

Practice is like an exercise and mantra for us which brings our physical and mental entities at one path of required frequency and leads us towards perfection, slowly but surely. Practicing continuously with faith creates a cohesive force which connects the physical and mental entities together to work at required frequency. Anyone can achieve his/her goal slowly but definitely if he/she go with the planned practice. Ambitious people do hard practices to see their ambitions fulfilled but never suppose to defeat. Practice is the best tool which we can use to sharpen our abilities and capabilities beyond our capacities in the pursuit of goal. Practice is the best friend which leads us towards success and make the knowledge remain with us. It helps people to awaken their lethargic potential by inducing confidence level. It calms our mind and gives happiness as practicing anything is like a meditation. We can achieve anything and reach to the unreachable heights in our life through practice. It prepares us to go in right direction and sharpen our abilities to face challenges and win. Practice is the continuous activity which enhances the will power and encourages us to run to the goal with strong perfection. Practice makes a man perfect is a proverb that refers to the importance of practice in the human life as it makes a man perfect. 'Work is Worship' is a proverb that refers to the importance and value of work in our life. In this proverb, an honest work is said that it is worship; because it is our honest work only which satisfies our all needs and takes us to the heights of success. Now-a-days, essay writing is in practice in the schools and colleges. It is a good strategy followed by teachers in the schools and colleges in order to enhance the English writing skill and knowledge of the students about any topic. It is an effective way to get views, new ideas and positive suggestions by the students about any topic. Following are some paragraphs, short essays and long essays on Work is Worship to help students in completing their task in the classroom. All the Work is Worship essay are written very simply. So, you can select any essay according to your need and requirement: If we understand the real meaning of work is worship, work is really the real worship as without work our life is waste. If we follow it well all through our life, it acts as the key to success, progress and happiness. If people understand its meaning in true sense, it will surely positively change the scenario of world economy and help people to strongly face the tougher challenges in life. However, we cannot ignore the type of people living together on this planet. Worker earns honestly, idle people depends on others like a parasite, etc. Our life and body get rust if we spend it without any work, aim or purpose. Hard work is the way to get greatness in life. It is considered that, only people who take interest in their work do

It's not always easy to talk to parents, you know. For example, last Saturday after we had been swimming, I bought a really nice chocolate cake and my friend Ben and my Baba were with me in a café. I was eating my cake when my Baba whispers in my ear that I have to give some of my cake to my friend Ben.

Baba said that this is a custom in Turkish culture. It took me ages to whisper back and explain to my Baba that in English culture it is rude to offer my friend half eaten cake as I know he has some money in his pocket, and if he wanted to have some cake he would buy some for himself.' Adem explains to us that his Baba has lived in England for a very long time, but he still does not have many English friends. The young boy says it is as if his father still lives as he used to live in Turkey.

'That is okay,' Adem tells us, 'but it is sometimes difficult for me to understand some of the Turkish traditions, and there are so many of them to remember.' Adem has almost arrived at the meeting point where his Baba has told him to wait to be picked up after school. Today is a Thursday. He looks a little bit nervous as he scans the street. 'I have tried to do something about this embarrassment,' he informs us earnestly, 'but it has not worked yet.

I do not know how to talk to my Baba about the way he acts when we are with my friends.' Adem stops on the corner. He still looks a bit nervous. 'This is where my Baba picks me up,' he says. There are lots of children from Adem's school standing about on the corner: some waiting to be picked up by their parents, some heading for the bus or walking home in pairs. Adem pretends to read his book. He doesn't want any of his friends to be near him when his Baba picks him up. This is when Adem notices Emily. Emily is beautiful. She has blonde hair and blue eyes and Adem has fancied her ever since they were both in year five. One day, Adem's history teacher placed all of the children in pairs for a school project. Adem was placed with Emily. The children had to make a Motte and Bailey castle.

The best castle would win a prize. So Adem and Emily spent a lot of time together and worked really hard on their castle. Then, when the judging day came, THEY WON! And that's when the fancying began, because Emily had hugged Adem. From that moment to this, whenever Adem sees Emily, he feels a warm feeling inside. Emily is approaching the corner where Adem is waiting for his Baba to come pick him up. Adem looks very uncomfortable all of a sudden. 'Oh no! Here is my Baba's jeep coming around the corner. Baba is coming! Emily is coming! Baba is coming! Emily is coming!' Adem quickly sits on the floor and pretends to tie his shoelaces while attempting to hide from his Baba and from Emily. But it is no use; the young boy can tell that his Baba has spotted him.

The jeep pulls up to the kerb and Adem's Baba steps out. Meanwhile, Emily is getting closer and closer, and now she can see Adem and his Baba together next to the jeep. Adem's Baba throws a smile. 'Are you OK, my big boy?' I hate Thursdays Adem stands up now and his Baba grabs a hold of him and gives him a big cuddle and a kiss.

'Come on Adem,' says his Baba in a cheerful voice, 'won't you give me a kiss!' Adem looks around, then quickly kisses his father on the cheek and jumps inside the jeep before Emily gets any closer and laughs at him for kissing and hugging his father when Adem is a big boy now and should be more grownup.

Father and son do not talk to each other for a couple of minutes as they drive through the busy streets heading for home. Baba looks at Adem and asks again, 'Are you OK, my son?' 'Yes,' says Adem, but his voice is not very convincing. Adem's Baba knows that his son is not happy because he knows him very well and they are very close. 'Come on,' he says, 'why don't you tell me what is wrong.' Indian-origin religions include Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Hinduism.

On a certain occasion, many years ago, the north wind and the sun were unable to agree as to which of them had the greater strength. At last they came to the decision that they would put their strength to the test. It was agreed between them to try their strength upon a strong young man who was at the time walking from his farm to a town some distance away.

Their object was to get the man's coat off. The north wind had a heavy fall of rain. The wind, however, did not take off the man's coat; instead it had the effect of making him draw the coat very close to his body to keep himself warm and dry. Then the sun came out and tried to make the poor man as warm as possible.

It was not long before he was feeling too much warm in his heavy coat, and he took it off and sat down under some trees to rest. Thus, it was the sun that was able to win. It will often be found that the use of great force is not the best means by which to obtain the most satisfactory results.

It is a strange thought to most of us that one day the earth must grow like the moon, cold and dead, without life. Even the sun itself must in the course of time grow cold. The moon became cold first, the explanation for this being that it is not so large as the earth, of course, not nearly so large as the sun. As we know, the small things grow cold in much less time than the large ones. The earth, being larger than the moon, is not yet quite so cold, but one day it will be like the moon. The sun is a very great deal larger than the earth, but we may be quite sure that, in accordance with the same law, it too must grow cold. Owing to the difference in size there will always be some difference in the state of the moon, the earth, and the sun. For instance, a small body has less power than a large one to draw to itself gas from outside. The moon, being small, was unable to keep gas for outside, and as a result it has no air as we have on the earth. After the coldness of the winter months the lovely days of April, May and June call to us and ask us to go out and see the beautiful countryside. During the long the countryside has been resting and waiting for the warmth of summer to make it colourful once more.

Even the Trinamool Congress, which proposed his name, did not want him to go to Bengal for a campaign visit as it did not want to be seen in his company. Any candidate would have lost the election, but the Opposition could have selected one who could have made a political point even in defeat. If there was a claim that the campaign for the 2024 election would start with the presidential election this year, it was a poor hope, and the campaign a non-starter.

The NDA's choice of long-time party loyalist Jagdeep Dhankhar as the vice-presidential candidate is also a well-considered one. He is a former Governor of West Bengal, and is from the Jat community, which is dominant in parts of UP, Haryana and Rajasthan. The BJP has a support base in the community and Dhankhar's candidature may become useful when Rajasthan goes to polls next year. The Opposition has again gone in for a no-contest with the candidature of a retired Congress politician, Margaret Alva, who is unlikely to make any impact.

Mankind has taken another important step in its exploration of the universe with the imaging of a span of faraway worlds in long lost time by the James Web space telescope, which peers into time and space like no human eye or machine has done till now. The many horizons it has brought closer, giving fascinating visions of those that lie beyond, are grander in scale and complexity than had even been imagined so far.

The space telescope, which is the successor to the Hubble space telescope, is looking at the universe from its solar orbit 1.5 million km away from the earth. US space agency NASA, the European Space Agency and the Canadian Space Agency have collaborated on the state-of-the-art infrared telescope for about three decades, spending about \$10 billion on it.

Stretched out both her arms, and raised one of her legs so high, that the tin soldier could not see it at all, and he thought that she, like himself, had only one leg. "That is the wife for me," he thought; "but she is too grand, and lives in a castle, while I have only a box to live in, five and twenty of us altogether, that is no place for her.

Still I must try and make her acquaintance." Then he laid himself at full length on the table behind a snuff box that stood upon it, so that he could peep at the little delicate lady, who continued to stand on one leg without losing her balance. When evening came, the other tin soldiers were all placed in the box, and the people of the house went to bed. Then the playthings began to have their own games together, to pay visits, to have sham fights, and to give balls.

The tin soldiers rattled in their box; they wanted to get out and join the amusements, but they could not open the lid. The nut crackers played at leap frog, and the pencil jumped about the table. There was such a noise that the canary woke up and began to talk, and in poetry too. Only the tin soldier and the dancer remained in their places.

She stood on tiptoe, with her legs stretched out, as firmly as he did on his one leg. He never took his eyes from her for even a moment. The clock struck twelve, and, with a bounce, up sprang the lid of the snuff box; but, instead of snuff, there jumped up a little black goblin; for the snuff box was a toy puzzle. "Tin soldier," said the goblin, "don't wish for what does not belong to you." But the tin soldier pretended not to hear. "Very well; wait till to morrow, then," said the goblin.

When the children came in the next morning, they placed the tin soldier in the window. Now, whether it was the goblin who did it, or the draught, is not known, but the window flew open, and out fell the tin soldier, heels over head, from the third story, into the street beneath. It was a terrible fall; for he came head downwards, his helmet and his bayonet stuck in between the flagstones, and his one leg up in the air.

The servant maid and the little boy went down stairs directly to look for him; but he was nowhere to be seen, although once they nearly trod upon him. If he had called out, "Here I am," it would have been all right, but he was too proud to cry out for help while he wore a uniform. Presently it began to rain, and the drops fell faster and faster, till there was a heavy shower. When it was over, two boys happened to pass by, and one of them said, "Look, there is a tin soldier. He ought to have a boat to sail in." So they made a boat out of a newspaper, and placed the tin soldier in it, and sent him sailing down the gutter, while the two boys ran by the side of it, and clapped their hands.

Good gracious, what large waves arose in that gutter! and how fast the stream rolled on! for the rain had been very heavy. The paper boat rocked up and down, and turned itself round sometimes so quickly that the tin soldier trembled; yet he remained firm; his countenance did not change; he looked straight before him, and shouldered his musket. Suddenly the boat shot under a bridge which formed a part of a drain, and then it was as dark as the tin soldier's box. "Where am I going now?" thought he.

"This is the black goblin's fault, I am sure. Ah, well, if the little lady were only here with me in the boat, I should not care for any darkness." Suddenly there appeared a great water rat, who lived in the drain. "Have you a passport?" asked the rat, "give it to me at once." But the tin soldier remained silent and held his musket tighter than ever. The boat sailed on and the rat followed it. How he did gnash his teeth and cry out to the bits of wood and straw, "Stop him, stop him; he has not paid toll, and has not shown his pass." But the stream rushed on stronger and stronger.

Now there were four on the log, floating towards a bend in the river. Nearby a holy man was living humbly in a little hut. He just happened to be the Bodhisatta the Enlightenment Being. He had been born into a rich high class family in Kasi. When he had grown up, he had given up all his wealth and position, and had come to live by himself next to the river.

It was the middle of the night when the holy man heard the cries of panic coming from the Evil Prince. He thought, "That sounds like a frightened human being. My loving kindness will not let me ignore him. I must save him." He ran down to the river and shouted. "Don't be afraid! I will save you!" Then he jumped into the rushing torrent, grabbed the log, and used his great strength to pull it to shore. He helped the prince step safely onto the riverbank. Noticing the snake, water rat and parrot, he took them and the man to his cozy little hut. He started up his cooking fire.

Thinking of the weakness of the animals, he gently warmed them by the fire. When they were warm and dry he set them aside. Then he let the prince warm himself. The holy man brought out some fruits and nuts. Again he fed the more helpless animals first, followed by the waiting prince. Not surprisingly this made the Evil Prince furious! He thought, "This stupid holy man doesn't care at all for me, a great royal prince.

Instead he gives higher place to these three dumb animals!" Thinking this way, he built up a vengeful hatred against the gentle Bodhisatta. The next day the holy man dried the deadwood log in the sun. Then he chopped it up and burned it, to cook their food and keep them warm. In a few days the four who had been rescued by that same log were strong and healthy. The snake came to the holy man to say good bye. He coiled his body on the ground, arched himself up, and bowed his head respectfully.

He said, "Venerable one, you have done a great thing for me! I am grateful to you, and I am not a poor snake. In a certain place I have a buried treasure of 40 million gold coins. And I will gladly give it to you for all life is priceless! Whenever you are in need of money, just come down to the riverbank and call out.

"Snake! Snake!" The water rat, too, came to the holy man to say good bye. He stood up on his hind legs and bowed his head respectfully. He said, "Venerable one, you have done a great thing for me! I am grateful to you, and I am not a poor water rat. In a certain place I have a buried treasure of 30 million gold coins. And I will gladly give it to you for all life is priceless! Whenever you are in need of money, just come down to the riverbank and call out, "Rat! Rat!" Such grateful generosity from a snake and a water rat! A far cry from their previous stingy human lives! Then came the parrot to say his good bye to the holy man.

He bowed his head respectfully and said, "Venerable one, you have done a great thing for me! I am grateful to you, but I possess no silver or gold. However, I am not a poor parrot. For if you are ever in need of the finest rice, just come down to the riverbank and call out. 'Parrot! Parrot!' Then I will gather together all my relatives from all the forests of the Himalayas and we will bring you many cart loads of the most precious scented red rice.

For all life is priceless!" Finally the Evil Prince came to the holy man. Because his mind was filled with the poison of vengeance, he thought only about killing him if he ever saw him again. However, what he said was, "Venerable one, when I become king, please come to me and I will provide you with the Four Necessities." He returned to Benares and soon became the new king. In a while the holy man decided to see if the gratitude of these four was for real.

First he went down to the riverbank and called out, "Snake! Snake!" At the sound of the first word, the snake came out of his home under the ground.

You must tell me without shame, whatever it is, hiding nothing. "If you do these things correctly, you will earn the Unhappiness Degree. Then your mother will be proud of you." The student agreed and began tending to the 120 year old lady. He bathed and fed her with his own hands. He massaged her arms, legs, back and head.

While doing this he said, "Madam, it is marvellous indeed! Even in such great old age, your arms and legs are so very beautiful! I can guess how beautiful you were in your youth!" In this way he exaggerated her beauty again and again, for many days. Gradually, desire began to arise in the old lady's mind. Even though she knew she was blind and her body was rotten from old age, she thought, "No doubt this young man would like to live with me like a husband."

So she asked him, "Do you want to be with me, just like a husband and wife?" The man replied, "Oh yes of course, madam. I want to very much. But how can I? Your son is my teacher and he is very respectable. It would cause such a scandal! I will not dishonour my teacher." Then the teacher's mother said, "Well in that case, if you really want to be with me, then kill my son!" The student said, "How can I kill him when I have been studying with him for so long? How can I kill him just because of this desire for you?" Then she said, "If you will stay with me and not desert me, I will kill him myself!"

As he had agreed, the student went to the world famous teacher and told him all that had taken place. Amazingly, the teacher did not seem surprised. He said, "You have done well to tell me this, my pupil. I appreciate your good work." Then he examined his mother's horoscope and discovered that this was to be the day of her death. He said, "I will arrange a test for her." The teacher carved a statue from the softwood of a tree limb. He made it look exactly like himself, life size.

He laid it in his own bed and pulled the sheet up over it. He attached a long string to it and gave it to his pupil. He told him, "Now take this string and axe to my mother. Tell her it is time to do the killing." Obediently the student returned to the blind old lady. He said, "Madam, my master is sleeping in his bed. If you follow this string it will lead you to him. Then kill him with this axe, if you really can do such a thing!" She replied, "If you do not abandon me, I will do it."

He said, "Why should I abandon you?" Then she took the axe in her hands. She trembled as she stood up. Slowly she followed the string to her son's bed. She felt the statue and thought she recognised her son. She pulled down the sheet from the head and raised the axe. Thinking to kill him with one blow she struck the neck as hard as she could with the axe.

But it made a thumping sound, so she knew it had struck wood. The teacher asked, "What are you doing, my mother?" Suddenly she realised she had been deceived and discovered. The shock was so overwhelming that she dropped dead on the spot! This time the horoscope had been correct. The world famous teacher respectfully burned his mother's body and offered flowers on her ashes. Then he said to his pupil, "My son, there really is no such thing as the 'Unhappiness Degree'.

Wicked women cause unhappiness. You are fortunate to have such a good and wise mother. By sending you here to earn the Unhappiness Degree, she wanted you to learn how evil some women can be. "You have seen with your own eyes how my mother was filled with craving and vanity. She has taught you this lesson. Now return to your wise mother, who cares so much for your well being." When he arrived home his mother asked, "My dear son, have you finally earned the high degree in the subject of Unhappiness?" He replied, "Yes mother."

Then she said, "I ask you again, my son, do you wish to leave the worldly life and go into the forest to worship the fire god? Or do you wish to marry and lead the family life?"

But they dragged him out of the room and up stairs to the garret, and threw him on the floor, in a dark corner, where no daylight shone, and there they left him. "What does this mean?" thought the tree, "what am I to do here? I can hear nothing in a place like this," and he had time enough to think, for days and nights passed and no one came near him, and when at last somebody did come, it was only to put away large boxes in a corner. So the tree was completely hidden from sight as if it had never existed.

"It is winter now," thought the tree, "the ground is hard and covered with snow, so that people cannot plant me. I shall be sheltered here, I dare say, until spring comes. How thoughtful and kind everybody is to me! Still I wish this place were not so dark, as well as lonely, with not even a little hare to look at.

How pleasant it was out in the forest while the snow lay on the ground, when the hare would run by, yes, and jump over me too, although I did not like it then. Oh! it is terrible lonely here." "Squeak, squeak," said a little mouse, creeping cautiously towards the tree; then came another; and they both sniffed at the fir tree and crept between the branches.

"Oh, it is very cold," said the little mouse, "or else we should be so comfortable here, shouldn't we, you old fir tree?" "I am not old," said the fir tree, "there are many who are older than I am." "Where do you come from? and what do you know?" asked the mice, who were full of curiosity.

"Have you seen the most beautiful places in the world, and can you tell us all about them? and have you been in the storeroom, where cheeses lie on the shelf, and hams hang from the ceiling? One can run about on tallow candles there, and go in thin and come out fat." "I know nothing of that place," said the fir tree, "but I know the wood where the sun shines and the birds sing." And then the tree told the little mice all about its youth.

They had never heard such an account in their lives; and after they had listened to it attentively, they said, "What a number of things you have seen? you must have been very happy." "Happy!" exclaimed the fir tree, and then as he reflected upon what he had been telling them, he said, "Ah, yes! after all those were happy days." But when he went on and related all about Christmas eve, and how he had been dressed up with cakes and lights, the mice said, "How happy you must have been, you old fir tree."

"I am not old at all," replied the tree, "I only came from the forest this winter, I am now checked in my growth." "What splendid stories you can relate," said the little mice. And the next night four other mice came with them to hear what the tree had to tell. The more he talked the more he remembered, and then he thought to himself, "Those were happy days, but they may come again. Humpty Dumpty fell down stairs, and yet he married the princess; perhaps I may marry a princess too."

And the fir tree thought of the pretty little birch tree that grew in the forest, which was to him a real beautiful princess. "Who is Humpty Dumpty?" asked the little mice. And then the tree related the whole story; that they were ready to jump to the top of the tree. The next night a great many more mice made their appearance, and on Sunday two rats came with them; but they said, it was not a pretty story at all, and the little mice were very sorry, for it made them also think less of it.

"Do you know only one story?" asked the rats. "Only one," replied the fir tree; "I heard it on the happiest evening of my life; but I did not know I was so happy at the time." "We think it is a very miserable story," said the rats. "Don't you know any story about bacon, or tallow in the storeroom." "No," replied the tree. "Many thanks to you then," replied the rats, and they marched off.

When the mother had drunk out of the bottle, and was gone to sleep, the little robber maiden went to the reindeer, and said, "I should like very much to tickle your neck a few times more with my knife, for it makes you look so funny; but never mind, I will untie your cord, and set you free, so that you may run away to Lapland; but you must make good use of your legs, and carry this little maiden to the castle of the Snow Queen, where her play fellow is.

You have heard what she told me, for she spoke loud enough, and you were listening." Then the reindeer jumped for joy; and the little robber girl lifted Gerda on his back, and had the forethought to tie her on, and even to give her her own little cushion to sit on. "Here are your fur boots for you," said she; "for it will be very cold; but I must keep the muff; it is so pretty. However, you shall not be frozen for the want of it; here are my mother's large warm mittens; they will reach up to your elbows. Let me put them on.

There, now your hands look just like my mother's." But Gerda wept for joy. "I don't like to see you fret," said the little robber girl; "you ought to look quite happy now; and here are two loaves and a ham, so that you need not starve."

These were fastened on the reindeer, and then the little robber maiden opened the door, coaxed in all the great dogs, and then cut the string with which the reindeer was fastened, with her sharp knife, and said, "Now run, but mind you take good care of the little girl." And then Gerda stretched out her hand, with the great mitten on it, towards the little robber girl, and said, "Farewell," and away flew the reindeer, over stumps and stones, through the great forest, over marshes and plains, as quickly as he could.

The wolves howled, and the ravens screamed; while up in the sky quivered red lights like flames of fire. "There are my old northern lights," said the reindeer; "see how they flash." And he ran on day and night still faster and faster, but the loaves and the ham were all eaten by the time they reached Lapland.

Sixth Story: The Lapland Woman and the Finland Woman THEY stopped at a little hut; it was very mean looking; the roof sloped nearly down to the ground, and the door was so low that the family had to creep in on their hands and knees, when they went in and out. There was no one at home but an old Lapland woman, who was cooking fish by the light of a train oil lamp.

The reindeer told her all about Gerda's story, after having first told his own, which seemed to him the most important, but Gerda was so pinched with the cold that she could not speak. "Oh, you poor things," said the Lapland woman, "you have a long way to go yet. You must travel more than a hundred miles farther, to Finland.

The Snow Queen lives there now, and she burns Bengal lights every evening. I will write a few words on a dried stock fish, for I have no paper, and you can take it from me to the Finland woman who lives there; she can give you better information than I can." So when Gerda was warmed, and had taken something to eat and drink, the woman wrote a few words on the dried fish, and told Gerda to take great care of it. Then she tied her again on the reindeer, and he set off at full speed.

Flash, flash, went the beautiful blue northern lights in the air the whole night long. And at length they reached Finland, and knocked at the chimney of the Finland woman's hut, for it had no door above the ground. They crept in, but it was so terribly hot inside that that woman wore scarcely any clothes; she was small and very dirty looking. She loosened little Gerda's dress, and took off the fur boots and the mittens, or Gerda would have been unable to bear the heat; and then she placed a piece of ice on the reindeer's head,

The major general sprung up in the air; and cried out to the old Chinaman, "They are running away! they are running away!" The two were rather frightened at this, so they jumped into the drawer of the window seat. Here were three or four packs of cards not quite complete, and a doll's theatre, which had been built up very neatly.

A comedy was being performed in it, and all the queens of diamonds, clubs, and hearts,, and spades, sat in the first row fanning themselves with tulips, and behind them stood all the knaves, showing that they had heads above and below as playing cards generally have.

The play was about two lovers, who were not allowed to marry, and the shepherdess wept because it was so like her own story. "I cannot bear it," said she, "I must get out of the drawer;" but when they reached the floor, and cast their eyes on the table, there was the old Chinaman awake and shaking his whole body, till all at once down he came on the floor, "plump." "The old Chinaman is coming," cried the little shepherdess in a fright, and down she fell on one knee.

"I have thought of something," said the chimney sweep; "let us get into the great pot pourri jar which stands in the corner; there we can lie on rose leaves and lavender, and throw salt in his eyes if he comes near us." "No, that will never do," said she, "because I know that the Chinaman and the pot pourri jar were lovers once, and there always remains behind a feeling of good will between those who have been so intimate as that. No, there is nothing left for us but to go out into the wide world."

"Have you really courage enough to go out into the wide world with me?" said the chimney sweep; "have you thought how large it is, and that we can never come back here again?" "Yes, I have," she replied. When the chimney sweep saw that she was quite firm, he said, "My way is through the stove and up the chimney. Have you courage to creep with me through the fire box, and the iron pipe? When we get to the chimney I shall know how to manage very well.

We shall soon climb too high for any one to reach us, and we shall come through a hole in the top out into the wide world." So he led her to the door of the stove. "It looks very dark," said she; still she went in with him through the stove and through the pipe, where it was as dark as pitch. "Now we are in the chimney," said he; "and look, there is a beautiful star shining above it." It was a real star shining down upon them as if it would show them the way.

So they clambered, and crept on, and a frightful steep place it was; but the chimney sweep helped her and supported her, till they got higher and higher. He showed her the best places on which to set her little china foot, so at last they reached the top of the chimney, and sat themselves down, for they were very tired, as may be supposed.

The sky, with all its stars, was over their heads, and below were the roofs of the town. They could see for a very long distance out into the wide world, and the poor little shepherdess leaned her head on her chimney sweep's shoulder, and wept till she washed the gilt off her sash; the world was so different to what she expected. "This is too much," she said; "I cannot bear it, the world is too large. Oh, I wish I were safe back on the table.

Again, under the looking glass; I shall never be happy till I am safe back again. Now I have followed you out into the wide world, you will take me back, if you love me." Then the chimney sweep tried to reason with her, and spoke of the old Chinaman, and of the Major general field sergeant commander Billy goat's legs; but she sobbed so bitterly, and kissed her little chimney sweep till he was obliged to do all she asked, foolish as it was. And so, with a great deal of trouble, they climbed down the chimney, and then crept through the pipe and stove, which were certainly not very pleasant places.

He told her that he had wounded one of his wings in a thorn bush, and could not fly as fast as the others, who were soon far away on their journey to warm countries. Then at last he had fallen to the earth, and could remember no more, nor how he came to be where she had found him. The whole winter the swallow remained underground, and Tiny nursed him with care and love.

Neither the mole nor the field mouse knew anything about it, for they did not like swallows. Very soon the spring time came, and the sun warmed the earth. Then the swallow bade farewell to Tiny, and she opened the hole in the ceiling which the mole had made. The sun shone in upon them so beautifully, that the swallow asked her if she would go with him; she could sit on his back, he said, and he would fly away with her into the green woods.

But Tiny knew it would make the field mouse very grieved if she left her in that manner, so she said, "No, I cannot." "Farewell, then, farewell, you good, pretty little maiden," said the swallow; and he flew out into the sunshine. Tiny looked after him, and the tears rose in her eyes. She was very fond of the poor swallow. "Tweet, tweet," sang the bird, as he flew out into the green woods, and Tiny felt very sad. She was not allowed to go out into the warm sunshine.

The corn which had been sown in the field over the house of the field mouse had grown up high into the air, and formed a thick wood to Tiny, who was only an inch in height. "You are going to be married, Tiny," said the field mouse. "My neighbor has asked for you. What good fortune for a poor child like you. Now we will prepare your wedding clothes. They must be both woollen and linen. Nothing must be wanting when you are the mole's wife."

Tiny had to turn the spindle, and the field mouse hired four spiders, who were to weave day and night. Every evening the mole visited her, and was continually speaking of the time when the summer would be over. Then he would keep his wedding day with Tiny; but now the heat of the sun was so great that it burned the earth, and made it quite hard, like a stone. As soon, as the summer was over, the wedding should take place. But Tiny was not at all pleased; for she did not like the tiresome mole.

Every morning when the sun rose, and every evening when it went down, she would creep out at the door, and as the wind blew aside the ears of corn, so that she could see the blue sky, she thought how beautiful and bright it seemed out there, and wished so much to see her dear swallow again. But he never returned; for by this time he had flown far away into the lovely green forest. When autumn arrived, Tiny had her outfit quite ready; and the field mouse said to her, "In four weeks the wedding must take place." Then Tiny wept, and said she would not marry the disagreeable mole.

"Nonsense," replied the field mouse. "Now don't be obstinate, or I shall bite you with my white teeth. He is a very handsome mole; the queen herself does not wear more beautiful velvets and furs. His kitchen and cellars are quite full. You ought to be very thankful for such good fortune." So the wedding day was fixed, on which the mole was to fetch Tiny away to live with him, deep under the earth, and never again to see the warm sun, because he did not like it.

The poor child was very unhappy at the thought of saying farewell to the beautiful sun, and as the field mouse had given her permission to stand at the door, she went to look at it once more. "Farewell bright sun," she cried, stretching out her arm towards it; and then she walked a short distance from the house; for the corn had been cut, and only the dry stubble remained in the fields. "Farewell, farewell," she repeated, twining her arm round a little red flower that grew just by her side.

So she took him by the wrist, and he laughed till he nearly choked; and when she came to the fourth finger, there was a gold ring on it, as if it knew there was to be a betrothal. Then the old goblin said, "Hold fast what you have: this hand is yours; for I will have you for a wife myself." Then the elfin girl said that the stories about the ring finger and little Peter Playman had not yet been told.

"We will hear them in the winter," said the old goblin, "and also about the fir and the birch trees, and the ghost stories, and of the tingling frost. You shall tell your tales, for no one over there can do it so well; and we will sit in the stone rooms, where the pine logs are burning, and drink mead out of the golden drinking horn of the old Norwegian kings.

The water god has given me two; and when we sit there, Nix comes to pay us a visit, and will sing you all the songs of the mountain shepherdesses. How merry we shall be! The salmon will be leaping in the waterfalls, and dashing against the stone walls, but he will not be able to come in.

It is indeed very pleasant to live in old Norway. But where are the lads?" Where indeed were they? Why, running about the fields, and blowing out the will o' the wisps, who so good naturedly came and brought their torches. "What tricks have you been playing?" said the old goblin. "I have taken a mother for you, and now you may take one of your aunts." But the youngsters said they would rather make a speech and drink to their good fellowship; they had no wish to marry.

Then they made speeches and drank toasts, and tipped their glasses, to show that they were empty. Then they took off their coats, and lay down on the table to sleep; for they made themselves quite at home. But the old goblin danced about the room with his young bride, and exchanged boots with her, which is more fashionable than exchanging rings.

"The cock is crowing," said the old elfin maiden who acted as housekeeper; "now we must close the shutters, that the sun may not scorch us." Then the hill closed up. But the lizards continued to run up and down the riven tree; and one said to the other, "Oh, how much I was pleased with the old goblin!" "The boys pleased me better," said the earth worm. But then the poor miserable creature could not see. In the middle of the village lived an old shoemaker's wife; she sat down and made, as well as she could, a pair of little shoes out of some old pieces of red cloth.

They were clumsy, but she meant well, for they were intended for the little girl, whose name was Karen. Karen received the shoes and wore them for the first time on the day of her mother's funeral. They were certainly not suitable for mourning; but she had no others, and so she put her bare feet into them and walked behind the humble coffin.

Just then a large old carriage came by, and in it sat an old lady; she looked at the little girl, and taking pity on her, said to the clergyman, "Look here, if you will give me the little girl, I will take care of her." Karen believed that this was all on account of the red shoes, but the old lady thought them hideous, and so they were burnt. Karen herself was dressed very neatly and cleanly; she was taught to read and to sew, and people said that she was pretty.

But the mirror told her, "You are more than pretty you are beautiful." One day the Queen was travelling through that part of the country, and had her little daughter, who was a princess, with her. All the people, amongst them Karen too, streamed towards the castle, where the little princess, in fine white clothes, stood before the window and allowed herself to be stared at. She wore neither a train nor a golden crown, but beautiful red morocco shoes; they were indeed much finer than those which the shoemaker's wife had sewn for little Karen. There is really nothing in the world that can be compared to red shoes! Karen was now old enough to be confirmed; she received some new clothes, and she was also to have some new shoes.

No one knew, nor could any one give the slightest information, excepting the boys, who said that he had tied his sledge to another very large one, which had driven through the street, and out at the town gate. Nobody knew where it went; many tears were shed for him, and little Gerda wept bitterly for a long time.

She said she knew he must be dead; that he was drowned in the river which flowed close by the school. Oh, indeed those long winter days were very dreary. But at last spring came, with warm sunshine. "Kay is dead and gone," said little Gerda. "I don't believe it," said the sunshine. "He is dead and gone," she said to the sparrows.

"We don't believe it," they replied; and at last little Gerda began to doubt it herself. "I will put on my new red shoes," she said one morning, "those that Kay has never seen, and then I will go down to the river, and ask for him." It was quite early when she kissed her old grandmother, who was still asleep; then she put on her red shoes, and went quite alone out of the town gates toward the river. "Is it true that you have taken my little playmate away from me?" said she to the river.

"I will give you my red shoes if you will give him back to me." And it seemed as if the waves nodded to her in a strange manner. Then she took off her red shoes, which she liked better than anything else, and threw them both into the river, but they fell near the bank, and the little waves carried them back to the land, just as if the river would not take from her what she loved best, because they could not give her back little Kay. But she thought the shoes had not been thrown out far enough.

Then she crept into a boat that lay among the reeds, and threw the shoes again from the farther end of the boat into the water, but it was not fastened. And her movement sent it gliding away from the land. When she saw this she hastened to reach the end of the boat, but before she could so it was more than a yard from the bank, and drifting away faster than ever.

Then little Gerda was very much frightened, and began to cry, but no one heard her except the sparrows, and they could not carry her to land, but they flew along by the shore, and sang, as if to comfort her, "Here we are! Here we are!" The boat floated with the stream; little Gerda sat quite still with only her stockings on her feet; the red shoes floated after her, but she could not reach them because the boat kept so much in advance. The banks on each side of the river were very pretty.

There were beautiful flowers, old trees, sloping fields, in which cows and sheep were grazing, but not a man to be seen. Perhaps the river will carry me to little Kay, thought Gerda, and then she became more cheerful, and raised her head, and looked at the beautiful green banks; and so the boat sailed on for hours.

At length she came to a large cherry orchard, in which stood a small red house with strange red and blue windows. It had also a thatched roof, and outside were two wooden soldiers, that presented arms to her as she sailed past. Gerda called out to them, for she thought they were alive, but of course they did not answer; and as the boat drifted nearer to the shore, she saw what they really were.

Then Gerda called still louder, and there came a very old woman out of the house, leaning on a crutch. She wore a large hat to shade her from the sun, and on it were painted all sorts of pretty flowers. "You poor little child," said the old woman, "how did you manage to come all this distance into the wide world on such a rapid rolling stream?" And then the old woman walked in the water, seized the boat with her crutch, drew it to land, and lifted Gerda out. And Gerda was glad to feel herself on dry ground, although she was rather afraid of the strange old woman. "Come and tell me who you are," said she, "and how came you here."

He was such a little wee thing, that no human eye could see him. Behind each leaf of the rose he had a sleeping chamber. He was as well formed and as beautiful as a little child could be, and had wings that reached from his shoulders to his feet. Oh, what sweet fragrance there was in his chambers! and how clean and beautiful were the walls! for they were the blushing leaves of the rose. During the whole day he enjoyed himself in the warm sunshine, flew from flower to flower, and danced on the wings of the flying butterflies.

Then he took it into his head to measure how many steps he would have to go through the roads and cross roads that are on the leaf of a linden tree. What we call the veins on a leaf, he took for roads; ay, and very long roads they were for him; for before he had half finished his task, the sun went down: he had commenced his work too late. It became very cold, the dew fell, and the wind blew; so he thought the best thing he could do would be to return home. He hurried himself as much as he could; but he found the roses all closed up, and he could not get in; not a single rose stood open.

The poor little elf was very much frightened. He had never before been out at night, but had always slumbered secretly behind the warm rose leaves. Oh, this would certainly be his death. At the other end of the garden, he knew there was an arbor, overgrown with beautiful honey suckles.

The blossoms looked like large painted horns; and he thought to himself, he would go and sleep in one of these till the morning. He flew thither; but "hush!" two people were in the arbor, a handsome young man and a beautiful lady. They sat side by side, and wished that they might never be obliged to part. They loved each other much more than the best child can love its father and mother.

"But we must part," said the young man; "your brother does not like our engagement, and therefore he sends me so far away on business, over mountains and seas. Farewell, my sweet bride; for so you are to me." And then they kissed each other, and the girl wept, and gave him a rose; but before she did so, she pressed a kiss upon it so fervently that the flower opened. Then the little elf flew in, and leaned his head on the delicate, fragrant walls.

Here he could plainly hear them say, "Farewell, farewell;" and he felt that the rose had been placed on the young man's breast. Oh, how his heart did beat! The little elf could not go to sleep, it thumped so loudly. The young man took it out as he walked through the dark wood alone, and kissed the flower so often and so violently, that the little elf was almost crushed.

