he strode off, to tell his ogre wife, about his good luck.

But she only scolded him, for not bringing home a nice juicy boy, a plump girl, a fat woman, or even a skinny man, tough as he might be; for such a tid-bit would taste better than her every day meal of roots and berries and wild animals. As for her part, she was real hungry. She was so tired of Limburger cheese, as a steady diet. And, besides, she liked the strong smell of it, even less than she used to. She thought he was an auroch or a bear; and at last she called him a wild boar, for not thinking of her, and bringing home to her at least a bucketful of pea soup. How could he forget her!

In the home of Heinrich, there was trouble also. How could they keep up the supply of a whole barrel of thick pea soup every day for months?

For, although one might outwit an ogre, and play the sort of a trick, which must bamboozle his stupid brain, there was no telling what he might do, when matters referred to his stomach, and when there was no more thick pea soup, to divert him from the pigs and chickens; or, what he liked best, human beings. Heinrich feared that Toover Hek would soon eat him out of house and home and then proceed to make a meal of him and his vrouw; and finish up with his fowls and live stock.

"But there's no use trying to thin out the soup, and save peas. He'll find it out, and then he'll smash everything with his big club," said Heinrich to Grietje, after she had suggested economy, with more water and fewer peas, and then, when all the peas were gone, mock turtle or cabbage soup.

Heinrich, being a man, knew that it was not safe to play tricks with a hungry giant, when his stomach was empty. "A man and an ogre are about the same, when it comes to his appetite," he argued. He went on to say: "You could not do it with a farmer, and how was it to be done with an ogre? No, Toover Hek must

be given either thick pea soup, or else he would eat them all up." And at this, Heinrich pounded on the table, with his fist. He loved his wife, but he wanted her to understand that he was boss; but she only laughed inside, and knew she could "wrap him round her little finger," when she wanted to—the dear old donkey.

Now it happened just when his bin was empty, and the last bushel of peas had been scraped out, to make thick soup, and Toover Hek had again swallowed a barrel full, that these first inhabitants of Hasselt, Heinrich and Grietje, his wife, were saved from the ogre, in an unexpected way.

How did it come to pass?

Well a brave knight, who had heard of Heinrich's troubles, and had got tired of rescuing princes from dragons, and dungeons, and cruel uncles and old witches, hied him to the Forest of Hazel Nuts. He was just spoiling for a fight with an ogre. So he made a vow to the Holy Virgin that if she would help him, he would make the paths safe for travelers. Coming into the woods, near Hasselt, early one afternoon, he waited until old Toover Hek had already had his daily gulp of thick pea soup, and felt sleepy, and much like taking an afternoon nap. The ogre was so full, that he could not walk fast, or move about easily. Then the knight knew

that he would be "carrying his head under his armpit," that is, his wits were out.

The truth was, that old Toover Hek was half afraid to go home, and tell his wife that he had forgotten her again and had drunk up all the soup, before he thought of her, and what she had told him. He wished now that he had taken home a pail full; but he soon got over this spasm of conscience, and felt dull and stupid. Indeed he looked as if he were hunting round, for a good, soft place to take a nap in.

As soon as the knight noticed this, he flew at him with his trusty sword. He avoided his big club, which came down with a crack, hurting nothing, but only knocking off some hazel nuts, and making a big dent in the ground.

Then the knight rushed up close to his enemy's long legs and chopped away at his knees. Toover Hek fell over, for his big club was of no use. Seeing this, the knight ran up, and cut off the ogre's head.

Then pulling out his hunting horn, the victor blew a blast, which called up his two squires. They quickly rigged up a rude sled, made of poles, put the head of Toover Hek on it, and drew it off to the knight's castle. There it was exposed, on a sharpened stake of wood, in front of the gate. For a whole week it was the sport of the community, and the lads and maidens

danced and sang and all the people rejoiced. After the ogre's head was taken down, it was set in the ground at the side of a brook, and used for women to stand or kneel on, while washing clothes. In time it was polished as ivory and shone in the sun.

As for Heinrich, he hitched up four yoke of oxen, and tying an iron chain around the fir tree trunk, which formed the giant's club, he dragged it to his barnyard and there had it chopped up. It made a load of firewood which lasted him all winter.

Now that the roads were safe for all travelers, Heinrich and Grietje, and the knight, in thankfulness to the Holy Virgin fixed a pretty little shrine to one of the forest trees. Soon the knight's exploit was noised abroad and pilgrims came in large companies, to pray here, and take courage. They called the place by name, which, in the local dialect, or patois, is "Virga Jesse." In this form of words, one easily recognized the name of the Holy Virgin and her Blessed Son.

In time, instead of Heinrich's farm, a great clearing in the woods was made, and Hasselt, or Hazel Bush, was well named. It was also called the Forest City and became renowned throughout Europe.

The fame of the shrine was bruited abroad and rich people came to it and made offerings also

to the village church. Even the Pope sent as a gift, for the Holy Mother, a jeweled crown.

Every seventh year, on the 15th of August, besides the religious procession, celebrating the Feast of the Assumption, which attracts the pious, the Hasselters, young or old, have a jolly and happy time. They enjoy uproariously the legend of Heinrich and his vrouw, and they tell how a woman's wit brought to naught the villainous designs of the cannibal ogre, Toover Hek; and how a brave knight slew him and relieved the country of the monstrous Long Man. So, to this day, the barrel of thick pea soup, like the widow's cruse of oil, has never failed. What became of the ogre's wife no one knows, or cares.

VI

THE FAIRY OF THE POPPIES

THERE are many wild flowers in Belgium and the cultivated ones are very numerous and showy, especially in Flanders, where, at Ghent, there is the flower market of the world. In the fields, one sees the blue flax flower by the acre, the fleur-de-lys, the corn flower, and many others, besides the marguerite daisy, which the Walloons, who made the first homes in New York, brought to our continent of America.

Not a few of these Belgian flowers can be recognized on the coats of arms of the old crusaders, and on the crests and shields of the nobles and the honorable families. They are also carved on the public buildings, or made or set, with jewels and in gold, and worn as rings, bracelets, necklaces and brooches.

Most striking and showy of all is the poppy, with its flaming red petals. In the grain fields it grows among the wheat, making brilliant contrast of crimson and yellow. This harvest of gold, dotted with red is noted by every traveler,

and reminds one of the Belgian flag. For a thousand years, the dying soldiers on the battle fields of Flanders, as they closed their eyes in death, to sleep in God, have cast their final look at the crimson poppy.

In Fairy Land, this flower has a noble reputation and our story will tell why.

Once upon a day, in a time and an age too far back for any almanacs to mark, or astronomer to reckon, there was strife among the fairies as to which was the more honorable. They all wanted to be kings or queens, princes or princesses, but the earth's surface was not big enough for so many thrones. Besides, if all were sovereigns, where would be the subjects to obey and serve?

Fairy Land became so excited over the matter, that one would think the fairies were going to war; just as foolish mortals do, when they quarrel and kill each other. Since all were so haughty, and so prone to sulk, and be surly, it was necessary that one of the fairies should give up all pride and ambition and set an example of modesty, unselfishness and sacrifice.

It seemed all the more strange and unseemly, that the fairies living on the surface of the earth, or in the moonshine and starlight, should quarrel. One might rather expect that the kabouters and elves, who live down under the earth, and work at the forges and fires, and get sooty from long

dwelling among coal and smoke, would be the ones to be proud and bad tempered.

But no, these fairies underground were the most modest, humble, and peaceable of all. In fact, they rarely ever came up on the earth, unless some special duty or summons called them. The fairies of the upper world, where men lived, looked down on the kabouters and elves as far beneath them, and not at all in their society.

This fairy, of modest disposition, who was willing to set a good example, offered to the other fairies that, if they would stop their quarrelings and think only how they might help and serve good boys and girls, and not play tricks on milkmaids and farmers, she would become a kabouter. She would lay aside all her pretty clothes, wreaths, jewels and ornaments, and go down into the dark caves and deep into the earth to live there forever. She would learn the secrets of the elves, that work in the mines and at the fires, and she would make something beautiful for her old friends and companions, or else bring forth a new flower. Around this, they could dance and hold their revels, and so forget their jealousies and strife. For fairies, like men, get tired of old ways and scenes, which they have had a long time. They like to have new things that are fresh and bright.

When they all heard the most beautiful of

the fairies talk in this way, they at once put aside their quarrels, and every one resolved to behave properly—at least till she came back.

But she never returned, and this was the reason.

First, she put off all her beautiful garments and donned clothes that were of a dark and sad color. Then she went far down underground and into the caverns of the world beneath, and deeper even than the coal mines of the Boringue, and the zinc mines of Moresnet.

Coming suddenly upon a company of kabouters, these rude fellows at once seized her, crying out:

"Now we've got you. We've long wanted to catch one of the upper world fairies, for despising us sooty folk and making us work so hard for them. We have served your kind long enough. Now you shall do our will."

So they tied around her waist one of their blacksmith's leather aprons and stuck her pretty feet in old wooden shoes. Next, putting a pair of tongs into her hands, they bade her beat an iron bar, drawn red hot from the forge fire. Then, standing in front of the anvil, she had to beat the bar out flat. The kabouter, who was set to watch her and keep her busy, was one of the ugliest of their number. He had a cruel leer in his eye, and gloated over her, while she

toiled wearily. He scolded and even beat her, when she almost fainted under the hard tasks, to which she was so suddenly put and to which she was wholly unused.

Yet this earth fairy was very wise, while she was among the kabouters, and gradually she learned many of their secrets. One of these was the way these elves procured their iron; which was from the particles in the blood of the millions of men slain, on the soil of Belgium, ever since human beings came on the earth, and which makes blood so red. Here, the rival and hostile races had met on the thousand battle fields, known and unknown to human history. These were more numerous than spots on a leopard or stripes on a zebra. Torrents of blood had been poured out, and again and again the soil had been reddened, and the turf made to look dark with the stains. Sometimes, even rills and rivers ran red.

But the kindly rain from Heaven had made the human life-stream soak into the soil, and nature soon came with her sweet mantle of flowers to heal, and to reconcile, and make men forget. So to the new generation of boys and girls, each war, as it came and went, made only one more story to tell around the fireside on winter nights; for in summer with play and work, and dance and song they thought only of what

was just before them. Not for the young to look back over the past, except to hear about the fairies!

So, one generation after another, of human beings, forgot what had happened in former years and ages. Moreover, all the red rills, that had flowed from the veins of the wounded and dying, fed the earth and made it more fertile. Even their flesh and bones soon mingled with the soil and their elements reappeared in grain and trees, plants and flowers. Only the iron atoms of the blood of the soldiers remained in the ground. From the time when men fought with stone axes and arrows, to the days we can remember, when they used poison gas and dropped bombs from the sky, men fed the earth with their bodies and blood and left widows and orphans at home.

By the aid of their secret powers, the kabouters had collected these iron particles, that were once floating in human veins and arteries, and they made them into their tools, such as hammers, tongs, anvils, chains, locks, keys, and what not. They also possessed the secrets of the colors, that enter into the clays, flowers, stones, dyes for garments and whatever has tint or hue. The kabouters knew that, underneath all colors, of any sort or kind, there must be a metal, which, with other elements, becomes the

basis of all dyes, paints, and tints in or on anything solid or liquid.

Almost all the wonders of chemistry were known to these elves, and often, in talking to each other, they declared that everything, which the human artist laid on canvas, or with which he tinted his wall, or house, was caused by some chemical change in metals.

One of the most wonderful of their secrets was the transformation of iron into rouge, which the girls and women put on their cheeks, in order to imitate the lovely rose tints, with which nature paints the faces of her children. Yet whereas, in health and vigor, the color comes to the human face from within, foolish folks put it on from without. Indeed, in some countries, the forefinger and finger nail of the maidens which, at the tips, is usually red, is named "the rouge finger," because most used for this purpose by the girls who wear out the carpet in front of their looking glasses.

Now it was an old kabouter, that was kind to the fairy from the upper earth, who told her the secret of the splendid hue of the red petals of the poppy.

"It is the same color, and the same metal, in the crimson flowers, as that laid on the faces of the pretty girls, in their boudoirs; or that comes naturally to the cheeks of the healthy

young men and maidens. Now I can tell you how you can make a new flower, as red as blood, that will spring up all over the fields of Flanders."

The fairy clapped her hands with delight.

"O tell me how. I should gladly die, if I might end the quarrels of the fairies and leave behind me a crimson flower. I want something, on Belgian soil, that shall make its people love their land all the more, and, by its color, remind them of the blood of the slain of many generations of men. Let the red flower spring up everywhere, without thought or labor. So will they value the more their beloved country, when they plant and cultivate the white lilies of peace."

"So shall it be, if you say it," said the old kabouter, "but life for life. You must give up your own life, and the flower will be your transformation. Die, and the red flowers shall live. And we kabouters also love Belgium. We shall let the iron atoms, gathered during ages, from the dead, enter with your life into the new blooms which shall spring up. There is already enough iron in the soil to tint the petals for a thousand years to come."

At this word of promise, the fairy cried out "Good! it shall be a memorial of the thousand generations of the brave men, who have died on Belgic soil, and on Flanders fields, and it will

also heal the quarrels of my people." Then, sinking down, she breathed out her life, and was no more.

That night, there was a funeral among the fairies. In the softest spot, in the centre of a fairy ring, among the grass and yellow and blue flowers, they laid her to rest in a sad burial. Nevertheless the burden of their song was of promise and joy, and in praise of beauty; for the earth's surface was now to wear a new floral jewel.

And behold, in the next spring time, the earth seemed dotted with jets of flame, as if a thousand fairies were each one kindling a tiny memorial fire, in remembrance of human lives given for others.

From that day of the grave in the fairy's ring, there was peace among the fairies. And in our time, the poppies of Belgium keep a perpetual Decoration Day, because of the generations of the slain on the soil of Belgium the Beautiful.

VII

THE STORY OF THE FLEUR-DE-LYS

LONG before cows in Belgium wore ear-rings, to denote their pedigree and good breeding, or sugar was made out of beets, there were wonderful things done by the fairies.

These were so many, that some industrious farmers and their wives got together to see if they could equal or exceed the fairies in doing good things for their country. They wished to outrival the fairies, excel them if possible, and make Belgium great among the nations.

These honest folk used to meet together in the evenings and tell fairy tales, so that they and their little ones, as they grew up in their wooden shoes, might know just what fairies were good for. This was done, because they supposed that everything unusual, or wonderful in nature, was the work of the fairies, and they felt that human beings ought, in other ways, to beat them in a contest of wits.

Some of the inhabitants arranged a meeting to talk with the fairies, who should tell what

they had accomplished in the three kingdoms of nature—mineral, vegetable and animal. The meeting was at night, of course, for fairies are never seen in the day time.

Having already shown what they had done for the animals of Belgium, the fairy-folk proposed to talk about what they had done, with the plants and minerals, to enrich Belgium and make the country great.

The first story the fairies told was, "How the lowly flower got into royal society," and thus the fairy began:

"'All the world,' as the French say, knows that the fleur-de-lys, the lily of France has, for centuries, been their national emblem. In the blazonry of kings and queens, it was sewn on royal robes and embroidered in gold and silver on flags and banners. It was stamped on the coins, and made the symbol of everything glorious in France. All the world has heard of the Bourbon lilies, for that family of kings and rulers made it especially their own emblem.

"But originally the fleur-de-lys was our Belgian flower, that grew in the meadows along our river Lys (or Leye).

"To tell the full story of the Frankish tribes, who made France a kingdom, and especially of the Salic Franks, we must go back, in time, to the early ages. We must travel up into Dutch

Gelderland, where the waters of the North Sea or German Ocean, wash the shores, and the waves fling their spray over the land.

"The Salic Franks, that is, the Free men of the Salt, which was born of Heaven's fire and ocean's water, once dwelt by the sea. To get the crystals out of the brine, they cut down the trees of the forest, in which the fairies lived. Then they piled up the logs, and made a great blaze. The tongues of fire leaped higher and higher, for they were trying to get back to Heaven, their old home. Then the forefathers of our nation went down to the sea and drew up the salt water. This they flung on the red hot logs, praying all the time for the salt to come.

"The fire was put out by this means, and when they looked on the charred wood, they found thousands of shining white spots, which were crystals of pure salt. These, they scraped up, and, after refining, by means of water and evaporation, in the sun's rays, they used the salt on their food and, as offerings to the gods.

"The forefathers therefore considered salt as the child born of fire and water, of Heaven and Ocean. So they took the name Salis, which means 'of the salt.' Through the changes in the language, the name 'Salians' was used to denote a host. They were very proud of being Franks, or freemen, and were known as the Salic Franks.

They became very powerful and even defied the Romans.

When they found that their enemies were weakening, and food was scarce in the north, they resolved to march south and west, and possess the rich land stretching between the Maas and the Seine rivers, which is now Belgium and France.

"Assembling the entire host, with their chariots, wives and little ones, in the great moot-place, or sand-walled enclosure, a few miles from Nijkerk, they marched in one mighty army into Belgic Land. Reaching the river Lys, when the iris and the lily were in full bloom, each one of the tribesmen plucked a stem and blossom of the plant and stuck it in his cap.

"Then they rushed on, conquering and to conquer, until all the wide area of the country now called 'France,' and named after the Franks, was theirs. The flower of the Lys, or fleur-de-lys, under which they had won victory, was chosen as their emblem. Thus the once lovely Belgic flower was elevated into royal society.

"Even better, the Franks gave up their cruel pagan rites, and, believing in the Heavenly Father of all mankind, and in his beloved Son, and in the Holy Spirit, the fleur-de-lys was made the emblem of their faith. The missionaries often used it to teach the blessed doctrine of the

trinity—three forms of life, proceeding from one common stem and nature.

"Now all Belgians know, that our city, Tournai, was for centuries the centre and capital of this great Frankish empire. When Childeric, their emperor, died, he was buried at Tournai, and his tomb was here, in the church of St. Brice. On the robes, which cover his honored dust, when his coffin was opened, centuries ago, were found three hundred golden bees, models of those that gathered honey from the flowers that grew along the Lys and other rivers of Belgic Land.

"All the world knows, also, how Napoleon, who made himself emperor of the French, had these golden bees embroidered on his coronation robes. Just as the Bourbons had claimed the lily as the particular blazon of their family, so Napoleon made the golden bee his symbol.

"In truth, it has been the fashion, with these royal mortals, to take lowly flowers and humble insects for their heraldry. Did not a common shrub, named by Europeans, the 'broom,' the planta genista, become the proud emblem of the Plantagenets, kings of England?"

At this point, the fairy story-teller stopped and made apology for being so long. She hoped she had not been tedious. She then gave her final word:

"Good men and women, Belgians all, would

you make your country one of the best, to be always loved and honored of your children's children, while ever attracting admiring and delighted visitors, to come to see the wonders of Belgic land? Would you?

"Then, please remember that the universe is full of fairies, though men nowadays call them 'forces,' and they are ever ready to help you. Do your best to allure, coax, win, tame and harness them, for your use and benefit.

"Do not count any flower too lowly, or soil too poor; for in each is a secret worth learning and, even more, worth possessing. Believe what a wise man has said, concerning even the plants that you call 'weeds'—these which you uproot, plow under, throw out and burn. Yet each one may possess some secret charm, some virtue, or a message or science to you. For what says the seer?

"He defines a weed as a 'plant, the virtues of which have not yet been discovered.'"

Now the story-teller, stepping out of fairy regions into Yankee land, would remind all who read the fairy's message, and especially his American young friends, that the wise man, whom the fairy quoted, was our own Emerson. We forget not, either, that the white silken flags, under which Lafayette and the "sparkling Bourbonnaires" marched, were embroidered with the

fleur-de-lys. These French soldiers of 1780, who kept step with the Continentals, on the way to Yorktown, were under the Bourbon lilies. Let us remember also, that the old moot-place of the Salic Franks is still to be seen near Nijkerk, in Gelderland, the pretty town, whence came "Corlaer," and Van Rensselaer, and the settlers of New Netherland, out of which grew the four noble states of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.

VIII

THE IRISH PRINCESS AND HER SHIP OF SOD

THE story-teller has travelled many times in the land of the Belgians. There he saw hotels named "The Seven Churches," in one of which he slept. He asked how it was, that a hotel should be named after churches, and why there should be seven of them?

This was the answer, and here is the story.

After the holy Saint Patrick had left Ireland free from snakes, it was a pleasanter country to dwell in, and people were kinder to each other than ever before. There were still, however, many rough fellows still in the island, and fights between the clans were common.

Yet such was the beauty of the colleens, or young maidens, that oftentimes these warlike chiefs fell in love with the daughters of men who were their enemies. Then there was trouble in the families, for the Irish are very proud of their blood and ancestors. In those days, every tribe was jealous of the other. It was the rule, that all maidens must marry only the men, of whom

their fathers approved. This was for fear they might get a spalpeen in the family.

Now there was a lovely daughter of a famous chief, who lived in a castle, with plenty of green vines growing on the walls. Her name was Eileen, and her favorite plant was the shamrock. For Saint Patrick had taught that its three parts, growing on one stem, made a true symbol of the triune Deity, whom all good people ought to worship. The life was one, the leaves were three. Eileen was a Christian maid, and the shamrock was like the voice of a friend, that spoke to her every day, saying "be faithful and pure."

Hearing of the fame and beauty of this loveliest maid in Erin, a handsome and noble chief, in a neighboring county, sought her hand in marriage. How proud and happy he would feel, if she, as his wife, should grace his castle! Besides, an alliance, with her powerful father, would greatly add to the glory of his own name and prowess.

So, according to the ancient custom of the country, he told the wish of his heart to her father, before asking the maiden herself.

Her parents were pleased to have the chief thus propose the match, for they had already thought to marry their daughter to him, for he was also a brave warrior.

But there was one drawback. The ardent

lover and would-be husband was a pagan, still under the spell of bad fairies, and the wrong kind of people, who told him not to believe in the true God. The men in whom he trusted, and whose advice he followed, would not go to church, or keep the Sabbath day. The good rulers of the church had passed a law, which they named "the truce of God"; that, at certain seasons of the year, during three days, there should be no fighting. But this pagan chief cared nothing for this law, and was very cruel in many ways. Nearly all the good people in Ireland called him a spalpeen.

Nevertheless, this chief was so rich and powerful, that Eileen's parents insisted upon her marrying him. They hoped, too, that she, with her gentle ways, would change the brutish fellow's disposition.

But Eileen thought that this would be like trying to tame a tiger, or a lion; for bad passions raged in him as in the wild beasts. Tigers and lions look very grand, but they are not pleasant to live with.

Seeing that her father was determined to marry her off to this cruel man, and had even named the day of the marriage, and that her mother was sewing upon her wedding dress. Eileen resolved to leave home and escape to Belgic Land, across the sea.

But how could she get away, and out of the country? She knew no ship captains or sailors. Then, as everybody knows, the coast of Ireland was studded with high, round towers, from which the sentinels could see all who came and went.

One night, weary of thinking over her troubles, she fell asleep and dreamed. And this was her dream.

A great company of fairies flew over the sea, from Belgic Land, and greeted her with welcoming hands, smiles and curtsies. They all seemed to be standing on a sod, cut from the ground, like a large garden. She recognized some of the flowers,—the marguerite daisy, with its round golden heart and white petals, like rays, or strips, around the centre; the lily, that grew along the river Lys, called the fleur-de-lys; the blue wax flower, and some Oriental plants, such as the tulip and orange blossom. Besides these, there were the hazel tree buds, the blossoms of the apple tree, and several other pretty things that grow in the lowlands of Flanders, or high up among the highlands of the Ardennes. Some had come from the East, and some from the South, but together they gave Eileen the idea that Belgic Land would make for her a charming home, because she loved flowers so dearly. They were to her, as the very thoughts of God.

In her dream also, she seemed to be out of

doors, and on a high hill, overlooking the beautiful lakes of Killarney, when the fairy band, on the cloud-like garden, settled on the ground near her. The queen, or leader of the fairies, with a radiant star on her forehead, and a silvery wand in her right hand, stepped off the green sward and, dropping a curtsey, said:

"We have heard of your troubles, pretty maid, and have come to invite you to our country. You can travel on this magic sod, which will float on the water; and, in the fair weather of this coming day, you can reach our soil. Now, you must come with us."

"Oh, thank you," said Eileen, "but I cannot leave my shamrocks, and my chickens."

