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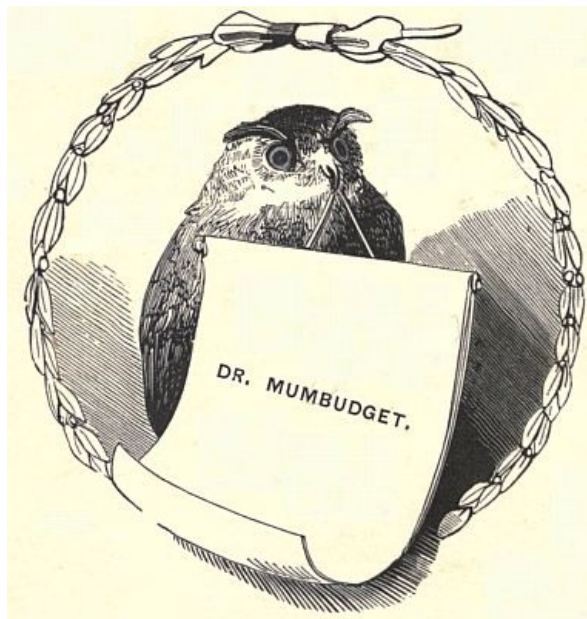
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK FUNNY BIG SOCKS ***



DR. MUMBUDGET'S DOOR-PLATE.

THE SOCK STORIES,

BY "AUNT FANNY'S" DAUGHTER.

FUNNY BIG SOCKS:

BEING

THE FIFTH BOOK OF THE SERIES.

BY

"AUNT FANNY'S" DAUGHTER,

THE AUTHOR OF "THE LITTLE WHITE ANGEL."

NEW YORK:
LEAVITT & ALLEN, 21 & 23 MERCER ST.
1863.

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S. L. BARROW,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the
Southern District of New York.

JOHN F. TROW,
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50 Greene Street, New York.

TO

THAT GENIAL GOOD MAN

AND PROFOUND PHILOSOPHER,

THE REV. DR. S. I. PRIME,

I DEDICATE THIS

BOOK.

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STORM STORIES.

[7]

FIRST EVENING.

How it did rain, to be sure! Up the long street, and down the long street nothing was to be seen but large mud puddles, while the gutter ran like a little river, and gushed with a loud sound into the sewer mouth.

That was a rain indeed! but in the warm rooms it was comfortable enough. Books and pretty pictures lined the walls on all sides but one, where the large window was, the recess filled with blooming flowers; they smelt so sweetly!

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There, at a table that was covered with a green cloth, sat a literary man. His head was bowed upon his arms; and when he raised his face, one saw that he was so sad and pale! The poor literary man was quite unhappy.

If one could have crept into his heart (like him who owned the "Galoshes of Fortune"), one would have seen that his thoughts ran, "Ah me! how unhappy I am. I write books about the good and the beautiful, but nobody buys them; no one cares to read of such things. If I could but tell them a tale, now, something lively or pathetic, like the poet Baggesen or our own Hoffman, that they all like. Nay, then, what a weary life it is!" and he leaned back in his arm chair, and closed his eyes.

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Suddenly, something came hissing down the chimney into the stove. It was two or three rain drops driven in by the wind. Something else appeared to have entered with them, for there was a rustle and breeze in the chamber, and then the literary man heard a whisper quite close to his ear.

"Thou silly fellow!" cried the wind, for that it was, "to sit in thy chamber with closed doors, waiting for the story to come to thee! Nay, then, what is there in thy books half so clever or amusing as what one sees in real life? Listen, now, and I will tell thee what I saw one moonlight night as I blew over this wide German land."

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THE STORY OF THE WIND.

IN summer, all the world—of Leipsic—goes out of town, to Baden or Ems. Those who can afford

it run over the Alps, to sunny Italy; but in winter—ah! then it is very different!

One is glad enough, then, to remain at home by the warm stove; or if one goes out, one must be well wrapped up in furs and cloaks.