He could feel through the leaf how hot the lips of the young man were, and the rose had opened, as if from the heat of the noonday sun. There came another man, who looked gloomy and wicked. He was the wicked brother of the beautiful maiden. He drew out a sharp knife, and while the other was kissing the rose, the wicked man stabbed him to death; then he cut off his head, and buried it with the body in the soft earth under the linden tree.

"Now he is gone, and will soon be forgotten," thought the wicked brother; "he will never come back again. He was going on a long journey over mountains and seas; it is easy for a man to lose his life in such a journey. Then he scattered the dry leaves over the light earth with his foot, and went home through the darkness; but he went not alone, as he thought, the little elf accompanied him. He sat in a dry rolled up linden leaf, which had fallen from the tree on to the wicked man's head, as he was digging the grave.

The hat was on the head now, which made it very dark, and the little elf shuddered with fright and indignation at the wicked deed. It was the dawn of morning before the wicked man reached home; he took off his hat, and went into his sister's room.

At last she could run no longer, so she sat down to rest on a great stone, and when she looked round she saw that the summer was over, and autumn very far advanced. She had known nothing of this in the beautiful garden, where the sun shone and the flowers grew all the year round.

"Oh, how I have wasted my time?" said little Gerda; "it is autumn. I must not rest any longer," and she rose up to go on. But her little feet were wounded and sore, and everything around her looked so cold and bleak.

The long willow leaves were quite yellow. The dew drops fell like water, leaf after leaf dropped from the trees, the sloe thorn alone still bore fruit, but the sloes were sour, and set the teeth on edge. Oh, how dark and weary the whole world appeared! Fourth Story: The Prince and Princess "GERDA was obliged to rest again, and just opposite the place where she sat, she saw a great crow come hopping across the snow toward her.

He stood looking at her for some time, and then he wagged his head and said, "Caw, caw; good day, good day." He pronounced the words as plainly as he could, because he meant to be kind to the little girl; and then he asked her where she was going all alone in the wide world. The word alone Gerda understood very well, and knew how much it expressed. So then she told the crow the whole story of her life and adventures, and asked him if he had seen little Kay.

The crow nodded his head very gravely, and said, "Perhaps I have it may be." "No! Do you think you have?" cried little Gerda, and she kissed the crow, and hugged him almost to death with joy. "Gently, gently," said the crow. "I believe I know. I think it may be little Kay; but he has certainly forgotten you by this time for the princess." "Does he live with a princess?" asked Gerda. "Yes, listen," replied the crow, "but it is so difficult to speak your language.

If you understand the crows' language I then I can explain it better. Do you?" "No, I have never learnt it," said Gerda, "but my grandmother understands it, and used to speak it to me. I wish I had learnt it." "It does not matter," answered the crow; "I will explain as well as I can, although it will be very badly done;" and he told her what he had heard.

"In this kingdom where we now are," said he, "there lives a princess, who is so wonderfully clever that she has read all the newspapers in the world, and forgotten them too, although she is so clever.

A short time ago, as she was sitting on her throne, which people say is not such an agreeable seat as is often supposed, she began to sing a song which commences in these words: 'Why should I not be married?' 'Why not indeed?' said she, and so she determined to marry if she could find a husband who knew what to say when he was spoken to, and not one who could only look grand, for that was so tiresome. Then she assembled all her court ladies together at the beat of the drum, and when they heard of her intentions they were very much pleased.

'We are so glad to hear it,' said they, 'we were talking about it ourselves the other day.' You may believe that every word I tell you is true," said the crow, "for I have a tame sweetheart who goes freely about the palace, and she told me all this." Of course his sweetheart was a crow, for "birds of a feather flock together," and one crow always chooses another crow. "Newspapers were published immediately, with a border of hearts, and the initials of the princess among them.

They gave notice that every young man who was handsome was free to visit the castle and speak with the princess; and those who could reply loud enough to be heard when spoken to, were to make themselves quite at home at the palace;

The hymn book, in which the rose still lay, was placed under her head, for so she had wished it; and then they buried grandmother. On the grave, close by the churchyard wall, they planted a rose tree; it was soon full of roses, and the nightingale sat among the flowers, and sang over the grave. From the organ in the church sounded the music and the words of the beautiful psalms, which were written in the old book under the head of the dead one.

The moon shone down upon the grave, but the dead was not there; every child could go safely, even at night, and pluck a rose from the tree by the churchyard wall. The dead know more than we do who are living. They know what a terror would come upon us if such a strange thing were to happen, as the appearance of a dead person among us. They are better off than we are; the dead return no more. The earth has been heaped on the coffin, and it is earth only that lies within it.

The leaves of the hymn book are dust; and the rose, with all its recollections, has crumbled to dust also. But over the grave fresh roses bloom, the nightingale sings, and the organ sounds and there still lives a remembrance of old grandmother, with the loving, gentle eyes that always looked young. Eyes can never die. Ours will once again behold dear grandmother, young and beautiful as when, for the first time, she kissed the fresh, red rose, that is now dust in the grave. was terribly cold and nearly dark on the last evening of the old year, and the snow was falling fast.

In the cold and the darkness, a poor little girl, with bare head and naked feet, roamed through the streets. It is true she had on a pair of slippers when she left home, but they were not of much use. They were very large, so large, indeed, that they had belonged to her mother, and the poor little creature had lost them in running across the street to avoid two carriages that were rolling along at a terrible rate. One of the slippers she could not find, and a boy seized upon the other and ran away with it, saying that he could use it as a cradle, when he had children of his own.

So the little girl went on with her little naked feet, which were quite red and blue with the cold. In an old apron she carried a number of matches, and had a bundle of them in her hands. No one had bought anything of her the whole day, nor had anyone given her even a penny. Shivering with cold and hunger, she crept along; poor little child, she looked the picture of misery. The snowflakes fell on her long, fair hair, which hung in curls on her shoulders, but she regarded them not. Lights were shining from every window, and there was a savory smell of roast goose, for it was New year's eve yes, she remembered that.

In a corner, between two houses, one of which projected beyond the other, she sank down and huddled herself together. She had drawn her little feet under her, but she could not keep off the cold; and she dared not go home, for she had sold no matches, and could not take home even a penny of money. Her father would certainly beat her; besides, it was almost as cold at home as here, for they had only the roof to cover them, through which the wind howled, although the largest holes had been stopped up with straw and rags. Her little hands were almost frozen with the cold.

Ah! perhaps a burning match might be some good, if she could draw it from the bundle and strike it against the wall, just to warm her fingers. She drew one out "scratch!" how it sputtered as it burnt! It gave a warm, bright light, like a little candle, as she held her hand over it. It was really a wonderful light. It seemed to the little girl that she was sitting by a large iron stove, with polished brass feet and a brass ornament. How the fire burned! and seemed so beautifully warm that the child stretched out her feet as if to warm them, when, lo! the flame of the match went out, the stove vanished, and she had only the remains of the half burnt match in her hand. She rubbed another match on the wall.

It burst into a flame, and where its light fell upon the wall it became as transparent as a veil, and she could see into the room.

Red in the head with passion, so that the poor little thing did not know where to go, and was quite miserable because he was so ugly and laughed at by the whole farmyard.

So it went on from day to day till it got worse and worse. The poor duckling was driven about by every one; even his brothers and sisters were unkind to him, and would say, "Ah, you ugly creature, I wish the cat would get you," and his mother said she wished he had never been born. The ducks pecked him, the chickens beat him, and the girl who fed the poultry kicked him with her feet.

So at last he ran away, frightening the little birds in the hedge as he flew over the palings. "They are afraid of me because I am ugly," he said. So he closed his eyes, and flew still farther, until he came out on a large moor, inhabited by wild ducks. Here he remained the whole night, feeling very tired and sorrowful. In the morning, when the wild ducks rose in the air, they stared at their new comrade. "What sort of a duck are you?" they all said, coming round him.

He bowed to them, and was as polite as he could be, but he did not reply to their question. "You are exceedingly ugly," said the wild ducks, "but that will not matter if you do not want to marry one of our family." Poor thing! he had no thoughts of marriage; all he wanted was permission to lie among the rushes, and drink some of the water on the moor. After he had been on the moor two days, there came two wild geese, or rather goslings, for they had not been out of the egg long, and were very saucy.

"Listen, friend," said one of them to the duckling, "you are so ugly, that we like you very well. Will you go with us, and become a bird of passage? Not far from here is another moor, in which there are some pretty wild geese, all unmarried. It is a chance for you to get a wife; you may be lucky, ugly as you are." "Pop, pop," sounded in the air, and the two wild geese fell dead among the rushes, and the water was tinged with blood. "Pop, pop," echoed far and wide in the distance, and whole flocks of wild geese rose up from the rushes.

The sound continued from every direction, for the sportsmen surrounded the moor, and some were even seated on branches of trees, overlooking the rushes. The blue smoke from the guns rose like clouds over the dark trees, and as it floated away across the water, a number of sporting dogs bounded in among the rushes, which bent beneath them wherever they went. How they terrified the poor duckling! He turned away his head to hide it under his wing, and at the same moment a large terrible dog passed quite near him.

His jaws were open, his tongue hung from his mouth, and his eyes glared fearfully. He thrust his nose close to the duckling, showing his sharp teeth, and then, "splash, splash," he went into the water without touching him, "Oh," sighed the duckling, "how thankful I am for being so ugly; even a dog will not bite me." And so he lay quite still, while the shot rattled through the rushes, and gun after gun was fired over him.

It was late in the day before all became quiet, but even then the poor young thing did not dare to move. He waited quietly for several hours, and then, after looking carefully around him, hastened away from the moor as fast as he could. He ran over field and meadow till a storm arose, and he could hardly struggle against it.

Towards evening, he reached a poor little cottage that seemed ready to fall, and only remained standing because it could not decide on which side to fall first. The storm continued so violent, that the duckling could go no farther; he sat down by the cottage, and then he noticed that the door was not quite closed in consequence of one of the hinges having given way.

"We shall have no time this evening," said he, spreading out his prettiest umbrella over the child. "Look at these Chinese," and then the whole umbrella appeared like a large china bowl, with blue trees and pointed bridges, upon which stood little Chinamen nodding their heads. "We must make all the world beautiful for to morrow morning," said Ole Luk Oie, "for it will be a holiday, it is Sunday.

I must now go to the church steeple and see if the little sprites who live there have polished the bells, so that they may sound sweetly. I have to do, is to take down all the stars and brighten them up.

I have to number them first before I put them in my apron, and also to number the places from which I take them, so that they may go back into the right holes, or else they would not remain, and we should have a number of falling stars, for they would all tumble down one after the other." "Hark ye! Mr. Luk Oie," said an old portrait which hung on the wall of Hjalmar's bedroom.

"Do you know me? I am Hjalmar's great grandfather. I thank you for telling the boy stories, but you must not confuse his ideas. The stars cannot be taken down from the sky and polished; they are spheres like our earth, which is a good thing for them." "Thank you, old great grandfather," said Ole Luk Oie.

"I thank you; you may be the head of the family, as no doubt you are, but I am older than you. I am an ancient heathen. The old Romans and Greeks named me the Dream god. I have visited the noblest houses, and continue to do so; still I know how to conduct myself both to high and low, and now you may tell the stories yourself:" and so Ole Luk Oie walked off, taking his umbrellas with him. "Well, well, one is never to give an opinion, I suppose," grumbled the portrait.

And it woke Hjalmar. Sunday "GOOD evening," said Ole Luk Oie. Hjalmar nodded, and then sprang out of bed, and turned his great grandfather's portrait to the wall, so that it might not interrupt them as it had done yesterday.

"Now," said he, "you must tell me some stories about five green peas that lived in one pod; or of the chickseed that courted the chickweed; or of the darning needle, who acted so proudly because she fancied herself an embroidery needle." "You may have too much of a good thing," said Ole Luk Oie. "You know that I like best to show you something, so I will show you my brother. He is also called Ole Luk Oie but he never visits any one but once, and when he does come, he takes him away on his horse, and tells him stories as they ride along. He knows only two stories.

One of these is so wonderfully beautiful, that no one in the world can imagine anything at all like it; but the other is just as ugly and frightful, so that it would be impossible to describe it." Then Ole Luk Oie lifted Hjalmar up to the window. "There now, you can see my brother, the other Ole Luk Oie; he is also called Death.

You perceive he is not so bad as they represent him in picture books; there he is a skeleton, but now his coat is embroidered with silver, and he wears the splendid uniform of a hussar, and a mantle of black velvet flies behind him, over the horse. Look, how he gallops along." Hjalmar saw that as this Ole Luk Oie rode on, he lifted up old and young, and carried them away on his horse. Some he seated in front of him, and some behind, but always inquired first, "How stands the mark book?" "Good," they all answered. "Yes, but let me see for myself," he replied; and they were obliged to give him the books.

Then all those who had "Very good," or "Exceedingly good," came in front of the horse, and heard the beautiful story; while those who had "Middling," or "Tolerably good,"

I did not think of it then, but Anastasia and I were really one. She was always sitting on my lap, or riding in the goat skin on my back; and in my dreams she always appeared to me. Two nights after this, other men, armed with knives and muskets, came into our tent. They were Albanians, brave men, my mother told me. They only stayed a short time.

My sister Anastasia sat on the knee of one of them; and when they were gone, she had not three, but two silver coins in her hair one had disappeared. They wrapped tobacco in strips of paper, and smoked it; and I remember they were uncertain as to the road they ought to take. But they were obliged to go at last, and my father went with them.

Soon after, we heard the sound of firing. The noise continued, and presently soldiers rushed into our hut, and took my mother and myself and Anastasia prisoners. They declared that we had entertained robbers, and that my father had acted as their guide, and therefore we must now go with them.

The corpses of the robbers, and my father's corpse, were brought into the hut. I saw my poor dead father, and cried till I fell asleep. When I awoke, I found myself in a prison; but the room was not worse than our own in the hut. They gave me onions and musty wine from a tarred cask; but we were not accustomed to much better fare at home.

How long we were kept in prison, I do not know; but many days and nights passed by. We were set free about Easter time. I carried Anastasia on my back, and we walked very slowly; for my mother was very weak, and it is a long way to the sea, to the Gulf of Lepanto. On our arrival, we entered a church, in which there were beautiful pictures in golden frames.

They were pictures of angels, fair and bright; and yet our little Anastasia looked equally beautiful, as it seemed to me. In the centre of the floor stood a coffin filled with roses. My mother told me it was the Lord Jesus Christ who was represented by these roses. Then the priest announced, "Christ is risen," and all the people greeted each other.

Each one carried a burning taper in his hand, and one was given to me, as well as to little Anastasia. The music sounded, and the people left the church hand in hand, with joy and gladness. Outside, the women were roasting the paschal lamb. We were invited to partake; and as I sat by the fire, a boy, older than myself, put his arms round my neck, and kissed me, and said, "Christ is risen." And thus it was that for the first time I met Aphtanides.

My mother could make fishermen's nets, for which there was a great demand here in the bay; and we lived a long time by the side of the sea, the beautiful sea, that had a taste like tears, and in its colors reminded me of the stag that wept red tears; for sometimes its waters were red, and sometimes green or blue. Aphtanides knew how to manage our boat, and I often sat in it, with my little Anastasia, while it glided on through the water, swift as a bird flying through the air.

Then, when the sun set, how beautifully, deeply blue, would be the tint on the mountains, one rising above the other in the far distance, and the summit of mount Parnassus rising above them all like a glorious crown. Its top glittered in the evening rays like molten gold, and it seemed as if the light came from within it; for long after the sun had sunk beneath the horizon, the mountain top would glow in the clear, blue sky.

The white aquatic birds skimmed the surface of the water in their flight, and all was calm and still as amid the black rocks at Delphi. I lay on my back in the boat, Anastasia leaned against me, while the stars above us glittered more brightly than the lamps in our church.

God sent a swarm of gnats one swarm of little gnats. They buzzed round the prince and stung his face and hands; angrily he drew his sword and brandished it, but he only touched the air and did not hit the gnats. Then he ordered his servants to bring costly coverings and wrap him in them, that the gnats might no longer be able to reach him.

The servants carried out his orders, but one single gnat had placed itself inside one of the coverings, crept into the prince's ear and stung him. The place burnt like fire, and the poison entered into his blood. Mad with pain, he tore off the coverings and his clothes too, flinging them far away, and danced about before the eyes of his ferocious soldiers, who now mocked at him, the mad prince, who wished to make war with God, and was overcome by a single little gnat.

In this street, just in front of the market place where vegetables are sold, stands a pig, made of brass and curiously formed. The bright color has been changed by age to dark green; but clear, fresh water pours from the snout, which shines as if it had been polished, and so indeed it has, for hundreds of poor people and children seize it in their hands as they place their mouths close to the mouth of the animal, to drink.

It is quite a picture to see a half naked boy clasping the well formed creature by the head, as he presses his rosy lips against its jaws. Every one who visits Florence can very quickly find the place; he has only to ask the first beggar he meets for the Metal Pig, and he will be told where it is.

It was late on a winter evening; the mountains were covered with snow, but the moon shone brightly, and moonlight in Italy is like a dull winter's day in the north; indeed it is better, for clear air seems to raise us above the earth, while in the north a cold, gray, leaden sky appears to press us down to earth, even as the cold damp earth shall one day press on us in the grave. In the garden of the grand duke's palace, under the roof of one of the wings, where a thousand roses bloom in winter, a little ragged boy had been sitting the whole day long; a boy, who might serve as a type of Italy, lovely and smiling, and yet still suffering.

He was hungry and thirsty, yet no one gave him anything; and when it became dark, and they were about to close the gardens, the porter turned him out. He stood a long time musing on the bridge which crosses the Arno, and looking at the glittering stars, reflected in the water which flowed between him and the elegant marble bridge Della Trinita.

He then walked away towards the Metal Pig, half knelt down, clasped it with his arms, and then put his mouth to the shining snout and drank deep draughts of the fresh water. Close by, lay a few salad leaves and two chestnuts, which were to serve for his supper. No one was in the street but himself; it belonged only to him, so he boldly seated himself on the pig's back, leaned forward so that. It was midnight. The Metal Pig raised himself gently, and the boy heard him say quite distinctly, "Hold tight, little boy, for I am going to run;" and away he started for a most wonderful ride.

First, they arrived at the Piazza del Granduca, and the metal horse which bears the duke's statue, neighed aloud. The painted coats of arms on the old council house shone like transparent pictures, and Michael Angelo's David tossed his sling; it was as if everything had life. The metallic groups of figures, among which were Perseus and the Rape of the Sabines, looked like living persons, and cries of terror sounded from them all across the noble square.

By the Palazzo degli Uffizi, in the arcade, where the nobility assemble for the carnival, the Metal Pig stopped. "Hold fast," said the animal; "hold fast, for I am going up stairs." The little boy said not a word; he was half pleased and half afraid.

The king said, "Shall we gamble on the throw of the dice?" The priest, expecting to win once more, agreed. Just as before, the king recited his lucky charm: "If tempted any woman will, for sure, give up her faithfulness and act impure." As usual the priest added: "Except my woman faithful evermore!" But lo and behold the dice fell in the king's favour and he took the priest's money.

The king said, "Oh priest, your woman is no exception! True faithfulness cannot be forced! Your plan was to snatch a newborn baby girl, lock her up behind seven gates guarded by seven guards, and force her to be good. But you have failed. Any prisoner's greatest wish is freedom! "She blindfolded you and then her playboy lover gave you that bump on your old bald head which proves your gates and guards were useless!

The priest returned home and accused his lady. But in the meantime, she had come up with a plan of her own. She said, "No, my lord, I have been completely faithful to you. No man has ever touched me except you! And I will prove it in a trial by fire. I will walk on fire without being burned to prove I speak the truth." She ordered the old servant woman to fetch her son, the playboy. She was to tell him to take the lady by the hand and prevent her from stepping in the flames. This the woman did. On the day of the trial by fire, the priest's lady said to the crowd of onlookers, "I have never been touched by any man except this priest, my master. By this truth, may the fire have no power over me."

Then, just as she was about to step into the fire, the playboy leaped from the crowd and grabbed her hand. He shouted, "Stop! Stop! How can this priest be so cruel as to force this tender young lady into a raging fire!" She shook her hand free and said to the priest, "My lord, since this man has touched my hand, the trial by fire is useless. But you can see my good intention!" The priest realised he had been tricked. He beat her as he drove her away forever.

At last she was free of him and mistress of her own fate. Once upon a time, a very rich man was living in Benares, in northern India. He had a daughter who was one of the most beautiful women in the city. Her skin was as soft as rose petals, her complexion was like lotus blossoms, and her hair was as black as midnight. But unfortunately her beauty was only skin deep. For, on the inside, she was very cruel. She insulted her servants and even enjoyed beating them.

She became known as the 'Wicked Lady'. One day she went down to the river for her bath. While she bathed, her servant girls played and splashed in the water. Suddenly it became dark and a heavy rainstorm came upon them. Most of the attendants and guards ran away. The servant girls said to each other, "This would be a perfect time to get rid of the Wicked Lady once and for all! So they deserted her there, still bathing in midstream. The storm became more and more terrible as the sun set. When the servant girls arrived home without the Wicked Lady, the rich man asked them, "Where is my precious daughter?" They replied, "We saw her coming out of the river, but since then we haven't seen her. We don't know where she went."

The rich man sent out relatives to search for her, but she was nowhere to be found. Meanwhile the Wicked Lady had been swept downstream by the ferocious flooded river. There just so happened to be a holy man living in the forest next to the river. In this peaceful area he had been meditating for a long time, until he had come to enjoy the inner happiness of a high mental state. Because of this happiness, he was quite sure he had left the ordinary desires of the world behind. At about midnight the Wicked Lady was carried past the holy man's hut by the raging river. She was crying out and screaming for help.

When he heard her, the holy man realised a woman was in danger. So he took a torch down to the river and saw her being swept along. He dived in and saved her.

They are called Pyramids, and are older than a stork could imagine; and in that country, there is a river that overflows its banks, and then goes back, leaving nothing but mire; there we can walk about, and eat frogs in abundance." "Oh, o h!" cried the young storks. "Yes, it is a delightful place; there is nothing to do all day long but eat, and while we are so well off out there, in this country there will not be a single green leaf on the trees, and the weather will be so cold that the clouds will freeze, and fall on the earth in little white rags." The stork meant snow, but she could not explain it in any other way.

"Will the naughty boys freeze and fall in pieces?" asked the young storks. "No, they will not freeze and fall into pieces," said the mother, "but they will be very cold, and be obliged to sit all day in a dark, gloomy room, while we shall be flying about in foreign lands, where there are blooming flowers and warm sunshine."

Time passed on, and the young storks grew so large that they could stand upright in the nest and look about them. The father brought them, every day, beautiful frogs, little snakes, and all kinds of stork dainties that he could find. And then, how funny it was to see the tricks he would perform to amuse them.

He would lay his head quite round over his tail, and clatter with his beak, as if it had been a rattle; and then he would tell them stories all about the marshes and fens. "Come," said the mother one day, "Now you must learn to fly." And all the four young ones were obliged to come out on the top of the roof. Oh, how they tottered at first, and were obliged to balance themselves with their wings, or they would have fallen to the ground below. "Look at me," said the mother, "you must hold your heads in this way, and place your feet so. Once, twice, once, twice that is it. Now you will be able to take care of yourselves in the world."

Then she flew a little distance from them, and the young ones made a spring to follow her; but down they fell plump, for their bodies were still too heavy. "I don't want to fly," said one of the young storks, creeping back into the nest. "I don't care about going to warm countries." "Would you like to stay here and freeze when the winter comes?" said the mother, "or till the boys comes to hang you, or to roast you? Well then, I'll call them." "Oh no, no," said the young stork, jumping out on the roof with the others; and now they were all attentive, and by the third day could fly a little.

Then they began to fancy they could soar, so they tried to do so, resting on their wings, but they soon found themselves falling, and had to flap their wings as quickly as possible. The boys came again in the street singing their song: "Stork, stork, fly away." "Shall we fly down, and pick their eyes out?" asked the young storks. "No; leave them alone," said the mother. "Listen to me; that is much more important. Now then. One two three. Now to the right.

One two three. Now to the left, round the chimney. There now, that was very good. That last flap of the wings was so easy and graceful, that I shall give you permission to fly with me to morrow to the marshes. There will be a number of very superior storks there with their families, and I expect you to show them that my children are the best brought up of any who may be present.

You must strut about proudly it will look well and make you respected." "But may we not punish those naughty boys?" asked the young storks. "No; let them scream away as much as they like. You can fly from them now up high amid the clouds, and will be in the land of the pyramids when they are freezing, and have not a green leaf on the trees or an apple to eat." "We will revenge ourselves," whispered the young storks to each other, as they again joined the exercising.

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"Farewell, farewell," cried the prince and princess, and little Gerda wept, and the crow wept; and then, after a few miles, the crow also said "Farewell," and this was the saddest parting. However, he flew to a tree, and stood flapping his black wings as long as he could see the coach, which glittered in the bright sunshine.

Fifth Story: Little Robber Girl THE coach drove on through a thick forest, where it lighted up the way like a torch, and dazzled the eyes of some robbers, who could not bear to let it pass them unmolested. "It is gold! it is gold!" cried they, rushing forward, and seizing the horses. Then they struck the little jockeys, the coachman, and the footman dead, and pulled little Gerda out of the carriage. "She is fat and pretty, and she has been fed with the kernels of nuts," said the old robber woman, who had a long beard and eyebrows that hung over her eyes.

"She is as good as a little lamb; how nice she will taste!" and as she said this, she drew forth a shining knife, that glittered horribly. "Oh!" screamed the old woman the same moment; for her own daughter, who held her back, had bitten her in the ear. She was a wild and naughty girl, and the mother called her an ugly thing, and had not time to kill Gerda.

"She shall play with me," said the little robber girl; "she shall give me her muff and her pretty dress, and sleep with me in my bed." And then she bit her mother again, and made her spring in the air, and jump about; and all the robbers laughed, and said, "See how she is dancing with her young cub." "I will have a ride in the coach," said the little robber girl; and she would have her own way; for she was so self-willed and obstinate.

She and Gerda seated themselves in the coach, and drove away, over stumps and stones, into the depths of the forest. The little robber girl was about the same size as Gerda, but stronger; she had broader shoulders and a darker skin; her eyes were quite black, and she had a mournful look. She clasped little Gerda round the waist, and said, "They shall not kill you as long as you don't make us vexed with you. I suppose you are a princess."

"No," said Gerda; and then she told her all her history, and how fond she was of little Kay. The robber girl looked earnestly at her, nodded her head slightly, and said, "They sha'nt kill you, even if I do get angry with you; for I will do it myself." And then she wiped Gerda's eyes, and stuck her own hands in the beautiful muff which was so soft and warm.

The coach stopped in the courtyard of a robber's castle, the walls of which were cracked from top to bottom. Ravens and crows flew in and out of the holes and crevices, while great bulldogs, either of which looked as if it could swallow a man, were jumping about; but they were not allowed to bark. In the large and smoky hall a bright fire was burning on the stone floor.

There was no chimney; so the smoke went up to the ceiling, and found a way out for itself. Soup was boiling in a large cauldron, and hares and rabbits were roasting on the spit. "You shall sleep with me and all my little animals to night," said the robber girl, after they had had something to eat and drink. So she took Gerda to a corner of the hall, where some straw and carpets were laid down. Above them, on laths and perches, were more than a hundred pigeons, who all seemed to be asleep, although they moved slightly when the two little girls came near them.

"These all belong to me," said the robber girl; and she seized the nearest to her, held it by the feet, and shook it till it flapped its wings. "Kiss it," cried she, flapping it in Gerda's face. "There sit the wood pigeons," continued she, pointing to a number of laths and a cage which had been fixed into the walls, near one of the openings.

The rose faded with grief, and lay between the leaves of the book, which he opened in his own home, saying, "Here is a rose from the grave of Homer." Then the flower awoke from her dream, and trembled in the wind. A drop of dew fell from the leaves upon the singer's grave. The sun rose, and the flower bloomed more beautiful than ever.

The day was hot, and she was still in her own warm Asia. Then footsteps approached, strangers, such as the rose had seen in her dream, came by, and among them was a poet from the north; he plucked the rose, pressed a kiss upon her fresh mouth, and carried her away to the home of the clouds and the northern lights. Like a mummy, the flower now rests in his "Iliad," and, as in her dream, she hears him say, as he opens the book, "Here is a rose from the grave of Homer."

often, after a violent thunder storm, a field of buckwheat appears blackened and singed, as if a flame of fire had passed over it. The country people say that this appearance is caused by lightning; but I will tell you what the sparrow says, and the sparrow heard it from an old willow tree which grew near a field of buckwheat, and is there still. It is a large venerable tree, though a little crippled by age. The trunk has been split, and out of the crevice grass and brambles grow.

The tree bends for ward slightly, and the branches hang quite down to the ground just like green hair. Corn grows in the surrounding fields, not only rye and barley, but oats, pretty oats that, when ripe, look like a number of little golden canary birds sitting on a bough. The corn has a smiling look and the heaviest and richest ears bend their heads low as if in pious humility. Once there was also a field of buckwheat, and this field was exactly opposite to old willow tree.

The buckwheat did not bend like the other grain, but erected its head proudly and stiffly on the stem. "I am as valuable as any other corn," said he, "and I am much handsomer; my flowers are as beautiful as the bloom of the apple blossom, and it is a pleasure to look at us. Do you know of anything prettier than we are, you old willow tree?" And the willow tree nodded his head, as if he would say, "Indeed I do." But the buckwheat spread itself out with pride, and said, "Stupid tree; he is so old that grass grows out of his body." There arose a very terrible storm.

All the field flowers folded their leaves together, or bowed their little heads, while the storm passed over them, but the buckwheat stood erect in its pride. "Bend your head as we do," said the flowers. "I have no occasion to do so," replied the buckwheat. "Bend your head as we do," cried the ears of corn; "the angel of the storm is coming; his wings spread from the sky above to the earth beneath. He will strike you down before you can cry for mercy." "But I will not bend my head," said the buckwheat. "Close your flowers and bend your leaves," said the old willow tree.

"Do not look at the lightning when the cloud bursts; even men cannot do that. In a flash of lightning heaven opens, and we can look in; but the sight will strike even human beings blind. What then must happen to us, who only grow out of the earth, and are so inferior to them, if we venture to do so?" "Inferior, indeed!" said the buckwheat.

"Now I intend to have a peep into heaven." Proudly and boldly he looked up, while the lightning flashed across the sky as if the whole world were in flames. When the dreadful storm had passed, the flowers and the corn raised their drooping heads in the pure still air, refreshed by the rain, but the buckwheat lay like a weed in the field, burnt to blackness by the lightning.

The branches of the old willow tree rustled in the wind, and large water drops fell from his green leaves as if the old willow were weeping.

After bathing in the river the wise man returned home. At dinnertime he asked his sister to join them. After dinner he invited her to stay in his home. In only a few days the queen gave birth to a wonderful little baby boy. She named him fruitful. She told the wise man this was the name of the boy's grandfather, who had one been King of Mithila.

The baby grew into a little boy. His friends took to making fun of him for not being of high class birth like they were. So he went and asked his mother who his father was. She told him to pay no attention to what the other children said. She told him his father was the dead King Badfruit of Mithila, and how his brother, Prince Poorfruit, had stolen the throne.

After that, it didn't bother him when the others called him "son of a widow." Before he was 16, the bright young Fruitful learned all there was to know about religion, literature and the skills of a warrior. He grew into a very handsome young man. He decided it was time to regain his rightful crown, which had been stolen by his uncle. So he went and asked his mother, "Do you have any of the wealth that belonged to my father?" She said, "Of course! I did not escape empty handed.

Thinking of you, I brought pearls, jewels and diamonds. So there is n need for you to work for pay. Go directly and take back your kingdom." But he said, "No mother, I will take only half. I will sail to Burma, the land of gold, and make my fortune there." His mother said, "No my son, it is too dangerous to sail abroad. There is plenty of fortune here!" He said, "I must leave half with you, my mother, so you can live in comfort as a queen should." So saying, he departed by ship for Burma.

On the same day that Prince Fruitful set sail, his Uncle King Poorfruit became very ill. He was so sick that he could no longer leave his bed. Meanwhile, on the ship bound for Burma there were some 350 people. It sailed for seven days. Then there was a violent storm that damaged and weakened the ship. All except the prince cried out in fear and prayed for help to their various gods. But the Bodhisatta did not cry out in fear; the Enlightenment Being did not pray to any god for help.

Instead he helped himself. He filled his belly with concentrated butter mixed with sugar, since he didn't know how long it would be before his next meal. He soaked his clothes in oil to protect himself from the cold ocean water and help him stay afloat. Then when the ship began to sink, he went and held on to the mast, for it was the tallest part of the ship.

As the deck sank underwater, he pulled himself up the mast. Meanwhile his trembling praying shipmates were sucked underwater and gobbled up by hungry fish and huge turtles. Soon the water all around turned red from blood. As the ship sank, Prince Fruitful reached the top of the mast. To avoid being devoured in the sea of blood, he jumped mightily from the tip of the mast in the direction of the kingdom of Mithila.

And at the same time as he saved himself from the snapping jaws of the fish and turtles, King Poorfruit died in his bed. After his mighty leap from the top of the mast, the prince fell into the emerald coloured sea. His body shined like gold as he swam for seven days and seven nights. Then he saw it was the fasting day of the full moon. So he purified his mouth by washing it out with salt water and observed the "Eight Training Steps". Once upon a time in the very distant past, the gods of the four directions had appointed a goddess to be the protector of the oceans. They had told her that her duty was to protect especially all those who honour and respect their mothers and other elders.

He thought, "This man is talking about me! Has the king taken my wealth and given it away?" Then: he jumped out from the bushes and shouted, "Hey you, what are you doing with my bullock cart?" He grabbed the reins and stopped the cart. The villager got down and said, "What's wrong with you?"

The billionaire Lord Illisa is giving his wealth to all the people of the city. What do you think you're doing?" As he said this he struck Illisa on the head as hard as a thunderclap and rode away on the cart filled with treasure. Illisa the Cheap bounced to his feet and chased after the cart. He grabbed the reins again. This time the villager held onto Illisa by the hair, pulled his head down, and struck it hard with his elbow. He grabbed him by the neck, threw him to the ground, and then continued on his way. All this rough treatment sobered up Illisa. He ran home as fast as he could.

He saw the crowds of people carrying off his precious riches. He grabbed hold of them to stop them, but they just pushed him out of the way and knocked him down. Nearly fainting from his bruises, he tried to get into his home. But the gate keeper said, "Where do you think you're going?" Beating him with a cane, he grabbed him by the neck and threw him out. Illisa thought, "Now no one can help me but the king." So he ran to the palace and went straight inside. He said, "My lord, why do you want my house to be looted?" The king said, "This is not my doing.

I myself heard you say that if I would not accept your wealth, you would give it to all the citizens. I applaud your generosity! And did you not send a drummer into the streets to announce you were giving your wealth to any and all?" "My lord king must be joking!" said Illisa. "I didn't do any such thing. People don't call me 'Illisa the Cheap' for nothing! I don't give anything to anybody if I can help it! Please, lord king, summon whoever is giving my treasures away, and clear up this matter."

After being summoned by the king, Sakka came to the palace. Illisa asked, "Who is the real billionaire, my lord king?" Neither the king nor his ministers could tell the difference between them. The king said, "We cannot recognize which one it is. Do you know someone who can recognize you for sure?" "Yes, my lord, my wife can recognize me," said Illisa. But when she was called for and asked to decide, she stood next to Sakka and said, "This is my husband." When Illisa's children and servants were summoned, they too picked Sakka. Illisa thought, "I have a wart on my head, covered up by my hair.

Only my barber knows this." So he said to the king, "Please summon my barber. He knows me very well." The barber was called for and the king asked him, "Can you tell us which of these two men is Illisa the billionaire?" "I must examine their heads," he said, "then I will determine who the real Illisa is." "Do so," said the king. Immediately Sakka, King of the Heaven of 33, made a wart appear on his head. When the barber examined them he found warts on both their heads.

He said, "Oh lord king, I cannot recognize which of these is Illisa. Both have crooked feet, both have crooked hands, both have crooked eyes, and both have warts on the same spots on their heads. I can't tell the difference!" Hearing these words, Illisa began trembling. His mind became so unbalanced from losing his last hope of regaining his wealth, that he fainted on the spot. At that very moment, Sakka said, "I am not Illisa. I am Sakka, King of the Gods of the Heaven of 33."

As he said this, he used his super powers to rise into the air and remain suspended there. Attendants splashed cold water on Illisa's face and woke him from his fainting spell. He knelt down in respect before Sakka, King of Gods. Then Sakka spoke: "This wealth came from me, Illisa, not from you. I myself, when I was your father, did many meritorious deeds. I was glad to give to the poor and needy. That is why, when I died, I was reborn as Sakka, King of Gods.

Strong enough to easily support great mountains, and is able to bear the worst filth and stench, could not bear and support this cruel man's enormous unwholesomeness. So, when he could no longer be seen by the suffering elephant, the mighty earth cracked open beneath him. Fire from the lowest hell world leaped up, engulfed him in bright red flames, and pulled him down to his doom! The moral is: The ungrateful stops at nothing, and digs his own grave.