"No, nor need you. Take them along with you. We'll promise that you can keep them with you; or, we'll change them into whatever form of life you may desire."

Eileen quickly ran to the hen house, in her father's croft, and gathered up her seven tiny chicks in her apron. This she held with one hand, while with the other, she grasped two shamrock plants, for she could not leave either of her favorites behind. She had to hurry, because the fairies can work only at night, and they all disappear at sunrise.

Returning from her father's croft and barn, she stepped on the magic sod, and in a moment,

was floating off and down towards the sea. By the time they had got well out upon the salt water, the eastern sky began to get, first gray, and then faintly red. Thereupon, the chief fairy spoke to her and said:

"We must disappear now, but we shall meet you in our Belgic land, and shall always help you. Don't for one moment, be afraid. The sod will float you, and tomorrow night, we shall be there, on the strand, to greet you. Command us, for we love you, and will do your will. We are sure you will be happy in our country, where you are needed. Good-bye." The chief fairy waved her wand, and at once the whole company disappeared.

Eileen looked around, over the floating garden, but every one of the fairies had vanished. There was nothing to be seen, but the flowers, the grass, and the little chicks, that were running about, as if they thought it great fun. Indeed, they were having the time of their lives; for, being so small, they thought the whole world was bounded by that sod.

Meanwhile, soft breezes were blowing, and the sun shone out, keeping her warm. She needed this, for she had come away with only the thin clothes, which she wore in the house.

Towards evening, she began to feel lonely, and cried for her mother. For the first time in her

life, she was afraid. The little chicks had found some low branches of a bush; and, roosting there, comfortably had closed their eyes. They stuck their little heads under their tiny wings, and were soon fast asleep. Eileen envied them, for she was in terror, as the awful sense of loneliness, and of being so far away from home, and father and mother, came upon her. She kept wondering what they might be thinking about her. Would the fairies keep their promise? Or, would they forget? Might not the wind arise, and in the storm, would she not be drowned?

One by one, the bright planets came out, and the stars followed. Yet the larger lights seemed only to blink, and say, "what a foolish girl, to leave her home and go afar!"

Then Eileen looked at her shamrock and thought of what good Saint Patrick had taught her ancestors. After that, a sense of peace folded her like a garment. Surely, God was near.

Looking up, in the dark night, toward the south and the west, where the last faint glow of light seemed to linger, she felt happier. Next, she saw lights moving on the distant shore. She rubbed her eyes. The sparkles and gleams seemed to be gaining in brightness. Yes, it was really so. The fairies were all there and waltzing about, until, as she came nearer, they looked

like a shower of tiny stars, or a swarm of fireflies.

Pretty soon, the big sod slipped up against the shore, with a little bump. In a moment more, it seemed to be a part of the country itself, and the little chicks hopped ashore. Then the fairies led Eileen into a very pretty building, which looked something like a palace, but more like a church. There, a feast was spread, and she sat down to eat heartily, and drink plentifully, while the fairies waited upon her.

Then they led her into a nicely furnished sleeping chamber. Upon a silken couch, with fine dresses near at hand, she was soon fast asleep. The fairies brought up the shamrock plants and placed them on a table of Flemish oak, very dark and fine. The little chicks were kept in a coop, with plenty of food and water, and sticks to perch on.

In the morning, she cast her eyes, upon the home-plant, that told her of her Heavenly Father's love. Then, after praying for her father and mother, she looked out upon a lovely landscape, rich in flowers; for she was now in Flanders, where the poppies and daisies grow.

Yet when she looked inquiringly for church spires, or round towers, or grand castles, they were not there. The people, going to work, or ploughing in the soft fields, seemed poor folks. Indeed, no men or women that she saw, had any

gold on their persons. This, indeed, was the Belgic Land of long, long ago.

Eileen soon found that the inhabitants needed to be told of the good news of God, which the blessed Saint Patrick had taught the Irish. While she had enough to eat and drink, and plenty of pretty clothes to wear, she thought of the many people, who were not only poor, but who did not know of the Father in heaven. Why should she dwell in a rich castle, and dress in costly garments, when others were not only without these, but were also very ignorant.

So Eileen travelled through the country, and told the Belgian people the same good news from Heaven, which Saint Patrick had brought to her Irish ancestors. Wherever she went, she took one of her shamrocks with her, and taught the same lesson.

One of her plants, which she put into the ground, became the parent of others, in many varieties, so that the fields of Flanders were green, where once was only sterile sand. Cows and sheep found food, where, of old, was nothing but waste land. In time, the city of Ghent became a floral capital, with as wonderful a market for bulbs and blossoms, as Haarlem was for tulips and hyacinths, in Holland. These were rich in all the colors, with which the Father in Heaven had tinted the blooms of the field, and the opening buds of the fruit trees.

The most astonishing change took place, wherever Eileen stayed long enough to gather a congregation of people. She patiently taught them the lesson, of which the shamrock was the symbol; and, in each of seven places, she left one of her chickens. Somehow, from the love that was left behind, by this good woman, and around each living creature, there grew up a church, and every one of these churches was given a name after the Irish princess, Saint Eileen, though often pronounced differently in Flemish. To this day, the people in seven cities of Belgium, cherish the memory of the sweet lady, who spent her life in blessing their fathers.

Yet the dream story and the fairy tale are scarce more wonderful than the historic reality of ancient Christian Ireland's gifts to Belgium. The story-teller adds, for the benefit of older folk, that the dream story and the fairy tale are scarcely more wonderful than the historic reality of ancient Erin's missionary gifts to Belgic Land.

IX

WINE-CRUST, THE BLUE-BEARD OF FLANDERS

EVER so many centuries ago, when all Belgium was part of the great forests, that covered nearly all of northern Europe, there was a chief of a powerful tribe, who was named Halwyn; or, as we shall call him, Wine-Crust, or Crusty Wine. He was famous for loving three things, wine, women and song. Being a magician, he had great power over young maidens, many of whom thought they would like to marry him.

This Halwyn got his name from a curious custom which he had. He was very fond of anything sweet, whether it were honey or the sugary crust, left, by old or sweet wine, on the sides of barrels and the wooden vessels, in which the wine had stood for a long time. He chipped or broke it off, and ate it as if it were candy. So people called him Sir Halwyn, or Wine-Crust.

Now the curious thing about Sir Halwyn and his castle, was, that it was supposed that he had been married more than once. Yet no one ever

saw his wife with him, or met any one of the wives he had had; for no other chief or nobleman was ever admitted into his castle. It was because he had such a fine voice, and could sing so well, that he was invited into other castles. Yet he never made any return of the courtesies which he had received. It was rumored about, in Flanders, that he had married in distant places and brought his brides, one after another, to his own castle; yet, no one in Flanders or the Ardennes ever saw or heard of them afterwards.

So, in time, in spite of his good singing, Halwyn's reputation was so bad, that no king or noble would allow his daughter, when out hunting, to go anywhere near the stronghold of Sir Halwyn. Moreover, it was suspected that he was a magician, and used his magic craft very cruelly.

In those forest days, girls were trained to riding, wrestling, and the use of the sword, spear and shield. The women often went to war with their husbands and brothers, and fought the enemy, both in the tribal fights and those against the Romans.

Now there was a beautiful maiden, named Quirina, one of several daughters of the king of Arlon, and she was his favorite and best beloved child. Her father, mother, brother, and her only sister, who was never jealous of her, vied with

each other in making her presents of ornaments, and clothes, and pretty things, that would please her; and all this, she repaid with sweet and tender affection.

Quirina was unusually well skilled in horsemanship, and the use of the sword and spear. She had brown eyes and hair of the same color, but much darker, and was tall and slender but very strong.

Though bold in hunting, she was very fond also of pretty clothes, and when she dressed herself in her best, there was no woman, young or old, in the castle hall, even on great occasions, that looked finer than she. In fact, it was well known, through all Belgic Land, that no maiden possessed a richer wardrobe than Quirina. Many times Sir Halwyn had tried to win her; and, by openly making love to her, and by offering her father a title and home for his daughter, he hoped to succeed. Or, he strove to lure her away, by telling of his great castle and domain; but had never succeeded. Yet, as much as ever, he seemed determined to persevere and win her.

Quirina, on the other hand, openly declined; for she was secretly determined not to be his wife. By this time, also, her father, mother, brother and sister, had heard the evil reports about Sir Halwyn, and that none of his wives had ever been heard from, after once entering his castle. They

steadfastly warned their dear sister to beware of the fellow, as a dangerous person, and not even, in the ardor of her chase after deer, to get too near his domain.

One day, every one was surprised, when Quirina asked her father to give his consent for her to go to visit Sir Halwyn's castle. In the words of the old Flemish ballad, he answered.

> "O neen! myn dochter—neen gy niet;
> Die derwaert gaen en keeren niet."

In English, this is:

> "O no, my daughter; no, not so,
> They ne'er return who thereward go."

Then Quirina asked her mother, but she replied to her daughter, exactly as her father had done.

Then she sought the advice of her older sister, whether she should go to Sir Halwyn's castle.

The answer made was the same.

Finally of her brother, she made the same request. His reply was different from that of the others; for he trusted that his sister's wit would extricate her from any difficulty.

> "Go where thou wilt, all's one to me,
> But see thou keep'st thine honor free,
> Thy crown bear firm and uprightly."

After receiving these answers, though secretly encouraged, more by what her brother had pur-

posely refrained from saying, than from what he had said, this is what the maiden Quirina did:

She went up into that part of her father's castle called the Virgin's Bower, which, in ancient days, was a room upstairs and off from the main hall, or "house." It was reached, by a stairway built on the outside. There, in her room, she dressed herself in her finest robes.

First she put on a chemise, which was soft as silk. Over this, was a skirt and bodice, richly trimmed with lace, made of threads of gold. Her crimson petticoat, showing behind that part of her dress which was open in front, was studded with golden stars. Around her neck, she clasped strings of pearls. Finally, on her head, she placed a coronet, rich in precious stones. In her resplendent attire, she stood forth as fair in face, and form, and as gorgeously arrayed, as any queen on earth.

Then hieing to her father's stable, she chose from the stalls a horse that was the finest and fleetest of them all. Leaping upon its back, she sat astride the steed, riding like a man. Clapping her ankles against its sides, she rode off in the direction of Halwyn's castle, singing aloud, until the woods re-echoed her gladness. She had scarcely reached the middle of the forest, when Sir Halwyn, having heard her song, came riding along.

He cantered up to her, swung off his big hat, which had a long feather in it and bowing low, twice cried out "gegroet," which is the Flemish for "Greeting" and "Welcome." He called her "Fair maid, with the clear brown eyes."

Quirina smilingly returned his salutation and seemed pleased to ride with him. Then their horses cantered on, while they chatted by the way. Sir Halwyn never seemed more charming in his manners, or more brilliant in his conversation. She let him choose where they should ride and the hours passed very pleasantly.

Suddenly they came to an opening in the forest. Quirina looked over to the left, and beheld a frightful picture, which revealed the true character of Sir Halwyn; for there, from the cross-beam of a long gallows frame, hung the bodies of no fewer than sixteen maidens, whom this brutish murderer had cruelly put to death.

The monster and magician Halwyn, for such he was, now appeared in his true character. With a scowl, he cried out:

"Most beautiful of all women, though you are, you are now to die; but, since you are so lovely, I shall allow you to choose the manner of your death. Yet decide quickly, for you have but a moment to live."

Quirina, perfectly cool, instead of piteously entreating the magician Halwyn to spare her

life, thanked him for allowing her a choice between the gallows and beheading, and made reply:

"Well, if I must decide, let me die under your bright sword. But first, remove your velvet cloak and fine silk doublet; for a young girl's blood spurts out high in the air, and I should be sorry to have your fine clothes ruined by blood stains."

Making haste to throw aside his velvet cloak, and then to unlace his silk coat, rich in gold decoration, Halwyn, while busy at this task, suddenly found his head off.

The maiden had deftly drawn his sword from its sheath, and with one skilful sweep of the blade, cut his neck through.

The magician's head tumbled at her feet, but his tongue uttered these words, beseeching her:

"Take my hunting horn, and go into yonder grain field, and blow it; so that my servants and friends may know my fate."

"Not I," shouted the angry maiden. "I'll follow no murderer's counsel."

"Well, then, please go under the gallows frame yonder. There you will find a pot of salve. Bring it, and anoint my red neck with it."

"Never," cried the maiden. "I shall follow no murderer's counsel."

She propped up the headless corpse, as if Hal-

wyn were still looking at the gallows, and enjoying the sight of the sixteen maidens' bodies hung there.

She took up the head, and repairing to the fountain, she washed it in the spring water, which was clear and cold, until all the blood was off it. Then, rolling it up under his cloak to conceal it, and again sitting astride her horse, she galloped away, singing a song of victory.

When half through the wood, she met Halwyn's father.

"Beautiful maiden," said he, "have you seen my son?"

"I have left him well placed. He sits in the green field, playing with sixteen of his girls."

Further on, Halwyn's brother came riding along.

"Fair one, have you chanced to meet my brother, today?"

"Oh, yes, sir. Your brother is a renowned lord. He told me the secrets of his art today, with sixteen maidens, well guarded, around him."

A few furlongs further, she met Halwyn's sister, who asked her the news, and whether she had seen anything of her brother.

"Oh, yes!" answered Quirina, "you must ride further on. Then you will see him with sixteen lovely girls around him. He is a hero, isn't he?"

Again, as she rode homeward, she met Halwyn's mother, who inquired about her son.

"Madam," answered Quirina, "your son is dead. I have his head in my lap and my apron, covering it, is stained red with his blood;" and she rushed past her.

The mother, in grief and rage, called after Quirina, angrily:

"Oh, if you had told me that first, you could never have ridden past me."

"Ha! you ugly woman, you are lucky that I let you off with your life, and did not lay you out stiff like your son."

Then she rode away furiously. Reaching her father's castle, she blew a blast on the horn, which no man could exceed. Her father, brother, mother, sister, and all the men of the garrison rushed together and warm was their greeting.

Not one of them knew, or suspected, what had happened; for everything else was forgotten in the joy of seeing and welcoming her back alive. In fact, she kept the surprise, which she had in store for them, to the hour of the banquet.

Then at night, when all were arrayed in their finest clothes, and each one stood in his proper place, at the long table, and the gleemen had sung a ballad or two, and it was time to sit down to partake of the viands:

Quirina walked into the hall, carrying a huge

dish, on top of which, was a big napkin. All the company wondered what was under the cover. She set it down on the table, and lifted the napkin.

And lo! It was the head of the magician Halwyn.

Then the blasts of the hornmen, and the deafening shouts from the warriors, told only too well how they enjoyed the gruesome sight of the wicked magician's head.

X

LYDERIC, THE ORPHAN

IN the middle ages, the holy saint Willebrod spent his life in doing good among the Dutch and Belgian tribes. His relics rest in the church at Echternach, in Luxemburg.

When trouble of any sort came upon the country people, they looked to him for help and advice.

In a certain year, a plague came upon their cattle. The poor dumb creatures acted as if they had brain fever. They were giddy, and staggered about, going round and round, but seemed to be unable to go forward. So the fields could not be ploughed and the cows would not give milk. The babies cried, the land was threatened with barrenness, and the people feared starvation.

In their distress, they came before the tomb of the good bishop, and made a vow that, if the pestilence ceased, they would, every year, make a pilgrimage to the church in which he was buried.

Now the curious thing, about this pilgrimage, was the manner in which it was carried out. To some extent, the people imitated, in their danc-

ing and gestures, the odd behavior of the cattle, during their brain disorder. It became the fashion to leap and stagger, as the smitten beasts had done. In times, however, the celebration took the form of a processional, with bands of music.

So, every year, the long line of thousands of people, old and young, rich and poor, strong and weak, sick and well, led by the musicians, and all singing as they went, started from the river bridge. They walked hand in hand, and four abreast, and this was the method of their march; they would take three steps forward, and two steps backward. In this way, they would advance, very gradually, to the hill where the church stands. Having reached this, they laid their gifts upon the altar and then danced down the church aisle, to the porch, door and outside.

One can see, that, to make an advance of one step, the dancers and singers had to take five distinct steps. In this way, although the route from the river to the church was only one mile, in length, five hours were required to go the whole route. Many joined in the procession who were so old and weak, that they were likely to fall down. Nevertheless many weak folk, tried it, for they hoped to get rid of their pains and aches.

Especially hard was the ascent of the sixty

stone steps, on the hillside. To mount to the top, five hundred human steps were necessary.

Thus it happened that not a few fell down along the march. Fainting and weary, they were left by the wayside. On the church steps, strong men stood by, on either side, to watch for any, who, from weakness, should lose their balance and fall down. Those who were likely to do so, or could not keep up, had to be dragged away quickly, lest they should be crushed by the waves of the oncoming dancers. In the frenzy of fervor and excitement, those who were waltzing, with giddy brains, might be so absorbed in their own motions, as not to notice what they were doing.

Now there was a young widow, who, out of grief, and hoping for comfort, had come to join in the procession. Being the bride of a few months, she was hoping for a son, and had vowed to St. Willebrod that, if she became the mother of a boy, she would dance from the river's edge to the saint's tomb. She prayed fervently that her hopes might be fulfilled.

She joined in the procession, and followed faithfully the rules laid down, but, when scarcely half way to the church, she felt her strength giving out. Fearing lest, if she continued, she might be trampled to death, she left the procession. Then, after a brief rest, she walked out

from the open road, some distance into the forest.

There, in her loneliness, her child was born, and it was a boy. Though she rejoiced to have her own, and its father's hopes fulfilled, yet she felt that she had so overtaxed her strength, in the dancing procession, that she was likely to die.

So, wrapping her babe in one of her own garments, she laid it down on a little bed of fallen leaves. Then scraping clean a part of the ground, she wrote, with a stick, upon the dirt, the name "Lyderic." Then, her last measure of strength having ebbed away, she died.

A pious hermit, whose dwelling was a hut in the forest, while strolling about, heard the infant's wail. Coming near the place, whence the sound proceeded, he found the dead mother and the living child. Something else also met his sight and a very wonderful picture it was. There on the bed of leaves, which the mother had scraped up, lay the baby boy. Beside him, lying along the floor of the forest was a doe, and this female deer was suckling the infant. This dumb mother of fawns seemed as careful and as anxious, as if the baby had been her own offspring; and indeed, it was not far away in the deep woods, that the doe kept her little family.

The baby boy, not knowing anything about different kinds of mothers, or qualities of food,

was as active, as if living in the nursery of a house, and fondled on a human mother's lap.

The fawn's large, deep, lustrous eyes, were appealing to the old hermit's heart. The wild creature did not tremble, or show any fear, for every beast of the forest seemed to know, and love the old man; as if realizing that he was their friend, and not an enemy, as the hunters were. They could see that he had no weapons, and even a bird could understand that.

The body of the human mother was given Christian burial, though the only conscious mourner was the old man, who hastily made a rustic cross, and set it over the grave; on which, also, he planted some wild flowers.

Now the hermit was not accustomed to take care of babies, but he made a rude cradle; and, every day, the doe mother came, as regularly as to her own little deer, to furnish nourishment to the child. So the infant grew to double his first weight and gave every promise of health and vigor. In a few months, he was crawling on the floor, in the hermit's hut; and, according to his mother's writing on the ground, Lyderic was his name.

To the old man, the days and months seemed to fly very fast, as babyhood was left behind, and a robust boy was growing up.

The old hermit recalled his own boyhood's skill

at such things, and made toys for the little fellow, who played happily with them. Anything bright, or shining, was especially attractive to the child.

One day, while the hermit was out among the willow trees, which skirted the stream, to make a whistle, for the baby boy, the fairies came into the hut and visited him at his cradle. They were traveling fairies, for they had come all the way from Wales. One of them, was named Morgana, or, as she was well known, Morgana la Fay. She fell in love with the little fellow, and promised that when he grew up, he was to be her love, while all the fairies agreed to bestow on him the gifts of mind and body, through which he might become a great man and conquer all his enemies.

It would make our story too long, to tell how Lyderic, even while a baby boy, was looked upon as the leader of men, in one of those civil wars, which so long troubled Belgic Land. Once, during battle, his cradle was hung upon a tree branch, and he was called the baby leader, and centuries afterwards, a statue and a fountain were reared at Brussels in his honor.

Lyderic, when fully grown, was known as a man of fine character and tremendous strength. He was unselfish, and always ready to help the weak. In time, he became a crusader, and, go-

ing off to fight the Saracens, in Syria, won renown for his bravery. There was no Turk, that could stand against his lance, or sword, or battle axe; and their weapons had no power over him. So he came back, unhurt, to Belgium.

After his reurn home, he built a castle, but soon tiring of a quiet life, he crossed the sea and traveled in Britain. There he met Gratina, the beautiful daughter of Angart, or Edgar, the King of England. By this alliance, he became very powerful. Then the great monarch, Charlemagne, recognized him as an ally and vassal, and gave him, in fief, the Belgic provinces of Hainault and Brabant.

The flag of Lyderic, as Duke of Brabant, was a tricolor, of black, yellow, and red, in vertical bands. To his mind black stood for the dark forest and the difficulties which are always overcome by the brave. Yellow represented property and gold, the precious metal, which added to human prosperity, and must be guarded; while red was for blood and life, which all brave men willingly gave for their country, when they are called to go to war. Centuries afterward, when all the provinces of Belgic Land were united in one kingdom, and the people in one nation, and the country (in the English form of the name) was known as Belgium, this tricolor became the national flag.

Lyderic spent most of his time in Wales, on the lovely aisle of Avalon. Here he was in fairy land, for Morgana, jealous of his marriage to Gratina, had cast a spell upon him. So, while others died and were buried, he lived on. The time passed without his notice, or his asking about age, until two hundred years had slipped away.

Morgana, the fairy, had given Lyderic a fire brand, which, as long as it kept burning, his life would be prolonged; but when it went out, he would die. Lyderic lived with the knights of King Arthur, enjoying, with them, jousts and tournaments, and many wonderful sports and adventures. Yet at last, he tired of the company even of the knights of the Round Table, and longed to cross the sea, and live again in Belgic Land.

One day, when this desire became too strong to resist, he had an iron box made, and carefully keeping the fire alight, he left Avalon, and crossed the sea to his old home. Meeting the handsome widow of King Philip, this royal lady wished to marry him. Lyderic, while yielding to her wishes, and his mind occupied with his love affairs, forgot to attend to the fire, to keep it kindled, and so let the brand go out.

Then Morgana, the fairy, who had been jealous of the Princess Gratina and was now

even more jealous of Lyderic's new wife, carried him off to Avalon, and shut him up in the cave, where sit King Arthur and his knights, awaiting the day when they shall come forth, in time of greatest need. There Lyderic sleeps yet.

The fame of Lyderic lives in the myths of the fairy world, in many lands, from Denmark to Wales, and from Belgium to Italy. All the boys and girls of Europe have heard his story, in one form or another. As for Morgana, she is known all over the world, and in all time, as the conjurer. There are those who can discern her dwelling place on the clouds and vapors, especially off the coast of Calabria in Italy. At certain seasons of tide and weather, one may see, in the sky, and far above earth, or sea, a colossal picture of the trees and hills, of the houses and palaces of the wonderful city of Reggio, magnified many times, as it is reflected on the sky. One thus gets an idea of how the land looks where fairies live.

XI

THE LONG WAPPERS, AND THEIR TRICKS

IN his rambles in Belgium, the story-teller found no parts of any city in the land equal in interest to those of old Antwerp. If he sauntered down toward evening, into the narrow streets and through the stone gateway, blackened with age, under which the great Charles V. rode, the fairies and funny folks seemed almost as near to him as the figures in real history. Here, many a prince or princess made their "joyous entry," into the wonderful city of Brabo, the boy hero, who slew the cruel giant Antigonus and cut off his cruel hands.

Here, the story-teller noticed a great many images of the Virgin Mary; whereas, in the newer parts of the city, there were few or none. They were usually set in the house corners, where two streets came together. Inquiring into the reason of this, he discovered a new kind of Belgian fairy, the Wapper, famous for his long legs and funny tricks. Here were fairies on stilts.

This mischievous fellow was very active in old times. He could be as long, or as short, as it pleased him. He could stretch his body out, and up to the house roofs, or shrink it down, as if it were made of India rubber, according to his whim. For example, he would sit on a bridge, and lengthen his legs out until they were as thin as those of a mosquito. Again, he could drink until his body bulged out like a plum pudding, or a bag of oats. He was very fond of milk, and would suck or swallow it, until he looked the way a mosquito does, that has bored a hole through a fat boy's skin, and filled himself so red and round, that you would think he might burst.