The little boys slide and skate on the frozen river; the poorer folks go about in sledges, and the rich in splendid sleighs, with white fur robes and capering horses, which have little bells tied to their manes and tails. [11]

Just such a sleigh as this stood, one bright moonlight night, before the door of the Burgomaster Von Geirstein, in the good town of Leipsic. The whole family were going in a body out of town, and now the hall door opened, and forth came the fat and stupid Burgomaster himself, with his fat and silly wife on his arm, followed by their pretty, blue-eyed daughter, Matilda, and her lover, Walther Von Blumenwald, a thriving young merchant. Her brother, Max, came last, a merry, good-natured young fellow, but who, certainly, was not very wise.

Max took the driver's place; the others seated themselves within the large sleigh, and tucked the warm fur robes around them, and then, with a crack of the whip, and a loud huzzah from the young men, the sleigh glided swiftly away. [12]

About five miles from the town, in the midst of the forest, was a large inn of the better sort, which had lately become a favorite resort of the wealthy who went sleighing in the winter. Balls, even, were given there, and there one got the most delicious mulled wine and Westphalia hams, and all sorts of ale, "Bremen," "Prysing," "Emser ale," even "Brunswick Mumme." To this hotel, then, our party were bound.

Merrily rang the bells, swiftly flew the sleigh over the frozen snow, and as they passed out at the city gates, the whole party broke into a joyous glee: [13]

"Listen, listen, listen to the merry sleigh bells!
How they jingle, jingle, ever blithe and ever clear,
With a tintinnabulation that so musically wells
As it thrills, and it thrills upon the ear!
Every dancing little note
Seems to gurgle from the throat
Of a bird, that in its happy song so eloquently tells
The joy it is to bound
O'er the cold and frozen ground,
To the ringing and the clinging of the bells!

"Listen, listen, listen to the merry sleigh bells!
How they jingle, jingle, as the horses dash along;
What a story of our gladness their enticing music tells
As it chimes and it rhymes with the song!
Such a rollicking delight
Bubbles out upon the night
As their joy-creating burthen over hill and valley swells.
Every voice must join the tune
As we skim beneath the moon
To the tinkling and the twinkling of the bells!"

The sleigh had now turned out of the high road, and entered the forest. For some time the way lay plain before them, but at length came a fork, where two roads met. [14]

"Now, then," exclaimed Max, "which way? Blumenwald, thou hast been to Olè's before—must I take the right hand or the left?"

"Upon my word, I have forgotten!" exclaimed Walther. "It was a dark night when I drove out with my cousins; but, it appears to me, upon the whole, that we took the right hand road."

"Well, we can only try," said Max; "at least, if we don't get to Olè's, we shall have had a merry sleigh ride."

He shook the reins, and the impatient horses darted off; but, my stars! they had taken the wrong road! Deeper grew the wood; the roughness of the path momentarily increased; the trees became so thick that the moonlight no longer penetrated them, and Max at length stopped his horses once more, and gazed around him in bewilderment. [15]

"Potstausend!" exclaimed the Burgomaster; "where has the boy taken us? I tell you what, mein sonne, thou hadst best turn back, for we shall never get to Olè's to-night."

"And thy sister will take her death of cold!" cried the Frau Von Geirstein, while Walther looked anxiously at the fair Matilda, who only smiled up at him, and drew her fur-lined hood more closely about her face. [16]

Just as they were about to turn back, they heard a sound of sleigh-bells behind, and presently a small sleigh approached them, drawn by a spirited horse.

Max, without more ado, hailed the stranger, and begged him to set them, if he could, on the road to Olè's.

The new comer bowed courteously to the ladies, and replied, "I shall be most happy to direct you thither, my respectable friends. In short, then, you follow the road before you for a time, then turn to your right; next, pursue your way in a southeast direction for a mile; next, turn toward the northwest, and then——"

"What, sir!" interrupted Max, "do you suppose we can go to all points of the compass at once? What do you mean by your northwest and southeast?" [17]

"Potstausend! is the fellow making fun of us?" exclaimed the Burgomaster.

"Surely the Herr Von Geirstein cannot suppose I would be guilty of so great an impertinence!" exclaimed the stranger. "It is true, the road is somewhat obscure; may I not also have the pleasure of driving you to Olè's?"

"We thank you—you are most kind," replied the mollified Burgomaster, who never doubted for a moment that his vast importance caused him to be known to all the world; "but what will become of your sledge?" [18]

"Oh, I don't fear for the sledge—that can remain here among the underwood; and my horse can be attached in front of yours."