Once upon a time, King Brahmadata of Benares had a son. He grew up to be a mean and cruel man the type that's always trying to prove he's tougher than everyone else. He was a bully who constantly pushed people around and picked fights. Whenever he spoke to people it was with a stream of obscenities right out of the gutter.

And he was always quick to anger just like a hissing snake that's just been stepped on. People inside and outside the palace ran from him as they would from a starving man eating demon. They avoided him as they would a speck of dirt in the eye. Behind his back everyone called him the 'Evil Prince'. In short he was not a nice man! One day the prince decided to go swimming. So he went down to the river with his servants and attendants. Suddenly it became almost as dark as night.

A huge storm came up. Being so rough and tough, the prince was always trying to show he wasn't scared of anything. So he yelled at his servants, "Take me into the middle of the river and bathe me. Then bring me back to shore." Following his orders, they took him out to midstream. Then they said, "Now is our chance! Whatever we do here, the king will never find out.

That put him to sleep, but in between doses he woke and cried again, saying that a gator had his leg or a bear was hugging him to death or a snake had wound itself around the long part of his arm and was crushing it. Within a few days, the poisons had made him peaceful. Titania could not conceive of the way they were made, except as distillations of sadness and heartbreak and despair, since that was how she made her own poisons, shaking drops of terror out of a wren captured in her fist, or sucking with a silver straw at the tears of a dog. Oberon had voiced a fear that the boy was sick for human things, that the cancer in his blood was only a symptom of a greater ill that he was homesick unto death.

So she imagined they were putting into him a sort of liquid mortal sadness, a corrective against a dangerous abundance of faerie joy. He seemed to thrive on it. If she hadn't been so distracted by relief, it might have saddened her or brought to mind how different in kind he was from her that a distillation of grief should restore him. His whole body seemed to suck it up, bag after bag, and then his fever broke, and the spots on his skin began to fade like ordinary bruises, and the pain in his bones went away. She watched him for hours, finally restored to untroubled sleep, and when he woke he said, "I want a cheese sandwich," and the dozen faeries hidden around the room gave a cheer.

"You heard him," she said, and ordered them with a sweep of her arm out the door and the windows. The laziest went only to the hospital cafeteria, but the more industrious ventured out to the fancy cheese shops of Cole Valley and the Castro and even the Marina, and returned with loaves under their arms and wheels of stolen cheese balanced on their heads and stuffed down their pants, Manchego and Nisa and Tomme Vaudoise, proclaiming the names to the boy as if they were announcing the names of visiting kings and queens. The room rapidly filled with cheese, and then with sandwiches, as the bread and cheese were cut and assembled. The boy chose something from the cafeteria, a plastic looking cheese on toast.

Afterwards it became known by all and was reported to the king. He called the bad minister before him and said, 'I have investigated and found that you have done a criminal act. Word of it has spread and you have dishonoured yourself here in Benares. So it would be better for you to go and live somewhere else. You may take all your wealth and your family.

Go wherever you like and live happily there. Learn from this lesson.' Then the minister took his family and all his belongings to the city of Kosala. Since he was very clever indeed, he worked his way up and became a minister of the king. In time he became the most trusted adviser to the King of Kosala. One day he said, 'My lord, I came here from Benares. The city of Benares is like a beehive where the bees have no stingers! The ruling king is very tender and weak.

With only a very small army you can easily conquer the city and make it yours.' The king doubted this, so he said, "You are my minister, but you talk like a spy who is leading me into a trap!" He replied "No my lord. If you don't believe me, send your best spies to examine what I say. I am not lying. When robbers are brought to the King of Benders, he gives them money, advises them not to take what is not given, and then lets them go free," The king decided to find out if this was true.

So he sent some robbers to raid a remote border village belonging to Benares. The villagers caught the looters and brought them to King Goodness the Great. He asked them, "Why do you want to do this type of crime?" The robbers answered, "Your worship, we are poor people. The robbers answered, "Your worship, we are poor people. There is no way to live without money. As your kingdom has plenty of workers, there is no work for us to do. So we had to loot the country in order to survive." Hearing this, the king gave them gifts of money, advised them to change their ways, and let them go free.

When the King of Kosala was told of this, he sent another gang of bandits to the streets of Benares itself. They too looted the shops and even killed some of the people. When they were captured and brought to King Goodness, he treated them just the same as the first robbers. Learning of this, the King of Kosala began marching his troops and elephants towards Benares. In those days the King of Benders had a mighty army which included very brave elephants. There were many ordinary soldiers, and also some that were as big as giants. It was known that they were capable of conquering all India.

The giant soldiers told King Goodness about the small invading army from Kosala. They asked permission to attack and kill them all. But King Goodness the Great would not send them into battle. He said, "My children, do not fight just so I may remain king. If we destroy the lives of others we also destroy our own peace of mind. Why should we kill others? Let them have the kingdom if they want it so badly. I do not wish to fight." The royal ministers said, "Our Lord, we will fight them ourselves. Don't worry yourself. Only give us the order." But again he prevented them.

Meanwhile the King of Kosala sent him a warning, telling him to give up the kingdom or fight. King Goodness the Great sent this reply: "I do not want you to fight with me, and you do not want me to fight with you. If you want the country, you can have it. Why should we kill people just to decide the name of the king? What does it matter even the name of the country itself?" Hearing this, the ministers came forward and pleaded, "Our Lord, let us go out with our mighty army.

We will beat them with our weapons and capture them all. We are much stronger than they are. We would not have to kill any of them. And besides, if we surrender the city, the enemy army would surely kill us all!" But King Goodness would not be moved.

My rays could only light up isolated notes, so the greater part of what was written there will ever remain dark to me. Was it the death hymn he wrote there? Were these the glad notes of joy? Did he drive away to meet death, or hasten to the embraces of his beloved? The rays of the Moon do not read all that is written by mortals." Thirty Second Evening "I LOVE the children," said the Moon, "especially the quite little ones they are so droll.

Sometimes I peep into the room, between the curtain and the window frame, when they are not thinking of me. It gives me pleasure to see them dressing and undressing. First, the little round naked shoulder comes creeping out of the frock, then the arm; or I see how the stocking is drawn off, and a plump little white leg makes its appearance, and a white little foot that is fit to be kissed, and I kiss it too. "But about what I was going to tell you.

This evening I looked through a window, before which no curtain was drawn, for nobody lives opposite. I saw a whole troop of little ones, all of one family, and among them was a little sister. She is only four years old, but can say her prayers as well as any of the rest. The mother sits by her bed every evening, and hears her say her prayers; and then she has a kiss, and the mother sits by the bed till the little one has gone to sleep, which generally happens as soon as ever she can close her eyes.

"This evening the two elder children were a little boisterous. One of them hopped about on one leg in his long white nightgown, and the other stood on a chair surrounded by the clothes of all the children, and declared he was acting Grecian statues. The third and fourth laid the clean linen carefully in the box, for that is a thing that has to be done; and the mother sat by the bed of the youngest, and announced to all the rest that they were to be quiet, for little sister was going to say her prayers.

"I looked in, over the lamp, into the little maiden's bed, where she lay under the neat white coverlet, her hands folded demurely and her little face quite grave and serious. She was praying the Lord's prayer aloud. But her mother interrupted her in the middle of her prayer. 'How is it,' she asked, 'that when you have prayed for daily bread, you always add something I cannot understand? You must tell me what that is.' The little one lay silent, and looked at her mother in embarrassment.

'What is it you say after our daily bread?' 'Dear mother, don't be angry: I only said, and plenty of butter on it. lived once upon a time a wicked prince whose heart and mind were set upon conquering all the countries of the world, and on frightening the people; he devastated their countries with fire and sword, and his soldiers trod down the crops in the fields and destroyed the peasants' huts by fire, so that the flames licked the green leaves off the branches, and the fruit hung dried up on the singed black trees.

Many a poor mother fled, her naked baby in her arms, behind the still smoking walls of her cottage; but also there the soldiers followed her, and when they found her, she served as new nourishment to their diabolical enjoyments; demons could not possibly have done worse things than these soldiers! The prince was of opinion that all this was right, and that it was only the natural course which things ought to take. His power increased day by day, his name was feared by all, and fortune favoured his deeds.

He brought enormous wealth home from the conquered towns, and gradually accumulated in his residence riches which could nowhere be equalled. He erected magnificent palaces, churches, and halls, and all who saw these splendid buildings and great treasures exclaimed admiringly:

He told him not even to touch them with his hand. He was to carry them on a stick and go throw them in the corpse grounds. Then he must bathe from head to foot before returning home. The son obeyed his father. When he arrived at the corpse grounds, carrying the clothes on a stick, he found the holy man sitting by the gate.

When Lucky Cloth's son threw away the cursed suit, the holy man picked it up. He examined it and saw the tiny teeth marks made by the mice. But since they could hardly be noticed, he took the suit with him back to the pleasure garden. After bathing thoroughly, his son told Priest Lucky Cloth what had happened. He thought, "This cursed suit of clothes will bring great harm to the king's favorite holy man. I must warn him." So he went to the pleasure garden and said, "Holy one, the unlucky cloth you have taken, please throw it away! It is cursed and will bring harm to you!" But the holy man replied, "No no, what others throw away in the corpse grounds is a blessing to me! We forest meditators are not seers of good and bad luck.

All kinds of Buddhas and Enlightenment Beings have given up superstitions about luck. Anyone who is wise should do the same. No one knows the future!" Hearing about the truly wise and enlightened ones made Priest Lucky Cloth see how foolish he had been. From then on he gave up his many superstitions and followed the teachings of the humble holy man.

The moral is: A fool's curse can be a wise man's blessing. Once upon a time, in the country of Gandhara in northern India, there was a city called Takkasila. In that city the Enlightenment Being was born as a certain calf. Since he was well bred for strength, he was bought by a high class rich man. He became very fond of the gentle animal, and called him 'Delightful'.

He took good care of him and fed him only the best. When Delightful grew up into a big fine strong bull, he thought, "I was brought up by this generous man. He gave me such good food and constant care, even though sometimes there were difficulties. Now I am a big grown up bull and there is no other bull who can pull as heavy a load as I can.

Therefore, I would like to use my strength to give something in return to my master." So he said to the man, "Sir, please find some wealthy merchant who is proud of having many strong bulls. Challenge him by saying that your bull can pull one hundred heavily loaded bullock carts." Following his advice, the high class rich man went to such a merchant and struck up a conversation. After a while, he brought up the idea of who had the strongest bull in the city.

The merchant said, "Many have bulls, but no one has any as strong as mine." The rich man said, "Sir, I have a bull who can pull one hundred heavily loaded bullock carts." "No, friend, how can there be such a bull? That is unbelievable!" said the merchant. The other replied, "I do have such a bull, and I am willing to make a bet." The merchant said, "I will bet a thousand gold coins that your bull cannot pull a hundred loaded bullock carts." So the bet was made and they agreed on a date and time for the challenge. The merchant attached together one hundred big bullock carts. He filled them with sand and gravel to make them very heavy.

The high class rich man fed the finest rice to the bull called Delightful. He bathed him and decorated him and hung a beautiful garland of flowers around his neck. Then he harnessed him to the first cart and climbed up onto it. Being so high class, he could not resist the urge to make himself seem very important. So he cracked a whip in the air, and yelled at the faithful bull, "Pull, you dumb animal! I command you to pull, you big dummy!" The bull called Delightful thought, "This challenge was my idea!

He said that he had a very wonderful dream about the princess and her shoe, he therefore advised John to ask her if she had not thought of her shoe. Of course the traveller knew this from what the magician in the mountain had said. "I may as well say that as anything," said John. "Perhaps your dream may come true; still I will say farewell, for if I guess wrong I shall never see you again." Then they embraced each other, and John went into the town and walked to the palace.

The great hall was full of people, and the judges sat in arm chairs, with eider down cushions to rest their heads upon, because they had so much to think of. The old king stood near, wiping his eyes with his white pocket handkerchief. When the princess entered, she looked even more beautiful than she had appeared the day before, and greeted every one present most gracefully; but to John she gave her hand, and said, "Good morning to you."

Now came the time for John to guess what she was thinking of; and oh, how kindly she looked at him as she spoke. But when he uttered the single word shoe, she turned as pale as a ghost; all her wisdom could not help her, for he had guessed rightly. Oh, how pleased the old king was! It was quite amusing to see how he capered about.

All the people clapped their hands, both on his account and John's, who had guessed rightly the first time. His fellow traveller was glad also, when he heard how successful John had been. But John folded his hands, and thanked God, who, he felt quite sure, would help him again; and he knew he had to guess twice more.

The evening passed pleasantly like the one preceding. While John slept, his companion flew behind the princess to the mountain, and flogged her even harder than before; this time he had taken two rods with him. No one saw him go in with her, and he heard all that was said. The princess this time was to think of a glove, and he told John as if he had again heard it in a dream. The next day, therefore, he was able to guess correctly the second time, and it caused great rejoicing at the palace.

The whole court jumped about as they had seen the king do the day before, but the princess lay on the sofa, and would not say a single word. All now depended upon John. If he only guessed rightly the third time, he would marry the princess, and reign over the kingdom after the death of the old king: but if he failed, he would lose his life, and the magician would have his beautiful blue eyes. That evening John said his prayers and went to bed very early, and soon fell asleep calmly. But his companion tied on his wings to his shoulders, took three rods, and, with his sword at his side, flew to the palace.

It was a very dark night, and so stormy that the tiles flew from the roofs of the houses, and the trees in the garden upon which the skeletons hung bent themselves like reeds before the wind. The lightning flashed, and the thunder rolled in one long continued peal all night. The window of the castle opened, and the princess flew out. She was pale as death, but she laughed at the storm as if it were not bad enough. Her white mantle fluttered in the wind like a large sail, and the traveller flogged her with the three rods till the blood trickled down, and at last she could scarcely fly; she contrived, however, to reach the mountain.

"What a hail storm!" she said, as she entered; "I have never been out in such weather as this." "Yes, there may be too much of a good thing sometimes," said the magician. Then the princess told him that John had guessed rightly the second time, and if he succeeded the next morning, he would win, and she could never come to the mountain again, or practice magic as she had done,

In the palace, the high born gentlemen and beautiful ladies danced with each other, and they could be heard at a great distance singing the following song: "Here are maidens, young and fair, Dancing in the summer air; Like two spinning wheels at play, Pretty maidens dance away Dance the spring and summer through Till the sole falls from your shoe." But the princess was still a witch, and she could not love John. His fellow traveller had thought of that, so he gave John three feathers out of the swan's wings, and a little bottle with a few drops in it.

He told him to place a large bath full of water by the princess's bed, and put the feathers and the drops into it. Then, at the moment she was about to get into bed, he must give her a little push, so that she might fall into the water, and then dip her three times. This would destroy the power of the magician, and she would love him very much.

John did all that his companion told him to do. The princess shrieked aloud when he dipped her under the water the first time, and struggled under his hands in the form of a great black swan with fiery eyes. As she rose the second time from the water, the swan had become white, with a black ring round its neck. John allowed the water to close once more over the bird, and at the same time it changed into a most beautiful princess.

She was more lovely even than before, and thanked him, while her eyes sparkled with tears, for having broken the spell of the magician. The next day, the king came with the whole court to offer their congratulations, and stayed till quite late. Last of all came the travelling companion; he had his staff in his hand and his knapsack on his back. John kissed him many times and told him he must not go, he must remain with him, for he was the cause of all his good fortune.

But the traveller shook his head, and said gently and kindly, "No: my time is up now; I have only paid my debt to you. Do you remember the dead man whom the bad people wished to throw out of his coffin? You gave all you possessed that he might rest in his grave; I am that man." As he said this, he vanished.

The wedding festivities lasted a whole month. John and his princess loved each other dearly, and the old king lived to see many a happy day, when he took their little children on his knees and let them play with his sceptre. And John became king over the whole country. where the water is as blue as the prettiest cornflower, and as clear as crystal, it is very, very deep; so deep, indeed, that no cable could fathom it: many church steeples, piled one upon another, would not reach from the ground beneath to the surface of the water above. There dwell the Sea King and his subjects.

We must not imagine that there is nothing at the bottom of the sea but bare yellow sand. No, indeed; the most singular flowers and plants grow there; the leaves and stems of which are so pliant, that the slightest agitation of the water causes them to stir as if they had life. Fishes, both large and small, glide between the branches, as birds fly among the trees here upon land. In the deepest spot of all, stands the castle of the Sea King.

Its walls are built of coral, and the long, gothic windows are of the clearest amber. The roof is formed of shells, that open and close as the water flows over them. Their appearance is very beautiful, for in each lies a glittering pearl, which would be fit for the diadem of a queen. The Sea King had been a widower for many years, and his aged mother kept house for him. She was a very wise woman, and exceedingly proud of her high birth; on that account she wore twelve oysters on her tail; while others, also of high rank, were only allowed to wear six.

She was, however, deserving of very great praise, especially for her care of the little sea princesses, her grand daughters. They were six beautiful children; but the youngest was the prettiest of them all; her skin was as clear and delicate as a rose leaf, and her eyes as blue as the deepest sea;

Two days longer we can remain here, and then must we fly away to a beautiful land which is not our home; and how can we take you with us? We have neither ship nor boat." "How can I break this spell?" said their sister. And then she talked about it nearly the whole night, only slumbering for a few hours.

Eliza was awakened by the rustling of the swans' wings as they soared above. Her brothers were again changed to swans, and they flew in circles wider and wider, till they were far away; but one of them, the youngest swan, remained behind, and laid his head in his sister's lap, while she stroked his wings; and they remained together the whole day.

Towards evening, the rest came back, and as the sun went down they resumed their natural forms. "To-morrow," said one, "we shall fly away, not to return again till a whole year has passed. But we cannot leave you here. Have you courage to go with us? My arm is strong enough to carry you through the wood; and will not all our wings be strong enough to fly with you over the sea?" "Yes, take me with you," said Eliza.

Then they spent the whole night in weaving a net with the pliant willow and rushes. It was very large and strong. Eliza laid herself down on the net, and when the sun rose, and her brothers again became wild swans, they took up the net with their beaks, and flew up to the clouds with their dear sister, who still slept. The sunbeams fell on her face, therefore one of the swans soared over her head, so that his broad wings might shade her.

They were far from the land when Eliza woke. She thought she must still be dreaming, it seemed so strange to her to feel herself being carried so high in the air over the sea. By her side lay a branch full of beautiful ripe berries, and a bundle of sweet roots; the youngest of her brothers had gathered them for her, and placed them by her side. She smiled her thanks to him; she knew it was the same who had hovered over her to shade her with his wings.

They were now so high, that a large ship beneath them looked like a white sea gull skimming the waves. A great cloud floating behind them appeared like a vast mountain, and upon it Eliza saw her own shadow and those of the eleven swans, looking gigantic in size. Altogether it formed a more beautiful picture than she had ever seen; but as the sun rose higher, and the clouds were left behind, the shadowy picture vanished away.

Onward the whole day they flew through the air like a winged arrow, yet more slowly than usual, for they had their sister to carry. The weather seemed inclined to be stormy, and Eliza watched the sinking sun with great anxiety, for the little rock in the ocean was not yet in sight. It appeared to her as if the swans were making great efforts with their wings. Alas! she was the cause of their not advancing more quickly.

When the sun set, they would change to men, fall into the sea and be drowned. Then she offered a prayer from her inmost heart, but still no appearance of the rock. Dark clouds came nearer, the gusts of wind told of a coming storm, while from a thick, heavy mass of clouds the lightning burst forth flash after flash. The sun had reached the edge of the sea, when the swans darted down so swiftly, that Eliza's head trembled; she believed they were falling, but they again soared onward.

Presently she caught sight of the rock just below them, and by this time the sun was half hidden by the waves. The rock did not appear larger than a seal's head thrust out of the water. They sunk so rapidly, that at the moment their feet touched the rock, it shone only like a star, and at last disappeared like the last spark in a piece of burnt paper. Then she saw her brothers standing closely round her with their arms linked together.

Suddenly the door of the room flew open and the draught of air caught up the little dancer, she fluttered like a sylph right into the stove by the side of the tin soldier, and was instantly in flames and was gone. The tin soldier melted down into a lump, and the next morning, when the maid servant took the ashes out of the stove, she found him in the shape of a little tin heart.

But of the little dancer nothing remained but the tinsel rose, which was burnt black as a cinder. away in the land to which the swallows fly when it is winter, dwelt a king who had eleven sons, and one daughter, named Eliza. The eleven brothers were princes, and each went to school with a star on his breast, and a sword by his side.

They wrote with diamond pencils on gold slates, and learnt their lessons so quickly and read so easily that every one might know they were princes. Their sister Eliza sat on a little stool of plate glass, and had a book full of pictures, which had cost as much as half a kingdom. Oh, these children were indeed happy, but it was not to remain so always.

Their father, who was king of the country, married a very wicked queen, who did not love the poor children at all. They knew this from the very first day after the wedding. In the palace there were great festivities, and the children played at receiving company; but instead of having, as usual, all the cakes and apples that were left, she gave them some sand in a tea cup, and told them to pretend it was cake.

The week after, she sent little Eliza into the country to a peasant and his wife, and then she told the king so many untrue things about the young princes, that he gave himself no more trouble respecting them. "Go out into the world and get your own living," said the queen. "Fly like great birds, who have no voice." But she could not make them ugly as she wished, for they were turned into eleven beautiful wild swans.

Then, with a strange cry, they flew through the windows of the palace, over the park, to the forest beyond. It was early morning when they passed the peasant's cottage, where their sister Eliza lay asleep in her room. They hovered over the roof, twisted their long necks and flapped their wings, but no one heard them or saw them, so they were at last obliged to fly away, high up in the clouds; and over the wide world they flew till they came to a thick, dark wood, which stretched far away to the seashore. Poor little Eliza was alone in her room playing with a green leaf, for she had no other playthings, and she pierced a hole through the leaf, and looked through it at the sun, and it was as if she saw her brothers' clear eyes, and when the warm sun shone on her cheeks, she thought of all the kisses they had given her.

One day passed just like another; sometimes the winds rustled through the leaves of the rose bush, and would whisper to the roses, "Who can be more beautiful than you!" But the roses would shake their heads, and say, "Eliza is." And when the old woman sat at the cottage door on Sunday, and read her hymn book, the wind would flutter the leaves, and say to the book, "Who can be more pious than you?" and then the hymn book would answer "Eliza." And the roses and the hymn book told the real truth.

At fifteen she returned home, but when the queen saw how beautiful she was, she became full of spite and hatred towards her. Willingly would she have turned her into a swan, like her brothers, but she did not dare to do so yet, because the king wished to see his daughter. Early one morning the queen went into the bath room; it was built of marble, and had soft cushions, trimmed with the most beautiful tapestry. She took three toads with her, and kissed them, and said to one, "When Eliza comes to the bath, seat yourself upon her head, that she may become as stupid as you are."

Then she said to another, "Place yourself on her forehead, that she may become as ugly as you are, and that her father may not know her."

Her soul flew on the sunbeams to Heaven, and no one was there who asked after the Red Shoes. "Yes, I'll give my daughter to him who jumps highest," said the King, "for it would be mean to let these people jump for nothing."

The Flea stepped out first. He had very pretty manners, and bowed in all directions, for he had young ladies' blood in his veins, and was accustomed to consort only with human beings; and that was of great consequence. Then came the Grasshopper: he was certainly much heavier, but he had a good figure, and wore the green uniform that was born with him.

This person, moreover, maintained that he belonged to a very old family in the land of Egypt, and that he was highly esteemed there. He had just come from the field, he said, and had been put into a card house three stories high, and all made of picture cards with the figures turned inwards.

There were doors and windows in the house, cut in the body of the Queen of Hearts. "I sing so," he said, "that sixteen native crickets who have chirped from their youth up, and have never yet had a card house of their own, would become thinner than they are with envy if they were to hear me." Both of them, the Flea and the Grasshopper, took care to announce who they were, and that they considered themselves entitled to marry a Princess.

The Skipjack said nothing, but it was said of him that he thought all the more; and directly the Yard Dog had smelt at him he was ready to assert that the Skipjack was of good family, and formed from the breastbone of an undoubted goose. The old councillor, who had received three medals for holding his tongue, declared that the Skipjack possessed the gift of prophecy; one could tell by his bones whether there would be a severe winter or a mild one; and that's more than one can always tell from the breastbone of the man who writes the almanac. "I shall not say anything more," said the old King.

"I only go on quietly, and always think the best." Now they were to take their jump. The Flea sprang so high that no one could see him; and then they asserted that he had not jumped at all. That was very mean. The Grasshopper only sprang half as high, but he sprang straight into the King's face, and the King declared that was horribly rude.

The Skipjack stood a long time considering; at last people thought that he could not jump at all. "I only hope he's not become unwell," said the Yard Dog, and then he smelt at him again. "Tap!" he sprang with a little crooked jump just into the lap of the Princess, who sat on a low golden stool.

Then the King said, "The highest leap was taken by him who jumped up to my daughter; for therein lies the point; but it requires head to achieve that, and the Skipjack has shown that he has a head." And so he had the Princess. "I jumped highest, after all," said the Flea. "But it's all the same. Let her have the goose bone with its lump of wax and bit of stick. I jumped to the highest; but in this world a body is required if one wishes to be seen."

And the Flea went into foreign military service, where it is said he was killed. The Grasshopper seated himself out in the ditch, and thought and considered how things happened in the world.

And he too said, "Body is required! body is required!" And then he sang his own melancholy song, and from that we have gathered this story, which they say is not true, though it's in print. you ever seen an old wooden cupboard quite black with age, and ornamented with carved foliage and curious figures? Well, just such a cupboard stood in a parlor, and had been left to the family as a legacy by the great grandmother.

It was covered from top to bottom with carved roses and tulips; the most curious scrolls were drawn upon it, and out of them peeped little stags' heads, with antlers.

It was really a doleful garden for a princess. "Do you see all this?" said the old king; "your fate will be the same as those who are here, therefore do not attempt it. You really make me very unhappy, I take these things to heart so very much." John kissed the good old king's hand, and said he was sure it would be all right, for he was quite enchanted with the beautiful princess.

Then the princess herself came riding into the palace yard with all her ladies, and he wished her "Good morning." She looked wonderfully fair and lovely when she offered her hand to John, and he loved her more than ever. How could she be a wicked witch, as all the people asserted? He accompanied her into the hall, and the little pages offered them gingerbread nuts and sweetmeats, but the old king was so unhappy he could eat nothing, and besides, gingerbread nuts were too hard for him.

It was decided that John should come to the palace the next day, when the judges and the whole of the counsellors would be present, to try if he could guess the first riddle. If he succeeded, he would have to come a second time; but if not, he would lose his life, and no one had ever been able to guess even one. However, John was not at all anxious about the result of his trial; on the contrary, he was very merry.

He thought only of the beautiful princess, and believed that in some way he should have help, but how he knew not, and did not like to think about it; so he danced along the high road as he went back to the inn, where he had left his fellow traveller waiting for him. John could not refrain from telling him how gracious the princess had been, and how beautiful she looked. He longed for the next day so much, that he might go to the palace and try his luck at guessing the riddles.

But his comrade shook his head, and looked very mournful. "I do so wish you to do well," said he; "we might have continued together much longer, and now I am likely to lose you; you poor dear John! I could shed tears, but I will not make you unhappy on the last night we may be together. We will be merry, really merry this evening; to morrow, after you are gone, shall be able to weep undisturbed." It was very quickly known among the inhabitants of the town that another suitor had arrived for the princess, and there was great sorrow in consequence.

The theatre remained closed, the women who sold sweetmeats tied crape round the sugar sticks, and the king and the priests were on their knees in the church. There was a great lamentation, for no one expected John to succeed better than those who had been suitors before. In the evening John's comrade prepared a large bowl of punch, and said, "Now let us be merry, and drink to the health of the princess." But after drinking two glasses, John became so sleepy, that he could not keep his eyes open, and fell fast asleep.

Then his fellow traveller lifted him gently out of his chair, and laid him on the bed; and as soon as it was quite dark, he took the two large wings which he had cut from the dead swan, and tied them firmly to his own shoulders. Then he put into his pocket the largest of the three rods which he had obtained from the old woman who had fallen and broken her leg. After this he opened the window, and flew away over the town, straight towards the palace, and seated himself in a corner, under the window which looked into the bedroom of the princess. The town was perfectly still when the clocks struck a quarter to twelve.

Presently the window opened, and the princess, who had large black wings to her shoulders, and a long white mantle, flew away over the city towards a high mountain. The fellow traveller, who had made himself invisible, so that she could not possibly see him, flew after her through the air, and whipped the princess with his rod, so that the blood came whenever he struck her. Ah, it was a strange flight through the air! The wind caught her mantle, so that it spread out on all sides, like the large sail of a ship, and the moon shone through it. "How it hails, to be sure!"

The family said, "We would like to find the snake and make him suck the poison out." After the snake was caught, the doctor asked him, "Did you bite this man?" "Yes I did," said the snake. "Well then," said the doctor, "You must suck your own poison out of the wound." But the strong willed snake replied, "Take back my own poison? Never! I have never done such a thing and I never will!" Then the doctor started a wood fire and said to the snake, "If you don't suck that poison out, I'll throw you in this fire and burn you up!" But the snake had made up his mind.

He said, "I'd rather die!" And he began moving towards the fire. In all his years, the snake bite expert doctor had never seen anything like this! He took pity on the courageous snake, and kept him from entering the flames. He used his medicines and magic spells to remove the poison from the suffering man. The doctor admired the snake's single minded determination. He knew that if he used his determination in a wholesome way he could improve himself.

So he taught him the Five Training Steps to avoid unwholesome actions. Then he set him free and said, "Go in peace and harm no one." The moral is: Determination wins respect. Once upon a time, the Enlightenment Being was born into a family of vegetable gardeners. After he grew up he cleared a patch of land with his shovel. He grew herbs, pumpkins, melons, cucumbers and other vegetables. These he sold to earn a humble living. The shovel was his one and only possession in the whole world. He carried it in the same way a forest monk carries his walking staff.

So he became known as the 'Shovel Wise Man'. One day he thought, "What good does it do me to live the ordinary everyday life of a gardener? I will give up this life and go meditate in the forest. Then I will be peaceful and happy." So the Shovel Wise Man hid his one possession, his shovel, and became a forest meditator.

Before too long, he started thinking about his only possession, his shovel. He was so attached to this shovel that he couldn't get it out of his mind, no matter how hard he tried! Trying to meditate seemed useless, so he gave it up. He returned to his shovel and his ordinary life as a vegetable gardener.

Lo and behold, in a little while the Shovel Wise Man again gave up the everyday life, hid his shovel and became a forest meditator. Again he could not get his shovel out of his mind, and returned to being a gardener. All in all, this happened six times! The next time the Shovel Wise Man gave up his forest meditation, he finally realised it was because of his old worn out shovel that he had gone back and forth seven times! So he decided to throw it away, once and for all, in a deep river.

Then he would return to the forest for good. He took his shovel down to the riverbank. He thought, "Let me not see where this shovel enters the water. Otherwise it may tempt me again to give up my quest." So he closed his eyes, swung the shovel in a circle over his head three times, and let it fly into the midst of the river. Realising that he would never be able to find the shovel again, he shouted, just like a lion roars, "I have conquered! I have conquered! I have conquered!" It just so happened that the King of Benares was riding by at that very moment. He was returning from putting down a revolt in a border village.

He had bathed in the river, and had just seated himself on his magnificent royal elephant."He said to us. "I'm not frightened. Boris, are you frightened?" "I'm not frightened," I told him, though my brothers knew I was. I was ten and imagined myself his ally. Petya was five. Mikhail was seven. Both are weeping in the photo, their hands on their thighs. Sometimes at night when our mother was still alive our father would walk the ridge above us, to see the moon on the river, he said.

He would shout off into the darkness: he was Victor Grigoryevich Prushinsky, director of the Physico Energy Institute. While she was alive, that was the way our mother Mikhail's and my mother introduced him. Petya's mother didn't introduce him to anyone.

Then the little ones held each other by the hand, and kissed the roses, and looked at the bright sunshine, and spoke to it as if the Christ child were there. Those were splendid summer days.

How beautiful and fresh it was out among the rose bushes, which seemed as if they would never leave off blooming. One day Kay and Gerda sat looking at a book full of pictures of animals and birds, and then just as the clock in the church tower struck twelve, Kay said, "Oh, something has struck my heart!" and soon after, "There is something in my eye."

The little girl put her arm round his neck, and looked into his eye, but she could see nothing. "I think it is gone," he said. But it was not gone; it was one of those bits of the looking glass that magic mirror, of which we have spoken the ugly glass which made everything great and good appear small and ugly, while all that was wicked and bad became more visible, and every little fault could be plainly seen.

Poor little Kay had also received a small grain in his heart, which very quickly turned to a lump of ice. He felt no more pain, but the glass was there still. "Why do you cry?" said he at last; "it makes you look ugly. There is nothing the matter with me now. Oh, see!" he cried suddenly, "that rose is worm eaten, and this one is quite crooked.

After all they are ugly roses, just like the box in which they stand," and then he kicked the boxes with his foot, and pulled off the two roses. "Kay, what are you doing?" cried the little girl; and then, when he saw how frightened.

she was, he tore off another rose, and jumped through his own window away from little Gerda. When she afterwards brought out the picture book, he said, "It was only fit for babies in long clothes," and when grandmother told any stories, he would interrupt her with "but;" or, when he could manage it, he would get behind her chair, put on a pair of spectacles, and imitate her very cleverly, to make people laugh. By and by he began to mimic the speech and gait of persons in the street.

All that was peculiar or disagreeable in a person he would imitate directly, and people said, "That boy will be very clever; he has a remarkable genius." But it was the piece of glass in his eye, and the coldness in his heart, that made him act like this. He would even tease little Gerda, who loved him with all her heart. His games, too, were quite different; they were not so childish.

One winter's day, when it snowed, he brought out a burning glass, then he held out the tail of his blue coat, and let the snow flakes fall upon it. "Look in this glass, Gerda," said he; and she saw how every flake of snow was magnified, and looked like a beautiful flower or a glittering star. "Is it not clever?" said Kay, "and much more interesting than looking at real flowers. There is not a single fault in it, and the snow flakes are quite perfect till they begin to melt."

Soon after Kay made his appearance in large thick gloves, and with his sledge at his back. He called up stairs to Gerda, "I've got to leave to go into the great square, where the other boys play and ride." And away he went. In the great square, the boldest among the boys would often tie their sledges to the country people's carts, and go with them a good way. This was capital.

But while they were all amusing themselves, and Kay with them, a great sledge came by; it was painted white, and in it sat some one wrapped in a rough white fur, and wearing a white cap. The sledge drove twice round the square, and Kay fastened his own little sledge to it, so that when it went away, he followed with it.

It went faster and faster right through the next street, and then the person who drove turned round and nodded pleasantly to Kay, just as if they were acquainted with each other,

He said, "it is all very well to say 'pack up,'" but he had nothing left to pack up, therefore he seated himself in the trunk. It was a very wonderful trunk; no sooner did any one press on the lock than the trunk could fly. He shut the lid and pressed the lock, when away flew the trunk up the chimney with the merchant's son in it, right up into the clouds.

Whenever the bottom of the trunk cracked, he was in a great fright, for if the trunk fell to pieces he would have made a tremendous somersault over the trees. However, he got safely in his trunk to the land of Turkey. He hid the trunk in the wood under some dry leaves, and then went into the town: he could do this very well, for the Turks always go about dressed in dressing gowns and slippers, as he was himself.

He happened to meet a nurse with a little child. "I say, you Turkish nurse," cried he, "what castle is that near the town, with the windows placed so high?" "The king's daughter lives there," she replied; "it has been prophesied that she will be very unhappy about a lover, and therefore no one is allowed to visit her, unless the king and queen are present." "Thank you," said the merchant's son. So he went back to the wood, seated himself in his trunk, flew up to the roof of the castle, and crept through the window into the princess's room. She lay on the sofa asleep, and she was so beautiful that the merchant's son could not help kissing her.

Then she awoke, and was very much frightened; but he told her he was a Turkish angel, who had come down through the air to see her, which pleased her very much. He sat down by her side and talked to her: he said her eyes were like beautiful dark lakes, in which the thoughts swam about like little mermaids, and he told her that her forehead was a snowy mountain, which contained splendid halls full of pictures.

And then he related to her about the stork who brings the beautiful children from the rivers. These were delightful stories; and when he asked the princess if she would marry him, she consented immediately. "But you must come on Saturday," she said; "for then the king and queen will take tea with me. They will be very proud when they find that I am going to marry a Turkish angel; but you must think of some very pretty stories to tell them, for my parents like to hear stories better than anything.

My mother prefers one that is deep and moral; but my father likes something funny, to make him laugh." "Very well," he replied; "I shall bring you no other marriage portion than a story," and so they parted. But the princess gave him a sword which was studded with gold coins, and these he could use. Then he flew away to the town and bought a new dressing gown, and afterwards returned to the wood, where he composed a story, so as to be ready for Saturday, which was no easy matter.