In days, centuries ago, the Long Wappers, as they were sometimes called, used to go around the streets of old Antwerp at dusk. Or, in the dark night, they would wait in lonely places and run off with the people. No one ever heard of any good boys or girls being snatched away, but drunken louts, coming home very late, that is toward midnight, from the dram shops, were often caught. The Wappers would seize them by the hair, swing them round, and then toss them into the gutters, till they were black with mud; or, they would throw them into the Scheldt River. Occasionally a toper would be found in a hog pen, sleeping with the sow and her pig-

gies. When the man woke up, about noon, he could not tell how he ever got there; but the Wappers knew, and they kept their secret.

How numerous the Wappers were, the story-teller never could find out. It was in their power, to be as wee as a baby, or as big as a giant. That was the peculiar thing about them. It was very funny, that this kind of fairies never weighed more or less. No matter how much they drank of milk, they were never any heavier, or lighter, for it. And to their length, or shortness, they were more like earthworms that, in crawling, can be long, or short, as they please.

Sometimes the Wappers rose up out of the water, or sat on the bridges with their feet cooling in the stream. In that position, from their toes, up to their bodies, their legs looked more like black threads, or wires; or, as if a strand from a spider's web had broken loose. If the water was not very deep, then they seemed to be on stilts.

One particular stream of water was named the Wapper's Rui, or Wapper's Creek, and the bridge crossing it was called the Wapper's Bruck. While the Wapper was wading in the water, he seemed to be as long as a lightning rod, but as soon as the creature reached the bank, to step out, on land, his legs shortened to the size of a boy's.

When on the bridge, he pulled up his wiry limbs, and looked like any human youngster. When he made use, to the utmost, of this elastic power of lengthening or shortening himself, the mischievous rascal elongated himself until his legs were like stilts, so that he could look down into the church windows. Then he would howl at the priests and the people, or make faces at them, and follow them home from the mass.

With his spidery legs, drawn out as thin as threads, he stretched himself upward toward the house roofs. Then he poked his long, curly nose, even into the top windows, usually just as the maids were going to bed, and nearly scared them out of their wits. They cried out "Holy Mother," and crossed themselves, whereat he lowered himself and fled.

His favorite trick, however, was to make himself look like a foundling baby, or a very small child, crying and pretending to be hungry. He was always well wrapped up, and attracted attention. One day, a young nursing mother, that had left her baby at home for a few minutes, to run out to buy something, saw, as she thought, the poor little one.

In the goodness of her motherly heart, the woman took it up and gave it refreshment, meanwhile patting its back most affectionately. She crooned to herself, "arme pop," "kinde," "lieve-

BUT DRUNKEN LOUTS, COMING HOME VERY LATE, WERE OFTEN CAUGHT

ling," "trotekind" (poor baby, darling, lovey-dovey, trotty-kin), and other affectionate words, such as Flemish mothers use in the nursery. Meanwhile, the baby kept on with its breakfast.

But after five or ten minutes, when the supposed infant had drained both breasts, the woman thought of her own little one, in the cradle at home, and wondered whether her darling would have to go hungry.

Then she noticed that the strange baby's stomach was swollen, almost as round as a big ball, for it had, from the first moment shown symptoms of ravenous hunger, and its body got bigger and bigger.

Horrified at this, she wrapped up the foundling and was about to lay it down, where she found it, and leave it there; when, out of the bundle, jumped a Wapper. He shook off the swaddling clothes, left them in the street, and ran off howling, laughing and gibbering.

When boys were coming home from school, they often stopped and played the game of "stuif hoed," or "shove the hat." Each boy took turns in slinging his hat down in the ring; or, another seized it from his head and pushed it, or kicked it about, with their wooden shoes, until the owner recovered it. Some boys grew very expert at this game, and all were eager to get first kick with their klomps.

The Wapper usually found out, beforehand, which one of the urchins had not been at school that day, then he changed himself into a boy, to look like the one who was absent. At the right moment, he threw down his hat. When one of the lads rushed up and gave it a tremendous kick, his klomp, or wooden shoe, flew in pieces, and he howled with pain, for his toes were nearly broken. The Wapper had, just for the fun of it, put an iron pot under the hat. When everybody was laughing at the poor boy, who was limping home, the Wapper could not be seen anywhere.

In fact, this fiendish fairy was always playing April fool jokes on people. He would lay a hat on the pavement, but, hidden under it, was a brick or stone, for some fellow to stub his toe upon.

The Wapper often went into a tavern, and, joining in a game of cards, would make the players cheat each other. Then a fight followed and some one would get hurt. If they had been drinking heavily, one might get killed.

Or, the Wapper would go about the town selling mussels to housekeepers. These shell fish are called mussels, because each one looks like a little mouse. But when a woman would let one of these pass her lips, out would crawl, not a mouse, but a spider; or, she would find her

mouth full of sand. When the housewives discovered who and what this peddler of shell fish was, they would go after him with tongs, or rolling pins, or even chairs and stools, but at the first alarm, he lengthened his legs and rushed off so fast, that no one could ever catch him. Then again, he was called the Long Wapper.

But by and bye, it was noticed that whenever the Wapper came to an image or shrine of the Virgin Mary, he was afraid to pass it, and turned back. It was a woman, with sharp eyes, who first made this discovery, and all her neighbors honored her highly for her smartness. Some thought she ought to be made a saint.

So at once it became the fashion to make or buy images of the Holy Mother, and set them out in front of houses, over the doors or windows. It came to pass that the shops, where religious goods were sold, soon did a roaring business. Not only that, but whenever a new house was built, the architect set a niche in the angle, and there they built a shrine. Corner houses were especially well provided in this way, for by thus guarding two streets at once, the Long Wapper was double fooled, and so prevented from playing his tricks, whether high or low. By such means, they got rid of the Wappers in Antwerp.

Nobody ever sees this Belgian species of daddy

longlegs nowadays, and it is supposed that specimens are seen only among the sandhills of the Campine. It is said that the Wappers are very mad about it, because they can do so little mischief, as compared with the good old times, when they broke the toes of boys, scared housemaids, deceived kind mothers, and made themselves a nuisance generally. No one nowadays ever hears even the word "wapper," unless it be applied to a swing bridge, or the flap of a sail, or to some foolish person, who is more or less silly. They may use the Wapper's picture as a comic valentine.

In fact, so low has the reputation of the Wappers fallen, that many Flemish folk think that their tribe is represented today by the Kludde.

The Kludde have no tongues, and they usually change themselves into old, worn out horses that are seen browsing in the sandy fields along the canals, in the heath country or in the Campine. A rustic fellow, thinking to get a ride, mounts the supposed horse. Then, at a gallop, the beast rushes forward and tumbles the man into the ditch, while the nag bounds away crying, or grunting out "Kludde, Kludde." But some people say the Kludde are more numerous, where dram shops abound.

When the swing bridge, over the street of water, in the towns has been lifted into the air,

to let a boat with masts, go through the canal, school boys rush over it, to get the bounce, when it thumps down level; and they may call the bump a "Wapper."

But who wants to be a Wapper?

XII

THE PILGRIM PIGEONS

EVERY child, old enough to eat with a spoon, knows that monkeys and pigeons cannot get along together. The birds are gentle and of sweet disposition, but the beasts behave like ruffians. All the pigeons of any family, that want to have a quiet time, move away into other countries. It would be like imps and angels living together.

The naughty monkeys are too fond of fresh eggs, to care where they get them, and they have no regard for the feelings of other creatures. They climb up into the trees and pull down the pigeons' nests, and even eat up the young squabs.

So it happened that, long, long ago, the pigeon fathers and mothers flew far, far away, from Monkey Land. Then the young fuzzy fellows, with such long fingers and toes, had to do without the little blue eggs for their breakfast, of which they had been so fond.

The first country, in which the flock of emigrant pigeons rested their weary wings, was

where the Saracens lived. Here were orange and lemon trees, and figs and nut trees, besides plenty of barley and other grain. So that the little birds, that had been made thin and very tired by flying so far, soon got fat again. The young lady pigeons preened their feathers, and made themselves very lovely to look at. This pleased the young male birds greatly. From ducking their heads so vigorously while eating, the pigeons were sometimes called doves; that is divers.

Now that traveling was over, the season of courting began. Soon it was whispered among the pigeon mothers that this, or that son, and daughter, had mated, and both were busy at nest building.

The Saracen boys and girls were very kind to these new comers. They made playmates of them, and taught the mother bird to carry messages, from one city to another. For once away from her nest and young ones, she wanted to get back in a hurry. By and bye, when well trained, a homing pigeon would fly long distances without regard to family cares, or little ones in the nest. So the pigeons were very happy in the Saracen world.

In this warm region, they not only multiplied, but found new and strange places to live in, some in minarets, and some in the mountains;

others in the woods, some in the crowded cities, and some by the seashore. Wonderful to relate, instead of being all alike, in size and color, they changed in form, weight and habits, the carrier birds, especially, being strong of wing. Yet they were all called doves, or pigeons, though so varied in appearance.

But after a long time, just when everything in the bird world was going on finely, all the pigeons were made dreadfully unhappy by very sad news. Some of the old feathered daddies at once declared the whole flock would have to become emigrants and pilgrims, again, and seek another country.

What was the matter? All the young fathers and mothers, with their little families, could not, at first, see the reason why. They had built nests, and their birdlings were just putting on their first coat of feathers, and their proud parents wanted to show them off in their varied colors and bright neck-sheen. In fact, every mother bird was sure that her fledglings were very accomplished young ones, and would certainly surprise the world when they made their début. It was too bad that, just when their babies were growing up to be big birds, and coming out into pigeon society, they must leave the olive groves and pleasant vineyards, to go to a strange country where nobody knew them. Al-

ready they had learned to coo a ditty, that sounded very much like "Home, sweet home."

Well, this was the trouble. There was war going on in the world of human beings, and men were killing each other, because, on one side, one set of fellows did not believe the stories the other lot told. The Crusaders fought with a red cross on their coats, but the Saracens had a silver crescent on their banners. One of the most famous of the Saracens was Saladin, but the victor and king of Jerusalem was Godfrey de Bouillon, a Belgian. The Crusaders and the Saracens had dressed themselves in iron clothes, and their armies had gone to battle. They were not contented to hack and chop each other to pieces, but these fierce fighters had to carry their quarrels even into the air and there they made the birds fight and kill each other.

The Crusaders brought into the Saracen country hundreds of falcons. These terrible birds of prey had sharp beaks, like knives, and horrible talons like steel hooks, that choked and killed at once. The men from the West set these savage creatures to catch the carrier pigeons, which the Saracens had used for letter carriers. In this way, they could find out their enemy's war secrets.

Hundreds of innocent doves were thus cruelly torn to pieces. In many a nest, there was grief.

Mournful cooings were heard all over the land, because the little pigeons were lonely, without their mothers that did not come back. The poor daddies had hard work to get food enough for the birdies to eat. Everybody knows that father-birds do not know much about taking care of motherless little things, when they have not enough feathers to fly with. Some of the tiny squabs, that missed the warm bosoms of their mothers, actually died in the nest.

So a great meeting of the daddies was held to take counsel as to what should be done. A few of the older mothers were present, who sat on the top branches of the trees and listened. The whole subject was talked over. To stay there meant to be all torn to pieces by the falcons of the Crusaders. So it was decided to leave Saracen land, and migrate to another country; and, in fact, nearly all the young and stronger birds went.

"But this time," said one of the older of the father-birds, who seemed to be chief of the company, "we shall leave the warm countries and go into the cold north. There, it may be that men do not fight, and there are no falcons."

"At any rate," cooed the very oldest of the mother-birds, "there will be no monkeys there."

At this, all the other mother pigeons winked and blinked at each other, as if to say, "What a

long memory she has!" And, indeed, this bald-pated old pigeon was the oldest in the entire party. She was not a carrier, but she remembered what her great, great grand-mother had told her, about the mischievous monkeys, that ate up the pigeons' eggs, to the grief of the parents, that could only fly at the rascals, and peck the ears of the ugly brutes.

"Nor any falcons, either," snapped out another rather old Mrs. Pigeon, that had six times laid eggs, and borne six broods of squabs, each time educating them properly, and teaching them to fly. Now, in her old age, just when she hoped for a little quiet, without family cares or trouble, she had to take sole charge of two sets of young pigeons, whose mothers had been killed by falcons. The poor daddies, that were now widowers, did not know much about the business of housekeeping, or of washing, dressing, and preening the feathers of his young brood, or about keeping the nest in order; yet they could spank the lazy squabs when necessary, and box the heads of the naughty ones, and do it well.

As for the old lady pigeon, who had to attend to the matter of properly raising two motherless families, she grumbled a good deal about it, declaring to her neighbors that she had already, for six successive spring seasons, raised six lots of youngsters. For her part, she was tired of

squabs, that had no clothes on, and did not know how to coo, or behave properly. She would do the best she could, to look after other folks' babies, yet she did hope that, as soon as their wings grew, the flight of the whole community would at once take place, and not be put off a day; for she had heard that more falcons were coming.

It must be at night, when the terrible hunters of the air were asleep, or could not see, that the pigeons were to migrate in a body. The country decided on was Norway.

So, after a long flight, with many stops on the way, to give rest to the wings of the youngsters, that were not strong, the entire flock—enough of them almost to darken the air—arrived in the land of mountains, lakes, and waterfalls, of stormy winds, and of ice and snow, that fell heavy and often; sometimes even in summer. They received a right royal welcome from the people living in the country where reindeer were numerous and nearly all the houses were built of wood.

Tied to the chimneys of the barns and wooden houses, the stranger birds noticed sheaves of grain and hay. From these, the pigeons found food when they were hungry, and carried away warm stuff for the building and lining of their nests. Soon they were very happy in their new

quarters, with no wars, or monkeys, or falcons, to disturb their housekeeping.

There was much billing and cooing, and a great many nests were built at once. These were soon filled, first, with pretty blue eggs, and then by chirping birdies, and everybody in the pigeon world was happy as happy could be.

Now when the fairies in Norway heard of the arrival of this new kind of bird, in their realm, and of the good behaviour of the young, and the fine character of the old ones, they wanted to see them and could hardly wait till they paid a formal visit.

There was a fairy maid, that traveled much over the whole country, and heard all the news. She listened at keyholes, and over chimneys, and in the market places, where she could overhear the chat and the gossip. She always had her ears open, and when told of the pigeons and their wonderful ways, and fine manners, she hied at once to see how they looked.

When this news carrier found that the birds were short legged, but very strong, had big wings, and could fly long distances, she went right off and told Freya, the Fairy Queen, whose husband, Odin, was a mighty king and knew everything. Freya at once sent for a pair of doves, to pay a visit at her court.

Because of this, the fairy maid gained great

glory, and was very proud. Everybody had hitherto supposed that only the two ravens, which fly out all through the world during the day, and come back at night, could find out the news. This pair of wise birds, perched every evening on the shoulder of the fairy King, after he had had his supper, and was in good humor. They whispered in his ear, telling him about all manner of things, and especially the latest news. In this way, he got to know first everything that went on.

Yet in this case, the ravens had failed to learn about the pigeons, while the fairy maid had found them. That is the reason why she was very proud. She boasted over the ravens so much, that she made herself very disagreeable, and hardly any one loved her. But as for the king, he lost his temper and called the ravens slow pokes, blockheads, and other names, until Freya, his queen and wife, soothed his temper. Then the ravens promised to be more alert, and not let a single fairy ever get ahead of them in carrying news.

Now the fairy queen, that invited the pigeons to her snow palace was named Freya, and her day to be at home was Friday. Every time we speak of that day in the week, we pronounce her name. When we say Wednesday, or Woden's day, we utter the name of her husband, the fairy king.

Freya, the beautiful, was always dressed in white, her robes being trimmed with ermine. Her cap, cloak, skirts, leggings and buskins were snowy-hued. Her skis were of white birch, and her skates were of silver.

It was her business to attend to the love affairs of young people. She tied their marriage knots, made homes, and welcomed little babies to their cradles, and helped in giving them names. On Valentine's day, she was always very busy, for she taught the young men and women how to write love letters. Then she attended to getting valentines carried and delivered to the lads and lassies, who were waiting and expecting them.

In great glee, at having such charming visitors in her realm, Freya sent an invitation to the king of the doves, asking that a pair of his great family should visit her court, on a certain day. She promised them a good dinner—not of whale blubber, or seal meat, or fish, or mushrooms, or moss, such as reindeers eat, but of wheat, barley, grain, and seeds, such as pigeons enjoy.

The King of the doves, on receiving the invitation from Freya, at once called a council of father and mother birds. All were delighted to be thus honored. After much talk, it was decided that a pair of white doves should be sent, the hue of their plumage being best suited to the situation, and most pleasing to the fairies in

Norway, where ice and snow lie longest on the land. So the happy, pair, chosen to represent the kingdom of the doves, set out on their journey.

In the next story we shall tell what happened to them.

XIII

THE FAIRY QUEEN AND THE CARRIER DOVES

THERE was trouble in the ice-palace of Freya, the Fairy Queen. In spite of her thousand fairy servant-maids, and all her untold riches, she was unhappy.

Why was this?

It was just when the pigeons came into this fairy land of the North, that Queen Freya's troubles came. She was trying to please every one. She wanted each big girl, and every boy, who thought he was a man, to get the right valentine, which he or she expected. But this could not be, because Queen Freya was not able to get them sent out fast enough.

The chief reason was because the reindeer, that had drawn the sleigh of Santa Claas all through the country, and over the chimneys, refused to be harnessed. They announced that they were too tired to serve, because Santa Claas had driven them so hard, and overworked them, and now they wanted a long holiday. Some of the stags

excused themselves politely, but the real reason was that they were lazy. Others declared they had caught colds, from waiting too long during the freezing night, on the house roofs. Several of them had got nearly choked from the smoke, that came up from the fireplaces. Not a few of the big horned fellows, announced that they had had enough to do, in attending to carrying around the toys and goodies to fill the children's stockings. Besides, they didn't believe in sending valentines, anyhow! In fact, they were a cross lot of lazy beasts.

So the Fairy Queen, Freya, was at her wit's end, to know what to do. She had a warehouse full of valentines, all ready and properly directed, to waiting youth and maids. Yet how should she get them delivered? Who should be her postmen?

It was about the first of February, when she was in such trouble, and Valentine Day would soon be coming around. However, when she heard that a pair of doves were on their way to visit her, she put aside her cares, to meet them, and make their visit a very merry and happy one.

When the two snow-white birds arrived at Freya's court, they were welcomed by a company of fairies, that entertained them pleasantly. They sang songs and, in their dances, imitated the northern lights. These are just like what

children, who go to school, call the "aurora borealis," and the doves were delighted.

Queen Freya asked her white-winged friends, the doves, if they would stay at her court, and live with her always. And would they be willing to be harnessed to her shining chariot, and draw it, for her, while she rode around the country, to deliver the valentines to fair maidens and fine young men?

For Freya had heard that these doves were carrier pigeons, also, and could fly with messages, hundreds of miles. Besides this, she was jealous of Santa Claas, and wanted to have a much handsomer vehicle to ride on, than even a sleigh, drawn by reindeers. They could gallop, but birds could fly and go faster. Moreover the doves were more beautiful to look at, and more gentle in behavior, as they ought to be, for a lady driver. They never got into bad temper like the reindeer, that were sometimes very surly.

Now the doves had been warned, by their wise, old, great-great grandmother, that the Fairy Queen Freya would ask them these very questions; and she advised them to say "yes," and stay in Fairyland. Moreover, the two white birds were themselves lovers, and they thought they should like the task of helping young people who were in love.

So, putting their bills together, to show that

they were one in mind, the two doves began to coo, which meant the answer "yes" to Queen Freya's question.

Then, on their pink toes, they strutted up and down, and around, as if in compliment to Her Majesty, and to show their happiness.

The Fairy Queen, Freya, had a dainty little chariot of silver, made by the elves, who lived down in the earth, where they always have plenty of precious ore, with their furnace fires, and tongs and hammers, ready at hand.

Always after that, with her two doves harnessed to the silver car, well loaded with valentines, and with pink straps for harness, and blue ribbons for bridles, the Fairy Queen, Freya, was drawn wherever she wanted to go. Many a valentine was dropped under the door-sill, for happy maidens, and for brave boys, that were worthy of a good girl, and for every fine fellow that deserved a sweet bride. But when she came to the houses where bad boys lived, or who had rude manners, or who were known to be too rough, or there were girls who had bad tempers, or told fibs, there Freya had her fun. She handed them ugly pictures, that made them howl with rage.

Hundreds of years passed by, for in fairy land, there are no clocks. Still the pair of pigeons did their work faithfully, for they loved it. By

her spell, Queen Freya kept these carrier pigeons ever young and strong, for she had a secret power, by which they became like herself, and never grew old.

But by and bye, it came to pass that Queen Freya took off the spell, and let the two white doves become carrier pigeons, and unharnessed again. Then, like other birds, they cooed and billed, and laid eggs, and reared their young, and yet were good carriers, stronger and better than ever.

It came to pass, in the kindness of her heart, that Freya sent these birds as a gift into Belgium.

Why and how did it happen?

Well, it was long ago, and nothing alive now, unless he were an old whale, or an elephant, or a Florida alligator, or an oak tree, that has no voice, but can only, with its leaves, breathe softly, when the wind blows, could tell the whole story. Yet as the fairies whispered it to the story-teller, this is the way it came about.

The Fairy Queen heard that the vikings, or Norsemen, who lived on the sea coast of Norway, had been very cruel to the Belgians. These big fellows rowed out, in their dragon boats, over the stormy waves of the Atlantic Ocean, to the South. Then, landing on the Belgian shores, where now stand the cities of Ostend, Zeebrugge, Ghent, Bruges, and even in the inland

places, where Brussels and Mons are, they behaved very roughly; even killing the people and burning their houses. They made slaves of the men, and carried away the beautiful maidens, to the cold north country. Many little babies and children starved to death, because they had no fathers or mothers any more.

A Belgian girl, named Yvonne, told her story to one of the ravens, that, during the day, fly all over the world, and come back at night, to sit on the shoulders of Woden. But the king was then off on a hunting party, and the raven could not wait till he came back, and so told his wife, the Fairy Queen Freya. She at once called the Belgian maid to court, to have her tell all about what the cruel Norsemen had done in her beautiful country.

When the captive maid from the south land came and saw the silver chariot, drawn by snow white doves, she made up her mind what to ask for, in behalf of her country and people. If the Queen showed herself sorry for what the vikings had done in her native land, Yvonne would solicit a favor from her.

Queen Freya was very patient, in listening to the story of the Norsemen's cruelty. After Yvonne had told it all, Freya said:

"I have long heard what your people have suffered, at the hands of the cruel Norsemen, and

now, I intend to give you something that will repay, in part, your country's losses. I am sure that fairies would not behave so badly; but then, we fairy folk can never tell what human beings, and especially rough men, will do. Speak now the word, and you shall have, not only your own freedom, but anything I possess."

Yvonne clapped her hands in delight, and cried out:

"The carrier doves and the silver chariot, with a precious cargo of valentines."

At this, all the fairies, that stood around looked at each other, in surprise. Some were as mad as fire.

"The greedy girl," said one. "She asks too much."

"Her eyes are bigger than her waist! I expect she will cook and eat them," said another, snappishly.

"Oh, if she had only asked for something else! What shall we do, to get our valentines around to the right people?" asked a slim fairy, that looked old.

One of the fairies seemed much frightened, as she said, "Surely the men will be very mad, and hurl ice chunks at us."

And another almost scowled, as she answered, "And the girls will make faces and throw snowballs at us."

These two spoke almost together, for both were very timid.

Other fairies, big and little, were getting ready to speak out their anger; for fairies never like the idea of human creatures ever being smarter than they are, or, in a way outwitting them.

The Fairy Queen waved her hand, and cried out: "Silence all! I shall get another pair of doves for my chariot; but these two, and the Belgian maid, shall be sent at once to her home. Obey me all!"

Now let us look at Belgic Land. For the first time, in all the history of the country, the sentinel upon the castles walls, at Ostend, saw coming a ship, on whose flag was the figure, not of a black raven, but of a white dove. And lo! when the ship drew near, they saw no shields of fighters hung on the side, nor the glint of any swords, or spears, and no armor, or anything that told of war. Instead of these, a lovely girl stood on the prow of the ship. She held up a cage, in which were two snow white doves.