This arrangement was soon effected, and the stranger, who was so muffled up in fur cap and coat, that scarcely a feature could be distinguished, mounted beside Max, and seized the reins.

Donnerwetter! how he shouted at the horses! cracking his whip, and calling them all manner of strange names. "Now, then, pig with a wooden head! Get along with you, toad of serpents! To the mischief with the whole team!" till the foam flew on all sides, the iron-clad heels of the steeds rang like hammer upon anvil on the frozen ground, and sparks scintillated in the air! [19]

Meanwhile, however, the effect of this rapid motion on the Burgomaster's family was anything but exhilarating. Now that the bustle of setting out was at an end, they one and all began to feel afraid of their strange guide, and to think there was something more than common in their adventure.

"He's a very odd-looking man, after all," whispered the Burgomaster's wife; "how do we know what sort of a fellow he is, and if he is taking us to Olè's at all? I, for my part, believe he's in league with some robber band, and we shall all be murdered." [20]

"Potstausend! it looks very much like it!" exclaimed the Burgomaster, who, although so big a man, was mighty chicken-hearted. "I wish Max had not been so confoundedly hasty in accepting his advice."

"I beg thy pardon there, father-in-law," returned Walther; "it was thou who bade him come in."

The Burgomaster was about to make some peppery reply, when Max suddenly broke upon the whispered conversation by exclaiming:

"Since you are so good, sir, as to drive us, perhaps you will inform us to whom we are obliged."

But the stranger, who, before this, had been the noisiest of the party, appeared to have become suddenly dumb, for he answered not a word. [21]

"Come, sir," repeated Walther, "tell us who you are."

No answer.

Max now half jumped from his seat, exclaiming, "But we insist on knowing, sir, and, furthermore, I should like to know if you are taking us to Olè's or not."

The stranger turned at this, and with a smile that displayed his glittering teeth, replied:

"My good people, I am taking you just where you are destined to go. As to my name, that is my affair. Remember, your safety depends on me; certainly, you had better not provoke me, or——" here his speech suddenly came to an end, and a fresh series of yells followed to the excited horses, which all this time were tearing along as though a troop of fiends were in pursuit. [22]

"It must be the Evil One himself!" cried the Burgomaster, trembling in every limb, while the ladies screamed and clung together.

"Not quite so bad as that, I hope," said Walther, half laughing, yet excited, and, to tell the truth, somewhat alarmed also.

"We are all fools if we allow this thing to go on!" shouted Max, who had suddenly recovered his spirits. "Walther, thou wilt stand by me. Give me the reins, sir, or hold them longer at your peril!" [23]

As he spoke, he endeavored to seize the reins, while Walther stood up in the sleigh and grasped the whip.

All at once the stranger let fall the reins, and as they trailed on the ground, he snatched the whip from Walther's hand, gave a sudden leap into the air, and vaulted on the back of the near horse, where he sat at ease, and drove postillion, without their being able to help themselves.

"Alas, we have no arms!" groaned the Burgomaster; "we may as well be resigned to our fate. Kiss me, my children; you may never kiss your old papa again!"

On this, the whole quartette fell to weeping, blowing their noses most earnestly from time to time, when, just as their grief was at its height, and they were fairly sobbing in each other's arms, a sound of music broke upon their ears! The next moment lights gleamed through the trees, the sleigh took a sharp turn, passed through an open gate, and drew up before the very door of—Olè's! For, in reality, both roads led to the inn, although one was much more intricate and less frequented than the other. [24]

The Von Geirsteins were for a moment too much astounded to speak. Then the mysterious driver, swinging himself lightly off his horse, and doffing his fur cap, showing them a face not only handsome, but perfectly familiar to them, exclaimed: [25]

"You see, my dear friends, that it was neither a bandit nor His Satanic Majesty who drove you by the nearest road to a robber's castle or the lower regions, but your very good neighbor, Fritz Von Eisenfeldt, who has had at once the pleasure and amusement of taking you safe and sound to Olè's, after all!"