It was ready however by Saturday, when he went to see the princess. The king, and queen, and the whole court, were at tea with the princess; and he was received with great politeness. "Will you tell us a story?" said the queen, "one that is instructive and full of deep learning." "Yes, but with something in it to laugh at," said the king. "Certainly," he replied, and commenced at once, asking them to listen attentively.

"There was once a bundle of matches that were exceedingly proud of their high descent. Their genealogical tree, that is, a large pine tree from which they had been cut, was at one time a large, old tree in the wood. The matches now lay between a tinder box and an old iron saucepan, and were talking about their youthful days. 'Ah! then we grew on the green boughs, and were as green as they; every morning and evening we were fed with diamond drops of dew.

Whenever the sun shone, we felt his warm rays, and the little birds would relate stories to us as they sung.

Next they went to the Lapland woman, who had made some new clothes for them, and put their sleighs in order. Both the reindeer ran by their side, and followed them as far as the boundaries of the country, where the first green leaves were budding. And here they took leave of the two reindeer and the Lapland woman, and all said Farewell.

Then the birds began to twitter, and the forest too was full of green young leaves; and out of it came a beautiful horse, which Gerda remembered, for it was one which had drawn the golden coach. A young girl was riding upon it, with a shining red cap on her head, and pistols in her belt. It was the little robber maiden, who had got tired of staying at home; she was going first to the north, and if that did not suit her, she meant to try some other part of the world. She knew Gerda directly, and Gerda remembered her: it was a joyful meeting.

"You are a fine fellow to go gadding about in this way," said she to little Kay, "I should like to know whether you deserve that any one should go to the end of the world to find you." But Gerda patted her cheeks, and asked after the prince and princess. "They are gone to foreign countries," said the robber girl. "And the crow?" asked Gerda. "Oh, the crow is dead," she replied; "his tame sweetheart is now a widow, and wears a bit of black worsted round her leg. She mourns very pitifully, but it is all stuff. But now tell me how you managed to get him back." Then Gerda and Kay told her all about it.

"Snip, snap, snare! it's all right at last," said the robber girl. Then she took both their hands, and promised that if ever she should pass through the town, she would call and pay them a visit.

And then she rode away into the wide world. But Gerda and Kay went hand in hand towards home; and as they advanced, spring appeared more lovely with its green verdure and its beautiful flowers. Very soon they recognized the large town where they lived, and the tall steeples of the churches, in which the sweet bells were ringing a merry peal as they entered it, and found their way to their grandmother's door. They went upstairs into the little room, where all looked just as it used to do.

The old clock was going "tick, tick," and the hands pointed to the time of day, but as they passed through the door into the room they perceived that they were both grown up, and become a man and woman.

The roses out on the roof were in full bloom, and peeped in at the window; and there stood the little chairs, on which they had sat when children; and Kay and Gerda seated themselves each on their own chair, and held each other by the hand, while the cold empty grandeur of the Snow Queen's palace vanished from their memories like a painful dream. The grandmother sat in God's bright sunshine, and she read aloud from the Bible, "Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God."

And Kay and Gerda looked into each other's eyes, and all at once understood the words of the old song. "What a buzzing and a rumbling there is in the elfin hill," said one of the lizards; "I have not been able to close my eyes for two nights on account of the noise; I might just as well have had the toothache, for that always keeps me awake." "There is something going on within there," said the other lizard; "they propped up the top of the hill with four red posts, till cock crow this morning, so that it is thoroughly aired, and the elfin girls have learnt new dances; there is something."

"I spoke about it to an earth worm of my acquaintance," said a third lizard; "the earth worm had just come from the elfin hill, where he has been groping about in the earth day and night. He has heard a great deal; although he cannot see, poor miserable creature, yet he understands very well how to wriggle and lurk about."

Jack kept walking despite all of the obstacles in his way; despite the darkness and the terrifying blue, red, yellow and green eyes watching from the darkness. Jack walked on because he knew that the strangeness of the forest, and the scary eyes in the darkness, were all there to prevent him from finding the mythical Fern Flower.

The pine trees were tall and wide and caused Jack to make very slow progress. The bushes were so thick that he had to hack at them with his hands and feet in order to continue on his journey. Then he came across a pine tree that was so tall it seemed to stretch up into the sky, and so wide it seemed to him as if it would take forever to walk around its trunk.

When eventually he had gotten to the other side of the tree, he noticed that it was not so tall and wide after all, but rather another trick of the mysterious forest. Some time later, Jack came across a marsh in the middle of the gloomiest, dampest part of the forest. There was no way around the marsh, and when Jack tried to put his foot into the water he almost sank to the bottom. Eventually the young boy noticed very small clumps of grass dotted here and there across the length of the marsh.

He decided that this was the only way to cross the boggy water, so he took a deep breath and jumped from one clump to the next until he had crossed over to the other side. Jack continued on his winding journey through the forest until he came across a massive fern in the middle of a clearing. He noticed a tiny, radiant flower growing on a leaf of the fern. Jack had never seen anything so beautiful. The flower had five golden petals, and in its centre something like an eye that flickered and glowed against the darkness of the night. Jack also thought he heard the distant sound of laughter, but told himself that it was just another trick of the forest. He reached out very slowly, but just as he was about to touch the flower, the rooster crowed and there was a bright flash of light and the flower disappeared.

In the darkness Jack fell asleep, and the next time he awoke his mother was standing over him and he noticed that he was laid out in his own bed. Jack's mother looked very worried and explained how she had found him asleep in the middle of the forest that morning. The young boy felt ashamed that he had failed, but he never told his mother or his friends what he had been doing in the forest that night because he was afraid they would not believe him. Instead, Jack made a silent promise to himself that he would try again the following year.

Jack thought about the flower all year long until St John's night finally arrived again. As the villagers gathered around the fires, he dressed in his best clothes and went into the dark forest in search of the flower. This time the trees were even wider and taller. There were huge, slippery stones on the forest floor, and thick ferns, some much taller than the young boy. Once again, the strange eyes looked at him from out of the darkness, but Jack continued on his search. After many hours, he saw something glowing in the distance.

As he got closer he knew that it was the same flower with its five golden petals and the amazing glowing eye at its centre. Jack approached the flower in awe, but before he managed to touch it, the rooster crowed and the flower disappeared just as before. Jack was so tired after his adventure that he instantly fell fast asleep and experienced a strange dream in which the eye of the flower looked right at him. The flower asked the young boy, 'are you ready to give up yet?' When eventually he awoke from the dream, he promised himself that next St John's night the flower would be his for certain.

The year passed very slowly, but eventually St John's night arrived, and again Jack dressed in his best clothes and set off into the forest. This time the forest looked normal, just like it did in the daytime. Jack looked for the flower but could not find it anywhere. Then, quite suddenly, he noticed it, right there at his feet: the flower with five golden petals and the mysterious, glowing eye at its centre. Jack reached out and finally touched the mythical flower before the rooster could crow.

We are at present carefully working out our personal building programme for the year now before us. During the last three or four years, as you know, it was necessary for us to put aside all the money we possibly could so as to keep the business going on a business basis.

I think we can now claim that the state of business is very much better, and we fell less obliged this year to be so careful. We believe, in fact, that the time has come for us to make a change which we hoped to make some years ago but which we had to leave for the time being.

At the present time each different class of our work is carried out in a separate place, as a result of our having had to add to our business little by little in the past. This, of course, not only makes extra work but also is the cause of much loss of time and money. It is now our purpose to have new building put up entirely for our own use, a building which will be both beautiful and pleasant. We are not yet ready to tell you in full what we hope to do, but we shall do so as soon as possible.

The secretary said: I have felt for some time that the members of the College Club should have a separate building in which they would be free to meet at any time. I feel sure you will all agree that the Club is now strong enough to make this possible.

With this is view I have recently looked at a good deal of available property in an effort to get something to suit the members in every way. It is not, of course, very easy to get a building which is pleasant, near the College, and yet not too dear. I think, however, that I can offer you something which will meet you approval. The small building next to the church in this street is available for purchase, and I think about it. Should it be decided it be decided to purchase the property, it should be possible for us to have it available for the use of members in October.

Census operations were not possible for most part of 2021 in the midst of the pandemic. But the government should have begun the exercise at the earliest opportunity. No census has been missed in the country since it started in 1872. There is a lot of data relating to family and society that need to be collected through enumeration at the ground level.

The field work for this should have been started by now. It has been claimed that the data can be extrapolated from the 2011 census. This would be bad methodology, and would lead to wrong results.

The national census is not all about the number of people living in the country. It produces a whole lot of data which will give the latest demographic, social and economic profile of the country. More and more details are sought in successive census operations to build a better and more comprehensive profile.

Reliable and up to date data about society are needed for planning and formulating government programmes. The private sector also needs such data. The population and its composition should not be a matter of projection or speculation. It may be futile to speculate why the government did not want such an important exercise to be undertaken now. The census might give a clearer idea of Covid casualties.

There is a view that the government does not want it. But it is difficult to imagine that it would postpone an important exercise like the census for that reason. It is under pressure to hold a caste census as part of the general census, and it is likely that it does not want to do that.

In any case, the government has not been keen on surveys and data collection operations. Such a policy makes the country an opaque entity, as most authoritarian countries are. Democracies do not withhold or shy away from data and information about themselves.

The commencement of this story, for when we get to the end we shall know more than we do now about a very wicked hobgoblin; he was one of the very worst, for he was a real demon. One day, when he was in a merry mood, he made a looking glass which had the power of making everything good or beautiful that was reflected in it almost shrink to nothing, while everything that was worthless and bad looked increased in size and worse than ever.

The most lovely landscapes appeared like boiled spinach, and the people became hideous, and looked as if they stood on their heads and had no bodies. Their countenances were so distorted that no one could recognize them, and even one freckle on the face appeared to spread over the whole of the nose and mouth. The demon said this was very amusing.

When a good or pious thought passed through the mind of any one it was misrepresented in the glass; and then how the demon laughed at his cunning invention. All who went to the demon's school for he kept a school talked everywhere of the wonders they had seen, and declared that people could now, for the first time, see what the world and mankind were really like. They carried the glass about everywhere, till at last there was not a land nor a people who had not been looked at through this distorted mirror.

They wanted even to fly with it up to heaven to see the angels, but the higher they flew the more slippery the glass became, and they could scarcely hold it, till at last it slipped from their hands, fell to the earth, and was broken into millions of pieces. But now the looking glass caused more unhappiness than ever, for some of the fragments were not so large as a grain of sand, and they flew about the world into every country.

When one of these tiny atoms flew into a person's eye, it stuck there unknown to him, and from that moment he saw everything through a distorted medium, or could see only the worst side of what he looked at, for even the smallest fragment retained the same power which had belonged to the whole mirror

. Some few persons even got a fragment of the looking glass in their hearts, and this was very terrible, for their hearts became cold like a lump of ice. A few of the pieces were so large that they could be used as window panes; it would have been a sad thing to look at our friends through them. Other pieces were made into spectacles; this was dreadful for those who wore them, for they could see nothing either rightly or justly.

At all this the wicked demon laughed till his sides shook it tickled him so to see the mischief he had done. There were still a number of these little fragments of glass floating about in the air, and now you shall hear what happened with one of them. Second Story: A Little Boy and a Little Girl IN a large town, full of houses and people, there is not room for everybody to have even a little garden, therefore they are obliged to be satisfied with a few flowers in flower pots. In one of these large towns lived two poor children who had a garden something larger and better than a few flower pots.

They were not brother and sister, but they loved each other almost as much as if they had been. Their parents lived opposite to each other in two garrets, where the roofs of neighboring houses projected out towards each other and the water pipe ran between them. In each house was a little window, so that any one could step across the gutter from one window to the other. The parents of these children had each a large wooden box in which they cultivated kitchen herbs for their own use, and a little rose bush in each box, which grew splendidly. Now after a while the parents decided to place these two boxes across the water pipe, so that they reached from one window to the other and looked like two banks of flowers.

One shoot after another sprouted forth, and little white buds blossomed, which the poor girl fondly kissed. But her wicked brother scolded her, and asked her if she was going mad. He could not imagine why she was weeping over that flower pot, and it annoyed him.

He did not know whose closed eyes were there, nor what red lips were fading beneath the earth. And one day she sat and leaned her head against the flower pot, and the little elf of the rose found her asleep. Then he seated himself by her ear, talked to her of that evening in the arbor, of the sweet perfume of the rose, and the loves of the elves.

Sweetly she dreamed, and while she dreamt, her life passed away calmly and gently, and her spirit was with him whom she loved, in heaven. And the jasmine opened its large white bells, and spread forth its sweet fragrance; it had no other way of showing its grief for the dead. But the wicked brother considered the beautiful blooming plant as his own property, left to him by his sister, and he placed it in his sleeping room, close by his bed, for it was very lovely in appearance, and the fragrance sweet and delightful.

The little elf of the rose followed it, and flew from flower to flower, telling each little spirit that dwelt in them the story of the murdered young man, whose head now formed part of the earth beneath them, and of the wicked brother and the poor sister. "We know it," said each little spirit in the flowers, "we know it, for have we not sprung from the eyes and lips of the murdered one. We know it, we know it," and the flowers nodded with their heads in a peculiar manner.

The elf of the rose could not understand how they could rest so quietly in the matter, so he flew to the bees, who were gathering honey, and told them of the wicked brother. And the bees told it to their queen, who commanded that the next morning they should go and kill the murderer. But during the night, the first after the sister's death, while the brother was sleeping in his bed, close to where he had placed the fragrant jasmine, every flower cup opened, and invisibly the little spirits stole out, armed with poisonous spears.

They placed themselves by the ear of the sleeper, told him dreadful dreams and then flew across his lips, and pricked his tongue with their poisoned spears. "Now have we revenged the dead," said they, and flew back into the white bells of the jasmine flowers. When the morning came, and as soon as the window was opened, the rose elf, with the queen bee, and the whole swarm of bees, rushed in to kill him. But he was already dead.

People were standing round the bed, and saying that the scent of the jasmine had killed him. Then the elf of the rose understood the revenge of the flowers, and explained it to the queen bee, and she, with the whole swarm, buzzed about the flower pot. The bees could not be driven away. Then a man took it up to remove it, and one of the bees stung him in the hand, so that he let the flower pot fall, and it was broken to pieces.

Then every one saw the whitened skull, and they knew the dead man in the bed was a murderer. And the queen bee hummed in the air, and sang of the revenge of the flowers, and of the elf of the rose and said that behind the smallest leaf dwells One, who can discover evil deeds, and punish them also. when I feel most fervently and most deeply, my hands and my tongue seem alike tied, so that I cannot rightly describe or accurately portray the thoughts that are rising within me; and yet I am a painter; my eye tells me as much as that, and all my friends who have seen my sketches and fancies say the same.

I am a poor lad, and live in one of the narrowest of lanes; but I do not want for light, as my room is high up in the house, with an extensive prospect over the neighbouring roofs. During the first few days I went to live in the town, I felt low spirited and solitary enough.

He had been out, yet he knew nothing of the green forest in its spring verdure, till a neighbor's son brought him a green bough from a beech tree. This he would place over his head, and fancy that he was in the beech wood while the sun shone, and the birds carolled gayly. One spring day the neighbor's boy brought him some field flowers, and among them was one to which the root still adhered.

This he carefully planted in a flower pot, and placed in a window seat near his bed. And the flower had been planted by a fortunate hand, for it grew, put forth fresh shoots, and blossomed every year. It became a splendid flower garden to the sick boy, and his little treasure upon earth. He watered it, and cherished it, and took care it should have the benefit of every sunbeam that found its way into the cellar, from the earliest morning ray to the evening sunset.

The flower entwined itself even in his dreams for him it bloomed, for him spread its perfume. And it gladdened his eyes, and to the flower he turned, even in death, when the Lord called him. He has been one year with God. During that time the flower has stood in the window, withered and forgotten, till at length cast out among the sweepings into the street, on the day of the lodgers' removal.

And this poor flower, withered and faded as it is, we have added to our nosegay, because it gave more real joy than the most beautiful flower in the garden of a queen." "But how do you know all this?" asked the child whom the angel was carrying to heaven. "I know it," said the angel, "because I myself was the poor sick boy who walked upon crutches, and I know my own flower well." Then the child opened his eyes and looked into the glorious happy face of the angel, and at the same moment they found themselves in that heavenly home where all is happiness and joy.

And God pressed the dead child to His heart, and wings were given him so that he could fly with the angel, hand in hand. Then the Almighty pressed all the flowers to His heart; but He kissed the withered field flower, and it received a voice. Then it joined in the song of the angels, who surrounded the throne, some near, and others in a distant circle, but all equally happy.

They all joined in the chorus of praise, both great and small, the good, happy child, and the poor field flower, that once lay withered and cast away on a heap of rubbish in a narrow, dark street. China, you know, the emperor is a Chinese, and all those about him are Chinamen also.

The story I am going to tell you happened a great many years ago, so it is well to hear it now before it is forgotten. The emperor's palace was the most beautiful in the world. It was built entirely of porcelain, and very costly, but so delicate and brittle that whoever touched it was obliged to be careful. In the garden could be seen the most singular flowers, with pretty silver bells tied to them, which tinkled so that every one who passed could not help noticing the flowers. Indeed, everything in the emperor's garden was remarkable, and it extended so far that the gardener himself did not know where it ended.

Those who travelled beyond its limits knew that there was a noble forest, with lofty trees, sloping down to the deep blue sea, and the great ships sailed under the shadow of its branches. In one of these trees lived a nightingale, who sang so beautifully that even the poor fishermen, who had so many other things to do, would stop and listen.

Sometimes, when they went at night to spread their nets, they would hear her sing, and say, "Oh, is not that beautiful?" But when they returned to their fishing, they forgot the bird until the next night. Then they would hear it again, and exclaim "Oh, how beautiful is the nightingale's song!" Travellers from every country in the world came to the city of the emperor, which they admired very much, as well as the palace and gardens; but when they heard the nightingale, they all declared it to be the best of all.

He sleeps and dreams, but in his dreams he sees everything that happens in Denmark. On each Christmas eve an angel comes to him and tells him that all he has dreamed is true, and that he may go to sleep again in peace, as Denmark is not yet in any real danger; but should danger ever come, then Holger Danske will rouse himself, and the table will burst asunder as he draws out his beard. Then he will come forth in his strength, and strike a blow that shall sound in all the countries of the world.

An old grandfather sat and told his little grandson all this about Holger Danske, and the boy knew that what his grandfather told him must be true. As the old man related this story, he was carving an image in wood to represent Holger Danske, to be fastened to the prow of a ship; for the old grandfather was a carver in wood, that is, one who carved figures for the heads of ships, according to the names given to them.

And now he had carved Holger Danske, who stood there erect and proud, with his long beard, holding in one hand his broad battle axe, while with the other he leaned on the Danish arms. The old grandfather told the little boy a great deal about Danish men and women who had distinguished themselves in olden times, so that he fancied he knew as much even as Holger Danske himself, who, after all, could only dream; and when the little fellow went to bed, he thought so much about it that he actually pressed his chin against the counterpane, and imagined that he had a long beard which had become rooted to it.

But the old grandfather remained sitting at his work and carving away at the last part of it, which was the Danish arms. And when he had finished he looked at the whole figure, and thought of all he had heard and read, and what he had that evening related to his little grandson. Then he nodded his head, wiped his spectacles and put them on, and said, "Ah, yes; Holger Danske will not appear in my lifetime, but the boy who is in bed there may very likely live to see him when the event really comes to pass." And the old grandfather nodded again; and the more he looked at Holger Danske, the more satisfied he felt that he had carved a good image of him. the armor glittered like iron and steel.

The hearts in the Danish arms grew more and more red; while the lions, with gold crowns on their heads, were leaping up.¹ "That is the most beautiful coat of arms in the world," said the old man. "The lions represent strength; and the hearts, gentleness and love." And as he gazed on the uppermost lion, he thought of King Canute, who chained great England to Denmark's throne; and he looked at the second lion, and thought of Waldemar, who untied Denmark and conquered the Vandals. The third lion reminded him of Margaret, who united Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.

But when he gazed at the red hearts, their colors glowed more deeply, even as flames, and his memory followed each in turn. The first led him to a dark, narrow prison, in which sat a prisoner, a beautiful woman, daughter of Christian the Fourth, Eleanor Ulfeld,² and the flame became a rose on her bosom, and its blossoms were not more pure than the heart of this noblest and best of all Danish women.

"Ah, yes; that is indeed a noble heart in the Danish arms," said the grandfather. and his spirit followed the second flame, which carried him out to sea,³ where cannons roared and the ships lay shrouded in smoke, and the flaming heart attached itself to the breast of Hvitfeldt in the form of the ribbon of an order, as he blew himself and his ship into the air in order to save the fleet. And the third flame led him to Greenland's wretched huts, where the preacher, Hans Egede,⁴ ruled with love in every word and action. The flame was as a star on his breast, and added another heart to the Danish arms. And as the old grandfather's spirit followed the next hovering flame, he knew whither it would lead him.

In a peasant woman's humble room stood Frederick the Sixth,⁵ writing his name with chalk on the beam. The flame trembled on his breast and in his heart, and it was in the peasant's room that his heart became one for the Danish arms.

Gerda embraced it and kissed the roses, and thought of the beautiful roses at home, and, with them, of little Kay. "Oh, how I have been detained!" said the little maiden, "I wanted to seek for little Kay. Do you know where he is?" she asked the roses; "do you think he is dead?" And the roses answered, "No, he is not dead. We have been in the ground where all the dead lie; but Kay is not there."

"Thank you," said little Gerda, and then she went to the other flowers, and looked into their little cups, and asked, "Do you know where little Kay is?" But each flower, as it stood in the sunshine, dreamed only of its own little fairy tale of history. Not one knew anything of Kay. Gerda heard many stories from the flowers, as she asked them one after another about him.

And what, said the tiger lily? "Hark, do you hear the drum? 'turn, turn,' there are only two notes, always, 'turn, turn.' Listen to the women's song of mourning! Hear the cry of the priest! In her long red robe stands the Hindoo widow by the funeral pile.

The flames rise around her as she places herself on the dead body of her husband; but the Hindoo woman is thinking of the living one in that circle; of him, her son, who lighted those flames. Those shining eyes trouble her heart more painfully than the flames which will soon consume her body to ashes.

Can the fire of the heart be extinguished in the flames of the funeral pile?" "I don't understand that at all," said little Gerda. "That is my story," said the tiger lily. What, says the convolvulus? "Near yonder narrow road stands an old knight's castle; thick ivy creeps over the old ruined walls, leaf over leaf, even to the balcony, in which stands a beautiful maiden.

She bends over the balustrades, and looks up the road. No rose on its stem is fresher than she; no apple blossom, wafted by the wind, floats more lightly than she moves. Her rich silk rustles as she bends over and exclaims, 'Will he not come?' "Is it Kay you mean?" asked Gerda. "I am only speaking of a story of my dream," replied the flower.

What, said the little snow drop? "Between two trees a rope is hanging; there is a piece of board upon it; it is a swing. Two pretty little girls, in dresses white as snow, and with long green ribbons fluttering from their hats, are sitting upon it swinging. Their brother who is taller than they are, stands in the swing; he has one arm round the rope, to steady himself; in one hand he holds a little bowl, and in the other a clay pipe; he is blowing bubbles.

As the swing goes on, the bubbles fly upward, reflecting the most beautiful varying colors. The last still hangs from the bowl of the pipe, and sways in the wind. On goes the swing; and then a little black dog comes running up. He is almost as light as the bubble, and he raises himself on his hind legs, and wants to be taken into the swing; but it does not stop, and the dog falls; then he barks and gets angry. The children stoop towards him, and the bubble bursts.

A swinging plank, a light sparkling foam picture, that is my story." "It may be all very pretty what you are telling me," said little Gerda, "but you speak so mournfully, and you do not mention little Kay at all." What do the hyacinths say? "There were three beautiful sisters, fair and delicate. The dress of one was red, of the second blue, and of the third pure white.

Hand in hand they danced in the bright moonlight, by the calm lake; but they were human beings, not fairy elves. The sweet fragrance attracted them, and they disappeared in the wood; here the fragrance became stronger. Three coffins, in which lay the three beautiful maidens, glided from the thickest part of the forest across the lake.

The peonies puffed themselves up in order to be larger than the roses, but size is not everything! The tulips had the finest colours, and they knew it well, too, for they were standing bolt upright like candles, that one might see them the better. In their pride they did not see the little daisy, which looked over to them and thought, "How rich and beautiful they are! I am sure the pretty bird will fly down and call upon them.

Thank God, that I stand so near and can at least see all the splendour." And while the daisy was still thinking, the lark came flying down, crying "Tweet," but not to the peonies and tulips no, into the grass to the poor daisy. Its joy was so great that it did not know what to think. The little bird hopped round it and sang, "How beautifully soft the grass is, and what a lovely little flower with its golden heart and silver dress is growing here."

The yellow centre in the daisy did indeed look like gold, while the little petals shone as brightly as silver. How happy the daisy was! No one has the least idea. The bird kissed it with its beak, sang to it, and then rose again up to the blue sky. It was certainly more than a quarter of an hour before the daisy recovered its senses.

Half ashamed, yet glad at heart, it looked over to the other flowers in the garden; surely they had witnessed its pleasure and the honour that had been done to it; they understood its joy. But the tulips stood more stiffly than ever, their faces were pointed and red, because they were vexed. The peonies were sulky; it was well that they could not speak, otherwise they would have given the daisy a good lecture.

The little flower could very well see that they were ill at ease, and pitied them sincerely. Shortly after this a girl came into the garden, with a large sharp knife. She went to the tulips and began cutting them off, one after another. "Ugh!" sighed the daisy, "that is terrible; now they are done for." The girl carried the tulips away.

The daisy was glad that it was outside, and only a small flower it felt very grateful. At sunset it folded its petals, and fell asleep, and dreamt all night of the sun and the little bird. On the following morning, when the flower once more stretched forth its tender petals, like little arms, towards the air and light, the daisy recognised the bird's voice, but what it sang sounded so sad. Indeed the poor bird had good reason to be sad, for it had been caught and put into a cage close by the open window.

It sang of the happy days when it could merrily fly about, of fresh green corn in the fields, and of the time when it could soar almost up to the clouds. The poor lark was most unhappy as a prisoner in a cage. The little daisy would have liked so much to help it, but what could be done? Indeed, that was very difficult for such a small flower to find out.

It entirely forgot how beautiful everything around it was, how warmly the sun was shining, and how splendidly white its own petals were. It could only think of the poor captive bird, for which it could do nothing. Then two little boys came out of the garden; one of them had a large sharp knife, like that with which the girl had cut the tulips. They came straight towards the little daisy, which could not understand what they wanted.

"Here is a fine piece of turf for the lark," said one of the boys, and began to cut out a square round the daisy, so that it remained in the centre of the grass. "Pluck the flower off" said the other boy, and the daisy trembled for fear, for to be pulled off meant death to it; and it wished so much to live, as it was to go with the square of turf into the poor captive lark's cage.

"No let it stay," said the other boy, "it looks so pretty." And so it stayed, and was brought into the lark's cage. The poor bird was lamenting its lost liberty, and beating its wings against the wires;

As each was a year younger than the other, the youngest would have to wait five years before her turn came to rise up from the bottom of the ocean, and see the earth as we do. However, each promised to tell the others what she saw on her first visit, and what she thought the most beautiful; for their grandmother could not tell them enough; there were so many things on which they wanted information.

None of them longed so much for her turn to come as the youngest, she who had the longest time to wait, and who was so quiet and thoughtful. Many nights she stood by the open window, looking up through the dark blue water, and watching the fish as they splashed about with their fins and tails. She could see the moon and stars shining faintly; but through the water they looked larger than they do to our eyes.

When something like a black cloud passed between her and them, she knew that it was either a whale swimming over her head, or a ship full of human beings, who never imagined that a pretty little mermaid was standing beneath them, holding out her white hands towards the keel of their ship.

As soon as the eldest was fifteen, she was allowed to rise to the surface of the ocean. When she came back, she had hundreds of things to talk about; but the most beautiful, she said, was to lie in the moonlight, on a sandbank, in the quiet sea, near the coast, and to gaze on a large town nearby, where the lights were twinkling like hundreds of stars; to listen to the sounds of the music, the noise of carriages, and the voices of human beings, and then to hear the merry bells peal out from the church steeples; and because she could not go near to all those wonderful things, she longed for them more than ever.

Oh, did not the youngest sister listen eagerly to all these descriptions? and afterwards, when she stood at the open window looking up through the dark blue water, she thought of the great city, with all its bustle and noise, and even fancied she could hear the sound of the church bells, down in the depths of the sea. In another year the second sister received permission to rise to the surface of the water, and to swim about where she pleased.

She rose just as the sun was setting, and this, she said, was the most beautiful sight of all. The whole sky looked like gold, while violet and rose colored clouds, which she could not describe, floated over her; and, still more rapidly than the clouds, flew a large flock of wild swans towards the setting sun, looking like a long white veil across the sea. She also swam towards the sun; but it sunk into the waves, and the rosy tints faded from the clouds and from the sea.

The third sister's turn followed; she was the boldest of them all, and she swam up a broad river that emptied itself into the sea. On the banks she saw green hills covered with beautiful vines; palaces and castles peeped out from amid the proud trees of the forest; she heard the birds singing, and the rays of the sun were so powerful that she was obliged often to dive down under the water to cool her burning face.

In a narrow creek she found a whole troop of little human children, quite naked, and sporting about in the water; she wanted to play with them, but they fled in a great fright; and then a little black animal came to the water; it was a dog, but she did not know that, for she had never before seen one. This animal barked at her so terribly that she became frightened, and rushed back to the open sea. But she said she should never forget the beautiful forest, the green hills, and the pretty little children who could swim in the water, although they had not fish's tails.

The fourth sister was more timid; she remained in the midst of the sea, but she said it was quite as beautiful there as nearer the land.

"Why should we live in this crowd? Let us go to the villages, towns and cities inhabited by human beings. Tree spirits who live there receive the best offerings. And they are even worshipped by the superstitious people living in those places. What a life we will have!" So they went to the villages, towns and cities, and moved into the big freestanding trees, looked after by people. Then one day a big storm came up. The wind blew strong and hard.

The big heavy trees with old stiff branches did not do well in the storm. Branches fell down, trunks broke in two, and some were even uprooted. But the trees in the forest, which were intertwined with each other, were able to bend and support each other in the mighty wind. They did not break or fall! The tree spirits in the villages, towns and cities had their tree homes destroyed. They gathered up their children and returned to the forest. They, complained to the wise leader about their misfortune in the big lonely trees in the land of men. He said, "This is what happens to arrogant ones who ignore wise advice and go off by themselves." The moral is: Fools are deaf to wise words. Once upon a time, the Enlightenment Being was born as a fish in a pond in northern India. There were many kinds of fish, big and small, living in the pond with the Bodhisatta.

There came to be a time of severe draught. The rainy season did not come as usual. The crops of men died, and many ponds, lakes and rivers dried up. The fish and turtles dug down and buried themselves in the mud, frantically trying to keep wet and save themselves. The crows were pleased by all this. They stuck their beaks down into the mud, pulled up the frightened little fish, and feasted on them. The suffering of pain and death by the other fish touched the Enlightenment Being with sadness, and filled him with pity and compassion. He realized that he was the only one who could save them.

But it would take a miracle. The truth was that he had remained innocent. by never taking the life of anyone. He was determined to use the power of this wholesome truth to make rain fall from the sky, and release his relatives from their misery and death. He pulled himself up from under the black mud. He was a big fish, and as black from the mud as, polished ebony. He opened his eyes, which sparkled like rubies, looked up to the sky, and called on the rain god Pajjunna.

He exclaimed, "Oh my friend Pajjunna, god of rain, I am suffering for the sake of my relatives. Why do you withhold rain from me, who am perfectly wholesome, and make me suffer in sympathy with all these fish?" "I was born among fish, for whom it is customary to eat other fish even our own kind, like cannibals! But since I was born, I myself have never eaten any fish, even one as tiny as a rice grain. In fact, I have never taken life from anyone.

The truthfulness of this my innocence gives me the right to say to you: Make the rains fall! Relieve the suffering of my relatives!" He said this the way one gives orders to a servant. And he continued, commanding the mighty rain god Pajjunna: "Make rain fall from the thunderclouds! Do not allow the crows their hidden treasures!

Let the crows feel the sorrow of their unwholesome actions. At the same time release me from my sorrow, who have lived in perfect wholesomeness." After only a short pause, the sky opened up with a heavy downpour of rain, relieving many from the fear of death fish, turtles and even humans. And when the great fish who had worked this miracle eventually died, he was reborn as he deserved. The moral is: True innocence relieves the suffering of many.

Once upon a time, the Enlightenment Being was born into a rich and powerful family. When he grew up he became dissatisfied with going after the ordinary pleasures of the world. So he gave up his former lifestyle, including his wealth and position. He went to the foothills of the Himalayas and became a holy man. It just so happened that one day he ran out of salt.Prince Amar Singh to eternal conflict against the foes of his country's independence.

It was a wonderful journey which Ole Luk Oie had made him take this night. Thursday "WHAT do you think I have got here?" said Ole Luk Oie, "Do not be frightened, and you shall see a little mouse."

And then he held out his hand to him, in which lay a lovely little creature. "It has come to invite you to a wedding. Two little mice are going to enter into the marriage state tonight. They reside under the floor of your mother's store room, and that must be a fine dwelling place." "But how can I get through the little mouse hole in the floor?" asked Hjalmar.

"Leave me to manage that," said Ole Luk Oie. "I will soon make you small enough." And then he touched Hjalmar with his magic wand, whereupon he became less and less, until at last he was not longer than a little finger. "Now you can borrow the dress of the tin soldier. I think it will just fit you. It looks well to wear a uniform when you go into company."

"Yes, certainly," said Hjalmar; and in a moment he was dressed as neatly as the neatest of all tin soldiers. "Will you be so good as to seat yourself in your mamma's thimble," said the little mouse, "that I may have the pleasure of drawing you to the wedding." "Will you really take so much trouble, young lady?" said Hjalmar. And so in this way he rode to the mouse's wedding.

First they went under the floor, and then passed through a long passage, which was scarcely high enough to allow the thimble to drive under, and the whole passage was lit up with the phosphorescent light of rotten wood. "Does it not smell delicious?" asked the mouse, as she drew him along. "The wall and the floor have been smeared with bacon rind; nothing can be nicer." Very soon they arrived at the bridal hall.

On the right stood all the little lady mice, whispering and giggling, as if they were making game of each other. To the left were the gentlemen mice, stroking their whiskers with their fore paws; and in the centre of the hall could be seen the bridal pair, standing side by side, in a hollow cheese rind, and kissing each other, while all eyes were upon them; for they had already been betrothed, and were soon to be married.

More and more friends kept arriving, till the mice were nearly treading each other to death; for the bridal pair now stood in the doorway, and none could pass in or out. The room had been rubbed over with bacon rind, like the passage, which was all the refreshment offered to the guests.

But for dessert they produced a pea, on which a mouse belonging to the bridal pair had bitten the first letters of their names. This was something quite uncommon. All the mice said it was a very beautiful wedding, and that they had been very agreeably entertained. After this, Hjalmar returned home.

He had certainly been in grand society; but he had been obliged to creep under a room, and to make himself small enough to wear the uniform of a tin soldier. Friday "IT is incredible how many old people there are who would be glad to have me at night," said Ole Luk Oie, "especially those who have done something wrong. 'Good little Ole,' say they to me, 'we cannot close our eyes, and we lie awake the whole night and see all our evil deeds sitting on our beds like little imps, and sprinkling us with hot water.

Will you come and drive them away, that we may have a good night's rest?' and then they sigh so deeply and say, 'We would gladly pay you for it. Good night, Ole Luk, the money lies on the window.' But I never do anything for gold." "What shall we do to night?" asked Hjalmar.

"I do not know whether you would care to go to another wedding," he replied, "although it is quite a different affair to the one we saw last night. Your sister's large doll, that is dressed like a man, and is called Herman, intends to marry the doll Bertha.

The nurses had hung up a bag of liquid food for him, honey colored liquid that went directly into his veins. Oberon slapped at the bag, and said that it didn't look very satisfying. He fed the boy a bun, and a steak, and a crumpled cream puff, pulling each piece of food from his pocket with a flourish.

Titania protested, and threatened to get the nurse, and even held the call button in her hand, almost pressing it while the boy shoved steak into his mouth and Oberon laughed. The boy threw it all up in an hour, the steak looking practically unchanged, and became listless and squash colored for three days. When they were asked if the boy had eaten anything, Oberon only shrugged. But as soon as the boy recovered, he was crying again for food, pleading with them all the time, no matter how the nurses fiddled with the bag that was supposed to keep him sated.

One morning, the whole team showed up: Beadle and Blork and the junior junior doctors whose names Titania could never remember and Alice and the nurse and another two or three mortals whose function, if it was something besides just skulking about, she never did discover. When Dr. Blork asked him how he was doing, he pleaded with the doctors, too. "Can't I have one tiny little feast?" he asked, and they laughed at him. They chucked his chin and tousled the place where his hair had been, and then they went out, leaving her with this dissatisfied, suffering creature.