Just then, the wife of the watcher on the castle walls cried out:

"Why! it is either our Yvonne, or an angel. No! It is our daughter!"

At this moment, the maiden Yvonne drew aside the little door of the cage, and out flew the two birds. Joyfully rising up in the air, and whirring about for a few minutes, the pair

finally settled on the ridge pole of Yvonne's house. Her father had rebuilt his home, while she was away in the north land.

The maid and the doves were now happy indeed. Yvonne soon had a lover, who married her, and they had a new house and a garden, with a dove cote in the middle.

When the cradle rocked, with a sweet little baby daughter in it, that looked most like its father, the dove cote had also a nest, with four blue eggs. And this happened, nearly every spring time.

In a few years the pigeons multiplied, and found homes all over the country, from the birch and pine trees of the Ardennes hills, to the willow and lime trees along the canals of the lowlands, in Flanders.

Within a few years, the Belgian folks discovered the merits and powers of these sociable birds, that were so ready to be good servants of men. Many boys and girls had their fathers put up dove cotes in the gardens, and there the families of the carrier pigeons were reared.

It became the custom for Belgian folks, in different cities, to send messages of love and friendship to each other, or to tie tiny valentines to the pigeon's legs. So in peace and war, the carrier pigeon became one of the most famous features in Belgian life, and the best beloved of all living things in the land.

XIV

THE FAR FAMED ORIENTAL

THERE was a certain fairy, that was fond of changing herself into animal forms. She did this, to learn their language and ways, and ideas.

Her name was Flax-Flower, because she liked to wear gauzy, blue garments. Having been transformed into a heifer, or young cow, she heard very wonderful accounts of a new animal, that was soon coming to live among men and the other tame creatures. Her curiosity was so great, that she could hardly wait to regain her former state, so as to tell the other fairies about the coming stranger. In fact, this fairy resolved to learn the secret spell, by which she could transform herself into the new creature's shape, whenever he appeared.

We shall now tell you what information Flax-Flower picked up, from hearing what the animals and men and women said in their conversation. She found that the various birds and beasts of the barnyard were, by turns, jealous, or incredulous, or inquisitive, about this wonderful four-

legged being, that was to join their society, in Belgium. Then, by listening to the talk of the men and women, she learned its history.

This wonderful traveler, on four legs, was to come all the way from Egypt. Its ancestors had lived for ages in the deserts of Africa; and, for thousands of years in the Nile valley, it was known as a useful friend of man.

In fact, as far as fancy pictured it, the unknown animal was so magnificent, that words quite failed to describe it properly.

In the first place, it belonged to one of the most ancient families in the whole world. As for the high society in which it moved, there was no question about it, nor was anything equal to it. Moreover, it was so gentle and surefooted, that kings and queens, and lords and ladies always selected it to ride on, especially on great occasions. When the creature was milk white, as was often the case, it was held in such honor, and it cost so much money to buy one, that its price was above rubies. In fact, it took a mighty pile of gold coins to purchase the finest of the breed.

This superb creature was so desired by those who did not own one of his tribe, that, being reckoned in value along with houses, and wives, and other valuable property, it was a sin to long too much for the possession of one. To tell the

truth, it was particularly forbidden, in one of the ten commandments, which, after specifying this treasure on four legs said, "Thou shalt not covet."

Of course, the Belgians and other European folks, of that distant period, who never saw one of these splendid milk-white specimens, might wonder at this, and even laugh at the idea, for all they had heard was that the creature had a voice and his hearing was very sharp. It was only when they saw one drawing the chariot of the viceroy, or preceding the carriage of the Khedive of Egypt, that they could properly understand the commandment, "Thou shalt not covet." Seeing a body guard of splendid cavalry, with their flags and banners, and gay, bright uniforms and glittering drawn swords, they wondered no longer that this remarkable animal was particularly named, though the horse was not. No sooner did their eyes fall on the magnificent creature, than they wanted him, or one like him right off. Travellers in Egypt said he stood for what was Oriental splendor. Neither camels, nor elephants, nor antelopes, nor giraffes, nor zebras, nor tiger cubs led by silver chains, could compare with him.

Yet even that was not all. When the mothers and fathers of Belgic Land heard how tame, and gentle, and patient, this lovely creature was, and how he would not kick or bite, and that he would

let little boys and girls ride on his back, and trot along gaily, as if he liked young folks, they were too happy for anything. They longed for the day of his arrival.

Yet even this did not end the catalogue of the historic creature's virtues. To the farmers, he seemed either a miracle or a paragon. It cost so little to keep him! Instead of "eating his head off," as cows and horses were said to do, or requiring fresh meat, which the dogs howled and cats meoued for, this wonderful quadruped, with such renowned ancestors, mentioned and pictured in the ancient monuments, would live at a quarter of the expense necessary for oxen. It was reported that this high bred and well behaved creature would make a dinner of straw, chaff, weeds, and other cheap stuff, and then bob its head for thanks to the giver. Nor did he ever eat much at a time.

In fact, this Oriental wonder set a very good example to greedy boys and girls, that always wanted more. Whereupon, some fathers and mothers actually proposed getting up a festival in his honor, for the proper education of their children and as a good example.

It would take too long to tell the full story of the great expectations, excited in both the fairy world and in human society. If we should even attempt to do so, we are sure the children would

fall asleep, before we were more than half through.

As for the younger fairies, they declared they were just dying to welcome this four-legged racer in chariots and crazy to meet him. In fact, they talked just like young ladies, over their ice cream sodas, in a confectionery shop; or college girls, that say "lovely" every few minutes.

Finally the fairy Flax-Flower resolved to secure, from the Queen of the Fairies, sole permission to hold the spell, which should transform herself into this wonderful being from the Orient. Even to think of Egypt was to set Flax-Flower wild with delight. She conjured up visions of all grand and glorious things, such as pyramids, sphinxes, palm trees, obelisks, Moses and the bulrushes, the Nile River, Cleopatra, scarabs, camels, moonlight and every delightful thing, about which the fairies had heard.

Would the Fairy Queen allow Flax-Flower her wish—that is, to be like the wonderful creature that was to come in Belgium?

The Queen's answer, as read in a great court of the fairies, after due counsel taken with the wisest counsellors, was this:

"That Flax-Flower be permitted to transform herself into the likeness and form of the coming Egyptian creature, but"—and here the Queen looked very stern, first at the Flax-Flower, and

then at all the company of fairies, who were to bear witness to her words—"if she should not like her new nature, she should not be allowed ever to become a fairy again. She must remain, for one year, a four-footed creature. Then, if she wished to be something else"—and here she frowned terribly, as if to frighten Flax-Flower, and dissuade her, if possible, from her purpose, but certainly to show that she meant all she said—"Flax-Flower must be something that bore the name of the creature, and carried his burden, but not to have his body; and, that she should remain forever in that form which she chose."

"I agree," said Flax-Flower, but with a sort of gasp, as if terrified, as she thought of what might be her fate.

Months still passed away, but the Oriental Wonder had not come. At last, after the fairies had nearly fallen into nervous prostration, in waiting to see the creature from Africa, that was to astonish all, it arrived as large as life.

And behold it was a donkey!

When Flax-Flower had her first peep at the stranger, she fainted away; but a few drops of dew, thrown in her face, revived her. When shown the quadruped again, and seeing it face to face, with the long ears, shaggy hair, short mane, and bare tail, with only a tuft, like a long-handled paint brush, she drew back in terror.

Then, throwing herself at the feet of the Fairy Queen, she cried out most piteously:

"Is this the creature of our dreams, about which we heard so much in description? With all its glorious record and ancestry, it is the disgrace of creation. Must I take its form? Spare me, oh queen, and I shall be your slave."

"No," said the Fairy Queen. "You must obey the law of fairy land, as laid down in council. I shall make of you an example, to other frivolous fairies. It is so silly of you, or them, to envy other creatures. When you weary of being such a quadruped, if it be the right moment of your release, utter the Flemish name for donkey. Then, you will become a thing of wood, but not the living creature itself; and always after that, you must be burden-bearer for men. You will live forever, on four legs, in an artist's studio, but you can never be a fairy again."

Although Flax-Flower wept copiously, and the tears rolled down out of her beautiful eyes, like rain drops, the spell proceeded. Like magic, her pretty, pink ears sprouted into long and hairy things, as big as powder horns. Her mouth widened to the width of a cow's muzzle, her lovely white skin was changed into a shaggy hide; and, last of all, something like a rope, with a hairy tuft like a ball of yarn-fringe, at the end, appeared from behind. At first, she fell

down on her hands and knees, with grief; but, when she got up, she was on four legs! To show how completely she had been transformed, out of her mouth sounded what the real donkey in the barnyard recognized at once, as a vocal effort. He pricked up six or eight inches of his ears with delight and immediately felt at home. But as soon as the rough farmer's boy heard the noise, he called it braying. He declared to his father, that there was a donkey in the woods, calling, either for a thistle or a mate.

Thereupon Bavon, as the boy's name was, grabbed a big bunch of stems of the prickly weed. He threw his armful of the green stuff in, where he had heard the new sort of a nightingale.

And what happened?

Well, the being that, but an hour before, was a lovely fairy, showed that it had an appetite and was very hungry. It now opened its mouth and chewed up the spiny stuff, as if it had been used to such breakfasts all its life. Then it put out its tongue and smacked its lips, as if it enjoyed the new diet, but now wanted some beans.

Worse than all, the next day the farmer's boy caught the new donkey, led it by a halter, and harnessed the beast to a cart. He had now a pair of Orientals. Every day he took his team, which some fellow named "Rabbit Ears," to the field, to plough with; or, into town, to carry his

carrots or cabbages to market. Happily, he found that the donkey's reputation for patient hard work, economical diet, and general good behavior, was all he had heard it to be. The cost of feeding both animals was surprisingly little. Some people declared that, in winter, the Rabbit-eared beast was fed chiefly on barnyard fences and the East Wind.

Now the farmer's boy had taste and liked to draw and paint. He drew pictures with chalk on the barn door, and he cultivated his talents, especially in winter. Having no money to spare, to buy a paint brush or colors, he pulled some hairs out of poor pussy's tail, and made one, and he squeezed colors out of the juice of berries. By and bye he attracted the attention of a famous artist in Antwerp, who offered to employ the boy in his house.

Overjoyed at the idea, the farmer's boy asked if he could take his favorite donkey with him. Permission was given, and lo! the lad chose the one that was a transformed fairy. The boy rode to the great city on his long-eared beast, and, having arrived at the artist's dwelling, he locked up the creature in the stable and reported to his master.

Now this happened just about the time for the spell to be broken, when Flax-Flower was to resume, not her former shape, which she could not, but something with a donkey's name.

Now there were, already, a half dozen things called after the long-eared and useful beast, such as a pump, a drying frame, and several tools, but Flax-Flower longed to keep in good company. She therefore had made up her mind, which one she could choose. During the night, the spell was broken, and she took her final shape in wood, and in a frame with four legs, with pegs in it to hold a picture.

So when the farmer's boy came into the stable, next morning, there was no donkey visible in the stall, but, instead, there stood a beautiful new easel. Carrying it into his master's studio, he placed his masterpiece upon it, and the great painter was well pleased. When, in time, by hard work, the farmer's boy had himself become great, she had held the pictures which he painted; and many rich patrons, ladies and gentlemen, came into his studio, to admire his triumphs.

So, for centuries, the artists, who painted lovely scenes and portraits, have employed, for their work, Flax-Flower, now become an easel, the name, which, in Flemish is Ezel, meaning Little Donkey; but she never spoke a word, thus excelling in silence even the original. But what had, in Æsop's day, been reckoned, "the disgrace of creation," became the bearer of beauty unto unnumbered generations of men.

XV

PUSS GEIKO AND HER TRAVELS

HOW the cat first got into Belgium is not known, but of the puss that was first seen in Japan, the record is full and clear. There are, however, two stories, for there are two kinds, wild and tame.

Japanese house cats have no tails. These they never had, or lost them long ago; and now, most of them have hardly enough to set up a rabbit in business. Even if, in a litter of bob-tailed pussies, a long-tailed kitten is born, out comes the carving knife and off goes the caudal extension. Cats in Japan must all be in fashion,.to be allowed to live in a house with human beings.

So long as the Japanese puss stays at home, licks its feet, and cleans its face with its forepaws, using these for both wash-rag and towel, the creature is considered respectable, and there is no trouble in either the cat or the human family.

There was a certain puss named Geiko (gay-ko), which is the Kyoto pronunciation of Geisha (gay-shah); because she was so accomplished and so pretty, and made so much music

at night. Except those Japanese cats that, long ago, traveled to the Isle of Man, she was the first modern member of the family that wished to reside abroad. Then—according to what her mother said, who told the story of her adventures in Belgium—her troubles began.

Now this is the way it came to pass.

It happened that a grandmother puss, named Guitar, because she also was so musical, that lived in Persimmon Street, in Kyoto, was inquired of, by an inquisitive kitten, as to when, and how, and why, cats first came to Japan. Her mistress, a little girl, named Taka (tah-kah), or Falcon, who went every day to school, had come home and told her that, once upon a time, Japan, being an island and the country made up of islands, there were no tame cats, but only wild ones. Now, would Grandma Guitar tell all about her ancestors, and about her Aunt Geiko, who had gone to Europe?

So that evening, after the six kittens had had their supper, Grandma gathered them all around her, and told how pet cats were first brought from China, into Japan, and to the Emperor's court, about A. D. 1000. They were at first very great curiosities. Yet when they multiplied, they were even then kept in the house, and tied up at night. Some people thought cats were dangerous brutes.

"Why, grandma, dear?" asked one of the kittens. "Did they eat up *all* the birds?"

"No, I am inclined to think," said Grandma, "that they were kept in at nights, for fear that they might be stolen, for they were still considered very valuable animals."

Here Grandma Guitar paused, that is, she stopped in her story, long enough to wipe her mouth and face, with what serves pussies instead of a towel, napkin or handkerchief—her two fore feet.

Then continuing, she called on Kichibei (kee-chee-bay), a Tom, that lived next door. He was the lawyer among the cats of Persimmon Street, in which they lived. She requested him to read from the Government Book on Cat Law (Neko no Soshi). He made his bow, cocked his eye properly, and read the following regulation, of the year 1602.

"First, the cords on the cats in Kyoto shall be untied, and the cats shall be let loose.

"Secondly, it is no longer allowed to buy or sell cats. Whoever transgresses this ordinance, shall be punished with a heavy fine."

The kittens were almost sorry, that their grandma had called in this lawyer; for he instantly began a long dissertation on the cats of China, Korea and Japan, quoting from the historians and law books. He told how, gradually,

the cats, when they multiplied to millions, in the islands of Japan, got a bad reputation. In fact, all sorts of evil stories were told, and proverbs coined, and uncomplimentary expressions used concerning them. To tell the full truth, however, out of so many, some cats were really bad. It had even, of late years, become common to use cat skins to make banjos and guitars. That is the reason why the singing and dancing girls, or geishas (gay-shas in Tokyo, and gei-ko in Kyoto) were usually called "cats" in fun.

Then he went on to explain why there was a cat on every Japanese boat, or ship, as one could usually see—for in port, puss poked her head out of the windows to note what was going on. Of course, the seamen preferred a cat of three colors. For, although, as we say, a cat has nine lives, the Japanese sailors think Puss has at least three. He even went on to explain why ancient poetry referred so often to the flowers of the valerian plant, but so rarely mentioned them, in modern days. It was all because there were no cats in Japan in those early times, though so numerous now.

Kichibei, the lawyer, was going to tell more, but Grandma said "ippai" (ip-pi) and "mo yoroshi" (mo yo-ro-shee)—intimating that he had said enough, and thanked him. For the long talk of Kichibei had got to be so tiresome,

that several of the kittens had fallen asleep, before he was more than half through.

Finally, when he ended and went off, Grandma thought it was time to go to bed. For these kitties were too young to go outdoors at night, like grown-up cats.

"Oh, but you promised to tell us about our Aunt Geiko."

Now the way all those kittens woke up at once, to listen, showed that they would soon make the liveliest kind of roof scramblers, night prowlers, and street warblers; or be otherwise fitted for nocturnal accomplishments, just like their ancestors; and, all this, without being taught.

The lights having been put out, and all sitting in a ring, Grandma Guitar began. At once, it seemed as if fourteen little round balls of fire were glowing in the room; for each one of the cat's eyes had widened from a slit, or long crack, to a circular window. In fact, they could all plainly see each other, even in the dark.

"Well, my grandchildren," began the old lady cat, "you know that my daughter, your aunt Geiko, though born in the Blossom Capital, was the pet of a Belgian lady; and that both of them lived in Kobé, when they were in our country. They sailed away, a year ago, and, after a six weeks' voyage, arrived safely at her home at the little village of Gingelhom in Limburg."

"But, alas," and here Grandma Guitar pulled out a Japanese paper handkerchief, from under her collar, and wept real cat tears. On seeing this, all the kittens cried in sympathy, and some meouwed pitifully.

Grandma Guitar was so overcome by her feelings, that she could proceed no further. So, from this point on, we shall tell, in our way, the story of what happened to Miss Puss Geiko, in Belgium, from what Grandma Guitar related to the kittens the next evening.

For, in order to make Japanese kittens understand and enjoy the whole story, it was necessary to go into so much detail, that it would be tiresome, especially to us human beings, who have traveled in Belgium.

For in old Japan, men with whiskers, or women with bonnets; or leather shoes, or chairs, or cheese, were unknown. Even cow's milk, except for calves, or very old persons, was unheard of, as an article of drink or food. Grown up human beings thought it was wicked to take milk from the cow! And no wonder! for two strong men, working for an hour, could only get a quart or so, from the miserable little cows of the sort they then had.

So here is the story, as cut short, after being translated from Japanese cat talk.

When your Aunt Geiko arrived at Gingelhom,

in Limburg, it took her some time to get accustomed to the strange human folks, and their ways; and, almost as much, to the cats of the neighborhood. Everything looked, smelled, and tasted so strangely.

The language bothered her a good deal, for she could not understand Flemish, even when dear little children, in wooden shoes, put out their hands and tried with gentle voices to coax Puss Geiko to come to them. Even when they wanted to smooth her back, or rub her head, she was frightened at their talk and ran away. Yet they were only saying, "Come pussy, come here"! When they brought Geiko a saucer full of something white, she would not go near it. It was cow's milk, but she had known only mother milk, and had never seen what cows give us every day. If the Limburgers had only known it, dried fish would have tempted Geiko any time.

One day the lady, her mistress, set a saucer of cow's milk before Geiko, and, when her own mistress called to her, in Japanese, she ran up gladly and purred as if very happy. But she did not go near the lunch prepared for her. Then the Belgian lady dipped her finger in the milk and rubbed it on pussy's lips, and at once out came a little red tongue to lick it off. The eyes of your Aunt Geiko sparkled. This showed that she had discovered something good and liked

it. She lapped up the cow's milk, emptied the saucer, and always, after that, was glad to get more of what the lady said was "chichi" (chee-chee), which is Japanese for what we call "milk" and the Flemish "melk."

But the story-teller is sorry to say, that, on the subject of tails, Pussy Geiko did not show either good manners, or a sweet disposition. If cats have a commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," Pussy Geiko was an awful sinner.

Every time a cat of the country came near, Geiko would look enviously on its lovely, long tail. Then her eyes would turn green with jealousy. She would leap forward at the Belgian cat, and bite at, claw with both paws, tread upon, or scratch at its tail.

Geiko behaved just like a covetous human being, or a person who is jealous of another's good looks, or fine clothes, or general prosperity. So she was never popular with the cats of Limburg, and some always growled, when they saw her.

Now it was not Geiko's fault, that nature had not provided her with a handsome, long tail. For, while a Japanese cat has all the bones in that part, which a well-born kitten ought to possess, yet, for some reason, that which we call its "caudal extension" is not developed, and does not grow out.

On the other hand, it is sad to relate, that the

Belgian cats were not so polite, as they might have been. They looked with suspicion on any animal from a strange country. The worst and most ill mannered among them, every time they saw Geiko, called out "Hello, Stumpy, where did you leave your tail?" This made the Japanese Puss, already in a state of nervous prostration, so lonely, that she nearly died; for she had no society. Sometimes, at night, she would go up on the roof and look up at the moon, and think of her mother and feel too sad to live.

A short life had Geiko, in Belgic Land, and one morning she was found dead. It was rumored in Japan, that the poor creature had died of homesickness. Malignant cats, that envied Geiko her trip abroad, declared, in their gossip, that it was pride and conceit, that killed her; but, anybody who knew cats was sure that these chatterers were only jealous of Geiko. The truth was, that Geiko went into a decline, when she found how the other cats treated her. Indeed, she was so miserable, and became finally so weak and frail, that a cat doctor was heard to declare that the least excitement would kill her.

The real truth finally leaked out. Her kind mistress, the lady, hoping to cheer Geiko up, strengthen her nerves, and, possibly restore her to health, tried to tempt her appetite with the local delicacy. Sad to tell, it was all mistaken

kindness, for it went first to poor Pussy's nose, and then to her brain. The lady had served up for the cat's lunch, some Limburger cheese!

But alas, the odor, before she tasted it, even if she could have put it in her mouth, gave the final shock. So overpowered was the poor home-sick puss, that she fell over and never recovered from the paralysis of her nostrils.

So, in the corner of a Belgian garden, one sees a little mound, and a memorial stone above it, with only the words:

GEIKO
HIC JACET. . . .
R. I. P.

XVI

THE MARRIAGE OF THE FAIRIES

FAIRIES are sociable creatures, and like to be where there are many children and some grown folks. Long ago, before human beings came on the earth, it was proposed, in a meeting of the fairies, that some of them should go to Moon Land and invite the Moonlanders to come and settle on the earth. This was because the fairies wanted more company.

In fact, life among the fairies had got to be very dull. Nothing happened, and some wanted to change their people and their scenery.

But one old fairy said "No! the earth is as yet too bare and rough. Who wants to live here, unless they are fairies, that do not eat, or like candy, or that require no clothes, or food, or houses, or carriages or pets?"

Yes, said another. I agree with you. We must furnish this earth of ours with pretty things, like flowers, and fruit trees, and birds, and horses, and useful animals, and cats and dogs, and squirrels and rabbits. How can we go about it?"

During this debate among the wisest ones, there were two fairies that sat apart. It was noticed that they had put their heads together, talking every moment and sometimes both at once. They winked occasionally at each other, and often nodded knowingly, as if they understood things even better than those who talked most. Meanwhile, they seemed very happy. At last, with beaming smiles, they both spoke together to the assembled company.

We must not forget that while the fairies thus talked together, the giants of the frost kept on, busily cutting away the mountain sides, making the glacier a river of ice, that carried the rocks and gravel away and far down into the valleys and on the plains. In this way, the hard stone was ground into gravel, sand, clay, and dust, and scattered over the face of the earth. The glacier scratched, and chiseled, and grooved out the bed rocks, and then rolled the big stones over and over, and all together, until they were as round as oranges or marbles.

Usually this grinding was like that of a mill, which crushes the grain and makes meal, from which the miller blows away the bran, to get the white flour. So, at first, the rocks, thus broken and powdered, were mixed all together and tumbled about.

Yet many times the frost giants, the spirits

of the storm, the wind, the sun, and the glacier worked together, and all with one purpose. Often they laid the different materials very neatly in separate beds, some in this place and some in that. By this process, the clay, the sand, the stones, and the gravel were separated one from the other. It seemed as if they expected human beings to come and live on the earth. These mighty forces, of heat and cold, were working for the fairies, so as to have everything in order and ready when men should come, so that they could plow and coax flowers out of the ground.

So when the fairies were all waiting, to hear what could be done, one of the two that had whispered together spoke out in meeting. She was a silvery looking creature, reminding one of moonlight. Her dress, which was gauzy and shining, seemed to be made of aluminum threads woven together. Her helmet, of this metal, was very light and polished until it reflected the light, like a mirror.

"I have a daughter," said she, "named Klei. She is ready to be a bride, and, if she is married to the right one, I am sure her children will make the earth beautiful."

"And I," said the other, who seemed to be dressed entirely in crystal, and had on a helmet carved out of quartz, "have a son named Zand.