As the wind uttered these last words, it whisked up the chimney and disappeared. The literary man sat upright in his chair with a sudden start, and opened his eyes wide.

"Good heavens!" he cried, "have I been dreaming, or has the wind really related the tale?" He could not at all tell this, but he remembered every word of the story, and wrote it on—yes! this very piece of paper, where you now read it! [26]

SECOND EVENING.

THE following evening the literary man could not but think of the advice of the wind. He went to the window, and looked out on the street, to see if there might not be a story there.

The houses opposite were as handsome as on this side of the way, and exactly like them; the gas lamps burned brilliantly, and everything appeared as genteel and stupid as could possibly be conceived. "There's not a story to be met with in this part of the town," thought the literary man. "I must go out, and see if I can find one elsewhere." [27]

The snow flakes were rapidly falling from the sky, but the literary man wrapped his warm cloak around him, and went bravely out. It is not every one who has courage to go out in the snow! that is, the snow at Friedrichshafen. It is sure to be so wet and cold, with large bits of icy hail among it, covering the ground with a slippery compound, that one cannot step upon without danger of falling.

However, out he went, and slipped and scrambled along the pavement. Kribbedy, krabbledy, plump! down he sat on a neighbor's doorstep; not without exclaiming, "Potstausend!"

As he sat there with a rueful countenance, the thought passed through his mind, "If, now, the wind would but give me the least idea how to begin, I might compose a tale while I wait for a hackney coach, for walk I won't!" and he looked up and down the street, but no coach came in sight. [28]

All at once it was as though a merry voice whispered in his ear—yes, the literary man felt sure that the snow said to him "S-o-o! my good friend, the wind has sent thee to me! Fie upon thee, that thou canst not compose a tale without help, for all thy learning! Well, pay attention, and I will tell thee some of the frolics of my merry cousin, the Frost. Now, listen."

And the literary man listened with all his ears, and quite forgot that he was looking for a hackney coach, and that he was sitting on the steps of his neighbor, the Herr Hartman. [29]

THE STORY OF THE SNOW, ABOUT CAPTAIN JACK.

THE children were hurrying homeward on a cold winter's evening, from the forest, where they had been binding fagots. As they scampered along, some one seized upon them from behind and nipped their ears sharply. "Fie, ugly Captain Jack!" cried they; "so thou art at work again! one may easily see that!" and they would have pursued their spiteful enemy; but he was already gone, and they were now obliged to hasten onward. [30]

Captain Jack had slipped back to the forest, and thrown himself stealthily on the ground, laughing to see their discomfiture. The moon shone on the spot where he lay, and then all the dried grass appeared white and sparkling, as though it were covered with glistening spray. At one moment one saw him lying gazing at one with laughing eyes; the next, it seemed as though only the hoar dew rested there, and glittered in the moonlight.

"Bur-r-r!" growled the north wind, as he flew through the forest. "Hollo! Captain Jack; many thanks for the Ice King's message which thou broughtest me. Come, wilt thou ride on my back in return?" [31]

"Many thanks!" replied Captain Jack; "I prefer to travel on foot, and amuse myself by the way."

"Well, be that as thou wilt!" replied the wind, and he flew off in a huff; for he considered that he had made a very honorable offer, and had been slighted.

But Captain Jack ran gayly from the forest; taking long strides over the grass, and sowing it with little white pearls, breathing on the bare branches of the trees, and sheathing them in

glittering mail, pouncing slyly on stray wayfarers, and pinching their ears and noses till they roared again! Then Captain Jack laughed; it sounded like the sharp crack of a pistol through the still air.

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By the banks of the river hares were creeping, and complaining bitterly of the cold. "Ah!" said they, "if we could but find a warm hole to creep into, or if we had but thick, curly coats, like the bears!"

"Do you think I have a warm coat to give any one?" quoth Captain Jack, and he breathed on their long whiskers, which now stood quite stiffly. "Oh hute-tute-tute-tu!" cried they, hopping up and down with pain; "oh my toes! my poor toes!"

Captain Jack also danced with merriment; he had neither soul nor feeling, and couldn't understand being sorry for any one.