"Mama, please," he said all day, "just one little feast. I won't ask again, I promise." Oberon was silent, and left the room eventually, once again crying his useless tears, and Titania told the boy again that he would only become sick if he ate. "Don't think of eating," she said. "Think of this bird, instead." And she pulled a parrot out from the folds of her robe. But the boy asked if he could eat it. He wore her down toward evening. Oberon had still not returned, and every time she sent Radish to fetch him the pixie said, "He's still weeping. See?" And she held up a thimble brimming with tears.

Titania sighed, wanting to run from the boy and his anxious, unhappy hunger, which had seemed to her, as the day dragged on, to represent, and then to become, a hunger for something besides food. He didn't want food. He wanted to be well, to run on the hill in the starlight, to ride on the paths in the park in a cart pulled by six raccoons. He wanted to spend a day not immersed in hope and hopelessness. "All right, love," she said, "just one bite."

And she took out a chocolate from her bag, but before she could give it to him Oberon returned, calling for her to stop because he had something better. He cleared a space on the bed and put down a little sack, and very delicately, pinching with his thumb and his forefinger, removed all the elements of a tiny feast and laid them on the bed. "It will be faster if you help," he told her as he squinted to chop up a mote size carrot.

So she picked up a bag the size of her thumb, emptied out the beans from within, and began to snap. The boy kept trying to eat things raw at first, but Oberon slapped his hand away and told him to be patient, and eventually he helped as well, twisting the heads off the little chickens when Oberon handed them to him, and laughing when they danced for a few seconds in his palm. It took a long time to prepare the feast, though they had more and more help, as more faeries popped up in the room, some of whom were better sized for the work.

Still more of them gathered round in an audience, stuck to the walls, crowding the shelves, perched on the lintel, all of them muttering opinions as the preparations went on they would have baked, not seared, that fish, and salted the cabbage but not the asparagus, and chosen caramel over fudge for the cake. When it was done, the boy ate the whole thing, and did not share a morsel, which was exactly as it was supposed to be.

Aside from the size of it, there was nothing magical about the food. It shouldn't have sated him any more than half a dozen peanuts, but even the aroma calmed him down as they were cooking,

These you must gather even while they burn blisters on your hands. Break them to pieces with your hands and feet, and they will become flax, from which you must spin and weave eleven coats with long sleeves; if these are then thrown over the eleven swans, the spell will be broken. But remember, that from the moment you commence your task until it is finished, even should it occupy years of your life, you must not speak.

The first word you utter will pierce through the hearts of your brothers like a deadly dagger. Their lives hang upon your tongue. Remember all I have told you." And as she finished speaking, she touched her hand lightly with the nettle, and a pain, as of burning fire, awoke Eliza. It was broad daylight, and close by where she had been sleeping lay a nettle like the one she had seen in her dream. She fell on her knees and offered her thanks to God.

Then she went forth from the cave to begin her work with her delicate hands. She groped in amongst the ugly nettles, which burnt great blisters on her hands and arms, but she determined to bear it gladly if she could only release her dear brothers. So she bruised the nettles with her bare feet and spun the flax. At sunset her brothers returned and were very much frightened when they found her dumb.

They believed it to be some new sorcery of their wicked step mother. But when they saw her hands they understood what she was doing on their behalf, and the youngest brother wept, and where his tears fell the pain ceased, and the burning blisters vanished. She kept to her work all night, for she could not rest till she had released her dear brothers. she sat in solitude, but never before had the time flown so quickly.

One coat was already finished and she had begun the second, when she heard the huntsman's horn, and was struck with fear. The sound came nearer and nearer, she heard the dogs barking, and fled with terror into the cave. She hastily bound together the nettles she had gathered into a bundle and sat upon them. Immediately a great dog came bounding towards her out of the ravine, and then another and another; they barked loudly, ran back, and then came again. In a very few minutes all the huntsmen stood before the cave, and the handsomest of them was the king of the country.

He advanced towards her, for he had never seen a more beautiful maiden. "How did you come here, my sweet child?" he asked. But Eliza shook her head. She dared not speak, at the cost of her brothers' lives. And she hid her hands under her apron, so that the king might not see how she must be suffering. "Come with me," he said; "here you cannot remain. If you are as good as you are beautiful, I will dress you in silk and velvet, I will place a golden crown upon your head, and you shall dwell, and rule, and make your home in my richest castle." And then he lifted her on his horse.

She wept and wrung her hands, but the king said, "I wish only for your happiness. A time will come when you will thank me for this." And then he galloped away over the mountains, holding her before him on this horse, and the hunters followed behind them. As the sun went down, they approached a fair royal city, with churches, and cupolas. On arriving at the castle the king led her into marble halls, where large fountains played, and where the walls and the ceilings were covered with rich paintings. But she had no eyes for all these glorious sights, she could only mourn and weep.

Patiently she allowed the women to array her in royal robes, to weave pearls in her hair, and draw soft gloves over her blistered fingers. As she stood before them in all her rich dress, she looked so dazzlingly beautiful that the court bowed low in her presence. Then the king declared his intention of making her his bride, but the archbishop shook his head, and whispered that the fair young maiden was only a witch who had blinded the king's eyes and bewitched his heart. But the king would not listen to this; he ordered the music to sound, the daintiest dishes to be served, and the loveliest maidens to dance.

On average, it takes at least two months for new habits to become automatic behaviors. This brings us to the punchline of this article... The counterintuitive insight from all of this research is that the best way to change your entire life is by not changing your entire life. Instead, it is best to focus on one specific habit, work on it until you master it, and make it an automatic part of your daily life. Then, repeat the process for the next habit.

The way to master more things in the long run is to simply focus on one thing right now. One way to think about work life balance issues is with a concept known as The Four Burners Theory. Here's how it was first explained to me: Imagine that your life is represented by a stove with four burners on it. Each burner symbolizes one major quadrant of your life. The first burner represents your family. The second burner is your friends. The third burner is your health.

The fourth burner is your work. The Four Burners Theory says that "in order to be successful you have to cut off one of your burners. And in order to be really successful you have to cut off two." Three Views of the Four Burners My initial reaction to The Four Burners Theory was to search for a way to bypass it. "Can I succeed and keep all four burners running?" I wondered. Perhaps I could combine two burners. "What if I lumped family and friends into one category?" Maybe I could combine health and work. "I hear sitting all day is unhealthy. What if I got a standing desk?"

Now, I know what you are thinking. Believing that you will be healthy because you bought a standing desk is like believing you are a rebel because you ignored the fasten seatbelt sign on an airplane, but whatever. Soon I realized I was inventing these workarounds because I didn't want to face the real issue: life is filled with tradeoffs. If you want to excel in your work and in your marriage, then your friends and your health may have to suffer. If you want to be healthy and succeed as a parent, then you might be forced to dial back your career ambitions.

Before long, news came to the palace that there was a ferocious tiger living in the jungle next to the king's highway. He ambushed travellers, and then killed and ate them. Many began to avoid the king's highway out of fear of the man eater. The king summoned Fear Maker and asked, "Can you capture this rampaging tiger, young man?" "Your majesty," he answered, "I am known as your best archer. Why wouldn't I be able to capture a tiger?" Hearing this, the king gave him an extra sum of money and sent him out to catch the tiger. Fear Maker went home and told all this to his partner. "All right," said Little Archer, "be on your way!" "Aren't you coming too?" asked the surprised Fear Maker.

"No, I won't go," he replied, "but I will give you a perfect plan. You must do exactly as I say." "I will, my little friend. Please tell me," said the big front man. The clever little dwarf said to his friend, "Go to the district of the tiger, but don't rush straight to his home by yourself. Instead, gather together a thousand local villagers and give them all bows and arrows. Take them directly to the tiger's home. But then you must let them go on ahead while you hide in the underbrush. 'The local villagers will be very afraid of the tiger. When they see him they will surround him and beat him. Being so terrified, they won't stop beating him until he's dead!' Meanwhile you must cut a piece of vine with your teeth.

Then come out of hiding and approach the dead tiger, holding the vine in your hand. When you see the tiger's body, shout at the people, 'Hey! Who has killed the tiger? I was going to capture him with this vine and lead him like a bull to the king. That's why I've been searching in the jungle. Now tell me who has killed the tiger before I could get here with my vine.'

"The villagers will be easily frightened by this. They will say, 'Lord Fear Maker, please don't tell the king! Then they will give you a big bribe to be quiet. Thinking you have killed the dangerous tiger, King Brahmadata will also reward you greatly.'" This was the tricky plan of the clever Little Archer. Fear Maker did exactly as he had been instructed.

All thought this was affectation, and because she did not wish to sing excepting in the parlor, when on the table with the grand people. "In the window sat an old quill pen, with which the maid generally wrote. There was nothing remarkable about the pen, excepting that it had been dipped too deeply in the ink, but it was proud of that.

"If the tea urn won't sing,' said the pen, 'she can leave it alone; there is a nightingale in a cage who can sing; she has not been taught much, certainly, but we need not say anything this evening about that.' "I think it highly improper,' said the tea kettle, who was kitchen singer, and half brother to the tea urn, 'that a rich foreign bird should be listened to here.

Is it patriotic? Let the market basket decide what is right.' "I certainly am vexed,' said the basket; 'inwardly vexed, more than any one can imagine. Are we spending the evening properly? Would it not be more sensible to put the house in order? If each were in his own place I would lead a game; this would be quite another thing.' "Let us act a play,' said they all.

At the same moment the door opened, and the maid came in. Then not one stirred; they all remained quite still; yet, at the same time, there was not a single pot amongst them who had not a high opinion of himself, and of what he could do if he chose. "Yes, if we had chosen,' they each thought, 'we might have spent a very pleasant evening.' "The maid took the matches and lighted them; dear me, how they sputtered and blazed up! "Now then,' they thought, 'every one will see that we are the first.

How we shine; what a light we give!' Even while they spoke their light went out. "What a capital story," said the queen, "I feel as if I were really in the kitchen, and could see the matches; yes, you shall marry our daughter." "Certainly," said the king, "thou shalt have our daughter." The king said thou to him because he was going to be one of the family. The wedding day was fixed, and, on the evening before, the whole city was illuminated.

Cakes and sweetmeats were thrown among the people. The street boys stood on tiptoe and shouted "hurrah," and whistled between their fingers; altogether it was a very splendid affair. "I will give them another treat," said the merchant's son. So he went and bought rockets and crackers, and all sorts of fire works that could be thought of, packed them in his trunk, and flew up with it into the air. What a whizzing and popping they made as they went off!

The Turks, when they saw such a sight in the air, jumped so high that their slippers flew about their ears. It was easy to believe after this that the princess was really going to marry a Turkish angel. As soon as the merchant's son had come down in his flying trunk to the wood after the fireworks, he thought, "I will go back into the town now, and hear what they think of the entertainment." It was very natural that he should wish to know.

And what strange things people did say, to be sure! every one whom he questioned had a different tale to tell, though they all thought it very beautiful. "I saw the Turkish angel myself," said one; "he had eyes like glittering stars, and a head like foaming water." "He flew in a mantle of fire," cried another, "and lovely little cherubs peeped out from the folds." He heard many more fine things about himself, and that the next day he was to be married.

After this he went back to the forest to rest himself in his trunk. It had disappeared! A spark from the fireworks which remained had set it on fire; it was burnt to ashes! So the merchant's son could not fly any more, nor go to meet his bride. She stood all day on the roof waiting for him, and most likely she is waiting there still; while he wanders through the world telling fairy tales, but none of them so amusing as the one he related about the matches.

There was a sweet fragrance from the fresh green verdure, and the birds almost perched upon her shoulders. She heard water rippling from a number of springs, all flowing in a lake with golden sands. Bushes grew thickly round the lake, and at one spot an opening had been made by a deer, through which Eliza went down to the water.

The lake was so clear that, had not the wind rustled the branches of the trees and the bushes, so that they moved, they would have appeared as if painted in the depths of the lake; for every leaf was reflected in the water, whether it stood in the shade or the sunshine.

As soon as Eliza saw her own face, she was quite terrified at finding it so brown and ugly; but when she wetted her little hand, and rubbed her eyes and forehead, the white skin gleamed forth once more; and, after she had undressed, and dipped herself in the fresh water, a more beautiful king's daughter could not be found in the wide world.

As soon as she had dressed herself again, and braided her long hair, she went to the bubbling spring, and drank some water out of the hollow of her hand. Then she wandered far into the forest, not knowing whither she went. She thought of her brothers, and felt sure that God would not forsake her.

It is God who makes the wild apples grow in the wood, to satisfy the hungry, and He now led her to one of these trees, which was so loaded with fruit, that the boughs bent beneath the weight. Here she held her noonday repast, placed props under the boughs, and then went into the gloomiest depths of the forest. It was so still that she could hear the sound of her own footsteps, as well as the rustling of every withered leaf which she crushed under her feet.

Not a bird was to be seen, not a sunbeam could penetrate through the large, dark boughs of the trees. Their lofty trunks stood so close together, that, when she looked before her, it seemed as if she were enclosed within trellis work. Such solitude she had never known before. The night was very dark.

Not a single glow worm glittered in the moss. Sorrowfully she laid herself down to sleep; and, after a while, it seemed to her as if the branches of the trees parted over her head, and that the mild eyes of angels looked down upon her from heaven. When she awoke in the morning, she knew not whether she had dreamt this, or if it had really been so.

Then she continued her wandering; but she had not gone many steps forward, when she met an old woman with berries in her basket, and she gave her a few to eat. Then Eliza asked her if she had not seen eleven princes riding through the forest. "No," replied the old woman, "But I saw yesterday eleven swans, with gold crowns on their heads, swimming on the river close by."

Then she led Eliza a little distance farther to a sloping bank, and at the foot of it wound a little river. The trees on its banks stretched their long leafy branches across the water towards each other, and where the growth prevented them from meeting naturally, the roots had torn themselves away from the ground, so that the branches might mingle their foliage as they hung over the water. Eliza bade the old woman farewell, and walked by the flowing river, till she reached the shore of the open sea.

And there, before the young maiden's eyes, lay the glorious ocean, but not a sail appeared on its surface, not even a boat could be seen. How was she to go farther? the sea shore had been smoothed and rounded by the action of the water. Glass, iron, stones, everything that lay there mingled together, had taken its shape from the same power, and felt as smooth, or even smoother than her own delicate hand. "The water rolls on without weariness," she said, "till all that is hard becomes smooth; so will I be unwearied in my task. Thanks for your lessons, bright rolling waves; my heart tells me you will lead me to my dear brothers."

To pass close by them, and they fixed their wicked glances upon her, but she prayed silently, gathered the burning nettles, and carried them home with her to the castle. One person only had seen her, and that was the archbishop he was awake while everybody was asleep. Now he thought his opinion was evidently correct.

All was not right with the queen. She was a witch, and had bewitched the king and all the people. Secretly he told the king what he had seen and what he feared, and as the hard words came from his tongue, the carved images of the saints shook their heads as if they would say. "It is not so. Eliza is innocent." But the archbishop interpreted it in another way; he believed that they witnessed against her, and were shaking their heads at her wickedness.

Two large tears rolled down the king's cheeks, and he went home with doubt in his heart, and at night he pretended to sleep, but there came no real sleep to his eyes, for he saw Eliza get up every night and disappear in her own chamber. From day to day his brow became darker, and Eliza saw it and did not understand the reason, but it alarmed her and made her heart tremble for her brothers. Her hot tears glittered like pearls on the regal velvet and diamonds, while all who saw her were wishing they could be queens.

In the mean time she had almost finished her task; only one coat of mail was wanting, but she had no flax left, and not a single nettle. Once more only, and for the last time, must she venture to the churchyard and pluck a few handfuls. She thought with terror of the solitary walk, and of the horrible ghouls, but her will was firm, as well as her trust in Providence. Eliza went, and the king and the archbishop followed her.

They saw her vanish through the wicket gate into the churchyard, and when they came nearer they saw the ghouls sitting on the tombstone, as Eliza had seen them, and the king turned away his head, for he thought she was with them she whose head had rested on his breast that very evening. "The people must condemn her," said he, and she was very quickly condemned by every one to suffer death by fire. Away from the gorgeous regal halls was she led to a dark, dreary cell, where the wind whistled through the iron bars.

Instead of the velvet and silk dresses, they gave her the coats of mail which she had woven to cover her, and the bundle of nettles for a pillow; but nothing they could give her would have pleased her more. She continued her task with joy, and prayed for help, while the street boys sang jeering songs about her, and not a soul comforted her with a kind word.

Towards evening, she heard at the grating the flutter of a swan's wing, it was her youngest brother he had found his sister, and she sobbed for joy, although she knew that very likely this would be the last night she would have to live. But still she could hope, for her task was almost finished, and her brothers were come.

Then the archbishop arrived, to be with her during her last hours, as he had promised the king. But she shook her head, and begged him, by looks and gestures, not to stay; for in this night she knew she must finish her task, otherwise all her pain and tears and sleepless nights would have been suffered in vain. The archbishop withdrew, uttering bitter words against her; but poor Eliza knew that she was innocent, and diligently continued her work.

The little mice ran about the floor, they dragged the nettles to her feet, to help as well as they could; and the thrush sat outside the grating of the window, and sang to her the whole night long, as sweetly as possible, to keep up her spirits. It was still twilight, and at least an hour before sunrise, when the eleven brothers stood at the castle gate, and demanded to be brought before the king.

The real nightingale was banished from the empire, and the artificial bird placed on a silk cushion close to the emperor's bed. The presents of gold and precious stones which had been received with it were round the bird, and it was now advanced to the title of "Little Imperial Toilet Singer," and to the rank of No. 1 on the left hand; for the emperor considered the left side, on which the heart lies, as the most noble, and the heart of an emperor is in the same place as that of other people.

The music master wrote a work, in twenty five volumes, about the artificial bird, which was very learned and very long, and full of the most difficult Chinese words; yet all the people said they had read it, and understood it, for fear of being thought stupid and having their bodies trampled upon.

So a year passed, and the emperor, the court, and all the other Chinese knew every little turn in the artificial bird's song; and for that same reason it pleased them better. They could sing with the bird, which they often did. The street boys sang, "Zi zi zi, cluck, cluck, cluck," and the emperor himself could sing it also. It was really most amusing.

One evening, when the artificial bird was singing its best, and the emperor lay in bed listening to it, something inside the bird sounded "whizz." Then a spring cracked. "Whir r r r" went all the wheels, running round, and then the music stopped.

The emperor immediately sprang out of bed, and called for his physician; but what could he do? Then they sent for a watchmaker; and, after a great deal of talking and examination, the bird was put into something like order; but he said that it must be used very carefully, as the barrels were worn, and it would be impossible to put in new ones without injuring the music.

Now there was great sorrow, as the bird could only be allowed to play once a year; and even that was dangerous for the works inside it. Then the music master made a little speech, full of hard words, and declared that the bird was as good as ever; and, of course no one contradicted him. Five years passed, and then a real grief came upon the land. The Chinese really were fond of their emperor, and he now lay so ill that he was not expected to live.

Already a new emperor had been chosen and the people who stood in the street asked the lord in waiting how the old emperor was; but he only said, "Pooh!" and shook his head. Cold and pale lay the emperor in his royal bed; the whole court thought he was dead, and every one ran away to pay homage to his successor. The chamberlains went out to have a talk on the matter, and the ladies' maids invited company to take coffee.

Cloth had been laid down on the halls and passages, so that not a footstep should be heard, and all was silent and still. But the emperor was not yet dead, although he lay white and stiff on his gorgeous bed, with the long velvet curtains and heavy gold tassels. A window stood open, and the moon shone in upon the emperor and the artificial bird.

The poor emperor, finding he could scarcely breathe with a strange weight on his chest, opened his eyes, and saw Death sitting there. He had put on the emperor's golden crown, and held in one hand his sword of state, and in the other his beautiful banner. All around the bed and peeping through the long velvet curtains, were a number of strange heads, some very ugly, and others lovely and gentle looking.

These were the emperor's good and bad deeds, which stared him in the face now Death sat at his heart. "Do you remember this?" "Do you recollect that?" they asked one after another, thus bringing to his remembrance circumstances that made the perspiration stand on his brow. "I know nothing about it," said the emperor.

When the Buttermilk Wise Man received the letter he believed every word. He rushed into the forest and ran to the gang's hide out. When he called out to her, the Wicked Lady came out and said, "Oh my lord and master, I'm so happy to see you. I can hardly wait to escape with you. But now is not a good time. The bandit chief could easily follow us and kill us both. So let us wait until nightfall." She took him inside, fed him, and hid him in a closet. When the chief returned in the evening he was drunk. The Wicked Lady asked him, "My lord and chief, if you saw my former husband now, what would you do?" "I would beat him up and kick him from one side of the room to the other!" he bragged, "Where is he now?" "He is much closer than you think," she said, "In fact, he is right here in this closet!" He opened the door and dragged out the Buttermilk Wise Man.

Sachin Ramesh Tendulkar was born on April 24, 1973 in Mumbai, India. He went to Shradashram Vidyamandir, a high school in Mumbai, where he began his cricketing career under his coach Ramakant Achrekar. He attended the MRF Pace Foundation during his schooldays to train as a fast bowler, but Australian fast bowler Dennis Lillee, who saw him training, was not much impressed and suggested that Tendulkar should focus on his batting instead. As a young boy, Tendulkar would practice for hours at the net, and was driven hard by his coach Achrekar. While at school, his extraordinary batting skills got noticed by the sports circuit. People felt that the young boy would soon become one of the greats in cricket. In the 1988 season, he scored a century in every inning that he played. In one of the inter school matches that year, he had an unbroken 664 run partnership with friend and team mate Vinod Kambli. Sachin Tendulkar Biography

When he was 14, Indian batting legend Sunil Gavaskar a great Indian batsman of that time, gave him a pair of his own light pads. This touching gesture greatly encouraged the budding cricketer, who 20 years later broke Gavaskar's world record of 34 Test centuries. In 1988, when he was just under 16, he scored 100 not out in for Bombay against Gujrat. This was on his first class debut. He then scored a century in his first appearance in the Deodhar and Duleep Trophy. Mumbai captain Dilip Vengsarkar picked him up after seeing him batting Kapil Dev in the nets. That season he was Bombay's highest run getter. In the Irani Trophy final, He made an unbeaten century. He scored a century in all three of his Irani Trophy, Ranji Trophy and Duleep Trophy debuts, and became the first player to do so. He was selected for the tour of Pakistan next year. At the very young age of 16, Sachin played his first Test match against Pakistan in Karachi in 1989. In this Test, he received several blows to his body at the hands of Waqar Younis, a pace bowler. He made just 15 runs. In the last test in Sialkot, he had a bloody nose from a bouncer, but he went on playing. He scored better in the subsequent games, scoring 53 runs of 18 balls at Peshawar. In the 1990 Test in England he scored a century at Old Trafford. The English were highly impressed by his disciplined display of immense maturity. He played many types of strokes. His off side shots from the back foot greatly impressed the English. Though short in height, he confidently faced short deliveries from the English pace bowlers. His great performance made him look the embodiment of Gavaskar, India's former famous opener. During the 1991 1992 tour of Australia Tendulkar scored and unbeaten 148 in Sydney and another century on a bouncing pitch a Perth. At the age of 19, Tendulkar was in England, playing for Yorkshire in 1992. He scored 1070 runs at an average of 45.25 while playing for the English county as the first overseas player. the 2003 Cricket World Cup, he made 673 runs in 11 matches which enabled India reach the final. Although Australia won the trophy Tendulkar was given the Man of the Tournament award. Shortly after this Tendulkar developed a tennis elbow and he was out of cricket for a while. But by 2005, he was back in form. He played well against Australia, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Tendulkar performed very well against Bangla Desh and he was adjudged the Man of the Series in the Future Cup against South Africa. Today Tendulkar is a national icon to fans all over the world. He is the most worshipped cricketer in the world. Tendulkar has been granted the Padma Vibhushan, Padma Shri, Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, Arjuna Award, Padma Vibhushan by the Indian government. Personal Life In 1995, Sachin married Anjali, a doctor and the daughter of Gujarati industrialist Anand Mehta. They have two children, Sara and Arjun. Tendulkar now sponsors 200 underprivileged children every year through a Mumbai based NGO. Mahatma Gandhi was the primary leader of India's independence movement and also the architect of a form of non violent civil disobedience that would influence the world. Born on October 2, 1869, in Porbandar, India, Mahatma Gandhi studied law and advocated for the civil rights of Indians, both at home under British rule and in South Africa. Gandhi became a leader of India's independence movement, organizing boycotts against British institutions in peaceful forms of civil disobedience.

That's why my lucky charm doesn't work anymore." He investigated and discovered what the cruel priest had done. So he sent for a well known playboy character. He asked him if he could cause the lady's downfall. He replied, "No problem, my lord!" The king paid him handsomely and told him to do the job quickly. The man bought a supply of the finest perfumes and cosmetics. He set up a shop just outside the royal priest's mansion. This mansion was seven stories high, with seven entrance gates one on each floor. Women guarded each gate, and no man except the priest was allowed to enter.

Only one servant waited on the priest's lady. She carried everything in and out, including perfumes and cosmetics. The priest gave her money for her purchases. The playboy saw the servant going in and out of the priest's mansion. Soon he realised she was the one who could get him inside. So he devised a plan and hired some cronies to help him.

The next morning, when the serving lady went out to do her shopping, the playboy dramatically fell to the ground before her. Grabbing her knees he tearfully cried, "Oh my dear mother, it's so wonderful to see you again after such a long time!" Then his cronies chimed in, "Yes, this must be she! She looks the same her hands and feet and face and type of dress. Yes, this must be she!" They all kept saying how amazing it was that her looks had changed so little in all that time.

The poor woman must have had a long lost son, for soon she was convinced this must be he. She hugged the king's clever playboy, and both sobbed tears of joy over their miraculous reunion. In between bouts of sobbing, the man was able to ask her, "Oh dear mother, where are you living now?" "I live next door," she said, "in the royal priest's mansion. Night and day I serve his young woman. Her beauty is without equal, like the mermaids sailors love to praise." He asked, "Where are you going now, mother?" "I'm going shopping for her perfumes and cosmetics, my son."

"There's no need, mother," he said, "from now on I will give you the best perfumes and cosmetics free of charge!" So he gave them to her, along with a bouquet of lovely flowers. When the priest's lady saw all these, much better quality than usual, she asked why the priest was so happy with her.

"No," said the serving woman, "these are not from the priest. I got them at my son's shop." From then on she got perfumes and cosmetics from the playboy's shop, and kept the priest's money. After a while the playboy began the next part of his plan. He pretended to be sick and stayed in bed. When the servant came to the shop she asked, "Where is my son?" She was told he was too sick to work, and was taken to see him. She began massaging his back and asked, "What happened to you, my son?" He replied, "Even if I were about to die, I couldn't tell you, my mother."

She continued, "If you can't tell me, whom can you tell?" Then, according to his plan, he broke down and admitted to her, "I was fine until you told me about your beautiful mistress 'like the mermaids sailors love to praise'. Because of your description, I have fallen in love with her. I must have her. I can't live without her. I'm so depressed, without her I'll surely die!" Then the woman said, "Don't worry, my son, leave it up to me." She took even more perfumes and cosmetics to the priest's lady. She said to her, "My lady, after my son heard from me about your beauty, he fell madly in love with you!

I don't know what to do next!" Since the priest was the only man she had ever seen, the lady was curious. And of course she resented being locked up by force. So she said, "If you sneak him into my room, it's all right with me!" The woman guards at the seven gates searched everything the servant took in and out. So she had to have a plan. She swept up all the dust and dirt she could find in the whole mansion. Then she began taking some of it out each day in a large covered flower basket. Whenever she was searched, she made sure some of the dust and dirt got on the guard women's faces.

After a few days of rest he asked, "What are you going to do now?" The wise man replied, "I don't want to live as householder anymore. I want to return to my old forest and meditate." The bandit said, "I too would like to be ordained and learn to meditate in the forest." After giving up all his stolen goods, he went and lived in the forest with the Buttermilk Wise Man as his teacher. After much effort, they both attained a high state of inner happiness.

The moral is: Seduction can be dangerous to men and women both. Once upon a time, there was a well known teacher who taught in and around Benares. He had over 500 students. One of these was from the distant countryside. Knowing little about the ways of city folks, he fell in love with a Benares girl and married her.

After the marriage he resumed his studies with the famous teacher. But he started missing classes, sometimes staying away for two or three days at a time. His wife was used to doing whatever she wanted. Even though she was married to the student, she was not loyal and faithful. She still had secret boy friends. It just so happened that after she had been with a boy friend, she acted very humble with her husband. She spoke softly and tried very hard to please him.

But on other days, when she had done nothing wrong, she was rude and domineering. She yelled at her husband and nagged him. This drove the man crazy. He was completely confused by how differently she acted from one day to the next. The countryman was so disturbed that he stayed away from classes. And while he remained home he discovered that his city wife was unfaithful. He was upset that he missed school for seven or eight days. Once upon a time, the Enlightenment Being was born into a rich high class family in Kasi, in northern India. He grew to young manhood and completed education.

Then he gave up ordinary desires and left the everyday world. He became a holy man and went to live by himself in the Himalayan forests. He meditated for a long time, developed high mental powers, and was filled with inner happiness. Having run out of salt, one day he came down to the city of Benares.

He spent the night in the royal garden. In the morning he washed himself, tied his tangled hair knot on top of his head, and dressed in a black antelope skin. He folded up the robe made of red bark, which he usually wore. Then he went to the city to collect almsfood. When he arrived at the palace gate, King Brahmadata was walking back and forth on his terrace. When he saw the humble looking holy man he thought there is such a thing as perfect calm, this man must have found it!" He had his servants bring him into the palace.

The holy man was seated on a luxurious couch and was fed the very best foods. He thanked the king. The king said, "You are welcome to live in my royal garden permanently. I will provide the 'Four Necessities' food, clothing, shelter and medicine. In so doing I may gain merit leading to rebirth in a heaven world." The holy man accepted this kind offer. He spent the next 16 years living in the royal garden of Benares.

During that time he taught all in the king's family, and received the Four Necessities from the king. One day King Brahmadata decided he must go to a frontier area and put down a revolt. Before leaving he ordered his queen to care for the needs of the holy man. Her name was Queen Tenderhearted. She prepared food every day for the holy man.

Then one day he was late in arriving for his meal. While waiting, Queen Tenderhearted refreshed herself in a perfumed bath, dressed in fine clothes and jewellery, and lay down on the couch. Meanwhile the Enlightenment Being had been meditating in a particularly joyful mental state.

"A jolly old sow once lived in a sty, Three little piggies had she," &c. But what was more wonderful was that, when one put a finger into the steam rising from the pot, one could at once smell what meals they were preparing on every fire in the whole town.

That was indeed much more remarkable than the rose. When the princess with her ladies passed by and heard the tune, she stopped and looked quite pleased, for she also could play it in fact, it was the only tune she could play, and she played it with one finger. "That is the tune I know," she exclaimed. "He must be a well educated swineherd.

Go and ask him how much the instrument is." One of the ladies had to go and ask; but she put on pattens. "What will you take for your pot?" asked the lady. "I will have ten kisses from the princess," said the swineherd. "God forbid," said the lady. "Well, I cannot sell it for less," replied the swineherd. "What did he say?" said the princess.

"I really cannot tell you," replied the lady. "You can whisper it into my ear." "It is very naughty," said the princess, and walked off. But when she had gone a little distance, the bells rang again so sweetly: "A jolly old sow once lived in a sty, Three little piggies had she," &c. "Ask him," said the princess, "if he will be satisfied with ten kisses from one of my ladies." "No, thank you," said the swineherd: "ten kisses from the princess, or I keep my pot." "That is tiresome," said the princess.

"But you must stand before me, so that nobody can see it." The ladies placed themselves in front of her and spread out their dresses, and she gave the swineherd ten kisses and received the pot. That was a pleasure! Day and night the water in the pot was boiling; there was not a single fire in the whole town of which they did not know what was preparing on it, the chamberlain's as well as the shoemaker's. The ladies danced and clapped their hands for joy.

"We know who will eat soup and pancakes; we know who will eat porridge and cutlets; oh, how interesting!" "Very interesting, indeed," said the mistress of the household. "But you must not betray me, for I am the emperor's daughter."

"Of course not," they all said. The swineherd that is to say, the prince but they did not know otherwise than that he was a real swineherd did not waste a single day without doing something; he made a rattle, which, when turned quickly round, played all the waltzes, galops, and polkas known since the creation of the world.

"But that is superbe," said the princess passing by. "I have never heard a more beautiful composition. Go down and ask him what the instrument costs; but I shall not kiss him again." "He will have a hundred kisses from the princess," said the lady, who had gone down to ask him. "I believe he is mad," said the princess, and walked off, but soon she stopped.

"One must encourage art," she said. "I am the emperor's daughter! Tell him I will give him ten kisses, as I did the other day; the remainder one of my ladies can give him." "But we do not like to kiss him" said the ladies. "That is nonsense," said the princess; "if I can kiss him, you can also do it. Remember that I give you food and employment." And the lady had to go down once more. "A hundred kisses from the princess," said the swineherd, "or everybody keeps his own."

"Place yourselves before me," said the princess then. They did as they were bidden, and the princess kissed him. "I wonder what that crowd near the pigsty means!" said the emperor, who had just come out on his balcony. He rubbed his eyes and put his spectacles on. "The ladies of the court are up to some mischief, I think. I shall have to go down and see." He pulled up his shoes, for they were down at the heels, and he was very quick about it.

He would not, however, be able to remember his previous existence as a god and would have to rely upon his human ability and courage alone. So, while Ram acted out his destiny, the gods bided their time, secure in the knowledge that one day they would be free of Ravan. Meanwhile, Ravan lived in luxury in the beautiful kingdom of Lanka.

One day, Ravan was sitting in his court with his many wives when he heard the sounds of hysterical bellows and Shurpanakha burst into the room. 'Your sister thirsts for revenge,' the demoness howled, rolling her hideous eyes. 'Our brother Khar and all of his demons have been destroyed by Ram of Kosala and he must be punished.'

I will personally suck the blood of Lakshman who has lopped off my nose and ears, and the blood of Sita who is the cause of my trouble. Ram's beauty attracted me and I turned myself into a beautiful woman to tempt him. I thought that no man could resist me, but I could not overcome Ram's love for Sita. She is more virtuous and lovely than any woman ever known.' Bitterly, Shurpanakha described Sita's beauty.

Ravan immediately desired Sita for himself and decided to seize her at once. He summoned his magic chariot and flew across the ocean to the place where a demon named Marich lived. 'You must help me destroy this Ram and obtain his wife Sita for me,' Ravan commanded, 'for Ram has killed 14,000 demons and disfigured my sister without provocation.' 'You do not know Ram,' replied Marich, 'he is perfection personified and commands all the forces of good. You cannot defeat him.' 'Not even the gods with their combined powers can stop me,' thundered Ravan.

'You have forgotten my power, how dare you contradict me! It is your place to obey. Now do as I say or I will kill you.' He gave Marich careful instructions and took him to Panchavati where Ram and his wife and brother were living. There Marich transformed himself into a golden deer and began to graze peacefully in the clearing by Ram's home.

Sita caught sight of the deer as she walked among the flowers. It looked at her with melting, sad eyes and she became enchanted by it. 'Ram, Lakshman,' she called. 'Come and look at this deer. Catch it and bring it to me so that I will always be able to look at it.' Ram remembered the warning that a gazelle would be an ill omen but Sita would not be convinced.

Lakshman also tried to reason with her, explaining that the gazelle might be one of the few demons left, but Sita did not believe there was any danger and finally Ram agreed to catch the deer for her. However, he told Lakshman not to leave Sita's side and drew a circle around her. 'This magic circle will protect you from demons.'

Do not step out of it until I return with the deer,' he warned and left to try and catch the lovely animal. The chase was long but at last Ram was close enough to take aim. He intended only to wound the animal slightly so that he could catch it but he misfired and his arrow sank deep into the deer's body. As it fell to the earth, it cried out in Ram's voice, 'Ah, Lakshman! Alas, my Sita!' Sita heard her husband's voice in the distance and thought that he must be hurt and in need of help. 'Go to him immediately,' Sita told Lakshman, 'Ram needs you.' Lakshman protested. 'Ram left me here to protect you,' he replied. 'He does not need my help.' But Sita wept and pleaded until he agreed to see if Ram had indeed been wounded.

Sooner had Lakshman disappeared into the forest than a holy man passed by. 'Who are you who live in the forest, yet are dressed in silk like one of noble birth?' he asked. 'Do you have no protector?' 'I am Sita,' she replied, greeting the holy man respectfully, 'I live here with my husband Ram and his brother Lakshman.'

He ordered the architect of the gods to build a dwelling place in the Himalayan forests for all these people. When they arrived in the Himalayas, the Shovel Wise Man was the first to announce that he had given up the ordinary world for good. Then all those with him did the same. Never was so much worldly power given up, or renounced, at the same time.

The Shovel Wise Man developed what holy man call the 'Four Heavenly States of Mind'. First is loving kindness, tender affection for all. Second is feeling sympathy and pity for all those who suffer. Third is feeling happiness for all those who are joyful. And the fourth state is balance and calm, even in the face of difficulties or troubles. He taught the others advanced meditation. With great effort they all gained high mental states, leading to rebirth in heaven worlds.