He is tough and strong, and sometimes, when the wind vexes him, he fusses about and stings and bites. Yet neither the sea shore, nor the dunes, nor the desert, nor the wilderness could get along without him. When the tempest blows him about, it irritates him and he behaves roughly and raises a terrible storm. But, if my son, Mr. Zand, is married to your daughter, Miss Klei, I predict that wherever the two live together, or their children dwell, there the sandpipers will trip along the shore and sing their notes, the cows and sheep will graze, the flowers bloom, and the human beings will build houses and barns. In any event, if they two marry, they will make the earth beautiful."

At this, which seemed like boasting to some of the old fairies, there was some shaking of the heads among them. "Rough and boisterous!" "Won't settle down!" "Too full of grit to be pleasant!" "Too likely to take on different forms, and to be changeable, to make a good husband!" These were some of the remarks dropped by old fairies that were critical or jealous, or knew too well the pranks of the young fellow Zand.

"And she? Why she's more changeable yet. Takes on different colors at different times, is hard or soft, according as she is hot or cold. Why, you can mould her to any pattern you

please. Just like wax! Let water come near her and the fickle fairy will melt away, spilling and spreading herself over everything."

"Yes, but she's tough, and can hold water as still in its place, as in a bowl," said another. "That shows a steady character, doesn't it?"

"Well, I don't know. On the other hand, put fire near her and she hardens into stone. How frivolous! She'll never make a good wife! If she does, she'll so settle down, that you can't move her!"

"Too much family pride on both sides," snapped out a wizened old fairy. Better not boast too much of one's children! A little more modesty might be more becoming. As for my part, I don't think either Mr. Zand or Miss Klei worth much. Neither has any good looks."

The wise old fairies paid no attention to this gossip and these ill-natured remarks. They said that all these critics were jealous. The match was approved, and preparations were made, on an immense scale, to celebrate the wedding.

It would take too long to tell who were present at the marriage feast, how they were dressed, the way they behaved, and how the fairies of the fire and the ice were over-careful. The six daughters of the snow did not like to get near the sooty and smoky elves and kabouters, that came up, out of the mines and caves and lower

earth, to see the company and the fun. In fact, fairies can be just as snobbish, and selfish, and impolite, as human beings. Some are very proud and selfish, and others kind and gracious.

The story-teller can only stop to say that the bride looked very sweet. She wore her mother's dress of silvery braid, while, instead of orange blossoms, which do not grow in the mountains, or a bouquet of roses, or sweet pinks, which had not yet come on the earth, she had on her head a crown made of the edelweiss, which is found only on the highest mountains and usually growing near the edge of precipices and is very rare and precious. It was born on the earth, long before fruit trees, or forget-me-nots, or pansies, and it grew, because it had a white woolly coat like fur, that kept it warm in the intense cold that killed other plants; in fact the mischievous Jack Frost could never bite, or pinch it. So it lived on.

It is far more important, in this story, to tell of the children that were soon born of the two wonderful fairies, Zand and Klei. Wherever they touched each other, or lived for any length of time, there was born a new thing called soil. Whenever a seed was dropped in that soil, up sprang a flower, a stalk of grain, a fruit tree, or grass. Gardens, orchards, corn fields, and pastures were always found where this couple had had a home.

By and bye great forests covered the land, and in the forests, the deer roamed, and squirrels played, for many nut trees grew here. The birds built their nests in the trees and the woods echoed with their sweet songs. In fact, in the month of May, when the birds were courting and love making, and nest building, there was a continual concert. Then, when the young birds left the nests to fly, and carol, and chirrup, and find their own food, the world was indeed a lovely place to live in. So, at least, a thousand kinds of happy animals thought.

By and bye, came men and women, with babies and cradles, and boys and girls. They built houses and had happy homes. The fields were covered with grain, which the millers ground into flour, and then the mothers made bread and cakes, and crullers and doughnuts, and many other goodies. From the fruit trees, they picked pears and apples, and, from the bushes, blackberries and raspberries, to make jam and pies. From the cows, they obtained milk and cheese. Then, with pet dogs and cats, and horses and singing birds, and with every house full of children, all the people were very happy.

The men learned, from the glacier, not only how to crush grain and crack nuts, and to get food, but also how to cut and shape, and carve stone, so as to make beautiful houses, and castles,

and temples, and churches. Then, when they saw how fire turns clay into a hard substance like stone, they mixed the clay with water and moulded the soft paste into cups and dishes, and pretty forms, and these they often painted and decorated. In time, they adorned their houses and halls with statues and sculpture. Then, the artists and teachers of beauty were rivals in building beautiful cities.

Now, in our language, for Zaan and Klei, we say Sand and Clay. For millions of years, after the fairies of the Zaan and Klei had married each other and made the fertile soil, from which such wonderful things came out, many other fairies were calling on men to make use of them, also, as they had already done with Sand and Clay.

They wanted human beings to know that the fairies of snow and frost, of sunshine and thaw, of light and air, and the many inhabitants of the air were willing to be continually busy, like those of the Zaan and Klei.

This couple, the two married fairies, were not selfish or lazy. They, too, kept on calling to men who had no pretty gardens, or fertile fields, to help in bringing them together and give them a home. When this was done, the ground was no longer loose, blown about, piled into billows by the wind, as in the desert, or left hard and

dead, on the sea shore, or heaped up in dunes, in which no seed could sprout. But, when they mixed the clay and sand, there appeared the soil, that was soft, warm, rich and held the rain. So, wherever the seeds of wheat, or corn, or flowers, were dropped into the bosom of this new child of the clay and sand, called soil, the sun and showers made the seeds come forth as flowers, or fruit. One witty gentleman was so sure of what would happen, even on the prairies, that he said, "tickle the earth with a spade, and it will laugh a flower." So the fairies called flowers "the smiles of the earth."

It was out of the wedding of the fairies of the sand and clay, that beautiful Belgium was born—the country which the men and women living in it love so dearly, that they gladly die for it. In time of war, before the battle began, the knights and foot soldiers used to kneel down on the ground and kiss it. Then they prayed to be strong and brave, and vowed to defend their soil, from all enemies. How grandly they did it, we all know.

XVII

THE ENCHANTED WINDMILL

EVER so many ages ago, there were a couple of fairies, who had a very interesting family of fairy children, that lived entirely in the air. The father was named Heet and the mother named Koud.

If we were to translate these names out of Flemish, I suppose we might call them Heat and Cold. Curious names, were they not?

But then, if we knew all the names of the fairies, we should laugh at many of them, as being very funny.

This fairy father and mother had many children, which, altogether, they called Wenda; that is, if we use the oldest form of the speech which the Flemings used. On our tongues, this becomes Winds. In different parts of the world, these wind-fairies were spoken of, according as their dispositions were rough or gentle, in their behavior; or, noisy or sweet in sound; or, as they were scorching or freezing; but all winds are born of Heat and Cold, but only four were very well known by their names.

But now it is time to tell about the enchanted windmill, that first began its career along with winds, among which Zephyrus was the best liked and most attractive. The other wind fairies, children of Heet and Koud, were not exactly envious of their handsome and popular brother, Zephyrus, or of Flora his wife; but they wanted to show that they also could do something for human beings, even if not able to give them such lovely things as flowers or fruit. So the three met together to see what could be done.

Now one of the wise men, among mortals, had said that three good things a man could do, and at least one of these he ought to do—to have and name a child, or a flower, or a book.

When this was told to the other three wind fairies, Eurus, Boreas, and Auster, they were at first downcast. They had no children, and as for flowers, they were out of the question; for Zephyrus and Flora had all to do with these. As for writing books, that was not the business of fairies, but of men and women.

However, after long thought, they hit upon a plan, by which, working altogether, they might help human beings. If they could not have handsome children, they could at least save toil and trouble to others when grown up. With the help of the fairies, they could more quickly redeem swamps and morasses, changing them into lovely

gardens and good grain fields, where flowers could grow and food be raised. They saw how hard men had to labor, in order to lift, pump, saw, hoist, grind, and polish. In draining the land, in cutting down trees, to make houses, and in grinding the grain, to make bread, men certainly needed help. They made up their minds that, while flowers were good, there were times, when bread and cake, cookies and crullers, puddings, and waffles, pot pie and potatoes might be better.

They summoned the elves of the mine and the forest to help them, and all together, they built a mill. It had long arms and sails outside, while within, were axles, wheels, windlass, ropes, pulleys, and grinding stones.

Set to other machinery, the mill could turn grain into flour for bread, and pump water out of a ditch, to make rich farm land, besides doing many other things.

The wind fairies were delighted with their success, and first, they made a present of the windmill to the Saracens, who employed it for hundreds of years.

But this is the way the first windmill was used. It was put on a raft, and floated on the water; so that men could pull it round to face the winds, as they blew. No one had then ever thought of putting it on land, or making a house of it.

By and bye, the crusaders from the Netherlands visited the Orient, and became acquainted with new seeds, flowers, fruits, and things they had never seen before, or at home. They watched with wonder the windmills, whirling their huge arms around and doing the work of thousands of men and horses.

Now there was a smart Fleming, Mynheer Molenaar, and crusader under Godfrey de Bouillon. When at home, he had been a miller on his lord's manor. After studying the workings of the windmill, he put its parts on a ship and brought it home.

Then he built a raft, and, putting his windmill together, followed the custom, of hauling it around, according as the wind might blow. He anchored it by the Scheldt river side. As everyone wanted to get his grain ground more cheaply, by wind, than by horse power, the Belgian miller soon had plenty of customers and quickly made money.

But one day, the river rose to a flood and swept the windmill down and out to the sea. Distracted by his loss, and with poverty staring him in the face, he tore his hair with rage, and mourned all day and late into the night. Toward morning, he fell into a heavy slumber.

In his dreams, a Belgian wind fairy, accompanied by a Kabouter, appeared to him. Sur-

prised at seeing a radiant and silvery creature, as bright as a star, alongside of a short, stumpy fellow, who was holding a box full of hammers and chisels, he forgot his troubles, and laughed heartily, smiling a welcome to both.

"We are glad you seem happier," said the shining one, for we have long wanted to help you and are ready to serve; for we fairies of the Netherlands, aided by our good friends, the Kabouters, have an idea for an improved windmill, that can beat either the Saracens, or the Greeks; for we can do what they could not." Then they told how to make a mill that could turn its face to any wind that blew.

The Kabouter nodded, as if to say "yes," and made what was rather a funny sort of a grin.

But Molenaar smiled again at this project, which seemed so nearly the impossible, as to be absurd, or an enchantment.

Altogether, with the contrast of a starry maiden and a blacksmith dwarf, the miller laughed again and this time, so loud, that he awoke.

But, pondering what the bright fairy had said to him, he resolved to act. That very day, with his head swelling with a new idea, he called together blacksmiths, masons, bricklayers, carpenters, and machinists. He paid them high wages, and urged on the building of a windmill on the

land; yes, like a house, and a windmill that was to serve many purposes.

"He's a fool, that fellow Molenaar, he is! The idea of making a dwelling and mill in one, and building it on land!" said one man who thought he knew all about windmills.

"Have the fairies cast a spell, on him?" asked another.

"The Wappers have certainly turned his brain," said a third.

"He's riding a Kludde horse, that's what he's doing," jeered a fourth.

Then, all together, they tapped their foreheads with their forefingers, and uttered what became a proverb:

"He has a mill in his head."

But Molenaar persevered. In less than a month, he had a comfortable brick house, three stories high, with a space like a cylinder, running down through the centre, and with stairways up to the floors above. On the first, or ground floor, was his flour mill, with grinding stones and bins. On the second, were four rooms for his family. On the third, were his parlor and linen closet; besides a playroom for the children. On the top were the wheels, axles, and sails; with a wide veranda, all the way around, by which the sails could be trimmed, reefed, or furled.

It was as good as a ship, and the children could take a walk all the way around the millhouse.

For three days, the breezes blew steadily from the west. For eight hours a day, the stones revolved merrily, and the bins were filed with meal.

Then the wind changed and swung around to the north.

"Now we'll see what the old fellow will do with his mill-house," said envious scoffers, as they passed by.

They had not noticed the contrivance, about which the fairies had told Molenaar. Around on the other side of the house, there was a windlass, with three long timbers reaching to the top. This, they had not seen before. It was a cap, or movable top.

A few turns of the windlass and the whole machinery, sails and all, faced the north wind. Soon the long arms, set with canvas, were whirling around at full speed, and most merrily the grit stones were turning, and the meal filling the bin.

It would be too long a story to tell, how this new sort of a Netherlands windmill could saw wood, pump the water out of ponds, and swamps, hoist barrels, and load wagons, besides grinding grain. In a few generations, both sandy Flanders, and swampy Holland were changed from heaths and mudholes, to a vast area of lovely flowers, beautiful gardens, and fruitful farms. The wind fairies had been only waiting, for ages, to become the servants of man.

XVIII

TURK, TURBAN, TULIP AND DRAGON

THERE used to be a great many kinds of dragons in the world. Anybody who looks at the old pictures, images, and decorations, or reads the stories of long ago, can see this.

There were bad dragons and good dragons. Some, like those that lived in China and Japan, had no wings; but very long tails. The Wyvern, or Scotch dragon, had two tails, like the Belgian lion, but the dragons in Turkey made up in wings what they lack in tail.

A long time ago, there was a Belgian crusader, a Fleming, who got acquainted with a dragon of most respectable character, that lived near Aleppo, which was one of the famous cities of the Saracens. This was a water-dragon, named Buccoleon (buc-có-le-on), that lived in the river near by, though sometimes, when it wanted to go on a picnic, or enjoy the company of the hill dragons, it flew into the mountains.

The Turkish water dragons were great friends of those fairies that lived in the clouds, and had much to do with the showers and heavy rains, that make the flowers grow.

A great many caravans passed through Aleppo. These brought the tea, ivory, silk, and spices from the countries in the Far East, where the sun rises. These, they sent from Aleppo, by sea, to Antwerp, one of the greatest seaports in the world. The camels did not, of course, require much rain water, for they only took a drink about once a week. When they did, however, they made up for it, with their long necks, by tasting the water all the way down; that is, for about two yards. On the other hand, when they had a cough, it was awfully troublesome, to have six feet of sore throat. So the good dragons pitied the camels, and were always kind to them.

It was necessary for the river dragons to keep on good terms with the hill dragons and cloud fairies; for, without rain, the river would dry up. Then the dragon, that lived in the water, would have no place to board, or to lodge, or even to wash in, for the river was its bath tub.

This river dragon was a peaceful creature and did not like war. In fact, among its fellow creatures, it was known as the Weeping Dragon, because it cried so much. Whenever there was a battle between the Belgian crusaders and the

Saracens, this dragon wept great tears. Each tear, in volume and amount, was equal to a bucket of water. Why should men, the dragon thought, chop and hack each other to death, because one carried a crescent on his banner, and the other sewed a red cross on his coat, over his armor? After every bloody fight, this river dragon used to go over the fields where the men from Belgium were buried, and drop a tear over each grave. Then it mopped its eyes, with a great bandana handkerchief, because the Flemings had died so far from home.

Now a bucket full of tear-water, falling on each burial spot, changed the sandy soil into fertile ground, and thereupon up sprang a new flower.

This novelty in the plant world looked like a cup, held by its stem. It rose up, in the air and sunlight, and was very rich and varied in color. All the hues and tints, of the other buds and blossoms, seen in the gardens that lined the river banks, seemed to unite in this one flower, as if everything good in the dead man had come to life again in bright colors. On some days, when, in the early morning, the sunlight struck the dew drops that lay on these flowers, each one looked like a crown set with costly jewels.

Now a certain Belgian soldier, a Fleming, whose home town was Ghent, and who was a

florist, by profession, noticed this splendid new flower. His name was Theophilus; but they called him Taff, for short. From the first, his hope and ambition, in going to the East, had been—if he were not killed while fighting the battles of the cross, or if he did not die of fever, or from the terrible ulcer, they called the "Aleppo button"—to take home a floral souvenir from the Turk's country. He knew that all the little boys would be expecting to see him come home loaded with trophies, captured from the Saracens; but the strange flower would also show where he had been, and through what adventures he had passed.

The Pilgrims to Jerusalem always carried home a scallop shell; but he intended to surprise the Ghenters with something prettier.

What better than the spirit-flower, or memorial blossom, which sprang up, where the weeping dragon had shown its grief? In fact, Taff thought of naming it "the Dragon's Tear."

But when he thought of the bad reputation of dragons in his country, he feared that all the Ghent folk would laugh at him and say that a dragon's tears were no better than a crocodile's. Besides, the idea of weeping was not a cheerful one, nor did it tell of the victories of the cross and the crusaders. What then should be a proper name for the flower?

While pondering this question, Taff looked out and saw two big Turks quarreling. They called each other all sorts of bad names. Finally one cursed his enemy, saying:

"May you wear a hat in the next world!"

And the other retorted: "May your turban fall into a pig-sty!"

Now these, with the Turks, were the same as horrible oaths. It was against the law for Saracens, as it is for Turks, to wear a hat. All faithful followers of the prophet cover their heads with a turban, and any one, who does not thus protect his head, is looked on as a vile sinner. To let one's turban fall among the pigs, is the greatest misfortune.

Whether it be a fez, that is, a round, red cap, with tassel on the top; or seventeen yards, of white muslin, or red damask, or green silk wound round one's head, every disciple of the prophet must wear a turban. If it be not neatly wrapped, a man is apt to be called a Bashi Bazouk, or "rotten head." All sorts of honors, and offices are denoted by the folds, colors, or methods of folding or wrapping the turban. Or, in the case of cleanliness and smartness on the one hand or dust or slovenliness, on the other, words of praise or nicknames, and low and vulgar terms, may be applied.

The tassel on the top is the handle, by which

the good believer is lifted, by the angels, into Paradise!

When Taff noticed the variety of rich colors, and the beauty of the fashion of the Saracen headdress, he decided to name the new flower the Turk's turban.

Now the word for this is tulipan, or tulip, for short. Thereupon Taff collected the seeds of this turban flower and when the war was over, he brought them to Flanders and planted them in his garden. Soon he had a tulip farm, and then orders came in, from all parts of Europe, for this wonderful flower.

The women did not care very much for the tulip, because it is not as well fitted, as are violets, or roses, or sweet peas, or honey suckles, for corsage bouquets, or to put in their hair. Moreover, in the language of flowers, it had neither poetry, nor message, nor meaning, like the pansy, for instance.

On the contrary, as the young ladies say, the men "adored" the tulip because of its bright colors. Every man, who had been a crusader, planted it in his garden, to remind him of the Saracens, whose heads he had cut off in battle; or, to tell his sons and neighbors about the terrible warriors he had met and fought with.

This was necessary, for all the small boys were disappointed, whose fathers did not bring back

a scimeter, a spear, a shield, a javelin, a real turban, a pair of turkish slippers, a harem shawl, or some other trophy, to show that they had really been to the wars. In fact, some of them expected their daddies to return with a string of Turks' heads at the saddle.

So the tulip was called a man's flower, and Taff got rich, by selling the bulbs. Then he cultivated many varieties, with new shapes and colors. It got to be the fashion to buy these, for every one wanted to show off the new hues and tints, the streaks and spots, and the flaming colors, and hoped to beat his neighbor with the most astonishingly big blooms.

At one time, it seemed as if the whole world had gone crazy over tulips. Thousands of dollars were paid for a single bulb, or even for a tulip in flower, which would lose its petals in a few hours. Every day the Bourse, or money market, was crowded with merchants and brokers; who were buying bulbs and plants, without ever seeing one of them. Prices were announced from distant markets, by means of signals given on the windmills. Some men had tulips on the brain. They sold all they had, chairs, tables, beds, dishes and even clothes, to buy tulips, red, yellow, blue, or black.

But wise men called all this madness, and even talked of "wind trade." Soon the excitement

died down, and the market fell as flat as a ship's sails on the mast, when there is not enough breeze to flap them.

There was another Fleming, a returned crusader, whose first name was Isaac; but they called him Nyken for short. This man was a potter by trade. He was so pestered by the small boys who wondered why he hadn't brought back two or three Turks' heads, that he was at his wit's end to explain and answer their questions. So Nyken hid himself away, resolving to get rich from what he had learned about turbans. Not having any garden, he could not raise flowers, so he made up his mind he would make tulips out of clay, and get rich, even faster than his neighbor Taff, who was an old bachelor; while Nyken had a wife, and three daughters, all highly accomplished.

So Nyken mixed his clay, got his potter's wheel ready, loaded his palette with paints, and then set to work, with his "vrouw en kinderen"; that is, his wife Bab (or Barbara) and his daughters three, Beck, Beff, and Jin (that is Rebecca, Elizabeth, and Joanna). These fine girls had all been well educated in the public schools, which were, even then, the glory of the Netherlands. They kept everything secret until the market day.

Then, to the surprise of the whole town of

Ghent, Nyken's stall and shelves blossomed out like a bed of tulips. There was his fat wife, whom he called Bulb, for a pet name, and his three blooming daughters, whom he called his Tulip blossoms.

First in demand, was the turban-dish, or "Turk's Head," for baking apples, and pot pies, and cakes, and macaroni. This was made of earthenware.

Then there was hard, shining glazed ware, in many forms and for many uses, cups, saucers, vases and flower-holders. These were made into the form of the flowers themselves, or were decorated with tulips of many tints; besides those which were black, yellow, and red, the colors of the Duke of Brabant and of the Belgian flag.

What pleased the young folks, more than all else, was the bust of a Saracen. This was a copy of a real Turk, with a turban on his head. His hair was black, and his face swarthy. His mouth was wide open, as if ready for some one to throw a pill down his throat, which he should swallow, without chewing it.

This was called "The Gaper," and was instantly popular with the apothecaries, who made the pills and sold them in boxes at a high price.

On the very first day, Nyken and Bulb had sold out their whole stock, and the three girls, Beck, Beff and Jin had already, in their minds,

selected the new dresses and lace collars, which they intended to buy. Soon, all through the Netherlands, there was a "gaper" over every druggist's shop. New medicines, and strange-looking bottles and boxes were seen on the counters.

There were "Saracen Sure Cure for Corns," "Buccoleon Liniment," "Dragons' Elixir of Life," "Palestinian Pills," "Tulip Cure-Alls," "Thousand-Years-of-Life Syrup," "Crusaders' Balm," "Dragon-Scale Plasters," "Oriental Ointment," and a hundred other remedies.

Meanwhile, what had become of the Aleppo dragon?

It turned out, just as the fairies and hill dragons had predicted; that, as soon as the war was over, and peace came, this dragon's eyes would dry up. Then, the energy, that was so long wasted, as they thought, on tears, would excite this dragon to travel, and then, also, the dry ground would turn no more into flowers. Instead, the stream of tears would strike inward, and all of a sudden, the dragon's scales would become gold.

It happened just so, and soon Buccoleon's skin was a mass of golden scales.

Hearing that the Flemings had done such wonders, with the turban flower, and the turban pottery, the dragon was filled with admiration

and envy. He wanted to fly at once to Flanders, and see things. He had learned, rather to like Crusaders, but when further, a traveler told the dragon about the Turk's Head, made of earthenware, for cooking, and the Gaper, for the medicine shops, Buccoleon laughed so loudly, that people in Aleppo thought it thundered.

But alas for men's treachery!

There was always so much envy and jealousy among the guilds in Ghent, that riots sometimes broke out. Then the bells called out the people to put down the rioters, and do justice to all.

Just at this time, as Buccoleon, the Aleppo dragon, was flying toward Flanders, the goldsmiths of Ghent were almost savagely envious of both Taff, the florist, and Nyken, the potter. When they heard of the coming flight of Buccoleon, they posted archers on the high towers, and these shot to death the good water dragon of Aleppo.

The greedy goldsmiths expected, with hammers and chisels, to pry off its scales and sell them! They wanted to get rich quickly, like Taff and Nyken.

These bad men were awfully disappointed. For when the people heard of what they had done, they rushed into the belfry of the tower. Some of them climbed up the three hundred and

seventy-six steps, and rang the great bell, making a terrific clangor.

Forthwith, all the citizens assembled, in the great square, to hear Taff and Nyken tell what this good dragon had done, and how its tears, over the dead Crusaders, had been turned into tulips.

It was voted unanimously that the highest honors should be paid to Buccoleon, the dragon. So, with ropes and pullies, and a strong scaffold, they raised a mighty tackle on the tower, while the blacksmiths made the iron weather vane. On its pivot, they set the Aleppo dragon, which was ten feet long. Now, when it came to dragons, Ghent could glory over Brussels, and the Boringue.