Over the river, the lights of the town were gleaming. They shone like stars that had stooped a little lower from heaven. Captain Jack skipped lightly across the waves rolling so softly from shore to shore, and as he passed, the water smoothed out under his feet; it was as though some one had placed upon it a thin sheet of glass.

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He ran through the silent streets of the town, where all the world had gone to sleep, and peered in at many casements. Sometimes he beheld the good folks dreaming, with the hard, ugly frown still on their faces which they had worn when they were awake; and then he slipped into the room—yes, a key hole was large enough for him to creep through if he chose! and breathed upon them so, that they shivered in their beds, in spite of the warm eider down they had tucked around them. "The window was open on a crack," they would say on the following day; but it needed not a crack for Captain Jack to enter if he thought they deserved it!

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In other chambers he beheld lovely little children, with the faces of angels; or venerable grandsires; with their snowy hair floating over the pillow, and then he drew the most beautiful pictures on the window pane, to amuse them when they should wake. He crept slyly into the larders of thrifty housewives, and, with a touch, made chickens and ducks hanging there, quite stiff and tasteless; he skipped to the cistern, and magically rendered the pump handle immovable; he ran about the streets and played tricks with the bright gas lamps, and they went out, as though a puff of wind had blown over them. And, last of all, he ran against a stout Burgomaster, returning homeward from a merry supper, and so pinched the end of his red bottle-nose, that it tingled again!

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"I'll have you taken to prison, you scoundrel!" roared the Burgomaster; but how was he to find Captain Jack? Only where a large fire was raging did Captain Jack shrink away in haste; heat did not seem to agree with him, for he looked strangely small and shrunken.

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He was now weary of the city, and hastened lightly to the seaside. In the harbor ships lay at anchor, ice-bound; and on one of these a young sailor was keeping watch for thieves; but he saw not Captain Jack coming softly on board, and peering over his shoulder to see what was written on the paper he held in his hand. A lantern hung from the mast and shed a feeble light on the tear-blistered page, where the pious mother implored a blessing on her son. As he read, the young sailor also wept; but Captain Jack had no taste for tears. He breathed on the letter, and the sparkling drops that the reader let fall became beads of ice. The sailor hastily turned, and for a moment fancied he beheld the brilliant eyes of Captain Jack gazing upon him; but the next instant he saw only two glittering icicles, which had formed on the ropes.

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The sea gulls flew in circles round the vessel; late as it was, they still hoped something might be thrown out. Captain Jack caught them by the long feathers of their wings, and they tumbled on the deck, and hopped stiffly about. "Creesh, creesh!" cried they; "it is that villain, Captain Jack, who has served us thus! Ugh! how stiff we are!"

Crick, crack! sounded through the air. It was Captain Jack laughing at them.

"How merry it is in winter!" he cried. "It is there my uncle, the Ice King, holds his court in the palace at the North Pole. The great icebergs come crashing to the very door to do him homage, and the white young lady bears dance the Polonaise so gracefully! We don't spend a moment in silly thought about anything—no! we frisk and caper about, and even my uncle comes down from his throne and hops around, as well as his age will permit! and there I have such glorious sport in the long moonlight nights!"

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"Bur-r-r!" grumbled the north wind, sweeping by. "Thou hadst better hurry home, thou silly madcap! The sun is coming, and he is no friend of thine!"

"Many thanks!" cried Captain Jack again, with a graceful bow; "I see, truly, that my sport is over for to-night!" and he now looked about him with mischievous eyes, to see if there were not some last trick that he could play before he fled to his forest cave. But there was no time to lose, for already the round red sun, winking and blinking sleepily behind his bed curtains of red clouds, was rising from the sea; and, with a sudden leap, Captain Jack flung himself off the ship, and hastened away.

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The river was all covered with ice; the little hares skipped over it; in the town everybody was bawling for water, and the pump handles were hard and fast; the Burgomaster had his nose tied up in brown paper and warm vinegar; the naughty people went about with cricks in their necks and colds in their heads; while every withered grass blade, every branch of tree and bush, and

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every pane in the windows, was covered with the beautiful, fantastic, glittering handiwork of CAPTAIN JACK FROST!

As the story ended, the door above suddenly opened, and the Herr Hartman himself came out; and certainly looked somewhat surprised at seeing his good friend sitting there on the lower step.