The moral is: Only one possession is enough to keep the mind from finding freedom. Once upon a time there was a world famous teacher and holy man in the city of Takkasila. He had 500 students training under him. One day these 500 young men went into the forest to gather firewood. One of them came upon a tree with no leaves.

He thought, "How lucky I am! This tree must be dead and dry, perfect for firewood. So what's the hurry? I'll take a nap while the others are busy searching in the woods. When it's time to return, it will be easy to climb this tree and break off branches for firewood. So what's the hurry?" He spread his jacket on the ground, lay down on it, and fell fast asleep snoring loudly. After a while all the other students began carrying their bundles of firewood back to Takkasila.

On their way they passed the snoring sleeper. They kicked him to wake him up and said, "Wake up! Wake up! It's time to return to our teacher." The lazy student woke up suddenly and rubbed his eyes. Still not fully awake, he climbed up the tree. He began breaking off branches and discovered that they were actually still green, not dry at all. While he was breaking one of them, it snapped back and poked him in the eye.

From then on he had to hold his eye with one hand while he finished gathering his bundle of green wood. Then he carried it back to Takkasila, running to catch up. He was the last one back, and threw his bundle on top of the rest. Meanwhile an invitation arrived to a religious ceremony. It was to be held the next day at a remote village. The holy man told his 500 pupils, "This will be good training for you. You will have to eat an early breakfast tomorrow morning. Then go to the village for the religious service. When you return, bring back my share of the offerings as well as your own."

The students awoke early the next morning. They awakened the college cook and asked her to prepare their breakfast porridge. She went out in the dark to the woodpile. She picked up the top bundle of the lazy man's green wood. She brought it inside and tried to start her cooking fire. But even though she blew and blew on it, she couldn't get the fire going. The wood was too green and damp. When the sun came up there was still no fire for cooking breakfast. The students said, "It's getting to be too late to go to the village." So off they went to their teacher. The teacher asked them, "Why are you still here? Why haven't you left yet?" They told him, "A lazy good for nothing slept while we all worked.

He climbed a tree and poked himself in the eye. He gathered only green wood and threw it on top of the woodpile. This was picked up by the college cook. Because it was green and damp, she couldn't get the breakfast fire started. And now it's too late to go to the village." The world famous teacher said, "A fool who is lazy causes trouble for everyone. When what should be done early is put off until later, it is soon regretted." Once upon a time the Enlightenment Being was born as an elephant. He was wonderfully white in colour, glowing like polished silver. His feet were as smooth and bright as the finest lacquer.

Then he could carry home one piece at a time. He thought, "One lump I will use for ordinary day to day living. The second lump I will save for a rainy day. The third lump I will invest in my farming business. And I will gain merit with the fourth lump by giving it to the poor and needy and for other good works."

With a calm mind he divided the huge lump of gold into these four smaller lumps. Then it was easy to carry them home on four separate trips. Afterwards he lived happily. Once upon a time, Mr. Monkey was living by himself near a riverbank. He was very strong, and he was a great jumper.

In the middle of the river there was a beautiful island covered with mango, jackfruit and other fruit trees. There happened to be a rock sticking out of the water halfway between the bank and the island. Although it looked impossible, Mr. Monkey was used to jumping from the riverbank to the rock, and from the rock to the island. He would eat fruits all day and then return home by the same route each evening. A high class couple was living next to the same river Sir Crocodile and Lady Crocodile.

They were expecting their first brood of baby crocks. Because she was pregnant Lady Crocodile sometimes wished for strange things to eat. So she made unusual demands on her faithful husband. Lady Crocodile had been amazed, just like the other animals, by the way Mr. Monkey jumped back and forth to the island. One day she developed a sudden craving to eat the heart of Mr. Monkey! She told Sir Crocodile about her desire.

To please her, he promised to get Mr. Monkey's heart for her in time for dinner. Sir Crocodile went and laid himself down on the rock between the riverbank and the island. He waited for Mr. Monkey to return that evening, planning to catch him. As usual, Mr. Monkey spent the rest of the day on the island. When it was time to return to his home on the riverbank, he noticed that the rock seemed to have grown.

It was higher above water than he remembered it. He investigated and saw that the river level was the same as in the morning, yet the rock was definitely higher. Immediately he suspected the cunning Sir Crocodile. To find out for sure, he called out in the direction of the rock, "Hi there, Mr. Rock! How are you?" He yelled this three times. Then he shouted, "You used to answer me when I spoke to you. But today you say nothing. What's wrong with you, Mr. Rock?" Sir Crocodile thought, "No doubt on other days this rock used to talk to the monkey. I can't wait any longer for this dumb rock to speak!

I will just have to speak for the rock, and trick the monkey." So he shouted, "I'm fine, Mr. Monkey. What do you want?" Mr. Monkey asked, "Who are you?" Without thinking, the crocodile replied, "I'm Sir Crocodile." "Why are you lying there?" asked the monkey. Sir Crocodile said, "I'm expecting to take your heart! There's no escape for you, Mr. Monkey." The clever monkey thought, "Aha! He's right there's no other way back to the riverbank. So I will have to trick him."

Then he yelled, "Sir Crocodile my friend, it looks like you've got me. So I'll give you my heart. Open your mouth and take it when I come your way." When Sir Crocodile opened his mouth, he opened it so wide that his eyes were squeezed shut. When Mr. Monkey saw this, he immediately jumped onto the top of Sir Crocodile's head, and then instantly to the riverbank.

When Sir Crocodile realised he'd been outsmarted, he admired Mr. Monkey's victory. Like a good sport in a contest, he praised the winner. He said, "Mr. Monkey, my intention towards you was unwholesome I wanted to kill you and take your heart just to please my wife. But you wanted only to save yourself and harm no one. I congratulate you!" Then Sir Crocodile returned to Lady Crocodile. At first she was displeased with him, but when the little ones came they forgot their troubles for a time.

She felt as if her heart would break. She stole into the garden, took a flower from the flower beds of each of her sisters, kissed her hand a thousand times towards the palace, and then rose up through the dark blue waters. The sun had not risen when she came in sight of the prince's palace, and approached the beautiful marble steps, but the moon shone clear and bright.

Then the little mermaid drank the magic draught, and it seemed as if a two edged sword went through her delicate body: she fell into a swoon, and lay like one dead. When the sun arose and shone over the sea, she recovered, and felt a sharp pain; but just before her stood the handsome young prince.

He fixed his coal black eyes upon her so earnestly that she cast down her own, and then became aware that her fish's tail was gone, and that she had as pretty a pair of white legs and tiny feet as any little maiden could have; but she had no clothes, so she wrapped herself in her long, thick hair.

The prince asked her who she was, and where she came from, and she looked at him mildly and sorrowfully with her deep blue eyes; but she could not speak. Every step she took was as the witch had said it would be, she felt as if treading upon the points of needles or sharp knives; but she bore it willingly, and stepped as lightly by the prince's side as a soap bubble, so that he and all who saw her wondered at her graceful swaying movements.

She was very soon arrayed in costly robes of silk and muslin, and was the most beautiful creature in the palace; but she was dumb, and could neither speak nor sing. Beautiful female slaves, dressed in silk and gold, stepped forward and sang before the prince and his royal parents: one sang better than all the others, and the prince clapped his hands and smiled at her. This was great sorrow to the little mermaid; she knew how much more sweetly she herself could sing once, and she thought, "Oh if he could only know that! I have given away my voice forever, to be with him." The slaves next performed some pretty fairy like dances, to the sound of beautiful music.

Then the little mermaid raised her lovely white arms, stood on the tips of her toes, and glided over the floor, and danced as no one yet had been able to dance. At each moment her beauty became more revealed, and her expressive eyes appealed more directly to the heart than the songs of the slaves. Every one was enchanted, especially the prince, who called her his little foundling; and she danced again quite readily, to please him, though each time her foot touched the floor it seemed as if she trod on sharp knives. The prince said she should remain with him always, and she received permission to sleep at his door, on a velvet cushion. He had a page's dress made for her, that she might accompany him on horseback.

They rode together through the sweet scented woods, where the green boughs touched their shoulders, and the little birds sang among the fresh leaves. She climbed with the prince to the tops of high mountains; and although her tender feet bled so that even her steps were marked, she only laughed, and followed him till they could see the clouds beneath them looking like a flock of birds travelling to distant lands.

While at the prince's palace, and when all the household were asleep, she would go and sit on the broad marble steps; for it eased her burning feet to bathe them in the cold sea water; and then she thought of all those below in the deep. Once during the night her sisters came up arm in arm, singing sorrowfully, as they floated on the water. She beckoned to them, and then they recognized her, and told her how she had grieved them. After that, they came to the same place every night; and once she saw in the distance her old grandmother, who had not been to the surface of the sea for many years, and the old Sea King, her father, with his crown on his head.

They stretched out their hands towards her, but they did not venture so near the land as her sisters did. As the days passed, she loved the prince more fondly, and he loved her as he would love a little child,

Jonek suddenly had an idea. He found a short twig in the grass at his feet and jammed the twig into the hole, trapping Poverty inside the bone. Then he threw the bone out across the river and watched it splash into the water and sink beneath the murky surface. As soon as the bone disappeared from sight, Jonek felt peace in his heart, as if a great weight had been lifted for the first time in many years.

Jonek turned away from the river and cast the apparition from his mind forever. He began to whistle a happy tune and, for the first time that he could remember, he began to feel optimistic about the future. On his way home he passed by the village inn and was greeted by old friends and neighbours. They invited him inside to share a drink. They began to reminisce about old times, and many of the villagers gathered that night recalled Jonek's hardworking nature and his kindness towards others. They began to ask him if he might help them around their farms or businesses as they all remembered that Jonek was very skilled and very diligent in his work.

The eldest of the group brought out a stack of gold coins, giving Jonek two hundred pieces of gold with which to buy a horse and provide for his family. Jonek gratefully accepted, vowing to repay the gold as soon as he was able, and immediately returned home to his wife. By the time Jonek arrived at his little house on the edge of the village, the sun was rising across the fields. He found his wife and children in the garden waiting for him, all of them smiling and joyful. 'The people of the village came to visit us while you were away and they gave to us this cart full of flour and wheat and barley and beans!' exclaimed his wife.

'There is also meat and warm clothes for the children!' Jonek was overcome with joy and dropped to his knees and said a prayer of gratitude. 'Finally,' he thought, 'the curse of Poverty has been lifted from my family so that we might once more live in peace and happiness.' From that day forwards, Jonek's luck grew from strength to strength. He built a new house for his family and bought a small farm in a neighbouring field. He also bought two horses and some cows and even an ox. He busied himself in the forest, cutting wood and selling the timber to villagers all across the county. Soon he became so busy that he was able to hire a young farmhand, and he watched with a happy heart as his family grew strong and healthy.

Everybody in the village was pleased for Jonek and his family; everybody except for Antek who grew jealous and resentful of his brother's good fortune. One day, Antek invited his brother back to their childhood farm for some hot mead. Jonek, forever willing to forgive his brother's mean ways, accepted the invitation in the hope that they might once more become friends. The brothers sat and drank in front of the fire while talking over old times.

But it did not take very long before Antek's mood darkened. He could not stand to see his brother so happy and contented and he insisted on knowing how Jonek had turned his bad fortune into good. He accused his brother of many foul deeds. 'Surely you stole money,' he said. 'Or perhaps you visited a neighbouring village and took food and cattle during the night?' Jonek was hurt that Antek should think he had gained good fortune by dishonest means, so he decided to confide in his brother and told him all about how Poverty had haunted his family for many years and how, in the end, he had tricked Poverty by trapping her inside the bone and casting her into the river during the night.

This news was exactly what the treacherous brother had been waiting for. After bidding Jonek farewell, he waited until nightfall and then ran down to the river as fast as his legs would carry him. Once there, he jumped into the river and dived down into the murky waters in search of the bone. Eventually his hands landed upon the bone which had settled among the tall weeds in the riverbed. Antek swam to the surface and climbed out onto the riverbank and hastily pulled the twig from the hole in the end of the bone. There was a whooshing sound and a very bright light which made Antek drop the bone in fright.

"I want to go to Christian's Haven, in Little Turf Street." The men stared at him. "Pray tell me where the bridge is!" said he. "It is shameful that the lamps are not lighted here, and it is as muddy as if one were walking in a marsh." But the more he talked with the boatmen the less they could understand each other. "I don't understand your outlandish talk," he cried at last, angrily turning his back upon them. He could not, however, find the bridge nor any railings.

"What a scandalous condition this place is in," said he; never, certainly, had he found his own times so miserable as on this evening. "I think it will be better for me to take a coach; but where are they?" There was not one to be seen! "I shall be obliged to go back to the king's new market," said he, "where there are plenty of carriages standing, or I shall never reach Christian's Haven."

Then he went towards East Street, and had nearly passed through it, when the moon burst forth from a cloud. "Dear me, what have they been erecting here?" he cried, as he caught sight of the East gate, which in olden times used to stand at the end of East Street. However, he found an opening through which he passed, and came out upon where he expected to find the new market. Nothing was to be seen but an open meadow, surrounded by a few bushes, through which ran a broad canal or stream.

A few miserable looking wooden booths, for the accommodation of Dutch watermen, stood on the opposite shore. "Either I behold a fata morgana, or I must be tipsy," groaned the counsellor. "What can it be? What is the matter with me?" He turned back in the full conviction that he must be ill.

In walking through the street this time, he examined the houses more closely; he found that most of them were built of lath and plaster, and many had only a thatched roof. "All besides was a scream, quite as unintelligible as the warbling of the canary bird, excepting to the clerk, who being now a bird, could understand his comrades very well. "I flew beneath green palm trees, and amidst the blooming almond trees," sang the canary. "I flew with my brothers and sisters over beautiful flowers, and across the clear, bright sea, which reflected the waving foliage in its glittering depths; and I have seen many gay parrots, who could relate long and delightful stories." "They were wild birds," answered the parrot, "and totally uneducated.

Now let us be men. Why do you not laugh? If the lady and her visitors can laugh at this, surely you can. It is a great failing not to be able to appreciate what is amusing. Now let us be men." "Do you remember," said the canary, "the pretty maidens who used to dance in the tents that were spread out beneath the sweet blossoms? Do you remember the delicious fruit and the cooling juice from the wild herbs?" "Oh, yes," said the parrot; "but here I am much better off.

I am well fed, and treated politely. I know that I have a clever head; and what more do I want? Let us be men now. You have a soul for poetry. I have deep knowledge and wit. You have genius, but no discretion.

You raise your naturally high notes so much, that you get covered over. They never serve me so. Oh, no; I cost them something more than you. I keep them in order with my beak, and fling my wit about me. Now let us be men." "O my warm, blooming fatherland," sang the canary bird, "I will sing of thy dark green trees and thy quiet streams, where the bending branches kiss the clear, smooth water.

I will sing of the joy of my brothers and sisters, as their shining plumage flits among the dark leaves of the plants which grow wild by the springs." "Do leave off those dismal strains," said the parrot; "sing something to make us laugh; laughter is the sign of the highest order of intellect. Can a dog or a horse laugh? No, they can cry; but to man alone is the power of laughter given. Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Polly, and repeated his witty saying, "Now let us be men."

The evil cells were back in his blood, and he had a fever, and there was an infection in the bones of his face. Dr. Blork had said that a fungus was growing there, and had admitted that this news was, in fact, bad, and he had looked both awkward and grave as he sat with them, twisting his stethoscope around in his hands and apologizing for the turn of events, though not exactly accepting responsibility for the failures of the treatment.

Oberon had said that mushrooms were some of the friendliest creatures he knew, and that he could not understand how they could possibly represent a threat to anyone, but Blork shook his head, and said that this fungus was nobody's friend, and further explained that the presence of the new infection compromised the doctors' ability to poison the boy anymore, and that for that reason the leukemia cells were having a sort of holiday. The boy was sleeping.

They had brought back the morphine for his pain, so he was rarely awake, and was not very happy when he was. Titania moved from her chair to the bed, and took his hand. Even asleep, he pulled it away. "A terrible gift," she said. "Terrible." She sat on the bed, taking the boy's hand over and over as he pulled it away, and told her husband that she was afraid that when the boy died he would take with him not just all the love she felt for him but all the love she felt for Oberon, too, and all the love she had felt for anything or anyone in the world.

He would draw it after him, as if in obeisance to some natural law that magic could not violate, and then she would be left with nothing. "Do not speak of such things, my love," her husband said, and he kissed her. She let him do that. And she let him put his hands inside her dress, and let him draw her over to the narrow couch where they were supposed to sleep at night. She tried to pretend that it was any other night under the hill when they would roll and wrestle with each other while the boy slept next to them, oblivious. They were walked in upon a number of times.

But everyone saw something different, and none of them remembered what they had seen after they turned and fled the room. The night nurse, coming in to change some I.V. fluids, saw two blankets striking and grappling with each other on the couch. A nursing assistant saw a mass of snakes and cats twisting over one another, sighing and hissing. Dr. Blork actually managed to perceive Oberon's mighty thrusting bottom, and went stumbling back out into the hall, temporarily blinded.

One evening, Dr. Beadle came in alone, Blorkless, and sat down on the bed, where the boy was sweating and sleeping, dreaming, Titania could tell, of something unpleasant. "I think it's time to talk about our goals for Brad," he said, and put a hand on the Beastie over the boy's foot, and wiggled the foot back and forth as he talked, asking them whether they were really doing the best thing for the boy, whether they should continue with a treatment that was not making him better.

"You don't understand," Dr. Beadle said. "I don't mean that at all. Not at all!" He looked at Titania with an odd combination of pleading and pity. "Do you understand?" he asked her. In reply, she drew herself up and shook off every drop of the disguising glamour, and stood there entirely revealed to him. He seemed to shrink, and fell off the bed, and while he was not purposefully kneeling in front of her, he happened to end up on his knees. She leaned over him and spoke very slowly. The night the boy died, there were a number of miraculous recoveries on the ward. It was nothing that Titania did on purpose.

She did not care about the other pale bald headed children in their red wagons and masks, did not care about the other mothers, whose grief and worry seemed to elevate their countenances to resemble Titania's own. Indifference was the key to her magic; she could do nothing for someone she loved. So all the desperate hope she directed at the boy was made manifest around her in rising blood counts and broken fevers and unlikely remissions. It made for a different sort of day with so much good news around, it seemed as if hardly anyone noticed that the boy had died.

"Now we must fumigate the place with burnt horse hair and pig's bristles, and then I think I shall have done my part," said the elf man servant. "Father, dear," said the youngest daughter, "may I now hear who our high born visitors are?" "Well, I suppose I must tell you now," he replied; "two of my daughters must prepare themselves to be married.

The old goblin from Norway, who lives in the ancient Dovre mountains, and who possesses many castles built of rock and freestone, besides a gold mine, which is better than all, so it is thought, is coming with his two sons, who are both seeking a wife. The old goblin is a true hearted, honest, old Norwegian graybeard; cheerful and straightforward.

I knew him formerly, when we used to drink together to our good fellowship: he came here once to fetch his wife, she is dead now. She was the daughter of the king of the chalk hills at Moen. They say he took his wife from chalk; I shall be delighted to see him again. It is said that the boys are ill bred, forward lads, but perhaps that is not quite correct, and they will become better as they grow older. Let me see that you know how to teach them good manners."

"And when are they coming?" asked the daughter. "That depends upon wind and weather," said the elf king; "they travel economically. They will come when there is the chance of a ship. I wanted them to come over to Sweden, but the old man was not inclined to take my advice. He does not go forward with the times, and that I do not like." Two will o' the wisps came jumping in, one quicker than the other, so of course, one arrived first.

"They are coming! they are coming!" he cried. "Give me my crown," said the elf king, "and let me stand in the moonshine." The daughters drew on their shawls and bowed down to the ground. There stood the old goblin from the Dovre mountains, with his crown of hardened ice and polished fir cones. Besides this, he wore a bear skin, and great, warm boots, while his sons went with their throats bare and wore no braces, for they were strong men.

"Is that a hill?" said the youngest of the boys, pointing to the elf hill, "we should call it a hole in Norway." "Boys," said the old man, "a hole goes in, and a hill stands out; have you no eyes in your heads?" Another thing they wondered at was, that they were able without trouble to understand the language.

"Take care," said the old man, "or people will think you have not been well brought up." Then they entered the elfin hill, where the select and grand company were assembled, and so quickly had they appeared that they seemed to have been blown together. But for each guest the neatest and pleasantest arrangement had been made.

The sea folks sat at table in great water tubs, and they said it was just like being at home. All behaved themselves properly excepting the two young northern goblins; they put their legs on the table and thought they were all right. "Feet off the table cloth!" said the old goblin. They obeyed, but not immediately. Then they tickled the ladies who waited at table, with the fir cones, which they carried in their pockets.

They took off their boots, that they might be more at ease, and gave them to the ladies to hold. But their father, the old goblin, was very different; he talked pleasantly about the stately Norwegian rocks, and told fine tales of the waterfalls which dashed over them with a clattering noise like thunder or the sound of an organ, spreading their white foam on every side. He told of the salmon that leaps in the rushing waters, while the water god plays on his golden harp.

He spoke of the bright winter nights, when the sledge bells are ringing, and the boys run with burning torches across the smooth ice, which is so transparent that they can see the fishes dart forward beneath

"Where are they going?" asked the fir tree. "They are not taller than I am: indeed, one is much less; and why are the branches not cut off? Where are they going?" "We know, we know," sang the sparrows; "we have looked in at the windows of the houses in the town, and we know what is done with them.

They are dressed up in the most splendid manner. We have seen them standing in the middle of a warm room, and adorned with all sorts of beautiful things, honey cakes, gilded apples, playthings, and many hundreds of wax tapers." "And then," asked the fir tree, trembling through all its branches, "and then what happens?" "We did not see any more," said the sparrows; "but this was enough for us." "I wonder whether anything so brilliant will ever happen to me," thought the fir tree.

"It would be much better than crossing the sea. I long for it almost with pain. Oh! when will Christmas be here? I am now as tall and well grown as those which were taken away last year. Oh! that I were now laid on the wagon, or standing in the warm room, with all that brightness and splendor around me! Something better and more beautiful is to come after, or the trees would not be so decked out.

Yes, what follows will be grander and more splendid. What can it be? I am weary with longing. I scarcely know how I feel." "Rejoice with us," said the air and the sunlight. "Enjoy thine own bright life in the fresh air."

But the tree would not rejoice, though it grew taller every day; and, winter and summer, its dark green foliage might be seen in the forest, while passers by would say, "What a beautiful tree!" A short time before Christmas, the discontented fir tree was the first to fall.

As the axe cut through the stem, and divided the pith, the tree fell with a groan to the earth, conscious of pain and faintness, and forgetting all its anticipations of happiness, in sorrow at leaving its home in the forest. It knew that it should never again see its dear old companions, the trees, nor the little bushes and many colored flowers that had grown by its side; perhaps not even the birds. Neither was the journey at all pleasant.

The tree first recovered itself while being unpacked in the courtyard of a house, with several other trees; and it heard a man say, "We only want one, and this is the prettiest." Then came two servants in grand livery, and carried the fir tree into a large and beautiful apartment.

On the walls hung pictures, and near the great stove stood great china vases, with lions on the lids. There were rocking chairs, silken sofas, large tables, covered with pictures, books, and playthings, worth a great deal of money, at least, the children said so. Then the fir tree was placed in a large tub, full of sand; but green baize hung all around it, so that no one could see it was a tub, and it stood on a very handsome carpet.

How the fir tree trembled! "What was going to happen to him now?" Some young ladies came, and the servants helped them to adorn the tree. On one branch they hung little bags cut out of colored paper, and each bag was filled with sweetmeats; from other branches hung gilded apples and walnuts, as if they had grown there; and above, and all round, were hundreds of red, blue, and white tapers, which were fastened on the branches.

Dolls, exactly like real babies, were placed under the green leaves, the tree had never seen such things before, and at the very top was fastened a glittering star, made of tinsel. Oh, it was very beautiful! "This evening," they all exclaimed, "how bright it will be!" "Oh, that the evening were come," thought the tree, "and the tapers lighted! then I shall know what else is going to happen.

A mermaid has not an immortal soul, nor can she obtain one unless she wins the love of a human being. On the power of another hangs her eternal destiny. But the daughters of the air, although they do not possess an immortal soul, can, by their good deeds, procure one for themselves.

We fly to warm countries, and cool the sultry air that destroys mankind with the pestilence. We carry the perfume of the flowers to spread health and restoration. After we have striven for three hundred years to all the good in our power, we receive an immortal soul and take part in the happiness of mankind. You, poor little mermaid, have tried with your whole heart to do as we are doing; you have suffered and endured and raised yourself to the spirit world by your good deeds; and now, by striving for three hundred years in the same way, you may obtain an immortal soul."

The little mermaid lifted her glorified eyes towards the sun, and felt them, for the first time, filling with tears. On the ship, in which she had left the prince, there were life and noise; she saw him and his beautiful bride searching for her; sorrowfully they gazed at the pearly foam, as if they knew she had thrown herself into the waves. Unseen she kissed the forehead of her bride, and fanned the prince, and then mounted with the other children of the air to a rosy cloud that floated through the aether.

"After three hundred years, thus shall we float into the kingdom of heaven," said she. "And we may even get there sooner," whispered one of her companions. "Unseen we can enter the houses of men, where there are children, and for every day on which we find a good child, who is the joy of his parents and deserves their love, our time of probation is shortened.

The child does not know, when we fly through the room, that we smile with joy at his good conduct, for we can count one year less of our three hundred years. But when we see a naughty or a wicked child, we shed tears of sorrow, and for every tear a day is added to our time of trial!" The great city where he resided was very gay; every day many strangers from all parts of the globe arrived. One day two swindlers came to this city; they made people believe that they were weavers, and declared they could manufacture the finest cloth to be imagined.

Their colours and patterns, they said, were not only exceptionally beautiful, but the clothes made of their material possessed the wonderful quality of being invisible to any man who was unfit for his office or unpardonably stupid. "That must be wonderful cloth," thought the emperor. "If I were to be dressed in a suit made of this cloth I should be able to find out which men in my empire were unfit for their places, and I could distinguish the clever from the stupid.

I must have this cloth woven for me without delay." And he gave a large sum of money to the swindlers, in advance, that they should set to work without any loss of time. They set up two looms, and pretended to be very hard at work, but they did nothing whatever on the looms. They asked for the finest silk and the most precious gold cloth; all they got they did away with, and worked at the empty looms till late at night. "I should very much like to know how they are getting on with the cloth," thought the emperor. But he felt rather uneasy when he remembered that he who was not fit for his office could not see it.

Personally, he was of opinion that he had nothing to fear, yet he thought it advisable to send somebody else first to see how matters stood. Everybody in the town knew what a remarkable quality the stuff possessed, and all were anxious to see how bad or stupid their neighbours were. "I shall send my honest old minister to the weavers," thought the emperor. "He can judge best how the stuff looks, for he is intelligent, and nobody understands his office better than he." The good old minister went into the room where the swindlers sat before the empty looms.

Their long leaves and stems round the branches of the trees, so that the whole place became dark and gloomy. At length she could bear it no longer, and told one of her sisters all about it. Then the others heard the secret, and very soon it became known to two mermaids whose intimate friend happened to know who the prince was.

She had also seen the festival on board ship, and she told them where the prince came from, and where his palace stood. "Come, little sister," said the other princesses; then they entwined their arms and rose up in a long row to the surface of the water, close by the spot where they knew the prince's palace stood. It was built of bright yellow shining stone, with long flights of marble steps, one of which reached quite down to the sea.

Splendid gilded cupolas rose over the roof, and between the pillars that surrounded the whole building stood life like statues of marble. Through the clear crystal of the lofty windows could be seen noble rooms, with costly silk curtains and hangings of tapestry; while the walls were covered with beautiful paintings which were a pleasure to look at. In the centre of the largest saloon a fountain threw its sparkling jets high up into the glass cupola of the ceiling, through which the sun shone down upon the water and upon the beautiful plants growing round the basin of the fountain.

Now that she knew where he lived, she spent many an evening and many a night on the water near the palace. She would swim much nearer the shore than any of the others ventured to do; indeed once she went quite up the narrow channel under the marble balcony, which threw a broad shadow on the water. Here she would sit and watch the young prince, who thought himself quite alone in the bright moonlight.

She saw him many times of an evening sailing in a pleasant boat, with music playing and flags waving. She peeped out from among the green rushes, and if the wind caught her long silvery white veil, those who saw it believed it to be a swan, spreading out its wings. On many a night, too, when the fishermen, with their torches, were out at sea, she heard them relate so many good things about the doings of the young prince, that she was glad she had saved his life when he had been tossed about half dead on the waves.

And she remembered that his head had rested on her bosom, and how heartily she had kissed him; but he knew nothing of all this, and could not even dream of her. She grew more and more fond of human beings, and wished more and more to be able to wander about with those whose world seemed to be so much larger than her own.

They could fly over the sea in ships, and mount the high hills which were far above the clouds; and the lands they possessed, their woods and their fields, stretched far away beyond the reach of her sight. There was so much that she wished to know, and her sisters were unable to answer all her questions. Then she applied to her old grandmother, who knew all about the upper world, which she very rightly called the lands above the sea.

"If human beings are not drowned," asked the little mermaid, "can they live forever? do they never die as we do here in the sea?" "Yes," replied the old lady, "they must also die, and their term of life is even shorter than ours. We sometimes live to three hundred years, but when we cease to exist here we only become the foam on the surface of the water, and we have not even a grave down here of those we love.

We have not immortal souls, we shall never live again; but, like the green sea weed, when once it has been cut off, we can never flourish more. Human beings, on the contrary, have a soul which lives forever, lives after the body has been turned to dust. It rises up through the clear, pure air beyond the glittering stars.

He kissed us all, and had so much to tell of what he had seen of the great ocean, of the fortifications at Malta, and of the marvellous sepulchres of Egypt, that I looked up to him with a kind of veneration. His stories were as strange as the legends of the priests of olden times.

"How much you know!" I exclaimed, "and what wonders you can relate?" "I think what you once told me, the finest of all," he replied; "you told me of a thing that has never been out of my thoughts of the good old custom of 'the bond of friendship,' a custom I should like to follow.

Brother, let you and I go to church, as your father and Anastasia's father once did. Your sister Anastasia is the most beautiful and most innocent of maidens, and she shall consecrate the deed. No people have such grand old customs as we Greeks." Anastasia blushed like a young rose, and my mother kissed Aphtanides.

At about two miles from our cottage, where the earth on the hill is sheltered by a few scattered trees, stood the little church, with a silver lamp hanging before the altar. I put on my best clothes, and the white tunic fell in graceful folds over my hips.

The red jacket fitted tight and close, the tassel on my Fez cap was of silver, and in my girdle glittered a knife and my pistols. Aphtanides was clad in the blue dress worn by the Greek sailors; on his breast hung a silver medal with the figure of the Virgin Mary, and his scarf was as costly as those worn by rich lords.

Every one could see that we were about to perform a solemn ceremony. When we entered the little, unpretending church, the evening sunlight streamed through the open door on the burning lamp, and glittered on the golden picture frames. We knelt down together on the altar steps, and Anastasia drew near and stood beside us.

A long, white garment fell in graceful folds over her delicate form, and on her white neck and bosom hung a chain entwined with old and new coins, forming a kind of collar. Her black hair was fastened into a knot, and confined by a headdress formed of gold and silver coins which had been found in an ancient temple. No Greek girl had more beautiful ornaments than these. Her countenance glowed, and her eyes were like two stars.

We all three offered a silent prayer, and then she said to us, "Will you be friends in life and in death?" "Yes," we replied. "Will you each remember to say, whatever may happen, 'My brother is a part of myself; his secret is my secret, my happiness is his; self sacrifice, patience, everything belongs to me as they do to him?'" And we again answered, "Yes." Then she joined out hands and kissed us on the forehead, and we again prayed silently.

After this a priest came through a door near the altar, and blessed us all three. Then a song was sung by other holy men behind the altar screen, and the bond of eternal friendship was confirmed. When we arose, I saw my mother standing by the church door, weeping. How cheerful everything seemed now in our little cottage by the Delphian springs! On the evening before his departure, Aphtanides sat thoughtfully beside me on the slopes of the mountain.

His arm was flung around me, and mine was round his neck. We spoke of the sorrows of Greece, and of the men of the country who could be trusted. Every thought of our souls lay clear before us. Presently I seized his hand: "Aphtanides," I exclaimed, "there is one thing still that you must know, one thing that till now has been a secret between myself and Heaven. My whole soul is filled with love, with a love stronger than the love I bear to my mother and to thee."

He said to the queen, "Did you hear the same wisdom again from that craftsman? As a monk I would be ashamed to let you stay with me in front of him. So you go your way and I'll go mine. We are husband and wife no more good bye!" But still she followed him. Then the Great Being cut a stalk of tall grass.

He said to Queen Sivali, "Just as the two pieces of this stalk of grass cannot be joined again, so I will not join you again in the marriage bed! We two can never be joined together again. Like a full stalk of uncut grass, live on alone, my ex wife Sivali." On hearing this the queen went crazy with shock and grief.

She beat herself with both hands until she fell to the ground completely unconscious. Realising this, the Bodhisatta quickly left the roadway. He erased his footsteps and disappeared into the jungle. First he had given up the power and wealth of a king. Now he had given up the power and desire of a husband.

At last he was free to follow the path of a Truth seeking wandering monk. He made his way to the Himalayas and in only one week he was able to develop special mental powers. Never again did he return to the ordinary world. Meanwhile the royal ministers, who had been following at a distance, reached the fainted queen. They sprinkled water on her and revived her.

She asked, "Where is my husband the king?" They said, "We don't know. Don't you know?" In a panic she ordered, "Search for him!" They looked and looked, but of course he was gone. When Queen Sivali recovered from her fear and grief, she realised she felt no anger, jealousy or vengeance towards the monk Fruitful. Instead she admired him more than at any time since the day they met, when she gave him her hand and led him to the throne.

She had monuments erected to honour the courageous King Fruitful on four sites: where he had spoken with the floating holy man Narada, where he had eaten the good meat left by the dog, where he had questioned the little girl, and also the arrow maker. Beside the two mango trees in the royal garden, she had Prince Longlife crowned as the new king. Together with the army and crowds of followers, they returned to the city of Mithila.

In spite of herself, Queen Sivali had learned something by following, and finally losing, her husband King Fruitful. She too had tasted freedom! The wise lady gave up her royal duties. She retired to meditate in the garden by the mango trees. With great effort, she gained a high mental state leading to rebirth in a heaven world.

Once upon a time, when Brahmadata was king, the Enlightenment Being was born in a wealthy family. He became the richest man in Benares. There also happened to be a gang of drunkards who roamed the streets. All they ever thought about was finding ways to get alcohol, the drug they thought they couldn't live without.

One day, when they had run out of money as usual, they came up with a scheme to rob the richest man in Benares. But they didn't realise that he was the reborn Bodhisatta, so he wouldn't be so easy to fool! They decided to make a 'Mickey Finn', which is a drink of liquor with a sleeping drug secretly added to it. Their plan was to get the rich man to drink the Mickey Finn. Then when he fell asleep they would rob all his money, jewellery, and even the rich clothes he wore.

So they set up a temporary little roadside bar. They put their last remaining liquor into a bottle, and mixed in some strong sleeping pills. Later the rich man came by on his way to the palace. One of the alcoholics called out to him, "Honourable sir, why not start your day right by having a drink with us? And the first one is on the house!" Then he poured a glass of the dishonest liquor.

Oberon shouted at him, but by the time Titania entered the room, warned by Radish that Oberon was about to beat the changeling, Oberon had joined him in the game, putting a toy shovel in his teeth. Titania laughed, and it seemed to her in that moment that she had two hearts in her, each pouring out an equivalent feeling toward the prancing figures, and she thought, My men.

They were not allowed to go home. It was hardly time for that, Dr. Blook told them. The boy was barely better at all. This was going to be a three year journey, and they were not even a week into it. They would have to learn patience if they were going to get through this. They would have to learn to take things one day at a time.

"I like to take the long view of things," Titania said in response, and that had been true as a rule all through her long, long life. But lately her long view had contracted. Even without looking ahead into the uncertain future, she always found something to worry about. Oberon suggested she look to the boy, and model her behavior after his, which was what he was doing, to which she replied that a child in crisis needed parents, not playmates, to which he said that that wasn't what he meant at all, and they proceeded to quarrel about it, very softly, since the boy was sleeping. Still, she gave it a try, proceeding with the boy on one of his daily migrations through the ward.

Ever since he had been feeling better, he went for multiple promenades, sometimes on foot and sometimes in a little red buggy that he drove by making skibbling motions against the floor. He had to wear a mask, and his I.V. pole usually accompanied him, but these seemed not to bother him at all, so Titania tried not to let them bother her, either, though she was pushing the pole, and had to stoop now and then to adjust his mask when it slid over his chin.

The ward was almost the ugliest place she had ever seen, and certainly the ugliest place she had ever lived. Someone had tried, some time ago, to make it pretty, so there were big photographs in the hall of children at various sorts of play, and some of these were diverting, she supposed. But the pictures were few. In other places on the wall, someone had thought to put up bas relief cartoon faces, about the size of a child's face, but the faces looked deformed to her eye goblin faces and they seemed uniformly to be in pain.