Flashing golden in the sun, high in air, near the clouds, while far below, in the rich fields and gardens, the tulip spreads beauty on earth and wealth to the Netherlands, Buccoleon, the dragon, on top of the great belfry, turns to all the winds that blow.

XIX

UP AND DOWN AND UP AGAIN

LOOK on the cover of this book and see the bridge at Tournai, with its twin towers. In the bright moonlight, the waters of the Scheldt River are flowing through the arches. Here we have, from the low down to the high up, a true picture of the Land of Towers, Spires, and of those collections of bells, which make music in the air, and are called carillons.

Yet in very early times, in Belgium, there were no bridges, nor any towers, and no churches, except some buildings rudely put together, out of wood, or reeds and rushes, plastered with mud. Nor in the flat and sandy parts, as in Flanders, was there any stone. Few of the craftsmen understood masonry, or chisel work. Moreover, who could carry out stone from the mountains, and bring it hundreds of miles, to be cut and built into lofty campaniles, or bell towers, and splendid churches as in glorious Italy, from which teachers and missionaries came?

Now, one of these good Italian missionaries was named, in the Flemish language, Vrolyke Kwant. He was of a sunny disposition, known to all the children, and much loved by them. He had come from Italy when Belgium was a very wild country, and he greatly missed the bells, the towers and air-music of his dear, beautiful, distant land. So he was often homesick.

But when he heard how kind and well behaved the Belgian fairies were, and that they liked to help good people, he took heart, cheered up, and determined to make their acquaintance.

So he gave out that he would be glad to see them all, of every kind, and welcome them to his house. Knowing that the fairies, who keep out of sight during the day, were very busy between curfew and cock crow, that is, after sunset and before dawn, he spread abroad the notice that he would leave all the doors of his house open at night. If they would only come to see him, and talk over what could be done to make the people and their children happy, he would treat them well.

Now it is surprising how quickly the news spread in fairy land, especially when we think that fairies have no telephones, no telegraph wires, no railroads, no newspapers nor any messenger boys with blue caps.

But Vrolyke—to call him by his first name—

had not long to wait. After saying his evening prayers, he went to the front of his house and opened both leaves of his double door. There could not be, at this time of night, any danger of pigs or chickens coming in, for the piggies had gone to sleep and the birds to roost long before. So he unlatched even the heck, or lower half of the door, and slammed it loudly against the wall, as a signal to the fairies outside. He had already seen tiny lights flitting about, like fireflies.

Soon there were two or three gentle taps on the lintels of the doorway, and then trooped in the funniest looking company he had ever seen. Kabouters, Wappers, Manneken, and Red Caps. These were followed by a throng of silvery little ladies, with gauzy wings on their shoulders and with stars on their foreheads. They were dressed in the loveliest, sheeniest, garments, and they seemed prettier, even, than any of the rosiest maidens, which Father Vrolyke, the missionary, had yet seen in the Tournai region. They were, each and all, of them, dressed in the garb, which all the fairies of their several kinds have worn for ages; because fairies are not slaves to fashion. Unlike our girls, who say they have "nothing to wear" and are obliged to change fashions every year, the fairies keep the same style of clothes always. It is no wonder that they are free from

care, have no wrinkles on their faces and live long lives.

Then Vrolyke, smiling his best smile, bowed and offered to set out beer and cakes—all he had —on his rough table. But the fairies, one and all, laughed and waved their hands, even those of the Red Caps, which were green. They replied in chorus:

"Oh, thank you, we do not eat or drink. We came to see what we can do for you. We must keep busy, you know, or we'll play tricks on your people. We like to do funny things with stupid people, but we always help the good ones. Command us, and we shall obey."

While they were in such good humor, Father Vrolyke thought it best to assign them tasks.

So he said, "This flat country needs towers. Such as they have in Italy. These will add to the beauty of the country. Then we can have bells, which will call the people to worship; for, over these plains, the sound will roll far away, and everybody will hear easily.

Then he sighed and asked, "But where can we get the stone to build and where are the copper and tin for the bells? Good fairies, tell me and help."

"Leave that to us," shouted the fairies.

Then all those who had no wings, Kabouters, Wappers, Red Caps, and Mannekins, stumbled

out of the house, in the most merry and uproarious manner. They laughed and screamed with delight. They played leap frog over each other. Some of the Red Caps jumped on the shoulders of the Wappers and played riding piggy-back. The winged fairies, in gold, and silk, and gauze, flew out the door as quietly as if on a cloud, or in a dream.

Now for ages the solid rivers of ice, in Switzerland, had been grinding up the rocks to make clay and sand, gravel and soil for Belgium. From the heart of France, also, there rolled down the earth, which the rain washed out of the mountains. That is the reason why the river-beds in Belgium were full of just the sort of material the Kabouters liked to play in, and of which bricks could be made. They were just like two children that love to play in the soft mud and make pies and patty cakes.

Now all the fairies, especially those that had traveled in the southern countries, wondered why the northern people were so stupid, as not to make their houses and churches out of stone that would last a long time; instead of out of wood, which catches on fire so easily, or soon decays, and falls down.

For, already, there lay under their feet, and had lain there for ages, the stuff out of which bricks, as hard as stone, could be made, for the

river had brought it to their doors. The fairies, who understand what winds mean, when they whisper, or storms say, when they howl, declared that the river clay, in the streams, was calling, calling, calling, and this is what the voices said:

"Fairies and mortals, listen to us. We were once high and mighty in the world, and lived on the tops of mountains near the sky; and we expected to be there always. But Nature drove us out of our comfortable bed of rock, like as the parent eagles push their birdies out of the nest, just to make them fly in the air, which is their true home. So, the storms, and frost, and ice and rain, split us off from the mother rock, and tumbled us down towards the valley. The snow, and ice, and rushing waters have ground and rolled and tossed us about, until we have utterly lost our first form, as part of the mountain peaks. Now, we are nothing but soft mud, or 'slyk,' as the Flemings say. We live low in the river beds, not able even to nourish flowers, for we are not soil.

"But we want to be again in the bright air.

"Oh, that fairies, or men, would lift us up again high in the sunlight, and in the lofty heights again, nearer to the sky.

"Or else, mix us with the sand, and then, out of our bosoms, draw flowers. Either to be blossoms, or bricks, is what we long to be.

"Oh, take us up out of this darkness, in which we dwell under water."

To their ears, the gurgling of the water and the sounds from the rivers and streams were, to the fairies, as groans of pain. Now, they would change these to a song. All they had been waiting for, was an opportunity, or an invitation. Now they had received it, and that was the reason why they ran out of Father Vrolyke's house so merrily, for here was their chance to do something big. An idea had struck inside their heads, and had hit so hard that they wanted to go to work instantly to relieve pressure on the brain.

So right away, they summoned every fairy in Belgic Land to come and help, and merrily they came. Thousands of the little fellows, mostly Kabouters, hauled up tons after tons of river clay. They piled it up, until it made an enormous brick yard. Then they made moulds of wood and iron, of the shape of bricks.

One set of Kabouters were appointed to mix the clay. Others stood at the dry dust tubs. From the wet clay, heaped up on a big bench, or table, a big Kabouter threw down a lump into the square wood or iron frame or mould, shaped like a brick. Then he shoved the soft brick over to the Stryker, who struck off, to a level, the extra amount of clay, just as a good cook cuts off

the excess of dough, in the pie crust, that hangs over the edge of the dish, before she puts it in the oven to bake. From these benches the thousands of Manneken carried the wood or iron moulds filled with clay, over to the drying ground. They tumbled flat the clay out of the frames and laid the bricks, still soft, out to dry, for several days, in the sun. Every time, as they returned, they threw the empty iron moulds into a tub full of fine dry clay-dust, so the wet clay or bricks would not stick, but fall easily, when tumbled over, flat on the ground to dry.

Another set of Kabouters built a kiln, setting the bricks into piles, with spaces, like aisles and corridors, for the air to circulate in, and the flames to reach everywhere, and to every brick, from bottom to top. Another gang cut down wood and plugging it into these holes set the fires going, to bake the soft sun-dried bricks into "klinkers," or burnt bricks, as hard as stone.

Every night, for a month, they worked, until millions of bricks baked in the fire, until they were hard enough to "klink," or resound, when struck together, and were ready for the bricklayers. That's the reason they call a well-turned brick a "klinker," because it sounds.

Father Vrolyke now took the honorable name of Van Slyk (from the river mud, now turned into brick), and his reverend colleague took the

name Stryker, and, together, they summoned masons and bricklayers from Italy. These men piled brick on brick, until walls and towers rose up toward the sky, and made some of the people think of mountains.

And, would you believe it? Some stupid folks were afraid to walk in the streets, for fear the walls, which seemed so terribly high, would fall down on them!

But the builders were not afraid of these piles of brick falling down, for they held the courses together by the "Flemish bond"; that is, wherever two bricks met, end to end, another brick was laid on top between. The middle part of the upper brick lay directly over the joining place of the under ones. Thus the whole structure was held together as tightly, as if the bricks had gone back again, to be part of the mother rock, in the high mountain, whence they came ages before.

So, inch by inch, and foot by foot, the bricks rose up toward the blue sky and nearer the sun, until, high aloft, the church tower stood, and the clouds came and kissed it. The sunrise made it rosy, and the sunset rays gilded it.

Again, in high places of the earth, where winds blow, the clay of the river bed, now turned into brick, held honored place in the tower which dominated the Belgian landscape. At night, the

top seemed not far from the stars, and on the apex, or summit of some of the loftiest, men placed the golden dragon, as the symbol of power. Or, they set the weather vane to tell whence the wind was blowing and what they might expect from the wind fairies on the morrow.

Or, in honor of God, they built churches that had towers and spires—which all the world comes to Belgium to see, because they are so beautiful. On the top of many, they set the shining cross, symbol of the Heavenly Father's love, and of the Unselfish One, who pleased not himself, but died to make men holy.

The towers became the home of the bells, the throne room of sweet music, and the abode of the carillons. And so it has come to pass, that the men of Belgium have listened to the call of the clay, that fell down from the mountain heights and lay for ages neglected in the river beds. And, hearing the call, they lifted it up again to the honor of God and the delight of men. "Up and down and up again," is the story of what makes the belfry of Bruges, the "lady spire" of Antwerp Cathedral, and the glorious towers of Mechlin, of Ghent, of Mons, of Oudenarde, of Tournai, and hosts of Belgian towers the delight and joy of all the world.

XX

THE GOLDEN DRAGON OF THE BORINGUE

IN one part of Belgium, they had bored into the earth so often, and so deep, to get the coal, that this region is called the Boringue. The city of Mons is the center of the coal mining region, and here they still celebrate the victory of a brave knight over a mighty dragon.

This dragon was quite an unusual monster, for his skin was all of shining gold, with scales, like plate armor. He was as big as a battering ram, and his strength was like that of a catapult, which could hurl big stones into a city of the enemy's camp. More wonderful yet, this dragon of the Boringue had a flashing jewel in his forehead, that was worth all the diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, in the whole world. It shone like a lamp, in the darkest nights, and guided his path for him, as he moved down from the hills to devour maidens.

This monster was a conglomeration of all things terrible. He had every one of the powers, which any and all beasts, birds, fishes, or reptiles

possessed; whether on the earth, in the air, or under the waters. He had a roar like a lion, the wings of an eagle, the claws of a condor, and the power to glide like a snake or crawl like an alligator. He could fly like a falcon, burrow like a rat, swim like a shark, crush with his coils like an anaconda, and had a keen scent, like a hound. He had eyes like a tiger, teeth like a wolf, and tusks sharper than a boar's, the nose horns of a rhinoceros, the antlers of a stag, the tossing horns of a bull, the double moustaches of a catfish, and the shell of a tortoise. He could breathe fire out of his nostrils and burn up the grass. With a nail in his tail, he could scratch a furrow like a plow. When he thrashed around, in anger, he could deliver a blow like a battering ram. At the tips of his wings were hooks, as hard as steel. In short, he was like an encyclopædia of everything that was strong, vicious and dreadful. It seemed as if all the might and force of the old creatures, that had lived and died in the ancient forests, before the ocean rolled in, and before the ages of coal, had risen to resurrection in him to make a monster combining all the powers of every living creature.

The worst of the matter was that the Romans, coming into the land, soon found that none of their daughters would be left alive, if that monster kept roaring and rambling about. In ad-

dition to this terror, no one could sleep at night for the noises that he made. His howling, bellowing, hissing, barking, and rumbling were kept up till sunrise. Yet when he was quiet, it was still more dangerous, for then he was lurking for his prey. No parents could trust their lovely daughters outdoors, by night or day. For any girl, who was plump or pretty, was sure to be gulped down alive, or carried off to the dragon's lair in the hills. The fact that no other bill of fare, except one that had a live girl as part of his feast, would satisfy the monster, caused constant anxiety to parents.

For this dragon, while always hungry, was very particular in his diet. He would never make a dinner on a man, or a boy, a horse, or a pig, unless he had fasted a long while and was nearly starving. He thought they tasted "too salty." He was always on the lookout for young and tender maidens, or those well-favored or fat, who might be out picking flowers, or strolling along the road. These, he would seize and then run away swiftly, to his lair. He could easily outstrip any man on foot, even the fleetest runner. If men mounted on horseback to pursue him, he would spread his wide wings, give a flap or two and then rise up into the air, almost darkening the sun, and casting an awful shadow on the earth. It always smelled like burning

brimstone, where the dragon had been. Disappearing among the hills, he would enjoy a feast at his leisure. Soon, the cavern, in which he slept, was covered with maidens' bones; and, not far away, was a pit, into which he threw what was left of the few men and boys, or pigs and ponies, he had eaten up.

While the dragon was coming down from the hills, to make his evening meal of a pretty girl, or to swish her off to his cave, he was careful to sniff the air on every side, lest some brave men in hiding should rush out at him, and put his eye out with an arrow, or push a spear down his throat, or throw fire or poison into his mouth. The dragon could easily swallow up a man, but he feared missles shot or slung at him, whether arrows, sling stones or catapult balls. There were certain parts of his body, such as his eyes, or throat, or the soft places under his front and hind legs, and in the joints between the scales, where a barbed arrow or a sword blow, or spear thrust might penetrate.

The Roman general promised that any man, who would capture or slay this frightful monster, that combined a whole menagerie in himself, should marry his daughter. In addition, he should be owner of all the gold of the scales, which any one could, with hammer and chisel, wrench off from this dragon. But the forehead-

jewel, after adorning the bride's coronet, at her wedding, must be handed over to the Roman Emperor, for a crown possession.

Now there was a brave soldier named Rufinus, who was in love with one of the Roman general's daughters, and had expected to marry her, when May and the flowers should come. He had gone to the great city of Rome, in Italy, to buy a gold ring for his sweetheart, besides jewels and pretty woven stuff for new clothes.

But alas, in the week before he returned, the dragon had seized and carried her off to his lair, to eat her up, on the very day she was to be a bride.

There was mourning in the father's home. The mother wept all day and the old general was constantly asking, "Who will fight the dragon and rescue my daughter?"

When Rufinus was on his way back home, he was met by a man, a native Belgian, famous for his skill as an archer. He, too, was in grief, because his only daughter had been grabbed by the dragon, when out walking with the general's daughter, and he knew not whether she were yet alive. This man offered to go with Rufinus and help to slay the dragon, hoping that neither of the maidens had yet entered the monster's maw. Every night, this poor father's dreams were of skulls and bones.

Without waiting to see any one, not even the general, Rufinus sharpened his sword and spear. He prepared to go out at once, on his swiftest horse to fight the monster. He took with him the Belgian archer, who knew all the paths and hiding places. Then they waited, until the wind was favorable, so that the dragon would not get their scent, and go off in another direction. Then they got to windward of the monster, and hid behind rocks, in a thicket, not far from the roadside.

Toward evening, as the twilight deepened into dusk, Rufinus looked up toward the hilltops. He saw two round spots, like globes of fire, with something also, which was glistening and sending out rays from the centre of his forehead. These were the eyes of the dragon, with the flashing jewel in between. Soon he saw the beams of the rising moon, reflected from the golden scales; as the terrible creature moved slowly down the mountain side. His monstrous nose was bigger than a buffalo's. He was sniffing the air, to the right and to the left, to catch sight, either of a man in hiding, or a maid walking. His long, thick moustaches, like whip cords, thrashed about at everything within reach.

Now, when the dragon moves along over the ground, with folded wings, he never keeps his head quiet, or straight, for one moment; but

sways it from side to side, and up and down, as if to see everything and to catch the scent of any creature near, whether man or beast.

So when Rufinus looked up, he saw this monstrous head, high in the air with open jaws, working and breathing out fire, which crackled like mimic lightning flashes. His long body, half hidden, trailed along, in and out, among the rocks and trees. The wind, blowing toward them, bore the odor of burning sulphur, which, at times, nearly suffocated them. Yet they dared not cough, lest the monster should hear them. For fear the horse might snort, or stamp, or make any noise, the Belgian took out his flask of strong wine and blew some of the liquid into the animal's nostrils; so that, while his nose was tingling, the animal could think of nothing else, so the creature was as quiet, as if made of stone.

Both men, Rufinus on horseback, and the Belgian on foot, felt their hearts beating fast, as the latter waited for the monster to get within arrow range, while Rufinus poised his spear and got ready to spur his horse forward. The Belgian trusted to speed his shaft into the monster's eye, and blind him, while Rufinus hoped for a thrust of his weapon down into the red cavern, into which so many maidens had slipped as food.

Both brave fellows thought not only of the

glory that they should win, for killing the dragon, and delivering the land from a curse, but of the joy and gratitude which the rescued maidens would feel toward them as their deliverers. They would fight, even if they should be eaten up.

When within a hundred yards of the two men, the monster paused to look around, as if he suspected danger. Then he reared up on his hind legs and tail. At this moment the temptation, to the Belgian archer, to shoot, was great; for he was then sure of hitting the dragon in the heart or stomach; but, he kept his arrow on the string, and waited. They could hear the rattling of the golden scales, one upon the other, while the roar, that issued from the monster's throat, by which he expected to scare away any living enemies, reminded them of thunder echoing among the high mountains.

It was the dragon's habit, after finding there was no danger, to halt, then he would rest a while, so as to dispel suspicion, making every one think he had gone; and then, he would silently pounce upon his prey.

"Shall I shoot?" whispered the Belgian excitedly, to Rufinus.

"Yes, but be cool. Take your time and aim for the left eye, the one nearest to us," answered the Roman.

The Belgian drew the arrow clear up to his ear, and let fly. The dragon's cry of pain was so horrible, as almost to freeze the blood in the men's veins. His howls showed that the shaft had hit its mark. Then Rufinus, clapping spurs to his horse, dashed out into the path. The monster, half blinded, flapped his wings, arched his back, rose up on his hind feet and claws, and opened his terrible jaws, to dart at and swallow up the daring Roman. To the horse and rider, there seemed to yawn a deep, red cavern, down which, both might, in a moment, slide. The two men trembled for a moment, but they did not flinch.

But before a claw could touch Rufinus, he had run his long, steel-headed spear, deep down into the monster's throat. Then he drove his rearing horse still forward, and pushed the weapon further down and clear into the monster's heart. With a bellow, that seemed to shake and rend the hills, making echoes even in the distant mountains, the writhing mass of force and flesh fell over. The vicious brute, that, one moment before, seemed to be a combination of all brutes and able to face an army, was now a lifeless mass, dead as a door nail.

Rufinus, drawing his dirk, began digging out of the dragon's forehead, the flaming jewel. Washing it off in the brook, he reveled in its

splendor, and wished it could be for his bride. The Belgian hacked off four or five of the golden scales, to show to the Roman general, as specimens, and to prove his prowess, put them in his pocket.

The two men now gave their attention to rescuing their loved ones.

Neither the father, nor the lover, was, by any means, sure of finding the objects of their quest, the daughter and the betrothed, alive; but, after climbing up the path, a shout of recognition in the distance was heard. It was from both the maidens, who lifted up their voices together. For an hour or more, they were both laughing and crying. In the cavern lair, they found four other girls, that were to make meals for the dragon. He usually kept a supply on hand.

The wedding, of Rufinus and his promised bride, took place the following week; and the Belgian's daughter, her former companion in fear and misery, was one of the bridesmaids.

All this time, the mechanics and goldsmiths, under command of an inspector, were busy in wrenching off the golden scales, to make a dowry for the bride of Rufinus. One of the most skilful craftsmen set the dragon jewel in a coronet. This shone like a radiant star, on the forehead of the lovely bride She looked very sweet, as she walked to church, while all the maidens in the

town scattered flowers before her path. The four girls, that had been rescued from the monster's lair, led the van.

And ever after that, the people of Mons have celebrated the festival of the victory of Rufinus over the golden dragon of the Boringue. But in their Walloon speech, the name of the dragon means a snail, and the name of the hero is Gilles de Chin. Every year the people have their fun, and no wars or troubles can change their customs.

XXI

THE RED CAPS AND THE HUNTERS

ONCE upon a time there was an enormous creature that lived in the Land of Sentiment, called The Lion of the Netherlands. It was as big as the two countries, Holland and Belgium put together. Its lower limbs and haunches extended down, into the southern part of the Seventeen Provinces, and rested upon the high grounds of the Ardennes, upon the crags on which, a burg, or castle, was usually built. So this portion of the earth, which the lion straddled, with his lower limbs, was called Limburg.

When the mighty beast stood up, to make a rampant position, it poked its nose so far north and towards the pole, that it was nearly frozen. So they called that part of the country Friesland; or, as the boys used to spell it—Freezeland! Now the Dutch and Flemish for lion, is Leeuw; and there, the chief city was Leeuwarden, or the Lion City of the North.

The middle part of this creature, that is, the

Lion of the Map, lay between France and Germany. To find room for its long tail, Leeuw had to whisk his tip-tuft almost up to Scotland, while the root end, and bulging curve of the long tail, nearly touched England. It made faces at Germany, but its back was toward the British Isles. Its eyes were very near, what the Dutch call their eilanden, and its grinning mouth opened near a place called Leer.

When this Lion was angry, and got its back up, like a monstrous cat, its roaring could be heard in Denmark.

In this Country of Seventeen Provinces, comprising Dutch folks, the Flemings, and the Walloons, there were also fifty places named, in one way or another, after the king of beasts. There were lion castles, lion hills, lion mountains, lion dykes, caves, corners, lanes, stones, nooks, valleys and capes. It seemed as if every pretty place, in Belgic, Dutch and Walloon geography had a lion for a namesake.

The Netherlanders, however, were not satisfied with only a geographical lion. Nor were they happy in having a lion that lies down only in an atlas, or that lives in fairy land, or of which kings and noblemen are so fond, when they make use of him in heraldry; that is, they put the beast on their banners, seals, crests, and coats of arms. Oldest in Europe is this Belgian lion.

Of these heraldic lions, that were never seen either in cages, or at the circus, nor even in Africa, or Asia, there were too many, already. They were crowned, or double-headed, as if a crown could put more brains in one's noddle! or, as if two heads on the same beast were better than one! Some of them even had two tails, though what a lion, any more than a cow, wanted with more than one tail, was not clear.

Moreover, some of these heraldic beasts had tufted, or floriated tails, like gilliflowers. Or, they were curled in the middle, or frizzed all the way down. These lions were made to wear chains, jewelry, or flowers, or to stand on their hind legs, holding a shield, or coat of arms, or a flaming advertisement, of beer, or turnips, or waffles, or cookies. Besides these, some others had to stand up and wiggle their fore paws, like puppies asking for a dog biscuit. Worse than this, a few had to snicker and smirk, and grin, or leer, as if hearing good news, from their dams or cubs in Africa; or, as if they were reading a comic supplement to a Sunday newspaper. In fact, such lions, except in stone, or wood, or paint, or calico, were never heard of, in the jungles of Asia, or the veldts of Africa.

Now the Belgians wanted a lion, that was not on the map, nor in heraldry, or on a duke's crest, or cut in stone or wood, or in a picture, but a

live one, that could snarl, and bite, and roar, and go on a rampage. Yet, how should they capture a genuine male lion, a real beast, with a big beard and mane? Only one that could growl, and roar, and stand, and leap, or jump ten feet, and be able to eat up a calf, and pick its bones, or swallow ten pounds of mutton, or beef, at a meal, would fill the bill. Besides making faces, and swishing its tail around, and rearing up on its hind legs, and scratching with its four paws, it must have a tufted tail, at least a yard long. Nothing else would suit the Belgians, who are very proud of their country. They wanted a lion that would beat all creation.