"Why, my dear Herr Ekstein!" he exclaimed. "Is anything the matter?" and he hastened down the steps.

The literary man jumped up, and saw the Herr holding out his hand.

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"Nay, then, my good friend!" he exclaimed, "I have been hearing the merriest tale!"

"But come in! come in!" cried the Herr Hartman. "Some of our friends are with us; let us spend a sociable evening together."

With a pleased and happy face the literary man entered the house, and the warm room, where the company were assembled; and, amid peals of laughter, related both the story of Captain Jack, and that of the sleigh-ride to Olè's, with the deuse himself as driver!

THE CABBAGES;

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OR, THE DISCREET WIFE.

IN a remote part of Swabia there once dwelt a rich peasant, who was noted in all the neighborhood for his shrewdness. No one could get the better of him in a bargain, and no man managed his farm with such extraordinary success. His crops always seemed to flourish when the whole country round was desolated with the blight; his hay was sure to be got in the very night before a flood swept away the ricks of his neighbors; his cows gave the most milk, his oxen were the fattest, and his fields the most fruitful of the whole valley. In short, Wise Peter, for so he was called, became wealthy year after year, in a way which made his less fortunate neighbors shake their heads enviously, declaring "that such marvellous good luck could only be obtained by a bargain with the Evil One, or the assistance of gnomes." Whenever any of these stories came to the ears of Wise Peter, he would smile and say, "Ah! who knows, indeed!" but not a word more would he utter.

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Among his other possessions, Wise Peter owned an immense field, which was planted entirely with cabbages. If one stood in the middle and gazed around, nothing but cabbages and more cabbages grew, as far as the eye could reach; and as the fat burghers of the town were all extremely fond of sauerkraut, these were a source of great profit.

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It happened that Peter had a wife as well known for her folly and empty head, as her husband for his sagacity; and as he was rightly named Wise Peter, so was she equally well called Silly Catharine. How the two came to be united was a mystery to every one; for certain it is, that Silly Catharine had nothing to recommend her to a sensible man, but her being young and pretty.

Now Silly Catharine, who was as witless as she could well be, was fonder of cabbages than anything else in the world. She ate sauerkraut for breakfast, cabbage soup for dinner, fried cabbage for supper, and boiled cabbage for a noontday treat. Not even the constant scoldings of her husband, or the jeers of the neighbors at her folly, could distress her in any great degree, if she had only plenty of cabbages.

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One morning, Wise Peter loaded his wagon with grain and started off to sell it at the distant market town, a good day's journey to and from the village. "Now, Catharine," he said to his wife as he departed, "I want you to keep your wits about you, such as you possess, while I am gone; therefore attend to me. You must give orders that the men reap the wheat in the large field, take care that the young turkeys do not get among the brambles, and, above all, see that no one enters the little storeroom. They are going to tax every one who is worth five hundred guilders and over; and as I don't choose to give my hard earnings for the support of a parcel of lazy nobles and a useless court, I have hidden all the money bags there; therefore, be careful that nobody knows of it but yourself." So saying, Peter mounted his wagon and drove off. Silly Catharine looked after him as long as he could be seen, and then went back to the kitchen, determined to show her husband how clever she had become.

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"Shall I go and tell the goose girl to hunt the turkeys into the coop first?" thought she; "or shall I put on the cabbage to boil? I think I will set my cabbage on first; it will take but a moment, the turkeys are safe till then."

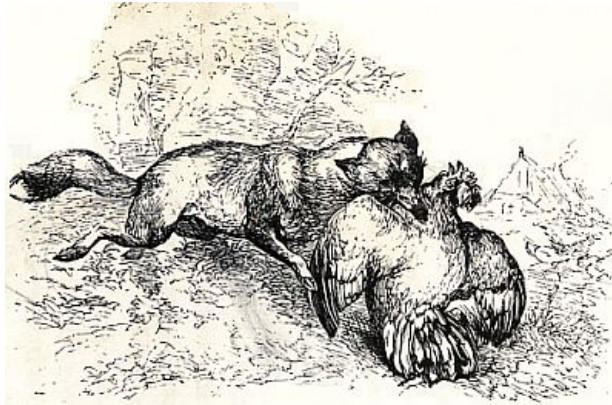
So she went to the larder, got out a fine large cabbage, and hung the pot over the fire, that it might boil quickly. The steam of the cabbage cooking ascended to her nose with a delicious perfume, and at last, what with hanging over the pot enveloped in steam, and the heat of the fire, she felt very drowsy, and falling into her chair, was soon soundly asleep. She had not slept long

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before in came the goose girl, whose business it was to take charge of the fowls of all sorts, crying out, "Oh, mistress! mistress: the turkeys have got among the brambles, and cannot get out!"