The boy was not allowed to wander beyond the filtered confines of the ward, so they went around and around, passing the posse of doctors on their rounds, and the nurses at their station, and the other parents and children making their own circumnavigations. The boy called out hello and beeped his horn at everyone they met.

They called back, "Hello, Brad!" or "Hello, Brian!" or "Hello, Billy!," since he answered to all those names. People all heard something different when they asked his name and Titania replied, "Boy." She walked, step by step, not thinking of anything but the ugliness of the hall, or the homeliness of Dr. Blook, or the coarseness of Dr. Beadle's hair, or the redness of the buggy. There is no past and no future, she told herself. We have been here forever and we will be here forever.

These thoughts were not exactly a comfort. She considered the other parents, staring at them as she passed, remembering to smile at them when they smiled at her. It seemed a marvel to her that any mortal should suffer for lack of love, and yet she had never known a mortal who didn't feel unloved. There was enough love just in this ugly hallway, she thought, that no one should ever feel the lack of it again. She peered at the parents, imagining their hearts like machines, manufacturing surfeit upon surfeit of love for their children, and then wondered how something could be so awesome and so utterly powerless.

A feeling like that ought to be able to move mountains, she thought, and then she wondered how she had come to such a sad place in her thoughts, when she meant to live entirely in the blank present.

Light streamed from the altar through the church into the deserted square. A wonderful blaze of light streamed from one of the monuments in the left side aisle, and a thousand moving stars seemed to form a glory round it; even the coat of arms on the tomb stone shone, and a red ladder on a blue field gleamed like fire. It was the grave of Galileo.

The monument is unadorned, but the red ladder is an emblem of art, signifying that the way to glory leads up a shining ladder, on which the prophets of mind rise to heaven, like Elias of old. In the right aisle of the church every statue on the richly carved sarcophagi seemed endowed with life.

Here stood Michael Angelo; there Dante, with the laurel wreath round his brow; Alfieri and Machiavelli; for here side by side rest the great men the pride of Italy.¹ The church itself is very beautiful, even more beautiful than the marble cathedral at Florence, though not so large.

It seemed as if the carved vestments stirred, and as if the marble figures they covered raised their heads higher, to gaze upon the brightly colored glowing altar where the white robed boys swung the golden censers, amid music and song, while the strong fragrance of incense filled the church, and streamed forth into the square.

The boy stretched forth his hands towards the light, and at the same moment the Metal Pig started again so rapidly that he was obliged to cling tightly to him. The wind whistled in his ears, he heard the church door creak on its hinges as it closed, and it seemed to him as if he had lost his senses then a cold shudder passed over him, and he awoke.

It was morning; the Metal Pig stood in its old place on the Porta Rosa, and the boy found he had slipped nearly off its back. Fear and trembling came upon him as he thought of his mother; she had sent him out the day before to get some money, he had not done so, and now he was hungry and thirsty.

Once more he clasped the neck of his metal horse, kissed its nose, and nodded farewell to it. Then he wandered away into one of the narrowest streets, where there was scarcely room for a loaded donkey to pass. A great iron bound door stood ajar; he passed through, and climbed up a brick staircase, with dirty walls and a rope for a balustrade, till he came to an open gallery hung with rags.

From here a flight of steps led down to a court, where from a well water was drawn up by iron rollers to the different stories of the house, and where the water buckets hung side by side. Sometimes the roller and the bucket danced in the air, splashing the water all over the court. Another broken down staircase led from the gallery, and two Russian sailors running down it almost upset the poor boy. They were coming from their nightly carousal.

A woman not very young, with an unpleasant face and a quantity of black hair, followed them. "What have you brought home?" she asked. when she saw the boy. "Don't be angry," he pleaded; "I received nothing, I have nothing at all;" and he seized his mother's dress and would have kissed it. Then they went into a little room.

I need not describe it, but only say that there stood in it an earthen pot with handles, made for holding fire, which in Italy is called a marito. This pot she took in her lap, warmed her fingers, and pushed the boy with her elbow. "Certainly you must have some money," she said. The boy began to cry, and then she struck him with her foot till he cried out louder. "Will you be quiet? or I'll break your screaming head;" and she swung about the fire pot which she held in her hand, while the boy crouched to the earth and screamed. Then a neighbor came in, and she had also a marito under her arm.

There it lay in the great arm chair near to the warm stove. It seemed almost as if it had grown larger, for it appeared quite to fill the chair. The old people sat at their supper, casting friendly glances at the old lamp, whom they would willingly have admitted to a place at the table.

It is quite true that they dwelt in a cellar, two yards deep in the earth, and they had to cross a stone passage to get to their room, but within it was warm and comfortable and strips of list had been nailed round the door. The bed and the little window had curtains, and everything looked clean and neat. On the window seat stood two curious flower pots which a sailor, named Christian, had brought over from the East or West Indies.

They were of clay, and in the form of two elephants, with open backs; they were hollow and filled with earth, and through the open space flowers bloomed. In one grew some very fine chives or leeks; this was the kitchen garden. The other elephant, which contained a beautiful geranium, they called their flower garden. On the wall hung a large colored print, representing the congress of Vienna, and all the kings and emperors at once.

A clock, with heavy weights, hung on the wall and went "tick, tick," steadily enough; yet it was always rather too fast, which, however, the old people said was better than being too slow. They were now eating their supper, while the old street lamp, as we have heard, lay in the grandfather's arm chair near the stove. It seemed to the lamp as if the whole world had turned round; but after a while the old watchman looked at the lamp, and spoke of what they had both gone through together, in rain and in fog; during the short bright nights of summer, or in the long winter nights, through the drifting snow storms, when he longed to be at home in the cellar. Then the lamp felt it was all right again.

He saw everything that had happened quite clearly, as if it were passing before him. Surely the wind had given him an excellent gift. The old people were very active and industrious, they were never idle for even a single hour. On Sunday afternoons they would bring out some books, generally a book of travels which they were very fond of. The old man would read aloud about Africa, with its great forests and the wild elephants, while his wife would listen attentively, stealing a glance now and then at the clay elephants, which served as flower pots.

"I can almost imagine I am seeing it all," she said; and then how the lamp wished for a wax taper to be lighted in him, for then the old woman would have seen the smallest detail as clearly as he did himself. The lofty trees, with their thickly entwined branches, the naked negroes on horseback, and whole herds of elephants treading down bamboo thickets with their broad, heavy feet. "What is the use of all my capabilities," sighed the old lamp, "when I cannot obtain any wax lights; they have only oil and tallow here, and these will not do." One day a great heap of wax candle ends found their way into the cellar. The larger pieces were burnt, and the smaller ones the old woman kept for waxing her thread. So there were now candles enough, but it never occurred to any one to put a little piece in the lamp.

"Here I am now with my rare powers," thought the lamp, "I have faculties within me, but I cannot share them; they do not know that I could cover these white walls with beautiful tapestry, or change them into noble forests, or, indeed, to anything else they might wish for." The lamp, however, was always kept clean and shining in a corner where it attracted all eyes. Strangers looked upon it as lumber, but the old people did not care for that; they loved the lamp. One day it was the watchman's birthday the old woman approached the lamp, smiling to herself, and said, "I will have an illumination to day in honor of my old man." And the lamp rattled in his metal frame, for he thought, "Now at last I shall have a light within me," but after all no wax light was placed in the lamp, but oil as usual.

The lamp burned through the whole evening, and began to perceive too clearly that the gift of the stars would remain a hidden treasure all his life.

The contractions press the baby's head into the vagina and the narrowest part of the pelvis's bony ring. The pelvis is usually wider from side to side than front to back, so it's best if the baby emerges with the temples lined up side to side with the mother's pelvis. The top of the head comes into view. The mother has a mounting urge to push.

The head comes out, then the shoulders, and suddenly a breathing, wailing child is born. The umbilical cord is cut. The placenta separates from the uterine lining, and, with a slight tug on the cord and a push from the mother, it is extruded. The uterus spontaneously contracts into a clenched ball of muscle, closing off its bleeding sinuses. Typically, the mother's breasts immediately let down colostrum, the first milk, and the newborn can latch on to feed.

That's if all goes well. At almost any step, though, the process can go wrong. For thousands of years, childbirth was the most common cause of death for young women and infants. There's the risk of hemorrhage. The placenta can tear, or separate, or a portion may remain stuck in the uterus after delivery and then bleed torrentially. Or the uterus may not contract after delivery.

The high class rich man had to pay him the one thousand gold coins. He returned home and sat down, saddened by his lost bet, and embarrassed by the blow to his pride. The bull called Delightful grazed peacefully on his way home. When he arrived, he saw his master sadly lying on his side. He asked. "Sir, why are you lying there like that? Are you sleeping? You look sad."

The man said, "I lost a thousand gold coins because of you. With such a loss, how could I sleep?" The bull replied, "Sir, you called me 'dummy'. You even cracked a whip in the air over my head. In all my life, did I ever break anything, step on anything, make a mess in the wrong place, or behave like a 'dummy' in any way?" He answered, "No, my pet." The bull called Delightful said, "Then sir, why did you call me 'dumb animal', and insult me even in the presence of others? The fault is yours.

I have done nothing wrong. But since I feel sorry for you, go again to the merchant and make the same bet for two thousand gold coins. And remember to use only the respectful words I deserve so well." Then the high class rich man went back to the merchant and made the bet for two thousand gold coins. The merchant thought it would be easy money.

Again he set up the one hundred heavily loaded bullock carts. Again the rich man fed and bathed the bull, and hung a garland of flowers around his neck. When all was ready, the rich man touched Delightful's forehead with a lotus blossom, having given up the whip. Thinking of him as fondly as if he were his own child, he said. "My son, please do me the honor of pulling these one hundred bullock carts." Lo and behold, the wonderful bull pulled with all his might and dragged the heavy carts, until the last one stood in the place of the first. The merchant, with his mouth hanging open in disbelief, had to pay the two thousand gold coins. The onlookers were so impressed that they honored the bull called Delightful with gifts.

But even more important to the high class rich man than his winnings, was his valuable lesson in humility and respect. The moral is: Harsh words bring no reward. Respectful words bring honor to all. Once upon a time there was a man who looked and acted just like a holy man. He wore nothing but rags, had long matted hair, and relied on a little village to support him. But he was sneaky and tricky. He only pretended to give up attachment to the everyday world.

He was a phoney holy man. A wealthy man living in the village wanted to earn merit by doing good deeds. So he had a simple little temple built in the nearby forest for the holy man to live in. He also fed him the finest foods from his own home. He thought this holy man with matted hair was sincere and good, one who would not do anything unwholesome. Since he was afraid of bandits, he took his family fortune of 100 gold coins to the little temple.

The girl's black sparkling eyes, half veiled behind their long silken lashes, followed it with a gaze of earnest intensity. She knew that if the lamp continued to burn so long as she could keep it in sight, her betrothed was still alive; but if the lamp was suddenly extinguished, he was dead.

And the lamp burned bravely on, and she fell on her knees, and prayed. Near her in the grass lay a speckled snake, but she heeded it not she thought only of Bramah and of her betrothed. 'He lives!' she shouted joyfully, 'he lives!' And from the mountains the echo came back upon her, 'he lives!'" Second Evening "YESTERDAY," said the Moon to me, "I looked down upon a small courtyard surrounded on all sides by houses.

In the courtyard sat a clucking hen with eleven chickens; and a pretty little girl was running and jumping around them. The hen was frightened, and screamed, and spread out her wings over the little brood. Then the girl's father came out and scolded her; and I glided away and thought no more of the matter. "But this evening, only a few minutes ago, I looked down into the same courtyard. Everything was quiet. But presently the little girl came forth again, crept quietly to the hen house, pushed back the bolt, and slipped into the apartment of the hen and chickens.

They cried out loudly, and came fluttering down from their perches, and ran about in dismay, and the little girl ran after them. I saw it quite plainly, for I looked through a hole in the hen house wall. I was angry with the willful child, and felt glad when her father came out and scolded her more violently than yesterday, holding her roughly by the arm; she held down her head, and her blue eyes were full of large tears.

'What are you about here?' he asked."And the father kissed the innocent child's forehead, and I kissed her on the mouth and eyes." Third Evening "IN the narrow street round the corner yonder it is so narrow that my beams can only glide for a minute along the walls of the house, but in that minute I see enough to learn what the world is made of in that narrow street I saw a woman.

Sixteen years ago that woman was a child, playing in the garden of the old parsonage, in the country. The hedges of rose bush were old, and the flowers were faded. They straggled wild over the paths, and the ragged branches grew up among the boughs of the apple trees; here and there were a few roses still in bloom not so fair as the queen of flowers generally appears, but still they had colour and scent too.

The clergyman's little daughter appeared to me a far lovelier rose, as she sat on her stool under the straggling hedge, hugging and caressing her doll with the battered pasteboard cheeks. "Ten years afterwards I saw her again. I beheld her in a splendid ballroom: she was the beautiful bride of a rich merchant.

I rejoiced at her happiness, and sought her on calm quiet evenings ah, nobody thinks of my clear eye and my silent glance! Alas! my rose ran wild, like the rose bushes in the garden of the parsonage. There are tragedies in every day life, and tonight I saw the last act of one.

"She was lying in bed in a house in that narrow street: she was sick unto death, and the cruel landlord came up, and tore away the thin coverlet, her only protection against the cold. 'Get up!' said he; 'your face is enough to frighten one. Get up and dress yourself, give me money, or I'll turn you out into the street! Quick get up!' She answered, 'Alas! death is gnawing at my heart.

Let me rest.' But he forced her to get up and bathe her face, and put a wreath of roses in her hair; and he placed her in a chair at the window, with a candle burning beside her, and went away. "I looked at her, and she was sitting motionless, with her hands in her lap. The wind caught the open window and shut it with a crash, so that a pane came clattering down in fragments; but still she never moved.

If I throw it away in a pond, the butter will float. on the surface and be discovered. If I throw it away on the ground, crows will come from miles around to feast on it, and that too would be noticed. So how can I get rid of it?" Then he saw a field that had just been burned by farmers to enrich the soil. It was covered with hot glowing coals.

So he threw the rich man's generous gift on the coals. The alms food burned up without a trace. And with it went his peace of mind! For, when he got back to the monastery, he found the visitor gone. He thought, "This must have been a perfectly wise monk. He must have known I was jealous afraid of losing my favored position.

He must have known I resented him and tried to trick him into leaving. Many people assume that winning the lottery would immediately deliver long lasting happiness, but research has found the opposite. In a very famous study published by researchers at Northwestern University in 1978 it was discovered that the happiness levels of paraplegics and lottery winners were essentially the same within a year after the event occurred. You read that correctly.

One person won a life changing sum of money and another person lost the use of their limbs and within one year the two people were equally happy. It is important to note this particular study has not been replicated in the years since it came out, but the general trend has been supported again and again.

We have a strong tendency to overestimate the impact that extreme events will have on our lives. Extreme positive and extreme negative events don't actually influence our long term levels of happiness nearly as much as we think they would. Researchers refer to this as The Impact Bias because we tend to overestimate the length or intensity of happiness that major events will create. The Impact Bias is one example of affective forecasting, which is a social psychology phenomenon that refers to our generally terrible ability as humans to predict our future emotional states.

How to Be Happy: Where to Go From Here There are two primary takeaways I have from The Impact Bias. First, we have a tendency to focus on the thing that changes and forget about the things that don't change. When thinking about winning the lottery, we imagine that event and all of the money that it will bring in. But we forget about the other 99 percent of life and how it will remain more or less the same. We'll still feel grumpy if we don't get enough sleep.

We still have to wait in rush hour traffic. We still have to workout if we want to stay in shape. We still have to send in our taxes each year. It will still hurt when we lose a loved one. It will still feel nice to relax on the porch and watch the sunset. We imagine the change, but we forget the things that stay the same. Second, a challenge is an impediment to a particular thing, not to you as a person. In the words of Greek philosopher Epictetus, "Going lame is an impediment to your leg, but not to your will."

We overestimate how much negative events will harm our lives for precisely the same reason that we overvalue how much positive events will help our lives. We focus on the thing that occurs (like losing a leg), but forget about all of the other experiences of life. Writing thank you notes to friends, watching football games on the weekend, reading a good book, eating a tasty meal. These are all pieces of the good life you can enjoy with or without a leg.

Mobility issues represent but a small fraction of the experiences available to you. Negative events can create task specific challenges, but the human experience is broad and varied. There is plenty of room for happiness in a life that may seem very foreign or undesirable to your current imagination.

She ran forwards as quickly as she could, when a whole regiment of snow flakes came round her; they did not, however, fall from the sky, which was quite clear and glittering with the northern lights. The snow flakes ran along the ground, and the nearer they came to her, the larger they appeared. Gerda remembered how large and beautiful they looked through the burning glass.

But these were really larger, and much more terrible, for they were alive, and were the guards of the Snow Queen, and had the strangest shapes. Some were like great porcupines, others like twisted serpents with their heads stretching out, and some few were like little fat bears with their hair bristled; but all were dazzlingly white, and all were living snow flakes.

Then little Gerda repeated the Lord's Prayer, and the cold was so great that she could see her own breath come out of her mouth like steam as she uttered the words. The steam appeared to increase, as she continued her prayer, till it took the shape of little angels who grew larger the moment they touched the earth.

They all wore helmets on their heads, and carried spears and shields. Their number continued to increase more and more; and by the time Gerda had finished her prayers, a whole legion stood round her. They thrust their spears into the terrible snow flakes, so that they shivered into a hundred pieces, and little Gerda could go forward with courage and safety. The angels stroked her hands and feet, so that she felt the cold less, and she hastened on to the Snow Queen's castle.

But now we must see what Kay is doing. In truth he thought not of little Gerda, and never supposed she could be standing in the front of the palace. Seventh Story: Of the Palace of the Snow Queen and What Happened There At Last THE walls of the palace were formed of drifted snow, and the windows and doors of the cutting winds.

There were more than a hundred rooms in it, all as if they had been formed with snow blown together. The largest of them extended for several miles; they were all lighted up by the vivid light of the aurora, and they were so large and empty, so icy cold and glittering! when the storm might have been the music, and the bears could have danced on their hind legs, and shown their good manners. There were no pleasant games of snap dragon, or touch, or even a gossip over the tea table, for the young lady foxes. Empty, vast, and cold were the halls of the Snow Queen.

The flickering flame of the northern lights could be plainly seen, whether they rose high or low in the heavens, from every part of the castle. In the midst of its empty, endless hall of snow was a frozen lake, broken on its surface into a thousand forms; each piece resembled another, from being in itself perfect as a work of art, and in the centre of this lake sat the Snow Queen, when she was at home.

She called the lake "The Mirror of Reason," and said that it was the best, and indeed the only one in the world. Little Kay was quite blue with cold, indeed almost black, but he did not feel it; for the Snow Queen had kissed away the icy shiverings, and his heart was already a lump of ice.

He dragged some sharp, flat pieces of ice to and fro, and placed them together in all kinds of positions, as if he wished to make something out of them; just as we try to form various figures with little tablets of wood which we call "a Chinese puzzle." Kay's fingers were very artistic; it was the icy game of reason at which he played, and in his eyes the figures were very remarkable, and of the highest importance; this opinion was owing to the piece of glass still sticking in his eye. He composed many complete figures, forming different words, but there was one word he never could manage to form, although he wished it very much.

It was the word "Eternity." The Snow Queen had said to him, "When you can find out this, you shall be your own master, and I will give you the whole world and a new pair of skates."

Metal Pig indeed, it was always in his thoughts. Suddenly he fancied he heard feet outside going pit a pat. He sprung out of bed and went to the window. Could it be the Metal Pig? But there was nothing to be seen; whatever he had heard had passed already. Next morning, their neighbor, the artist, passed by, carrying a paint box and a large roll of canvas.

"Help the gentleman to carry his box of colors," said the woman to the boy; and he obeyed instantly, took the box, and followed the painter. They walked on till they reached the picture gallery, and mounted the same staircase up which he had ridden that night on the Metal Pig. He remembered all the statues and pictures, the beautiful marble Venus, and again he looked at the Madonna with the Saviour and St. John.

They stopped before the picture by Bronzino, in which Christ is represented as standing in the lower world, with the children smiling before Him, in the sweet expectation of entering heaven; and the poor boy smiled, too, for here was his heaven. "May I see you paint?" asked the boy; "may I see you put the picture on this white canvas?" "I am not going to paint yet," replied the artist; then he brought out a piece of chalk.

His hand moved quickly, and his eye measured the great picture; and though nothing appeared but a faint line, the figure of the Saviour was as clearly visible as in the colored picture. "Why don't you go?" said the painter. Then the boy wandered home silently, and seated himself on the table, and learned to sew gloves. But all day long his thoughts were in the picture gallery; and so he pricked his fingers and was awkward. But he did not tease Bellissima.

When evening came, and the house door stood open, he slipped out. It was a bright, beautiful, starlight evening, but rather cold. Away he went through the already deserted streets, and soon came to the Metal Pig; he stooped down and kissed its shining nose, and then seated himself on its back.

"You happy creature," he said; "how I have longed for you! we must take a ride to night." But the Metal Pig lay motionless, while the fresh stream gushed forth from its mouth. The little boy still sat astride on its back, when he felt something pulling at his clothes. He looked down, and there was Bellissima, little smooth shaven Bellissima, barking as if she would have said, "Here I am too; why are you sitting there?"

A fiery dragon could not have frightened the little boy so much as did the little dog in this place. "Bellissima in the street, and not dressed!" as the old lady called it; "what would be the end of this?" The dog never went out in winter, unless she was attired in a little lambskin coat which had been made for her; it was fastened round the little dog's neck and body with red ribbons, and was decorated with rosettes and little bells.

The dog looked almost like a little kid when she was allowed to go out in winter, and trot after her mistress. And now here she was in the cold, and not dressed. Oh, how would it end? All his fancies were quickly put to flight; yet he kissed the Metal Pig once more, and then took Bellissima in his arms.

The poor little thing trembled so with cold, that the boy ran homeward as fast as he could. "What are you running away with there?" asked two of the police whom he met, and at whom the dog barked. "Where have you stolen that pretty dog?" they asked; and they took it away from him. "Oh, I have not stolen it; do give it to me back again," cried the boy, despairingly. "If you have not stolen it, you may say at home that they can send to the watch house for the dog."

Then they told him where the watch house was, and went away with Bellissima. Here was a dreadful trouble.

It just so happened that on that very same day a travelling merchant came to the village to trade his goods. When he saw the bandits he stayed out of sight. The headman brought all the villagers home in the evening. He ordered them to make a lot of noise by beating drums as they marched towards the village.

If the bandits had still been there, they would have heard the villagers coming for sure. The village people saw that they had been robbed and all their cows were dead and partly eaten. This made them very sad. The travelling merchant appeared and said to them, 'This treacherous village headman has betrayed your trust in him. He must be a partner of the gang of bandits.

Only after they left with all your valuables did he lead you home. beating drums as loudly as possible! 'This man pretends to know nothing about what has happened as innocent as a newborn lamb! In truth, it's as if a son did something so shameful that his mother would say 'I am not his mother. He is not my son. My son is dead!'" Before long, news of the crime reached the king. He recalled the treacherous headman and punished him according to the law.

The moral is: No one defends a betrayer of trust. Some say that the world comes into being, disappears, and comes into being ... over and over, throughout time. In one of these previous worlds, countless years ago, Truth was unknown and the Five Training Steps were practiced by only a few. Even the Enlightenment Being the Bodhisatta did not know Truth, and had not yet discovered the Five Training Steps.

Once upon a time in that long ago world, there was a king named Brahmadata. Like many other kings of that name, he ruled in the place known today as Benares. The Bodhisatta was born in a rich high class family in a market town, also in northern India. He happened to be a dwarf, bent over and partly hunchbacked. When he became a young man he remained short and stooped. Many people found him unpleasant to look at.

He studied under a very outstanding teacher. He learned all there was to know. at that time, about the two great branches of knowledge religion and science. He also learned how to use a bow and arrow better than anyone else in India. For this reason his teacher called him 'Little Archer'. Like most new graduates he was quite clever. He thought, "Many people judge by appearance alone.

If I go to a king and ask for a job, he'll probably ask, 'Having such a short body, what can you possibly do for me?' Therefore it would be better if I can team up with a front man someone who is handsome in appearance, tall and well grown in body, and strong in personality. I will provide the brains, but remain out of sight behind his shadow. In this way we can earn a good living together." One day he was walking in the district where the weavers live and work.

He happened to see a big, strong looking man. He greeted him and asked his name. The weaver said, "Because of my appearance, people call me Fear Maker." "With such an impressive name." said Little Archer, "and being so big and strong looking, why do you have such a low paying job?" "Because life is hard," he replied. "I have an idea." said the dwarf "In all India there is no one as skilled with a bow and arrow as I am. But I don't look the part! If I asked a king for work he would either laugh or get angry at me. He would not believe that a hunchbacked little dwarf could be the greatest archer in India! 'But you look perfect. And your name helps too. Therefore, let us go together to the king. You will be the front man and do all the talking. The king will hire you immediately. Meanwhile I will remain as if hidden underneath your shadow.

I will be the real archer and we will prosper and be happy. You just have to do whatever I tell you." Thinking he had nothing to lose, Fear Maker agreed, saying, "It's a deal, my friend!" The two partners went off to Benares to see the king.

"I believe I must go out into the world again," said the duckling. "Yes, do," said the hen. So the duckling left the cottage, and soon found water on which it could swim and dive, but was avoided by all other animals, because of its ugly appearance. Autumn came, and the leaves in the forest turned to orange and gold. then, as winter approached, the wind caught them as they fell and whirled them in the cold air.

The clouds, heavy with hail and snow flakes, hung low in the sky, and the raven stood on the ferns crying, "Croak, croak." It made one shiver with cold to look at him. All this was very sad for the poor little duckling. One evening, just as the sun set amid radiant clouds, there came a large flock of beautiful birds out of the bushes. The duckling had never seen any like them before. They were swans, and they curved their graceful necks, while their soft plumage shown with dazzling whiteness.

They uttered a singular cry, as they spread their glorious wings and flew away from those cold regions to warmer countries across the sea. As they mounted higher and higher in the air, the ugly little duckling felt quite a strange sensation as he watched them.

He whirled himself in the water like a wheel, stretched out his neck towards them, and uttered a cry so strange that it frightened himself. Could he ever forget those beautiful, happy birds; and when at last they were out of his sight, he dived under the water, and rose again almost beside himself with excitement.

He knew not the names of these birds, nor where they had flown, but he felt towards them as he had never felt for any other bird in the world. He was not envious of these beautiful creatures, but wished to be as lovely as they. Poor ugly creature, how gladly he would have lived even with the ducks had they only given him encouragement.

The winter grew colder and colder; he was obliged to swim about on the water to keep it from freezing, but every night the space on which he swam became smaller and smaller.

At length it froze so hard that the ice in the water crackled as he moved, and the duckling had to paddle with his legs as well as he could, to keep the space from closing up. He became exhausted at last, and lay still and helpless, frozen fast in the ice. Early in the morning, a peasant, who was passing by, saw what had happened.

He broke the ice in pieces with his wooden shoe, and carried the duckling home to his wife. The warmth revived the poor little creature; but when the children wanted to play with him, the duckling thought they would do him some harm; so he started up in terror, fluttered into the milk pan, and splashed the milk about the room.

Then the woman clapped her hands, which frightened him still more. He flew first into the butter cask, then into the meal tub, and out again. What a condition he was in! The woman screamed, and struck at him with the tongs; the children laughed and screamed, and tumbled over each other, in their efforts to catch him; but luckily he escaped.

The door stood open; the poor creature could just manage to slip out among the bushes, and lie down quite exhausted in the newly fallen snow. It would be very sad, were I to relate all the misery and privations which the poor little duckling endured during the hard winter; but when it had passed, he found himself lying one morning in a moor, amongst the rushes.

He felt the warm sun shining, and heard the lark singing, and saw that all around was beautiful spring.

He investigated further, until he found a narrow part of the pond. There, with great effort, he was able to jump from one side clear across to the other. In the midst of his leap he reached down and picked flowers, without actually getting into the water. Then he jumped back again, picking more flowers. He continued jumping back and forth, collecting lots of flowers.

Suddenly the water demon stuck his head up above the water. He exclaimed, "In all the time I've lived here I have never seen anyone, man or beast, as wise as this monkey! He has picked all the flowers he wanted, without ever coming within the grasp of my power, here in my kingdom of water."

Then the ferocious demon made a path for himself through the water and came up onto the bank. He said, "My lord, king of monkeys, there are three qualities that make a person unbeatable by his enemies. It appears that you have all three skill, courage and wisdom. You must be truly invincible! Tell me, mighty one, why have you collected all those flowers?" The prince of monkeys replied, "My father wants to make me king in his place. He sent me to gather these flowers for the coronation ceremony." The water demon said, "You are too noble to be burdened by carrying these flowers. Let me carry them for you."

He picked up all the flowers and followed him. From a distance, the monkey king saw the water demon carrying the flowers and following the prince. He thought, "I sent him to get flowers, thinking he would be eaten by the demon. But instead he has made the water demon his servant. I am lost!" The monkey king was afraid all his unwholesome deeds had caught up with him. He went into a sudden panic, which caused his heart to break into seven pieces.

Of course this killed him on the spot! The monkey band voted to make the strong young prince the new king. Once upon a time there was a drummer living in a small country village. He heard there was going to be a fair in the city of Benares. So he decided to go there and earn some money by playing his drums. He took his son along to accompany him when playing music written for two sets of drums. The two drummers, father and son, went to Benares Fair. They were very successful.

Everyone liked their drum playing and gave generously to them. When the fair was over they began the trip home to their little village. On the way they had to go through a dark forest. It was very dangerous because of muggers who robbed the travellers. The drummer boy wanted to protect his father and himself from the muggers. So he beat his drums as loudly as he could, without stopping. "The more noise, the better!" he thought. The drummer man took his son aside.

He explained to him that when large groups passed by, especially royal processions, they were in the habit of beating drums. They did this at regular intervals, in a very dignified manner, as if they feared no one. They would beat a drum roll, remain silent, then beat again with a flourish, and so on. He told his son to do likewise, to fool the muggers into thinking there was a powerful lord passing by. But the boy ignored his father's advice. He thought he knew best. "The more noise, the better!" he thought. Meanwhile, a gang of muggers heard the boy's drumming. At first they thought it must be a powerful rich man approaching, with heavy security. But then they heard the drumming continue in a wild fashion without stopping.

They realised that it sounded frantic, like a frightened little dog barking at a calm big dog. So they went to investigate and found only the father and son. They beat them up, robbed all their hard earned money, and escaped into the forest. Once upon a time there was a very well known teacher in the city of Takkasila, in northern India. He taught religion, as well as all other subjects. His knowledge was enormous and his teaching ability made him world famous.

At that time a son was born to a rich family in Benares. The family kept a holy fire burning constantly from that day on. When the son turned 16, they gave him a choice.

On whom my wishes depend, and in whose hands I should like to place the happiness of my life. I will venture all for him, and to win an immortal soul, while my sisters are dancing in my father's palace, I will go to the sea witch, of whom I have always been so much afraid, but she can give me counsel and help."

And then the little mermaid went out from her garden, and took the road to the foaming whirlpools, behind which the sorceress lived. She had never been that way before: neither flowers nor grass grew there; nothing but bare, gray, sandy ground stretched out to the whirlpool, where the water, like foaming mill wheels, whirled round everything that it seized, and cast it into the fathomless deep.

Through the midst of these crushing whirlpools the little mermaid was obliged to pass, to reach the dominions of the sea witch; Beyond this stood her house, in the centre of a strange forest, in which all the trees and flowers were polypi, half animals and half plants; they looked like serpents with a hundred heads growing out of the ground. The branches were long slimy arms, with fingers like flexible worms, moving limb after limb from the root to the top.

All that could be reached in the sea they seized upon, and held fast, so that it never escaped from their clutches. The little mermaid was so alarmed at what she saw, that she stood still, and her heart beat with fear, and she was very nearly turning back; but she thought of the prince, and of the human soul for which she longed, and her courage returned. She fastened her long flowing hair round her head, so that the polypi might not seize hold of it.

She laid her hands together across her bosom, and then she darted forward as a fish shoots through the water, between the supple arms and fingers of the ugly polypi, which were stretched out on each side of her. She saw that each held in its grasp something it had seized with its numerous little arms, as if they were iron bands.

The white skeletons of human beings who had perished at sea, and had sunk down into the deep waters, skeletons of land animals, oars, rudders, and chests of ships were lying tightly grasped by their clinging arms; even a little mermaid, whom they had caught and strangled; and this seemed the most shocking of all to the little princess. She now came to a space of marshy ground in the wood, where large, fat water snakes were rolling in the mire, and showing their ugly, drab colored bodies. In the midst of this spot stood a house, built with the bones of shipwrecked human beings.

There sat the sea witch, allowing a toad to eat from her mouth, just as people sometimes feed a canary with a piece of sugar. She called the ugly water snakes her little chickens, and allowed them to crawl all over her bosom. "I know what you want," said the sea witch; "it is very stupid of you, but you shall have your way, and it will bring you to sorrow, my pretty princess. You want to get rid of your fish's tail, and to have two supports instead of it, like human beings on earth, so that the young prince may fall in love with you, and that you may have an immortal soul."

And then the witch laughed so loud and disgustingly, that the toad and the snakes fell to the ground, and lay there wriggling about. "You are but just in time," said the witch; "for after sunrise to morrow I should not be able to help you till the end of another year. I will prepare a draught for you, with which you must swim to land tomorrow before sunrise, and sit down on the shore and drink it. Your tail will then disappear, and shrink up into what mankind calls legs, and you will feel great pain, as if a sword were passing through you.

But all who see you will say that you are the prettiest little human being they ever saw. You will still have the same floating gracefulness of movement, and no dancer will ever tread so lightly; but at every step you take it will feel as if you were treading upon sharp knives, and that the blood must

This effect works in a similar way for extremely positive events. Usually they put away their bowls and other things neatly. But this time they just left everything lying around, here and there. Soon they all passed out into a drunken sleep. When they had slept off their drunkenness, they awoke and saw the messy condition they'd left everything in. They became sad and said to each other, 'We have done a bad thing, which is not proper for holy men like US.'

Their embarrassment and shame made them weep with regret. They said, 'We have done these unwholesome things only because we are away from our holy teacher.' At that very moment the 500 forest monks left the pleasure garden and returned to the Himalayas. When they arrived they put away their bowls and other belongings neatly, as was their custom. Then they went to their beloved master and greeted him respectfully. He asked them, 'How are you, my children? Did you find enough food and lodgings in the city? Were you happy and united?' They replied.

'Venerable master, we were happy and united. But we drank what we were not supposed to drink. We lost all our common sense and self control. We danced and sang like silly monkeys. It's fortunate we didn't turn into monkeys! We drank wine, we danced, we sang, and in the end we cried from shame.' The kind teacher said, 'It is easy for things like this to happen to pupils who have no teacher to guide them. Learn from this. do not do such things in the future.' From then on they lived happily and grew in goodness. The moral is: A pupil without a teacher is easily embarrassed.

Once upon a time, there was a monk who lived in a tiny monastery in a little village. He was very fortunate that the village rich man supported him in the monastery. He never had to worry about the cares of the world. His alms food was always provided automatically by the rich man. So the monk was calm and peaceful in his mind. There was no fear of losing his comfort and his daily food. There was no desire for greater comforts and pleasures of the world.

Instead, he was free to practice the correct conduct of a monk, always trying to eliminate his faults and do only wholesome deeds. But he didn't know just how lucky he was! One day an elder monk arrived in the little village. He had followed the path of Truth until he had become perfect and faultless. When the village rich man saw this unknown monk, he was very pleased by his gentle manner and his calm attitude. So he invited him into his home. He gave him food to eat, and he thought himself very fortunate to hear a short teaching from him. He then invited him to take shelter at the village monastery. He said, 'I will visit you there this evening, to make sure all is well.'

When the perfect monk arrived at the monastery, he met the village monk. They greeted each other pleasantly. Then the village monk asked, 'Have you had your lunch today?' The other replied, 'Yes, I was given lunch by the supporter of this monastery. He also invited me to take shelter here.' The village monk took him to a room and left him there. The perfect monk passed his time in meditation. Later that evening, the village rich man came. He brought fruit drinks, flowers and lamp oil, in honor of the visiting holy man. He asked the village monk, 'Where is our guest?' He told him what room he had given him.

The man went to the room, bowed respectfully, and greeted the perfect monk. Again he appreciated hearing the way of Truth as taught by the rare faultless one. Afterwards, as evening approached, he lit the lamps and offered the flowers at the monastery's lovely temple shrine. He invited both monks to lunch at his home the next day.

Then he left and returned home. In the evening, a terrible thing happened. The village monk, who had been so contented, allowed the poison of jealousy to creep into his mind. He thought, 'The village rich man has made it easy for me here. He provides shelter each night and fills my belly once a day. 'But I'm afraid this will change because he respects this new monk so highly. If he remains in this monastery, my supporter may stop caring for me.