Now there were two hunters, who were reckoned the bravest in all the Belgic realm. One was a Fleming and spoke Dutch. The other was a Walloon, and his speech was French; but the talk of both was about wild game, and how to get it. Happily, both understood each other's language, when, in conversation about lions, or any other subject that related to the chase.

In these old days, before guns or powder, or bullets or cannon, they hunted wild animals with spears; and, with their arrows, they could bring down any bears, boars, or aurochs in the land. They had trapped all sorts of smaller animals, such as deer, foxes, rabbits, hares, and weasels,

beside every variety of wild ducks, geese, and other birds, that were good to eat.

But a lion! Even if they went to Africa, how could they lure one out of the bush into the veldt, or get at him, when near a water hole? Their idea was to bring one alive to Belgium, in order to exhibit him. Then, the people would know what the real king of beasts was. Then, the artists and sculptors, also, could make pictures or statues. They might thus be able to learn, and to show, the difference between an imaginary or a paper lion, and the genuine monarch of the jungle.

These two hunters met at a place called Kabouterberg, or the Hill of the Elves, or fairies, called Kabouters; though the Belgian fairies that live in caves, are called Klabbers, or Red Caps. In this hill, which is near Gelrode village, one may see a number of little caves, where they used to live long ago. The two hunters and the elves were great friends. It is even commonly reported among the peasants, that these brave fellows could often see the Klabbers, when no one else could lay eyes on them; for they had unusually sharp eyesight. Though these hunters killed birds and animals for food, or fur, or to sell them, for a living, they were never once cruel. So the little Klabbers, liked the hunters, and never played any *quellen,* or bad tricks, on

them, or their traps; though the imps often vexed mean and naughty people. Then these angry folks would call these Red Caps "quel-duivels," or plaguey rascals, but for this, the Klabbers did not care a copper.

These two hunters having finished their long tramp, the one from the Ardennes and the other from the Campine, met late in the afternoon, at Gelrode. Being hungry, each pulled out of his bag, some sausages and bread; and there they sat eating until twilight.

"I hope we shall see the Klabbers, tonight," said one fellow to the other. "I wonder if they are likely to come out."

"I think it probable," said the other. "The little Red Caps play around here very often. I've seen them before. They are always up to some tricks, or play, and I like to see them at it."

The hunters had not long to wait, for no sooner had the shades of evening fallen, than out of the small caves in the hill, issued the funniest sort of a procession of little people, of all colors. Some had green faces and hands and others had blue. Each bore a tiny lantern, hardly as big as a glow worm; so that they looked like a line of fireflies. They made a sort of parade, several hundreds of feet long. Each one had, stuck in his belt, a little roll of something.

A Klabber is about half as high as a yard stick. As to their bodies, some were all red, from top to bottom, some yellow, some pink, and some blue.

There were a few white and black ones, but all had either green or blue hands and faces, with red caps on their heads.

Having come out for a frolic, they soon ranged themselves, in two long opposite rows, one against the other.

Then they began to dance, and caper, and tumble head over heels, and pull each other's noses, which made the two hunters laugh heartily.

But pretty soon, with the many colors of their bodies and bright caps, and green hands and red faces, they made such a medley of tints and hues, that the hunters laughed still more uproariously at the jolly sight. They could not tell which was which. From being puzzled, the two men got so confused, that they suffered from a real brain storm. It was as though a hundred rainbows had been all smashed together, or were wobbling about. By and bye, there seemed no color at all, and the men actually became dizzy.

The next bit of fun, on the Red Caps' program, was to tear up the bits of paper, which they carried in their belts, and roll them round. Or they made their little torches, out of dead twigs and leaves. Then, when all was ready,

they ranged themselves into two lines again, as if two parties were trying to see which could beat the other in a game of smoke.

Each Red Cap pulled out his lantern and lighted the little roll of paper and leaves. Then he tried to blow the smoke into the face of a rival, on the opposite side. All the time, they kept up their laughing and chattering, like a lot of monkeys.

These Klabbers, were playing the game called camouflet, or smoke-blow. By the time the game was half over, the eyes of most of them were full of smoke, so that hardly any could see where they were going. In their glee, they tumbled over each other, making such a mess of colors, that the hunters were themselves so stupefied, that they began to wonder whether they had any brains left; for they could neither distinguish one color, or one Klabber, from another. When the men thought of rainbows, they wondered if rainbows ever got drunk.

At last, when all were tired out, and the fun lagged, the general of the Klabbers called off the game, and announced which side had gained the victory. The Green Faces had won over the Blues.

Then all the Klabbers picked up their lanterns, and, marching back up the hill, disappeared, in the little holes, or caves.

"Saint Christopher, help me! I have it," said the Flemish hunter. "We'll go to Africa and play the camouflet game on the lions. We'll give them a brain storm of color, and then we'll catch them, when their heads are upset.

"By Saint Hubert, yes," said the Walloon. "Come on! Let us make a big thing of it and call it camouflage. We'll capture our lion with paintpots and brushes. The bigger the lion, the easier he will be fooled."

When the hunters lay down to sleep, they dreamed of camouflaged houses, ships, lions and men and of their voyage to Africa.

XXII

THE SPLIT TAILED LION

THE two hunters went to Antwerp and embarked on one of the large ships, such as the crusaders made use of, to get to Jerusalem.

Reaching the mouth of the Nile, they tarried awhile in Cairo and in Khartoum, and then pushed into the interior. They engaged a company of native blacks, to carry their baggage, beat the bush, drive out the lions, and carry the beast, when caught, in a cage; to the return ships.

The whole party, strung out in a line, marched into a famous wide valley, where were also veldts, or open spaces. They camped to the windward of a big water hole, to which the lions resorted, for drink and their prey. There, they made a strong "hide-up," or enclosure, of tall reeds, bushes, and boughs of trees, all interlaced together. This was for them to hide behind. Here they opened the lids of their paintpots, and got ready their brushes to daub themselves all over, with seventeen different tints and hues, in streaks, spots, dabs, lines and figures.

The next day, the negroes brought in a report that, besides several small lions, that were in the bush, there was one big fellow, the king of them all. He was a famous man-eater, and had tasted many a black daddy and mammy, besides not a few pickaninnies. So it is no wonder that the African people, in telling the hunters about this beast, made him out to be so enormous, that it was thought a whole ox could hardly furnish him with one dinner; but this was just the sort about which they wanted to hear, for they were not afraid. They had been practicing camouflage, while on the ship and were now experts. The way they could sling paint on a man's body, and dress him up in damaged rainbows, made them feel sure they could upset all the lion's calculations. In fact, they believed they could raise a brain storm, in any beast that tried to look at them, no matter how large, or cunning he might be.

First they had the negroes dig a deep pit, and cover it over with poles, branches, leaves and earth. They caught a fat pig, and in spite of its squeals, they tied it to a stake, in front of the pit, out on the flat ground.

Then, stripping off their clothes, the two men went to the paint pots. They striped each other in wide bands, of several colors, painted round blotches, and curves, back and front, and so

daubed, and streaked, and spotted their faces, arms, legs, back and front, that one look might make a man or beast, first cross-eyed, and then blind, and finally stupefied. Even the scabbards of their long knives, their only arms—for they would take no risks—when painted in streaks, looked like a lot of crooked rainbows.

When the signal was given to the black men, to go around and shout, and beat the bush, Piggy began to squeal and ramp around, as if he knew he would soon be inside the lion. At once the big brute seeing the pig, and hoping to get a good meal, advanced toward what he supposed was to be his dinner.

Now this king of the lions had often seen human beings, but these were always of a dark color, with tints, ranging from chocolate brown to ebony black. He had eaten men and children for breakfast, dinner and supper, with an occasional extra lunch in the form of a baby. The lion's idea was, that all human beings were black, for he had never traveled to Europe, with a circus company, or to Rome to fight and claw gladiators. So, when driven out by the shouting of the bush-beaters, the big beast plunged out into the veldt, and charged toward the pork. He was the father of lions, in size, with a face as big as a wash tub, and on which there was enough long hair to stuff a mattress with.

Yet in the way things turned out, there was no need, either of pig, or pit; for the paint pots did the business. The two brave hunters were not afraid of the monstrous beast. They rushed out of their hide-up, and stood in his path, moving about zig-zag and crosswise, from right to left. This bothered the lion most awfully. He could not tell who was who, or which was which, or what was what. Relatively speaking, he forgot whether he was himself, or his wife, or his cubs, or something else.

Now the lion is an intellectual beast, at least he has that reputation; but what creature lives, that can take in, and hold, two ideas at one time? But, to have seventeen colors, hues, tints, and shades, moving before him, fairly scrambled the contents of the lion's brain pan.

As the two hunters leaped, danced, capered, gyrated and turned somersaults before him, the beast lost all power to think or move. His brain became as an omelet. He fell down helpless, whining piteously.

The two camouflaged hunters then went up to his very nose and tweaked it. They pulled his ears, they jerked his tail, and they dragged his carcass around; yet he cared nothing about all this, for he was wondering whether he was a lion; or if not, what?

Before he could unscramble his senses and re-

cover his eyesight, the hunters, with help of a score or more of the sturdy negroes, had boxed him up. The cage was slung on the shoulders of a dozen bearers, and borne in triumph to the ship.

On the voyage back to Belgium if, at any time, the king of beasts was surly, or misbehaved himself, or wanted fresh meat in the form of a sailor, instead of salt pork, all that was necessary to make him a good lion again, was for one of the hunters to camouflage himself, in all colors, and then make believe to enter his den to chastise him. But no spear, or red hot iron, or bottle of hartshorne was necessary.

The lion, on seeing the frightful figure, stopped his roaring at once, got down off his hind legs, ceased his rampage, and settled down as quiet as a guinea pig. Sometimes he would even lie down and roll over on his back and flop his paws up and down, as if to say, "Please don't! I'll be a good lion, if you won't tire my poor brain, and give me a headache, with your old camouflage." But occasionally, he gave a low growl as if swearing at such an impish invention; for, the story-teller is grieved to say that the lion learned some bad language while aboard the ship.

Nevertheless, it was not the beast but the men, that broke the peace; for one was a Fleming and

the other a Walloon, and they quarrelled as to which part of Belgium was the oldest and most honorable from the time of Cæsar. Each stood up stoutly for his language, and his district, claiming that it was his ancestors that had made Belgium great.

For this time of their quarrel was long before the Belgian people were a true nation, with one flag, one king and a glorious national unity.

One day, the two men got into a dispute as to which of the two, the Walloon, or the Fleming, deserved the greater credit, for confusing and capturing the lion. The contention waxed so hot, that they almost came to blows. Then each one camouflaged himself and tried to get possession of the lion, both entering the cage, but from opposite sides.

But at such a sight, the king of beasts again lost his wits, and had two brain storms at one time, from opposite lobes of the brain. He retreated into a corner, stuck his nose through the bars, and curled up his legs and toes, so that neither of the hunters could get hold of anything but his tail, and hardly more than the tuft of that. Each man grabbed hold of his caudal hair and pulled so hard, that, in spite of the roars of pain, from the poor beast, they split the creature's tail, half way up, and it never healed, or came together again.

So with a split tail, double for half its length, but, fortunately with a bit of tuft on each tip, the Belgian lion flourishes today. One half of its divided tail is Walloon and the other half Flemish; yet now, with pure patriotism, and loyal to a hero king and a noble queen, and with all the people united in devotion to their homeland, only the Belgian lion's tail recalls the history of the past; while its body and limbs represent the majesty, the courage, and the devotion of the brave Belgian people.

XXIII

RINALDO AND HIS WONDERFUL HORSE BAYARD

THERE was a Belgian lord, named Aymon, who built a castle in the mountainous part of Belgium. It was on so high a peak that it seemed also as if no one but eagles, or fairies, could live in it.

Besides his brave soldiers with him in the castle, Aymon's four stalwart sons were there to help him. Their names were Rinaldo, Allard, Guichard, and Richard. They were the biggest men known in the country. Rinaldo, the oldest, was as tall as the largest giant, for he stood sixteen feet high. When he rode a horse, he had to twist his legs up around the pommel of his saddle, so that his heels or toes would not dig into the ground, or drag on behind. In fact, no horse wanted to be under him, and there was always misery in stables, whenever it was known that Rinaldo wanted to go out riding, or hunting. But the horse Bayard always enjoyed careering over the country with his master in the saddle.

Happily, this long-legged fellow had a cousin,

named Mangis, who pitied him for having such long legs, and being thus obliged to pay a large tailor's bill, every time he wanted a pair of leggings. Moreover, Marquis was sorry for the horses which Rinaldo had to ride, and wanted to find out some way to make it easier, for the dumb creatures in the stables.

Now the castle of Duke Aymon was at Egremont, a few leagues from the famous city of Liège. Its master thought it to be so strong, that no army, however brave, or supplied with good engineers and plenty of catapults, could ever conquer it.

When Charlemagne sent a host of mighty men to Egremont, and the commander ordered his trumpeter to go to the gate of Aymon, and there demand his surrender, the proud Duke behaved both haughtily and naughtily. He put his thumb to his nose and then wiggled his four fingers at the trumpeter, in the most impolite manner. He then bade his master to go and eat turnips, and not bother him any more, with his foolish chatter about surrendering. He had beef, and bread, and sausages, and oats and hay, enough to last five years. Moreover, he did not care a clam shell for Charlemagne and all his host. Let them go and fight the Saracens, if they wanted to. Who cared?

The trumpeter came once more, and repeated

his demand that Duke Aymon should come out of his castle, and kneel down before Charlemagne and beg his pardon, kiss his hand, and promise to be loyal and obedient.

But the Duke, instead of listening politely, was even more impudent, than before. This time he not only wiggled the fingers of his right hand at the trumpeter, but he actually wiggled-waggled. That is, as soon as the trumpeter ceased blowing, he put his right thumb to his nose, and then, joining the little finger of the right hand, to the thumb of his left hand, he made a most contemptuous double motion, with all of his ten fingers wiggling at once.

At this the trumpeter, having lost his temper at the Duke, who was high up on the walls, shook his fist at him, and went off in high dudgeon. He reported to Charlemagne that his overproud vassal had actually wiggled-waggled to his face.

Thereupon, Charlemagne ordered his army to bring up the catapults, and they sent a storm of stones into the castle. They hurled blazing bundles of oil soaked in tow, while the archers and crossbowmen swept the turrets and walls with showers of arrows, and iron-headed bolts. This was to keep off the besiegers from the ramparts, so that they could not interfere with the sappers and miners. These men were far down on the lowest side of the castle, digging be-

low the foundations, so as to undermine the walls and tumble them down. They dug the earth away, with their picks and hammers, and then knocked away several rods of masonry. At first, they supported the walls at intervals with heavy pillars of wood, made of tree trunks, until all was ready. Then, they would set the wooden columns on fire, and the whole side of the castle would fall down.

Then again, Aymon was summoned to surrender, but nothing came of it; for, hardly had the echoes of the trumpet died away, before the duke was seen again at his old game of "sniggle-fritz"; that is, of playing wiggle-waggle, with both hands and his ten fingers. Meanwhile, he said all sorts of saucy things, boasting of how many barrels of salt beef he had in his larder, and bushels of oats in his bins.

Poor old fellow, he did not know that the fires, under the foundations of the walls, were to be kindled that night, which would spill most of his castle and all of his storehouses and stables into the valley, far beneath.

But his oldest son Rinaldo, the long-legged fellow, had also a long neck, like a rope. Stretching it out, with his body leaning far over the wall, he could see what was coming. But his father, the duke, would not yet believe there was any danger.

So Rinaldo got the horse Bayard, with the family saddle cleaned up, and all ready to escape. He vowed to keep up the war, even if his father was taken prisoner.

This was just what happened. Even when the enemy lighted the fires, at sundown, and the smoke rolled up over the ramparts, the old Duke stubbornly pooh-poohed the idea of any real danger.

But about midnight, a terrific noise, like a peal of thunder, was heard. Then one would have thought that the tail board of a cart, as large as a town hall, had been pulled out, and a million bricks were being dumped out. The walls slid down, the towers crashed over, and barns, storehouses, soldiers, horses, and engines of war were tumbled in one heap of rubbish into the valley.

Then Charlemagne's host rushed in with sword and spear. The Duke Aymon was taken prisoner and sent to Aix-la-Chapelle.

But Rinaldo was ready. Hearing the enemy's trumpet sound for the charge, he went to the stable, situated on the safe side of the castle, and led out the horse Bayard. Then he called his three brothers to his side, and coolly fed the animal a peck of magic oats, which the enchanter, Maugis, had given him. He was in no hurry, for he knew what was coming, while the three brothers watched in wonder. Rinaldo had in mind a secret path through the woods.

At the first mouthful of oats, Bayard began to lengthen out and enlarge, steadily increasing in size; until, having finished its feed, the faithful brute looked up and nodded. Some say he winked his eye, as if he enjoyed fooling the enemy.

The four brothers then leaped upon Bayard's back, and away he flew like the wind, never stopping until the heart of the forest of Ardennes was reached.

There, at Montfort, overlooking the Ourthe River, one of the highest rocky places, they reared a still stronger castle, with a triple line of walls and moats. The keep, or donjon, was perched on a pinnacle. There they lived unmolested several years, keeping up a wild life as outlaws; concerning which all Belgian children have heard. They defied Charlemagne to come and take their stronghold.

They built a special stable, long enough to hold the horse Bayard, when he should lengthen himself out; either for his own amusement, or for the family of brothers, to take a ride. They gave him every day a good feed of oats and hay, and the mountain springs furnished the best of water. They made for him a new saddle, which was eight feet long, so that the four brothers could ride more comfortably, if they had to mount him again in a hurry, to escape, or to go for a long joy ride.

But Charlemagne, resolving to get rid of these troublesome fellows, came into the Ardennes, with a bigger army and many war engines. After a long siege, he captured the castle.

Again the wonderful horse, Bayard, was brought out and its lengthened back having been duly strapped with the saddle, which was as big as a sofa, the four brothers jumped nimbly on its back. Bayard was so swift, that they escaped every one of the war bolts and arrows, which whizzed past them, from the sharpshooters, who were posted up in the trees and among the rocks. In fact, in its fleetness, this wonderful horse beat the wind. The four brothers never ceased their gallop, until they had reached Gascony, in France, in the dominions of King Yon. Here they entered his service, to drive out the Saracens.

But although they served loyally in the army of this monarch, who used a good deal of Gasconade, or boasting about his benevolence, he proved a traitor. He basely delivered up the four brothers to Charlemagne; but in due time they all escaped.

Now this story is not so much about the four men, as about Bayard, the most famous of all horses.

It is enough to say, that, after this time, the four brothers separated, three to seek more ad-

ventures in war, and the fourth to follow the pursuits of peace. What became of the three, who were the younger, we are not informed.

About the tall brother, Rinaldo, however, many stories are told, and a thousand streets, hotels, or parks, in France and Italy and Belgium, are named after him. Tired of war, he became a monk and entered the cloister in the city that makes sweet smelling eau de Cologne, or cologne water. He had shown much skill in building forts and castles, but now he resolved to rear a grand cathedral, more splendid than any in the Rhine country. He thus became one of the first architects of that noble house of worship, whose two magnificent spires have been completed, only within the memory of men still living.

Rinaldo evidently had a bad temper, and, this time, instead of a quarrel over a chess board, he got into a row with the masons, and these rough fellows threw him into the river Rhine and let him drown. Yet later the pope made him a saint and a fine monument to his memory, and over his relics, was reared in the city of Dortmund, where the Germans brew much beer and whence, from the mines near by, they dig up much coal.

Of the younger brothers, the last one before he died, gave Bayard a good feed of oats, and

then slapping him on the flank let him go free. Bayard trotted off and back to Belgic Land and into the forest of Ardennes. There, happy and free with no work to do, or burdens to carry, Bayard enjoyed the freedom of the wild horse.

But at last, Charlemagne's men captured the splendid animal, and brought him before the mighty ruler, who thus addressed Bayard:

"You have often in the past brought my plans to naught, but now you do so no more."

Thereupon Charlemagne gave orders that a great heavy stone, as big as a load of hay, should be tied around his neck. Then Bayard was to be driven off the high rock at Dinant, into the Maas, or Meuse, River; and, as every one might expect, to be drowned.

Now the lofty pinnacle rock at Dinant, called the Roche à Bayard, stands up by the river side. In shape, it is like an old fashioned sugar loaf, or a colossal Lombardy poplar, or a pointed fir tree, turned into stone. Close to it, is the solid bed rock of the hill. Between both, a famous high road runs, so that the two masses form a natural stone portal, or gateway, into the suburbs of the famous and beautiful city of Dinant.

Thousands of people assembled to see the wonderful sight, expecting the funeral and a watery grave of a noble animal that must surely be drowned. Some wept copiously, at the loss of so

splendid a creature. Bayard had certainly been loyal to its masters and deserved a better fate.

But, instead of grief and sadness, there was merriment. In place of drowning, a resurrection and a triumph surprised the multitude of gazers. For one moment, the gallant animal was seen, leaping into the air. Then, with a tremendous splash, the horse fell into the Maas River.

In the next moment, however, he had shaken off the load, and leaving the big stone behind him, swam across the river. Emerging from the stream, Bayard shook off the water from his flank. Then, rearing up on his hind legs, he neighed three times, as much as to say "catch me, if you can"; and trotted off into the woods.

No wonder the Belgian children believe that such a horse is immortal, and still lives. He courses, even yet, through the Ardennes forest. He neighs occasionally, but never allows himself to be seen of men, for he does not trust them.

What King Arthur is to the Welsh little folks, the horse Bayard, is to the children in Belgium, for the fairy horse Bayard, never dies.

XXIV

THE BELGIAN BUNNY

LONG before there was a church spire in Belgic Land, or a cross had gleamed in the sunset air, there was a lovely fairy, named Eastre. She was so bright and beautiful, that men thought of her as the lady of the up-springing light, at dawn, where her palace was built in the air. So they called her Eastre, or the East, or the Orient, after that part of the sky and the world, from which the sunshine first comes daily, and also, whence, for thousands of years, so many things have come from the dear old mother continent of Asia!

Now, on one of her first daily journeys, in traveling from the Orient, Queen Eastre, who was very fond of the Belgian people, brought with her a special gift for them. It was not gold, or pearls, or flowers, but four members of the rodent, or gnawing family; that is, a pair of rabbits, and a couple of hares. These long eared creatures look very much like each other, but belong to different species. She set them loose in the country and let them run free. They soon

multiplied, so that, in a century or so, there were millions of them, in both families.

Wherever one went, he would see Mr. and Mrs. Bunny and their children. Whether it was up in the hills, or the high part of the Walloon country, where the birch and the pine trees grow, and the houses are of stone, or, down in the Flemish low lands, where are the lime and willow trees, and many houses of wood or birch, there were the Bunny families and plenty of them.

Most of these fuzzy creatures were well behaved, and quite mild in their manners. The children liked them and had rabbit warrens, or burrows in the ground, where the tuft-tails lived; or, they kept them in coops, or open boxes, as pets. The little folks were delighted to find them so soft and fluffy. Their long ears served for handles, by which they could be lifted up easily, and carried about. The bunnies did not squeal, or bite, or kick, though they sometimes squirmed and wriggled tremendously. The boys and girls gave their pets queer names, such as Molly Cotton-tail, Mr. Buzz-Fuzz, Monsieur Snowball, or Mynheer Powder Puff, in winter; and, in summer, Bark Nibbler, or Hop Skipper, or Three Lips. This was on the idea, that the upper covering of the mouth consisted of two parts, instead of one.

Nobody ever knew, or could tell, why Mr. Bunny or Mrs. Bunny had a split upper lip; but all noticed that both the little and big bunnies had the same sort of a mouth-covering. This was very plain to be seen; for, except when they were asleep, the pretty creatures were either eating, or chewing something; and so they appeared to be nibbling or gnawing most of the time. Yet this was long before the days of chewing gum, when even human beings and some polite people let their mouths act like those of four-footed folk. In fact, these Belgian bunnies seemed to be just like some of our girls, that buy gum in the shops and then work their jaws, until they are tired and gradually grow very large, like a camel's or a donkey's.