"Mercy upon us!" exclaimed Catharine, springing up and wringing her hands; "what will Peter say to me! He will, doubtless, break his stick over my shoulders. If it were not for the cabbage on the fire, I should certainly throw myself from the window!" So saying, she ran out into the field, but too late; the little turkeys were all in the very middle of a bramble bush, which had tangled in their feathers, until it was impossible to get them out; beside which, a fox had entered the barn yard in the goose girl's absence, by the gate, which she had carelessly left swinging open, and carried off the biggest and handsomest Poland rooster, that Wise Peter valued even more than the turkeys. About this last loss, however, she said nothing, hoping that her mistress wouldn't remark it. This, indeed, proved to be the case; for, without noticing the absence of poor Chanticleer, Catharine burst into tears, exclaiming, "What is to be done? The only way is to cut the bush down."

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THE FATE OF POOR CHANTICLEER.

As she spoke, she seized an axe, and with one blow felled the bush to the ground. But what was her horror to find, as she let fall the axe, that she had also struck off the heads of every one of the turkeys!

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"Oh heavens! what a misfortune!" cried Catharine; "I am the most unlucky woman in the world! *Now* Wise Peter will not leave a whole bone in my body! Alas, the turkeys would have sold for eight skillings apiece when they had grown fat and big! The only thing that consoles me is, that I shall have such a famous supper ready for him. When he tastes my fine cabbage soup, I am sure he must forget to be vexed!" There were still, however, the bodies of the turkeys to see after; so she took out her needle and thread, sewed the heads of the turkeys on their necks, and set them upright in the coop, that they might look as though they were still alive.

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After this precious piece of cleverness, Silly Catharine returned to the house to see how her cabbage came on. But she had been gone so long that the water in the pot had all boiled away, and the cabbage was burning on hard and fast to the bottom of the pot. "Why, bless me! where can the water have gone to?" cried Silly Catharine. "It must have all drawn up chimney! Nevertheless, it would be a pity to lose it; full of the cabbage juice as it was, it might well have been made into soup; and Wise Peter has told me a hundred times never to waste anything. I will get something to let down the chimney and see if I can dip it up."

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So saying, she began to look about for a rope long enough to reach down the chimney; but she couldn't find one. All at once her eye fell on the bucket standing outside the well. Joyfully rushing to it, she cut the rope, and dragging the bucket after her, scrambled out on the roof, and began letting it down the chimney. While she was thus engaged, a poor little frightened swallow, who had built its nest there, suddenly flew up the chimney and darted right in her face. Silly Catharine was so much frightened, that she gave a loud scream and let go of the rope. The bucket, of course, fell into the middle of the fire, and in a twinkling was burnt to cinders. Down from the roof, and into the kitchen, rushed Catherine, but too late; nothing save the iron hoops now remained of the bucket.

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"What shall I do?" cried Silly Catharine. "Not an hour passes but some new misfortune occurs. Alas! I am no longer able to draw water for my soup! but stay, I think of a way!" So saying, she took the pot from the hook, tied a rope to the handle, let it down the well, with the cabbage still in it, and when it was filled carried it back to the house, and hung it over the fire.

Soon afterward the dairy maid went to draw some water for dinner. She could not find the bucket; so she let down a milk pail instead; but when she came to taste the water, she tasted also the flavor of the cabbage, and ran to her mistress, calling out, "Why, mistress, who has been meddling with our fine well? It had once the best water in the neighborhood, but now the flavor is precisely that of a greasy, horrible cabbage!"