The grass grows rank among the broad flagstones, and in the morning twilight thousands of tame pigeons flutter around the solitary lofty tower. On three sides you find yourself surrounded by cloistered walks. In these the silent Turk sits smoking his long pipe, the handsome Greek leans against the pillar and gazes at the upraised trophies and lofty masts, memorials of power that is gone.

The flags hang down like mourning scarves. A girl rests there: she has put down her heavy pails filled with water, the yoke with which she has carried them rests on one of her shoulders, and she leans against the mast of victory. That is not a fairy palace you see before you yonder, but a church: the gilded domes and shining orbs flash back my beams; the glorious bronze horses up yonder have made journeys, like the bronze horse in the fairy tale: they have come hither, and gone hence, and have returned again.

Do you notice the variegated splendour of the walls and windows? It looks as if Genius had followed the caprices of a child, in the adornment of these singular temples. Do you see the winged lion on the pillar? The gold glitters still, but his wings are tied the lion is dead, for the king of the sea is dead; the great halls stand desolate, and where gorgeous paintings hung of yore, the naked wall now peers through.

The lazzarone sleeps under the arcade, whose pavement in old times was to be trodden only by the feet of high nobility. From the deep wells, and perhaps from the prisons by the Bridge of Sighs, rise the accents of woe, as at the time when the tambourine was heard in the gay gondolas, and the golden ring was cast from the Bucentaur to Adria, the queen of the seas. Adria! shroud thyself in mists; let the veil of thy widowhood shroud thy form, and clothe in the weeds of woe the mausoleum of thy bridegroom the marble, spectral Venice." Eighteenth Evening "I LOOKED down upon a great theatre," said the Moon.

"The house was crowded, for a new actor was to make his first appearance that night. My rays glided over a little window in the wall. It was the hero of the evening. The knighly beard curled crisply about the chin; but there were tears in the man's eyes, for he had been hissed off, and indeed with reason. The poor Incapable! But Incapables cannot be admitted into the empire of Art. He had deep feeling, and loved his art enthusiastically, but the art loved not him.

The prompter's bell sounded; 'the hero enters with a determined air,' so ran the stage direction in his part, and he had to appear before an audience who turned him into ridicule. When the piece was over, I saw a form wrapped in a mantle, creeping down the steps: it was the vanquished knight of the evening. The scene shifters whispered to one another, and I followed the poor fellow home to his room. To hang one's self is to die a mean death, and poison is not always at hand, I know; but he thought of both. I saw how he looked at his pale face in the glass, with eyes half closed, to see if he should look well as a corpse.

A man may be very unhappy, and yet exceedingly affected. He thought of death, of suicide; I believe he pitied himself, for he wept bitterly, and when a man has had his cry out he doesn't kill himself. "Since that time a year had rolled by. Again a play was to be acted, but in a little theatre, and by a poor strolling company. Again I saw the well remembered face, with the painted cheeks and the crisp beard. He looked up at me and smiled; and yet he had been hissed off only a minute before hissed off from a wretched theatre, by a miserable audience. And tonight a shabby hearse rolled out of the town gate. It was a suicide our painted, despised hero. The driver of the hearse was the only person present, for no one followed except my beams.

In a corner of the churchyard the corpse of the suicide was shovelled into the earth, and nettles will soon be growing rankly over his grave, and the sexton will throw thorns and weeds from the other graves upon it." Nineteenth Evening "I COME from Rome," said the Moon.

English language, world history, and politics on his own. Maulana Azad had a natural inclination towards writing and this resulted in the start of the monthly magazine "Nairang e Alam" in 1899. He was eleven years old when his mother passed away. Two years later, at the age of thirteen So he decided to go and collect alms.

He came upon a caravan and went with it part way on its journey. In the evening they stopped and made camp. The holy man began walking at the foot of a big nearby tree. He concentrated until he entered a high mental state. He remained in that state throughout the night, while continuing to walk. Meanwhile, 500 bandits surrounded the campsite. They waited until after supper, when all had settled down for the night. But before they could attack, they noticed the holy man.

They said to each other, "That man must be on guard, for security. If he sees us, he'll warn the rest. So let's wait until he falls asleep, and then do our robbing and looting!" What the bandits didn't know was that the holy man was so deep in meditation that he didn't notice them at all or anything else for that matter! So they kept waiting for him to fall asleep.

And he just kept walking and walking and walking until the light of dawn finally began to appear. Only then was he finished meditating. Having had no chance to rob the caravan, the bandits threw down their weapons in frustration. They shouted, "Hey you in the caravan! If your security guard hadn't stayed up all night, walking under that tree, we would have robbed you all! You should reward him well!" With that they left in search of someone else to rob. When it became light the people in the caravan saw the clubs and stones left behind by the bandits. Trembling with fear, they went over to the holy man.

They greeted him respectfully and asked if he had seen the bandits. "Yes, this morning I did," he said. "Weren't you scared?" they asked. "No," said the Enlightenment Being, "the sight of bandits is only frightening to the rich. But I'm not a rich man. I own nothing of any value to robbers. So why should I be afraid of them? I have no anxiety in a village, and no fear in the forest. Possessing only loving kindness and compassion, I follow the straight path leading to Truth."

In this manner he preached the way of fearlessness to the lucky people of the caravan. His words made them feel peaceful, and they honored him. After a long life developing the Four Heavenly States of Mind, he died and was reborn in a high heaven world. The moral is: It pays to have a holy man around. Once upon a time there was a king called Brahmadata who was ruling in Benares, in northern India. One night he had 16 frightening nightmare dreams.

He awoke in the morning in a cold sweat, with his heart thumping loudly in his chest. The 16 dreams had scared him to death. He was sure they meant that something terrible was about to happen. In a panic, he called for his official priests, to ask their advice. When the priests arrived at the royal bed chamber, they asked the king if he had slept well. He told them that it had been the worst night of his life, that he had been scared to death by 16 dreams, and that he was desperate to find out their meanings. At this the priests' eyes lit up. They asked him, "What were these dreams, your majesty?" King Brahmadata told them all 16 dreams.

The priests pounded their foreheads and exclaimed, "Oh what horrors! It couldn't be worse, your majesty. Such dreams as these can mean only one thing danger!" The king asked them, "What danger, oh priests? You must tell me the meaning at once!" They replied, "It is certain, your majesty, these dreams show that one of three disasters will take place terrible harm to the kingdom, to your life, or to the royal wealth." The king had feared as much.

He wrung his hands as the sweat kept pouring from his body. He was shaking all over with terror and panic.

But she barked and jumped, and so pulled and tightened the string, that she was nearly strangled; and just then her mistress walked in. "You wicked boy! the poor little creature!" was all she could utter. She pushed the boy from her, thrust him away with her foot, called him a most ungrateful, good for nothing, wicked boy, and forbade him to enter the house again. Then she wept, and kissed her little half strangled Bellissima. At this moment the painter entered the room.

In the year 1834 there was an exhibition in the Academy of Arts at Florence. Two pictures, placed side by side, attracted a large number of spectators. The smaller of the two represented a little boy sitting at a table, drawing; before him was a little white poodle, curiously shaven; but as the animal would not stand still, it had been fastened with a string to its head and tail, to keep it in one position. The truthfulness and life in this picture interested every one. The painter was said to be a young Florentine, who had been found in the streets, when a child, by an old glovemaking, who had brought him up.

The boy had taught himself to draw: it was also said that a young artist, now famous, had discovered talent in the child just as he was about to be sent away for having tied up madame's favorite little dog, and using it as a model. The glovemaking's boy had also become a great painter, as the picture proved; but the larger picture by its side was a still greater proof of his talent. It represented a handsome boy, clothed in rags, lying asleep, and leaning against the Metal Pig in the street of the Porta Rosa.

All the spectators knew the spot well. The child's arms were round the neck of the Pig, and he was in a deep sleep. The lamp before the picture of the Madonna threw a strong, effective light on the pale, delicate face of the child. It was a beautiful picture. A large gilt frame surrounded it, and on one corner of the frame a laurel wreath had been hung; but a black band, twined unseen among the green leaves, and a streamer of crape, hung down from it; for within the last few days the young artist had died.

little dwelling in which we lived was of clay, but the door posts were columns of fluted marble, found near the spot on which it stood. The roof sloped nearly to the ground. It was at this time dark, brown, and ugly, but had originally been formed of blooming olive and laurel branches, brought from beyond the mountains. The house was situated in a narrow gorge, whose rocky walls rose to a perpendicular height, naked and black, while round their summits clouds often hung, looking like white living figures. Not a singing bird was ever heard there, neither did men dance to the sound of the pipe.

The spot was one sacred to olden times; even its name recalled a memory of the days when it was called "Delphi." Then the summits of the dark, sacred mountains were covered with snow, and the highest, mount Parnassus, glowed longest in the red evening light. The brook which rolled from it near our house, was also sacred. How well I can remember every spot in that deep, sacred solitude! A fire had been kindled in the midst of the hut, and while the hot ashes lay there red and glowing, the bread was baked in them.

At times the snow would be piled so high around our hut as almost to hide it, and then my mother appeared most cheerful. She would hold my head between her hands, and sing the songs she never sang at other times, for the Turks, our masters, would not allow it. She sang, "On the summit of mount Olympus, in a forest of dwarf firs, lay an old stag.

His eyes were heavy with tears, and glittering with colors like dewdrops; and there came by a roebuck, and said, 'What ailest thee, that thou weepest blue and red tears?' And the stag answered, 'The Turk has come to our city; he has wild dogs for the chase, a goodly pack.' 'I will drive them away across the islands!' cried the young roebuck; 'I will drive them away across the islands into the deep sea.' But before evening the roebuck was slain, and before night the hunted stag was dead."

Body back in the coffin, folded the hands, and took leave of it; and went away contentedly through the great forest. All around him he could see the prettiest little elves dancing in the moonlight, which shone through the trees. They were not disturbed by his appearance, for they knew he was good and harmless among men.

They are wicked people only who can never obtain a glimpse of fairies. Some of them were not taller than the breadth of a finger, and they wore golden combs in their long, yellow hair. They were rocking themselves two together on the large dew drops with which the leaves and the high grass were sprinkled.

Sometimes the dew drops would roll away, and then they fell down between the stems of the long grass, and caused a great deal of laughing and noise among the other little people. It was quite charming to watch them at play. Then they sang songs, and John remembered that he had learnt those pretty songs when he was a little boy. Large speckled spiders, with silver crowns on their heads, were employed to spin suspension bridges and palaces from one hedge to another, and when the tiny drops fell upon them, they glittered in the moonlight like shining glass.

This continued till sunrise. Then the little elves crept into the flower buds, and the wind seized the bridges and palaces, and fluttered them in the air like cobwebs. As John left the wood, a strong man's voice called after him, "Hallo, comrade, where are you travelling?" "Into the wide world," he replied; "I am only a poor lad, I have neither father nor mother, but God will help me." "I am going into the wide world also," replied the stranger; "shall we keep each other company?" "With all my heart," he said, and so they went on together.

Soon they began to like each other very much, for they were both good; but John found out that the stranger was much more clever than himself. He had travelled all over the world, and could describe almost everything.

The sun was high in the heavens when they seated themselves under a large tree to eat their breakfast, and at the same moment an old woman came towards them. She was very old and almost bent double. She leaned upon a stick and carried on her back a bundle of firewood, which she had collected in the forest; her apron was tied round it, and John saw three great stems of fern and some willow twigs peeping out.

just as she came close up to them, her foot slipped and she fell to the ground screaming loudly; poor old woman, she had broken her leg! John proposed directly that they should carry the old woman home to her cottage; but the stranger opened his knapsack and took out a box, in which he said he had a salve that would quickly make her leg well and strong again, so that she would be able to walk home herself, as if her leg had never been broken.

And all that he would ask in return was the three fern stems which she carried in her apron. "That is rather too high a price," said the old woman, nodding her head quite strangely. She did not seem at all inclined to part with the fern stems. However, it was not very agreeable to lie there with a broken leg, so she gave them to him; and such was the power of the ointment, that no sooner had he rubbed her leg with it than the old mother rose up and walked even better than she had done before.

But then this wonderful ointment could not be bought at a chemist's. "What can you want with those three fern rods?" asked John of his fellow traveller. "Oh, they will make capital brooms," said he; "and I like them because I have strange whims sometimes." Then they walked on together for a long distance. "How dark the sky is becoming," said John; "and look at those thick, heavy clouds." "Those are not clouds," replied his fellow traveller;

Suddenly worried, he ran to the forest temple, dug up the ground, and found his treasure gone. He ran back to the trader and said, "It has been stolen!" "Friend," he replied, "No one but that so called holy man could have taken it. Let's catch him and get your treasure back." They both chased after him as fast as they could.

When they caught up with him they made him tell where he had hidden the money. They went to the hiding place by the roadside and dug up the buried treasure. Looking at the gleaming gold the Bodhisatta said, "You hypocritical holy man. You spoke well those beautiful words, admired by all, that one is not to 'take what is not given'. You hesitated to leave with even a blade of grass that didn't belong to you

But it was so easy for you to steal a hundred gold coins!" After ridiculing the way he had acted in this way, he advised him to change his ways for his own good. The moral is: Be careful of a holy man who puts on a big show. Once upon a time there were two merchants who wrote letters back and forth to each other.

They never met face to face. One lived in Benares and the other lived in a remote border village. The country merchant sent a large caravan to Benares. It had 500 carts loaded with fruits and vegetables and other products. He told his workers to trade all these goods with the help of the Benares merchant. When they arrived in the big city they went directly to the merchant.

They gave him the gifts they had brought. He was pleased and invited them to stay in his own home. He even gave them money for their living expenses. He treated them with the very best hospitality. He asked about the well being of the country merchant and gave them gifts to take back to him. Since it is easier for a local person to get a good price, he saw to it that all their goods were fairly traded. Sometimes the uterus ruptures during labor. Infection can set in.

Once the water breaks, the chances that bacteria will get into the uterus rise with each passing hour. During the nineteenth century, people started to realize that doctors often spread bacteria, because they examined more infected patients than midwives did and failed to wash their contaminated hands. Bacteria routinely invaded and killed the fetus and, often, the mother with it. Puerperal fever was the leading cause of maternal death in the era before antibiotics.

Even today, if a mother doesn't deliver within twenty four hours after her water breaks, she has a forty per cent chance of becoming infected. The most basic problem is "obstruction of labor" not being able to get the baby out. The baby may be too big, especially when pregnancy continues beyond the fortieth week. The mother's pelvis may be too small, as was frequently the case when lack of vitamin D and calcium made rickets common.

The baby might arrive at the birth canal sideways, with nothing but an arm sticking out. It could be a breech, coming butt first and getting stuck with its legs up on its chest. It could be a footling breech, coming feet first, but then getting wedged at the chest with the arms above the head. It could come out head first but get stuck because the head is turned the wrong way. Sometimes the head makes it out, but the shoulders get stuck behind the pubic bone of the mother's pelvis.

These situations are dangerous. When a baby is stuck, the umbilical cord, the only source of fetal blood and oxygen, eventually becomes trapped or compressed, causing the baby to asphyxiate. Mothers have sometimes labored for astonishing lengths of time, unable to deliver, and died with their child in the process. In 1817, for example, Princess Charlotte of Wales, King George IV's twenty one year old daughter, spent fifty hours in active labor with a nine pound boy. His head was in a sideways position, and too large for Charlotte's pelvis. When he finally emerged, he was stillborn. Six hours later, Charlotte herself died, from hemorrhagic shock. She was King George's only legitimate child.

Man who owned the theatre could scarcely refrain from weeping; he was so sorry that he could not help them. Then he immediately spoke to John's comrade, and promised him all the money he might receive at the next evening's performance, if he would only rub the ointment on four or five of his dolls.

But the fellow traveller said he did not require anything in return, excepting the sword which the showman wore by his side. As soon as he received the sword he anointed six of the dolls with the ointment, and they were able immediately to dance so gracefully that all the living girls in the room could not help joining in the dance.

The coachman danced with the cook, and the waiters with the chambermaids, and all the strangers joined; even the tongs and the fire shovel made an attempt, but they fell down after the first jump. So after all it was a very merry night. The next morning John and his companion left the inn to continue their journey through the great pine forests and over the high mountains.

They arrived at last at such a great height that towns and villages lay beneath them, and the church steeples looked like little specks between the green trees. The sun shone brightly in the blue firmament above, and through the clear mountain air came the sound of the huntsman's horn, and the soft, sweet notes brought tears into his eyes, and he could not help exclaiming, "How good and loving God is to give us all this beauty and loveliness in the world to make us happy!" His fellow traveller stood by with folded hands, gazing on the dark wood and the towns bathed in the warm sunshine.

At this moment there sounded over their heads sweet music. They looked up, and discovered a large white swan hovering in the air, and singing as never bird sang before. But the song soon became weaker and weaker, the bird's head drooped, and he sunk slowly down, and lay dead at their feet. "It is a beautiful bird," said the traveller, "and these large white wings are worth a great deal of money. I will take them with me. You see now that a sword will be very useful." So he cut off the wings of the dead swan with one blow, and carried them away with him. They now continued their journey over the mountains for many miles, till they at length reached a large city, containing hundreds of towers, that shone in the sunshine like silver.

In the midst of the city stood a splendid marble palace, roofed with pure red gold, in which dwelt the king. John and his companion would not go into the town immediately; so they stopped at an inn outside the town, to change their clothes; for they wished to appear respectable as they walked through the streets.

The landlord told them that the king was a very good man, who never injured any one: but as to his daughter, "Heaven defend us!" She was indeed a wicked princess. She possessed beauty enough nobody could be more elegant or prettier than she was; but what of that? for she was a wicked witch; and in consequence of her conduct many noble young princes had lost their lives. Any one was at liberty to make her an offer; were he a prince or a beggar, it mattered not to her.

She would ask him to guess three things which she had just thought of, and if he succeed, he was to marry her, and be king over all the land when her father died; but if he could not guess these three things, then she ordered him to be hanged or to have his head cut off.

The old king, her father, was very much grieved at her conduct, but he could not prevent her from being so wicked, because he once said he would have nothing more to do with her lovers; she might do as she pleased. Each prince who came and tried the three guesses, so that he might marry the princess, had been unable to find them out, and had been hanged or beheaded. They had all been warned in time, and might have left her alone, if they would.

Human life is like a story to him. To night I shall not see thee again, old friend. Tonight I can draw no picture of the memories of thy visit. And, as I looked dreamily towards the clouds, the sky became bright. There was a glancing light, and a beam from the Moon fell upon me. It vanished again, and dark clouds flew past: but still it was a greeting, a friendly good night offered to me by the Moon. Ninth Evening THE air was clear again.

Several evenings had passed, and the Moon was in the first quarter. Again he gave me an outline for a sketch. Listen to what he told me. "I have followed the polar bird and the swimming whale to the eastern coast of Greenland. Gaunt ice covered rocks and dark clouds hung over a valley, where dwarf willows and barberry bushes stood clothed in green.

The blooming lychnis exhaled sweet odours. My light was faint, my face pale as the water lily that, torn from its stem, has been drifting for weeks with the tide. The crown shaped Northern Light burned fiercely in the sky. Its ring was broad, and from its circumference the rays shot like whirling shafts of fire across the whole sky, flashing in changing radiance from green to red.

The inhabitants of that icy region were assembling for dance and festivity; but, accustomed to this glorious spectacle, they scarcely deigned to glance at it.

'Let us leave the soul of the dead to their ball play with the heads of the walruses,' they thought in their superstition, and they turned their whole attention to the song and dance. In the midst of the circle, and divested of his furry cloak, stood a Greenlander, with a small pipe, and he played and sang a song about catching the seal, and the chorus around chimed in with, 'Eia, Eia, Ah.' And in their white furs they danced about in the circle, till you might fancy it was a polar bear's ball.

"And now a Court of Judgment was opened. Those Greenlanders who had quarrelled stepped forward, and the offended person chanted forth the faults of his adversary in an extempore song, turning them sharply into ridicule, to the sound of the pipe and the measure of the dance.

The defendant replied with satire as keen, while the audience laughed, and gave their verdict. The rocks heaved, the glaciers melted, and great masses of ice and snow came crashing down, shivering to fragments as they fall; it was a glorious Greenland summer night. A hundred paces away, under the open tent of hides, lay a sick man. Life still flowed through his warm blood, but still he was to die he himself felt it, and all who stood round him knew it also; therefore his wife was already sewing round him the shroud of furs, that she might not afterwards be obliged to touch the dead body.

And she asked, 'Wilt thou be buried on the rock, in the firm snow? I will deck the spot with thy kayak, and thy arrows, and the angekokk shall dance over it. Or wouldst thou rather be buried in the sea?' 'In the sea,' he whispered, and nodded with a mournful smile.

'Yes, it is a pleasant summer tent, the sea,' observed the wife. 'Thousands of seals sport there, the walrus shall lie at thy feet, and the hunt will be safe and merry!' And the yelling children tore the outspread hide from the window hole, that the dead man might be carried to the ocean, the billowy ocean, that had given him food in life, and that now, in death, was to afford him a place of rest. For his monument, he had the floating, ever changing icebergs, whereon the seal sleeps, while the storm bird flies round their gleaming summits!" Tenth Evening "I KNEW an old maid," said the Moon.

"Every winter she wore a wrapper of yellow satin, and it always remained new, and was the only fashion she followed. In summer she always wore the same straw hat, and I verily believe the very same gray blue dress. "She never went out, except across the street to an old female friend; and in later years she did not even take this walk, for the old friend was dead.

On each leaf stood a row of capital letters, every one having a small letter by its side. This formed a copy; under these were other letters, which Hjalmar had written: they fancied they looked like the copy, but they were mistaken; for they were leaning on one side as if they intended to fall over the pencil lines.

"See, this is the way you should hold yourselves," said the copy. "Look here, you should slope thus, with a graceful curve." "Oh, we are very willing to do so, but we cannot," said Hjalmar's letters; "we are so wretchedly made." "You must be scratched out, then," said Ole Luk Oie. "Oh, no!" they cried, and then they stood up so gracefully it was quite a pleasure to look at them.

"Now we must give up our stories, and exercise these letters," said Ole Luk Oie; "One, two one, two " So he drilled them till they stood up gracefully, and looked as beautiful as a copy could look. But after Ole Luk Oie was gone, and Hjalmar looked at them in the morning, they were as wretched and as awkward as ever.

Tuesday AS soon as Hjalmar was in bed, Ole Luk Oie touched, with his little magic wand, all the furniture in the room, which immediately began to chatter, and each article only talked of itself. Over the chest of drawers hung a large picture in a gilt frame, representing a landscape, with fine old trees, flowers in the grass, and a broad stream, which flowed through the wood, past several castles, far out into the wild ocean.

Ole Luk Oie touched the picture with his magic wand, and immediately the birds commenced singing, the branches of the trees rustled, and the clouds moved across the sky, casting their shadows on the landscape beneath them. Then Ole Luk Oie lifted little Hjalmar up to the frame, and placed his feet in the picture, just on the high grass, and there he stood with the sun shining down upon him through the branches of the trees.

He ran to the water, and seated himself in a little boat which lay there, and which was painted red and white. The sails glittered like silver, and six swans, each with a golden circlet round its neck, and a bright blue star on its forehead, drew the boat past the green wood, where the trees talked of robbers and witches, and the flowers of beautiful little elves and fairies, whose histories the butterflies had related to them. Brilliant fish, with scales like silver and gold, swam after the boat, sometimes making a spring and splashing the water round them, while birds, red and blue, small and great, flew after him in two long lines.

The gnats danced round them, and the cockchafers cried "Buz, buz." They all wanted to follow Hjalmar, and all had some story to tell him. It was a most pleasant sail. princesses, whose faces were those of little girls whom Hjalmar knew well, and had often played with.

One of them held out her hand, in which was a heart made of sugar, more beautiful than any confectioner ever sold. As Hjalmar sailed by, he caught hold of one side of the sugar heart, and held it fast, and the princess held fast also, so that it broke in two pieces. Hjalmar had one piece, and the princess the other, but Hjalmar's was the largest.

At each castle stood little princes acting as sentinels. They presented arms, and had golden swords, and made it rain plums and tin soldiers, so that they must have been real princes. Hjalmar continued to sail, sometimes through woods, sometimes as it were through large halls, and then by large cities. At last he came to the town where his nurse lived, who had carried him in her arms when he was a very little boy, and had always been kind to him.

She nodded and beckoned to him, and then sang the little verses she had herself composed and set to him, "How oft my memory turns to thee, My own Hjalmar, ever dear!

He said that four samples of bone marrow had been extracted and no one had told him anything since. Most of the pain was in his mouth and stomach. When he asked for a drink, I offered some mango juice I'd brought with me. He said it was just the thing he wanted. He was fed up with mineral water. He shouted at a passing doctor that the noise of her heels was giving him diarrhea.

"When we got outside, graphite was scattered all around," he said, as if we'd been in the middle of discussing the accident. "Someone touched a piece of it and his arm flew up like he'd been burned." "So you knew what it was?" I asked. I assumed I wasn't allowed to touch him because of the cream. He was always the boy I'd most resented and the boy I'd most wanted to be. I'd been the cold one, but he'd been the one who'd made himself, when he'd had to be, solitary and unreachable. An orderly wheeled in a tray of ointments, tinctures, creams, and gauzes.

He performed a counterfeit of patience while he waited for me to leave. "Have you had enough of everything?" I asked Mikhail. "Is there anything I can bring?" "I've had the maximum permissible dose of my brother Boris," he said. "Now I need to recuperate." But then he went on to tell me that Akimov had died. "As long as he could talk, he kept saying he did everything right and didn't understand how it had happened." He finished the juice.

"That's interesting, isn't it?" Mikhail had always said about me that I was one of those people who took a purely functional interest in whomever I was talking to. Father had overheard him once when we were adults and had laughed approvingly. "Someone's going to have to look after Petya," he said, his eyes closed, some minutes later. I'd thought he'd fallen asleep. As far as I knew, he wasn't aware that his brother was on the floor below him.

"I have to get on with this," the orderly finally remarked. When I told him to shut up, he shrugged. There Is No Return. Farewell. Pripjat, 28 April 1986 Two years later, at four in the morning, my father and I drove into the Zone. The headlights dissolved picturesquely into the pre dawn mist, but my father's driver refused to slow down. It was like being in a road rally. The driver sat on a lead sheet he'd cadged from an x ray technician.

For his balls, he explained when he saw me looking at it. Armored troop carriers with special spotlights were parked here and there working as chemical defense detachments. The soldiers wore black suits and special slippers. Even through the misty darkness we could see that nature was blooming. The sun rose. We passed pear trees gone to riot and chaotic banks of wildflowers. A crush of lilacs overwhelmed a mile marker. Mikhail had died after two bone marrow transplants.

He'd lasted three weeks. The attending nurse reported final complaints involving dry mouth, his salivary glands having been destroyed. But I assumed that that was Mikhail being brave, because the condition of his skin had left him in agony for the final two weeks. On some of my visits he couldn't speak at all, but only kept his eyes and mouth tightly closed, and listened. I was in Georgia at the start up of a new plant the day he died. He was buried, like the others in his condition, in a lead lined coffin that was soldered shut. Petya was by then an invalid on a pension Father and I had arranged for him. He was 25.

He found it difficult to get up to his floor, since his building had no elevator, but otherwise, he told me when I occasionally called, he was happy. He had his smokes and his tape player and could lay about all day with no one to nag him, no one to tell him that he had better amount to something. "It's a shame," my father mused on the ride in. "What is?" I asked, wild with rage at the both of us. But he looked at me with disapproval and dropped the subject. At Pripjat a sawhorse was set up as a checkpoint, manned by an officer and two soldiers. The soldiers had holes poked in their respirators for cigarettes. They'd been expecting my father, and he was whisked off to be shown something even I wasn't to be allowed to see.

Our deep seated desire to limit risk to babies is the biggest force behind its prevalence; it is the price exacted by the reliability we aspire to. In a sense, there is a tyranny to the score. Against the score for a newborn child, the mother's pain and blood loss and length of recovery seem to count for little. We have no score for how the mother does, beyond asking whether she lived or not no measure to prod us to improve results for her, too. Yet this imbalance, at least, can surely be righted.

If the child's well being can be measured, why not the mother's, too? Indeed, we need an Apgar score for everyone who encounters medicine: the psychiatry patient, the patient on the hospital ward, the person going through an operation, and the mother in childbirth. My research group recently came up with a surgical Apgar score a ten point surgical rating based on the amount of blood loss, the lowest heart rate, and the lowest blood pressure that a patient experiences during an operation. We still don't know if it's perfect.

But all patients deserve a simple measure that indicates how well or badly they have come through and that pushes the rest of us to innovate. "I watched, you know," Rourke says. "I could see the whole thing in the surgical lights. I saw her head come out!" Katherine Anne was seven pounds, fifteen ounces at birth, with brown hair, blue gray eyes, and soft purple welts where her head had been wedged sideways deep inside her mother's pelvis.

Her Apgar score was eight at one minute and nine at five minutes nearly perfect. Her mother had a harder time. "I was a wreck," Rourke says. "I was so exhausted I was basically stuporous. And I had unbearable pain." She'd gone through almost forty hours of labor and a Cesarean section. Dr. Peccei told her the next morning, "You got whipped two ways, and you are going to be a mess." She was so debilitated that her milk did not come in. "I felt like a complete failure, like everything I had set out to do I failed to do," Rourke says. "I didn't want the epidural and then I begged for the epidural.

I didn't want a C section, and I consented to a C section. I wanted to breast feed the baby, and I utterly failed to breast feed." She was miserable for a week. "Then one day I realized, 'You know what? This is a stupid thing to think. You have a totally gorgeous little child and it's time to pay more attention to your totally gorgeous little child.' Somehow she let me put all my regrets behind me." Millions of years before, he had been a follower of a long forgotten teaching "Buddha" a fully "Enlightened One". He had wished with all his heart to become a Buddha just like his beloved master.

He was reborn in many lives sometimes as poor animals, sometimes as long living gods and sometimes as human beings. He always tried to learn from his mistakes and develop the "Ten Perfections". This was so he could purify his mind and remove the three root causes of unwholesomeness the poisons of craving, anger and the delusion of a separate self. By using the perfections, he would some day be able to replace the poisons with the three purities non attachment, loving kindness and wisdom. This "Great Being" had been a humble follower of the forgotten Buddha.

He goal was to gain the same enlightenment of a Buddha the experience of complete Truth. So people call him "Bodhisatta", which mans "Enlightenment Being". No one really knows about the millions of lives lived by this great hero. But many stories have been told including this one about a pregnant queen who was about to give birth to him. After many more rebirths, he became the Buddha who is remembered and loved in all the world today.

At the time of our story, the Enlightenment Being had already achieved the Ten Perfections. So the glory of his coming birth caused a trembling in all the heaven worlds, including the Heaven of 33 ruled by King Sakka. When he felt the trembling, being a god he knows it was caused by the unborn babe inside the disguised Queen of Mithila. And he knew this must be a being of great merit, so he decided to go and help out.

Her name was Alice or Alexandra or Antonia. Titania had a hard time keeping track of all the mortal names, except for Beadle and Blork, but those were distinctive names, and actually rather faerielike. Alice gestured expansively around the room, not seeing what was actually there.

She saw paper stars hanging from the ceiling, and cards and posters on the wall, and a homey bedspread upon the mattress, but faeries had come to carpet the room with grass, to pave the walls with stone and set them with jewels, and to blow a cover of clouds to hide the horrible suspended ceiling.

And the bedspread was no ordinary blanket but the boy's own dear Beastie, a flat headless creature of soft fur that loved him like a dog and tried to follow him out of the room whenever they took him away for some new test or procedure. "I don't mean the room," Titania said. "I mean everything else. This whole place. And the people, of course.

Where did you find them? Look at you, for instance. Are you deliberately homely? And that Dr. Blork hideous!" Alice cocked her head. She did not hear exactly what Titania was saying. Everything was filtered through the same normalizing glamour that hid the light in Titania's face, that gave her splendid gown the appearance of a tracksuit, that had made the boy appear clothed when they brought him in, when in fact he had been as naked as the day he was born.

The same spell made it appear that he had a name, though his parents had only ever called him Boy, never having learned his mortal name, because he was the only boy under the hill. The same spell sustained the impression that Titania worked as a hairdresser, and that Oberon owned an organic orchard, and that their names were Trudy and Bob. "You need to take care of yourself," Alice said, thinking that Titania was complaining about feeling ugly.

"It might feel a little selfish, but you can't take care of him if you can't take care of yourself. Did you know we have a manicurist who comes every Wednesday?" "You are so sweet," Titania said, "even if you are homely. Did you ever wish you had the eyes of a cat?" "A hat? You can buy one downstairs. For when his hair falls out, you mean? That's weeks away, you know. But the baseball caps are awfully cute. But, listen, not everybody wants to talk about this at first, and not everybody has to.

I'm getting ahead of myself . . . of ourselves." "Or would you rather be a cat entirely? Yes, I think that would make you lovely." Titania raised her hands and closed her eyes, seeking words sufficient to the spell she had in mind. They came to her in an image, words printed on a little girl's purse she had glimpsed in the waiting room outside the surgical suites downstairs. She started to speak them Hello Kitty! but Oberon walked in before she had the first syllable out. "She's the social worker. And we were only talking." Alice's head was turned to the side, and she was staring at Titania with a mixture of curiosity and devotion. The glamour had slipped as Titania was about to strike, and the woman had seen her true face. "Her name is Alice."

"Stop playing," Oberon said. "He's almost finished. Don't you want to be there when he wakes?" The boy was downstairs having things done to him: a needle in his hip to take the marrow from his bones, and another in his neck to give him a special I.V. that would last through the weeks and months of the treatment. "You'll tell him I'm waiting here with his Beastie." She lifted it into her lap, as if to show him the truth of what she was saying. Alice, still standing between them, was looking back and forth, catching glimpses of their majesty as their mounting anger caused them to let it slip, and getting drunker on them. At first he had been like her own sort of Beastie, a creature who followed her around and was pleasant to cuddle with.

It didn't take long before he stopped his agitated weeping for the mortal parents he'd hardly known, and then he smiled for everyone, even Oberon, who barely noticed him for months.

Out of the Koran, and then the whole caravan passed over the consecrated spot. A young merchant, a child of the East, as I could tell by his eye and his figure, rode pensively forward on his white snorting steed. Was he thinking, perchance, of his fair young wife?

It was only two days ago that the camel, adorned with furs and with costly shawls, had carried her, the beautiful bride, round the walls of the city, while drums and cymbals had sounded, the women sang, and festive shots, of which the bridegroom fired the greatest number, resounded round the camel; and now he was journeying with the caravan across the desert.

"For many nights I followed the train. I saw them rest by the wellside among the stunted palms; they thrust the knife into the breast of the camel that had fallen, and roasted its flesh by the fire. My beams cooled the glowing sands, and showed them the black rocks, dead islands in the immense ocean of sand. No hostile tribes met them in their pathless route, no storms arose, no columns of sand whirled destruction over the journeying caravan.

At home the beautiful wife prayed for her husband and her father. 'Are they dead?' she asked of my golden crescent; 'Are they dead?' she cried to my full disc. Now the desert lies behind them. This evening they sit beneath the lofty palm trees, where the crane flutters round them with its long wings, and the pelican watches them from the branches of the mimosa.

The luxuriant herbage is trampled down, crushed by the feet of elephants. A troop of negroes are returning from a market in the interior of the land: the women, with copper buttons in their black hair, and decked out in clothes dyed with indigo, drive the heavily laden oxen, on whose backs slumber the naked black children.

A negro leads a young lion which he has brought, by a string. They approach the caravan; the young merchant sits pensive and motionless, thinking of his beautiful wife, dreaming, in the land of the blacks, of his white lily beyond the desert. He raises his head, and " But at this moment a cloud passed before the Moon, and then another.

I heard nothing more from him this evening. Twenty First Evening "I SAW a little girl weeping," said the Moon; "she was weeping over the depravity of the world. She had received a most beautiful doll as a present. Oh, that was a glorious doll, so fair and delicate! She did not seem created for the sorrows of this world. But the brothers of the little girl, those great naughty boys, had set the doll high up in the branches of a tree and had run away.

"The little girl could not reach up to the doll, and could not help her down, and that is why she was crying. The doll must certainly have been crying too, for she stretched out her arms among the green branches, and looked quite mournful. Yes, these are the troubles of life of which the little girl had often heard tell. Alas, poor doll! it began to grow dark already; and suppose night were to come on completely! Was she to be left sitting on the bough all night long? No, the little maid could not make up her mind to that. 'I'll stay with you,' she said, although she felt anything but happy in her mind.

She could almost fancy she distinctly saw little gnomes, with their high crowned hats, sitting in the bushes; and further back in the long walk, tall spectres appeared to be dancing. They came nearer and nearer, and stretched out their hands towards the tree on which the doll sat; they laughed scornfully, and pointed at her with their fingers. Oh, how frightened the little maid was! 'But if one has not done anything wrong,' she thought, 'nothing evil can harm one.

I wonder if I have done anything wrong?' And she considered. 'Oh, yes! I laughed at the poor duck with the red rag on her leg; she limped along so funnily, I could not help laughing; but it's a sin to laugh at animals.' And she looked up at the doll. 'Did you laugh at the duck too?' she asked;