But after the Belgians had built churches, and took the fairy queen's name for a great festival, which occurred, when the flowers were out, and eggs were plenty, it was told why it was; and this was the story:

Ages ago, when the moon was young, there lived a pretty fairy in the Sky Country of Silver Light, with whom Bunny—they called him Prince Bunny then, for he was very handsome—fell in love. He often looked up at the moon, which hung in the sky, like a round mirror. There he imagined he saw his own face. So he came to believe himself as handsome as she was.

He wanted so much to get married, that he became crazy over her. Especially, in the month of March, did he get wildly excited, for in those far off early days, the old year ended, and the new one began, in that month. At nearly the same time, the earth began to think of putting on her beautiful new dress of flowers. It was not until long afterward, in western countries, that the almanac was changed, so that New Year's day came as it does now, in January, and thus the flower time was pushed forward, almost into summer.

Prince Bunny kept on making love to the fairy in the moon, and at last she had to get rid of his importunity, that is, his teasing her, for an answer, by letting him come up into her shining palace.

But no sooner was he there, than she cast a spell upon him, and made him work hard as a servant. She gave him some rushes, that had much grit in them, and acted like a scouring cloth. Then she set him to polishing the moon's bright face; so, that when she turned it full and round upon the earth, she could flood the whole sky with her radiance. By her light on the earth, men could see to read, even at midnight, and old ladies in Scotland could thread needles at nine o'clock.

After thus brightening up her face, and help-

ing to increase her beauty, Bunny, the prince, thought his mistress would change him back into a human being, and let him marry her.

But lo! Whatever her intention might have been, she fell sick and called one of the famous genii, who was the doctor of the sky world. He felt her pulse, put his hand upon her forehead and made her open her pretty mouth, to show her tongue. Then he decided that nothing could cure her dreadful disorder and make her well again, but the elixir of life. This is compounded chiefly from the bruised leaf of the cassia tree, and the medicine must be given often. In fact, nothing else would do, but that Prince Bunny must go to the planet Venus, and get a young cassia tree, that grew there and transplant it to Moon Land. Then, for a thousand years, as men on earth measure time, the cassia leaves must be pounded in a mortar, with a pestle, and out of the juice the elixir of life must be made.

And, of course, nobody could go and get this wonderful tree, but Prince Bunny. He also must plant it, pick the leaves, and pound away, until the magic liquid flowed. Of course, the Moon Lady said to Bunny, calling him Prince, and putting on her sweetest smile, "You will be glad to do this service, because of your great affection for me. So run along, and be quick."

Prince Bunny made the journey, and pulled

up the tree by the roots. When he returned to the Moon Land, he planted it, plucked the leaves, and began to pound away to make the medicine. From time to time, the elixir was made and the Moon Queen drank it and got well, but Bunny had to keep on. Many millions of mortals on the earth, when they saw how busy and faithful he was at his task, admired his devotion. They noticed, also, that he had changed from being a courting lad to a druggist. Then they said:

"How he must love her!" and many a faithful maiden sighed, hoping she might have so fervent a lover and so faithful a spouse.

But during all this while, to the Fairy Queen, there was no such thing as time; for the moon is never in shadow like the earth, and there is no night in Moon Land. So she hardly noticed his absences, either when on his journey, or at his work, which made him so terribly tired. The fairy's spell was on him, and he had to keep at his toil, according to the calendar, which men used on the earth.

After a thousand years of pounding in the mortar, and handing over the cassia leaves, to be made into the elixir of life, Prince Bunny felt quite sure that the Moon Queen would now take him for her husband. But she, being now well and hearty, called him to her and said:

"Now that the Belgians have churches, I want you to go down into their country and bear from me a message. You are to present it through the Queen of the East, the fairy, Eastre.

And this was the word, which the Moon Queen gave to be delivered:

"For days together, you mortals see me die in the sky; but I come again into fullness of life. So shall you die, but live again. This is my message to you. May you be happy as you think of it."

But Prince Bunny flew into a rage. He was smarting under three grievances. The Moon Queen had kept him so long, working for her; she would not now release him into his former human form; and, she would not marry him, and be his wife. So, in bad temper, this is the way he gave his message to the Belgic folk.

"As I die and live no more, so shall it be with you poor mortals."

Alas that the people all believed what Bunny said, and they grieved for a long time, but Prince Bunny only laughed and chuckled over the mischief he had made.

When he returned to Moon Land, the Queen asked him what he had said, or done, for she heard the people crying. Then he answered, with impudence, and boasted that he had outwitted human beings, who often treated bunnies

badly. He rather thought the Queen might be impressed with his smartness and that now, she would marry him.

But the Lady of the Moon was very angry at him, and lost her self-control. Seeing a hatchet lying near, which Prince Bunny had used to chop off twigs of the cassia tree, she lifted it up and threw it at him. The blade struck Bunny on the upper lip, and divided it forever. Prince Bunny went first to all the doctors, that live in Moon Land, and among the stars, and, finally, to all that then dwelt on the earth. Not one could help him, or close the cleft in his upper lip. And all bunnies became like him.

As for the people in Belgic Land, they soon learned how the bad prince had deceived them. They recovered their faith, and named the day of the glorious Feast of the Resurrection, after the fairy of the radiant dawn and upspringing light, whom their ancestors loved so dearly. Thus they called the festival, that comes at the opening of the flowers. To our time, this, the happiest day of the year, is, in English, "Easter."

But because Prince Bunny had been so wicked, that was no reason why all hares and rabbits should be punished for his naughtiness.

So the real Bunny, that frisks on four legs, was adopted as the symbol of Easter, along with the eggs, and the hot cakes, which, baked the

HE BEGAN TO POUND AWAY AND MAKE THE MEDICINE

day before and stamped with the mark of the cross, were served at the Easter breakfast. Of these every child had one, but it was called not bunny, but for short, bun; or "hot cross bun."

Even this was not all. Not every family could afford hot cross buns, or even Easter eggs. There was one poor peasant, who had been sick many months. Not being able to earn any money, he was very sad, as Easter day came near, for he could buy neither buns nor eggs, for the three little girls, who were his children.

However, being a man of faith, and loving his little folks very dearly, he told them to make a nest, and to pray to the good Father in Heaven, who made both the sun, and the moon, and the earth, and the flowers. So the little maids went to bed early, that night. They were so eager to get up betimes, in the morning, that they did not undress, but got under the covers, with their clothes on. In this way, their mother found them at early dawn and first light, fast asleep, and drenched with perspiration, because the night was unusually warm.

She woke them up, washed their faces, and let them go out to the barn, to see if anything was in the nest, which they had made. Hand in hand, they first skipped, and then they ran, all reaching the door of the barn together. This they pulled open, in a jiffy.

What a sight! There sat a big rabbit on his haunches, wiggling his front paws up and down, as if he was trying to laugh, in order to welcome them and share their joy. Apparently, this bunny was as happy as a rabbit, or hare, could be. There, in the nest, lay three lovely eggs.

Now, many people in Belgium delight to think this fuzzy fellow, in the barn, was no other than Prince Bunny, who had repented of his naughtiness, and asked permission to come down on the earth, for one night; at the time for the first full moon after the spring equinox, on the 21st of March.

But just how he was able to furnish an Easter breakfast is a question no mere man has been able to answer, even to this day.

XXV

THE FAIRIES OF THE KITCHEN

IN early ages, there came into Belgic Land, a new set of people, called the Romans. For awhile, there was war, but the Belgians were brave and loved their country so dearly, that the Romans admired their courage, and they afterwards helped the very men, with whom they once fought battles. Indeed, Cæsar, their great general, wrote in his book, "The Belgians are, of all peoples, the bravest." Yet this was largely because they did not live, crowded together in the cities, but in the country they were hardy and strong, because they had plenty of sunshine, pure water, and fresh air.

The Romans brought into Belgic Land many good things to eat and new kinds of clothes. They built wonderful bridges and roads. They showed the people how to rear more comfortable houses and to have farms and gardens, with cows, and sheep, and chickens, ducks and geese.

But most wonderful of all, these Romans brought in, from Oriental countries, spices and

things that smell and taste good, and gold-colored fruit, called oranges and lemons. With peaches from Persia, grapes and apples and figs from the southern lands, and a variety of delicious eatables from the Orient, there was now plenty of fruit, which had been unknown before. It really seemed to the children of the Belgians that they had a new country, such as their fathers and grandfathers never even dreamed of.

Even better than all these wonderful gifts, to see and taste and smell, and the strange pets, such as peacocks, and rabbits, and song birds, with occasionally a tiger, or lion's cub, in a cage, and the circus shows and chariot races, which delighted young and old, there came a new kind of people in the land. These told the story of the Father in Heaven, and about the best Friend human beings ever had, and how he lived on earth, in the Holy Land, and loved children, and helped the poor and healed the sick. Moreover, these men and women were like him their Master, for they too took care of the weak, and old, and ill and feeble. They taught the Belgic people to be kind and good to each other, and not fight and quarrel.

If they told the people not to believe in the Druids and the mistletoe, it was because they wanted them to know more about the good God, who made the trees and flowers, and the sun

and stars, and bade winter and summer and spring and autumn come and go, and who wanted to make us all more happy, by our being his dear and obedient children. So by and bye, the Belgians ceased to worship trees, and the mistletoe, but had plenty of fun in the woods and under the mistletoe boughs, when young men and maidens met.

When at first, the Roman soldiers made war with the Belgians, the fairies were very sorry, and hid away from the noise of battle. But now, they gladly welcomed these new people, who built churches and taught such good news from Heaven. So they called a congress, and, meeting together, talked one with the other, as to how they might help these strangers that loved the Belgians.

At first, the fairies could not decide what to do, for they were dumbfounded to find that human beings seemed actually smarter, and able to do greater things, than they. These outsiders had brought into the land many good things, such as no Belgian fairy folk had ever thought of. The Romans had, indeed, cut down many of the grand forests, in which the fairies had lived, and about this they were sorry and even angry. Yet these same people made such fine roads, and laid out such beautiful farms, and had brought in so many bright and wonderful things,

that the fairies could find no fault with them. In fact, they praised them highly.

Although fairies do not eat anything, unless, it may be, to sip dew, or taste a drop or two of the honey, which bees make, yet they saw that human creatures loved dearly to eat and drink. In truth, some of them seemed to think more of tickling their palates and filling their stomachs than of anything else.

So the fairies decided that the best way, to please their human friends, was to get up some sort of delicacy. They called up one of the oldest and wisest of their number, who had been in the Belgian kitchens. These fairies had gone to play tricks upon the cooks, in the palaces of the rich, and upon the girls and mothers of the poor people, that lived in cabins. They were only mischievous, however, and did not destroy anything, but only amused themselves, in order to sharpen people's wits.

There was another very wise fairy, that had learned the language and could understand what men and women meant, when they talked. As often as they opened their mouths and lips, and let sounds come out of their throats, the fairy would listen and could distinguish between what they said, and what the dogs meant, when they barked, or the horses, when they whinnied. This fairy, also, told what would please the humans;

having heard much talk in the kitchen, the market, the barn and the house yards.

After these two wise fairies had reported, it was agreed that the best way to reach the hearts of both children and grown folks was down through their mouths and throats. One solemn old fairy proposed that the best time, to please the Belgians, would be when they celebrated the birthday of their greatest Friend, who was once a babe in a manger. Besides what the kitchen fairy had described, the other one, that often flew into churches, told what had been heard there.

All the fairies listened very attentively, while this one was giving the whole story, of how wise men from the East, where lay the lands of gold and spices, and perfumes, came to worship the young child. Much to the surprise of these three travelers, they found the royal baby in the hay, and its mother among the cows and sheep, and the hecks, or fodder racks of the animals.

Yet right there, without waiting for the wonderful child to be seen in a palace, they opened their treasures and made presents to the baby's parents. Their gifts consisted of bright, yellow gold and sweet smelling, costly frankincense. Besides the two royal or rich wise men, there was one of the three who was poor, and could afford only myrrh. Yet this spice, which, when mixed

with fragrant oil and resin, made the ordinary incense, was as gladly received as was the golden censer, or the more costly compound.

"Now," said the two wise fairies, almost in the same breath, "why cannot we make a dainty dish, worthy of being set before a king? Let us combine, in one delicious pie, all the elements of the Bethlehem stable scene, and bake it in a dish shaped like a manger, or feed-trough. Thus, in what these good people shall eat, they shall have a picture of the Oriental gifts, gold and the spices, frankincense and myrrh. In this way, people can think of the beautiful lands afar off, without having to travel in ships over oceans, or on horses over mountains, or on camels with caravans over the deserts.

"Besides these treasures of the Orient, we shall blend meat from the oxen, with fruits, herbs and delicious foods, which are products of our own Belgic Land. So shall we unite, in one dish, what is East and West, and present, at every single mouthful, what has been grown under the hands of the Belgic, the Roman, and the Oriental peoples."

To represent the gold the fairies got together, from the ships, golden oranges, lemons, yellow wine, honey, turmeric powder, and whatever was pleasant to the taste, that would also remind the eater of gold, the most precious of metals, brought from afar, from the wise men.

Then, for spices, the fairies collected mace, cinnamon, all-spice, raisins, nutmegs, currants, sugar, dates, and whatever came from Oriental lands that was delightful to taste or smell.

For myrrh, which was the poor man's offering, they chopped up many home-made things, good to eat, that had also a good smell and which grew out of the ground, or are raised on Belgic soil; such as apples, pears, garden herbs, and what they knew would please the Belgians. These they chopped up, all together, making a mince, or mixture.

To represent the cattle, they took beef and suet, well cooked, cut fine, and mixed the meat with the other things, so as to make the whole worthy of being called mince meat; but, of course, if we were talking Flemish, we should say "Haksel Vinken."

The next thing they did was to take flour, butter, salt and some lard, which they called "shortening" and make pastry. This they flattened out on a smooth board, with what they called a rolling pin.

The fairies had to work very hard, but very quietly, in these people's kitchens, lest they should wake up the fathers and mothers. More than this, they might be caught at their work, by the youngsters, boys and girls, that were very apt to wake up early, on Christmas morn-

ing. For, along with the good people that had come into the land, and told about the royal baby in the hay, at Bethlehem, had begun the custom of making presents, and of showing love and kindness to each other, and to all people. With them, once a year, came a most delightful old gentleman, a kind saint, who went around making presents and filling the stockings of the well behaved and obedient children, with presents of toys and goodies of all sorts.

His name was Saint Nicholas, which, in Flemish, is Santa Claas. The fairies and the kind old saint were on good terms, very friendly, and very helpful to each other.

At that time Santa Claas did not drive reindeer, nor use a sleigh, for he had not yet paid any visits to the cold countries, in the far north, where he had to put on a fur-trimmed cap and red coat. Indeed, it was several hundred years later, before the people who lived nearer the north pole, knew about either Santa Claas or the Bethlehem baby in the hay. Saint Nicholas always arrived in Belgium on a ship. He had a mitre on his head, held a shepherd's crook or crozier, in his hand, and was dressed in a long scarlet robe. He was so well known to the Belgian children, that almost every village, even the smallest one, had its special nursery song, or verses, chanted by the little folks.

In Belgium and Holland, Saint Nicholas' Day fell on December 6, and was for children only, and not for grown folks. But on Christmas Day, every one, old, young, and in baby clothes, looked forward with happy expectation. The good priests, who told about the Bethlehem baby, and its mother, and the angels' songs, had introduced the beautiful custom of singing carols, and also of everybody making presents one to the other. At Christmas, love and kindness ruled in every heart. Yet no one ever imagined what a wonder the fairies had provided for them.

There was a surprise when the good people came down to breakfast, on this joyful festival day of the year, A. D. 600.

Each family found on the tables a pie, big enough for all in the house. It was made in the shape of a manger, or feed-trough, for cattle; that is, a square, or oblong, with four corners. Its rich crust was slightly brown, from the baking, and it looked very tempting. When father cut it open, and gave each one a slice, and all the family had tasted it, it was declared that nothing more delicious had ever passed their lips!

So, ever after, on that day, the mince pie became the symbol of Bethlehem's manger, and of the baby in the hay, and of all the rich things that come from faith in the dear Father above,

who is the giver of all things. Fathers and mothers, over the pie, told again the story of how the baby, to whom the wise men presented their gifts, grew up to be the friend, and helper, and saviour of all. And the more men heard of this wonderful story, and learned about this king, who had no armies, and of this governor, who ruled by love only, whose kingdom is ever growing and never ends, the more they believed in him and tried to be like him.

So Belgium was soon covered with churches for the devout, and hospitals for the sick, and homes for the orphans and the poor and aged. It seemed as if every sweet thing in human character, such as love, joy, peace, long suffering, temperance, kindness, gentleness, and brotherly friendship, came from the babe, whose birth was celebrated at Christmas. Though born among dumb creatures, and laid in a manger, for a cradle, and in the hay for a bed, he was greater, and ruled more people, than any king or emperor that ever lived. Since his lowly home on earth was brightened, by the visit and gifts of the wise men from the East, it seemed as if every one must try to make his neighbor happier, through love and kindness. Of all this, the mince pie, pleasant to see, and delicious to taste, was the welcome symbol. So, like a traveler, or a good story, the mince pie has gone round the world and is eaten in every land.

XXVI

A SOCIETY TO MAKE FAIRY TALES COME TRUE

ONE evening of the fairy congress was devoted to story-telling, in which the fairies competed with each other to see which tale was the most interesting.

After one fairy had told the story of the fleur-de-lys, which was only "e pluribus unum"—as Horace said of a salad—that is, one out of many, another fairy rose up to tell the story of the opal. This precious stone carries in its bosom the colors of the Belgian flag, black, yellow, and red.

Thus the fairy began:

"It was long before Cæsar's day, when the first princess of the united Belgian tribes was to be married. Then the fairies came to her and asked her what she wished them to do, to adorn her head-dress for the wedding.

"This was her answer:

" 'My desire is for a jewel to wear on my forehead. I hope to get one that shall show the three colors; the first, to stand for loyalty to my

king-father; the second, to represent my willing obedience to the law of the commonwealth; and the third, to express the freedom of my countrymen from the slavery of enemies.

" 'These colors must be first, black; to signify that the king must face, without fear, every storm, and whatever is dark or difficult. The second must be yellow, to show how law protects gold, which is the symbol of property, as the result of human labor; the third must be red, representing blood, the life of the nation, and which, from their own veins, our brave men must, when necessary, shed for us all.

" 'Be sure to get me a perfect black, for everybody knows, that, in the heraldry of kings and nobles, sable, or black, denotes constancy, wisdom and prudence. If you can, bring me a precious stone that contains these three hues. They are my colors and my people love them. Yet, if a gem, and not something else, it must have them all, for I can wear but one stone.'

"Three fairies, with strong wings, were immediately sent to fly out over the forests and into the mountains, where the pretty gems are found. They hunted among the rocks, and in the beds of streams. They called on the kabouters to help them to make search in the dark caves. Happily, each one was successful beyond the highest hopes.

"After choice from many fine specimens, the three fairies returned, each one bearing a glistening jewel in her hand.

"The first proffered the princess a pure, hard, black stone. It was well named the diamond, meaning 'the invincible.' Rare indeed is a black, or colored diamond, but there it was.

"The second stone was the topaz, of a deep yellow. It reminded one of the gains of commerce, and the toil of millions, bringing comfort and wealth.

"The third stone was the ruby, deeply, darkly, beautifully red. Besides being hard, brilliant and permanent in tint, it was not easily scratched or broken.

"Joyfully the princess bound these three upon her forehead and looked into the mirror. She was delighted with all the gems, for each was beautiful and spoke its own language.

"Yet, as each fairy thought the one, which she had found in the mountains, and selected out of many, was that which the princess ought to prefer and to wear, the king's daughter could not decide, by herself at least, lest she be deemed selfish or partial.

"So she went to her father, and asked his advice.

"He looked at each jewel, admiring them all, yet thinking in his heart all the while that his

own daughter excelled each and every one. He then made answer:

"'In the Walloon language, my daughter "l'union fait la force" (unity makes strength). Suppose you ask the fairies to join the three gems in one, making a single stone. Then, see what will come of it.'

"The princess at once called to her aid the king of kabouters, and bade him make of the three jewels one.

"Down into the earth among his forges and fires, the master-fairy disappeared. He spent days and nights over the task. In a crucible, over a roaring fire, he fused the three gems into one. Then with a lapidist's skill, and a jeweler's craft, he set the jewel in an exceedingly beautiful coronet.

"Within one week, the kabouter king came back, holding in his hand a velvet-lined box which the three fairies had made with their delicate fingers. On the outside, were the three colors, black, yellow and red, in vertical bands.

"The chief kabouter proffered the casket to the Princess. On her opening it, there flashed and sparkled a gem, such as she had never seen before. Within its fiery heart, were, not one color, but, three of them, black, yellow, and red.

"This shining stone was not cut in facets, or little faces, as were most crown jewels, for it did

not need to be so treated to show its glories; nor did it require a foil or glittering metal leaf beneath it, as do some stones, to make sure of its maintaining its permanent hue; but it was set with a smooth round surface, like a hemisphere, or half a globe. This shape helped to reveal the precious stone's full splendor.

"Right well was it worthy of its general name 'gem,' which means a 'bud'; for it had colors, as varied as are the three in a moss rose,—sepal, petal and fringe, while yet in a unity of splendor.

"No words could do justice to the beauty of the gem. Some thought of a rainbow; some of the harlequin, who joins many colors in his costume; some of volcano fires. The Princess named it 'opal,' after the precious stone in the Sanskrit fairy tale. At the wedding, she wore it in the centre of her golden coronet.

"With even more enthusiasm, the people gathered from all parts of their land, every province sending its delegates to Brussels, the central city of the central province, in which Brabo was the hero, and whose story was known to all boys and girls. From him was named Brabant, whose inhabitants had already adopted as their motto 'La Union fait Force,' that is, 'In union there is strength,' which is struck on all coins.

"Although there were many provinces, and, notwithstanding, that all the tribes and people

were not interested each in the same things, yet they saw the wisdom of union for defense and growth. So, feeling that they must have a flag, to express their loyalty to the king, their regard for law, and their fixed resolution to be free, they voted to have one standard, containing the colors of Brabant. So, when the tricolor, black, yellow and red, was raised high in the air, before all the freemen, they clanged their swords on their shields and shouted 'Long live the King, forever be law, eternal our independence.' So these became the national colors of Belgium.

"Centuries afterwards, when William the Silent, whose statue stands today in Brussels, led the Netherlanders against the tyrant, there was embroidered, on his banners, the figure of a pelican feeding her young with blood from her own bosom, with the Latin motto, 'Pro rege, pro lege, pro grege (for the king, for the law, for the commonwealth). And when in 1830 the national hymn, The Brabançonne (The Brabanter) was composed, which every Belgian sings, the three-fold theme and burden of the throbbing lines was what the tricolor and the precious stone suggest. Black was for steadfastness, wisdom and prudence in the king; yellow for law, which protects industry; and red, for Belgium's unconquerable liberty, secured by the blood of her sons. Oh! how they sang it, and never with more mean-

ing and spirit than, during the four years of the 'nation's Calvary,'—1914–1918."

Forthwith, the people of Belgic Land, having heard the stories of the Fleur-de-lys, and of the opal, there was formed by them a Society to Make Fairy Tales Come True, and for generations they, and their children, have lived up to their name.

The story-teller has often said that nothing that fairies can do, or ever have done, can excel what he has seen in the wonders wrought in the soil, and on the Belgian and Dutch landscapes.

As a youth, he saw many square miles of worthless heath land, as sandy as a desert, on which even rabbits could not find food to live upon. Or, two of them might fight for one blade of grass.

In later life, the story-teller went into the same places. What magic! There were villages, farms, schools, churches, happy homes, barns stored with grain, and many signs of joyous abundance, cows, sheep, orchards and fields.

What did it mean?

The story of "The Marriage of the Fairies," explains in part how it came to pass. Water, brought in canals; that is, irrigation, wrought wonders; but, most of all, human continuance of toil, in unity of heart and will! Today the in-

dustry and perseverance of men and women have made Belgium as one of the wonders of the world.

"By concord little things become great." So, they sing in the national hymn, and under their flag, of black, yellow and red, which stand for king, law and liberty:

> "Let us work; our labor increases
> The fruitfulness of our fields
> And the splendor of our industry crowns
> King, Law and Liberty."

THE END

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

DISCHARGE URL

APR 2 (1981

139

3 1158 00664 5765

PZ
8
G875b