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"Nonsense!" cried Silly Catharine, with an air of contempt; "it is all your fancy. Don't tell me that water can taste of cabbages!" Her heart beat with affright, however, and as soon as the servant maid had left the room, she ran in great terror to the wine cellar. "What the servant said must have been true," thought she; "and Wise Peter will never forgive me when he finds out that I have spoilt the well. I will, therefore, pour some wine into the water, to take away the taste of

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the cabbages." So saying, she seized one of the wine barrels, and in the strength of terror she managed, with great difficulty, to push it up the cellar stairs, and roll it through the kitchen out to the well. Then she removed the spile and tilted the cask forward; when out streamed at least thirty gallons of the finest Tokay down the well!

Having done this, Silly Catharine hid the barrel away with great precipitation; and, determined to leave nothing else undone, she called the reapers and bid them go directly to the large field and reap the wheat. Then she went back, and began eating her dinner, saying, "Thank heaven, I have a good dinner to sit down to, at least; there are always cabbages enough!" [56]

Meanwhile, the reapers made ready to go a-field; and before they went, one of them drew a bucket of water to carry with them. But no sooner had they tasted the water, than they cried out, "'Tis wine! the finest wine!" and scarcely able to believe their senses, they drew up bucket after bucket of this new liquor, drank till they became drunk, and then tumbled senseless among the wheat; for it happened that the well was very low, and what they drew was nearly all wine. While they lay there, a violent hail storm came on, and in an hour's time the whole of the wheat was beaten to the ground, drenched, crushed, and ruined. [57]

Unconscious of this fresh misfortune, Silly Catharine prepared her soup for supper, and then, having finished her work, she sat down in the front porch and began to knit, feeling as if at last all her troubles were over. Presently the gate was opened, and a man entered the garden. It was he who was appointed to gather the tax, and knowing Wise Peter to be well off, it was to his house that he first came.

"Oh, you are very much mistaken if you think I will pay your outrageous tax!" cried Silly Catharine. "No, no! Wise Peter would know better than that, and his wife will not be behind hand! He told me before he went that he had no money to pay, and if he had, he wouldn't give it to support your lazy nobles; so be off with you!" [58]

While Catharine had been making this tirade, the tax gatherer, to whom she had unwittingly given a valuable hint, hit upon a new plan by which to secure his guilders. So as she paused, out of breath, he exclaimed, in a contemptuous tone: "There is no use in making such a noise, good woman; I see plainly that I was a fool to suppose the owner of this beggarly house was worth five hundred guilders. Five kreutzers would be much nearer the mark!" [59]

"What! do you dare to call the house of Wise Peter beggarly!" cried Catharine in a rage; "beggarly, indeed! you could never get such a fine one if you live a thousand years."

"And I repeat that it is a beggarly house," said the other; "with a poor, miserable family in it."

"You don't believe me?" screamed Silly Catharine; "well, then I'll show you what you call poor; a pretty thing, indeed, that you should say we are a beggarly family!" And, bouncing from her seat, she led the tax gatherer to the store room, and dragging the money bags from their concealment, she opened them triumphantly, saying, "There, what do you call *that*?" [60]

"At least a thousand guilders!" exclaimed the tax gatherer, astonished at seeing so much more than he had expected. "So, you refuse to pay the tax when you have all this money in the house! I confiscate it all in the name of the king, and you may think yourself lucky if you and your precious husband (who must be wise, since he married such a wife as you), don't get thrown into prison besides." So saying, he snatched up the bags of guilders, while Catharine stood staring at him in mute horror, and in an instant was out of the house, and gone on his way.

Nearly stunned with this new mishap, Catharine burst into tears, and ran down stairs crying, as though her heart would break. "What is to become of me," she sobbed, "when Peter comes home? He will certainly kill me for having shown the tax gatherer the money! Nevertheless, what could I do? It was impossible to have people say that Wise Peter was a beggarly creature—I could not allow that!" and, a little re-assured, she dried her eyes and went to taste the soup. It was nearly done, and tasted deliciously. "Ah!" cried Silly Catharine, "the soup is better than usual! It quite repays me for all to think that we still have the finest cabbages!" [61]

In the mean time, one of the reapers, who had drunk less wine than the others, woke up sober, and as soon as he found he could stand on his legs, he ran post haste to the village to relate the wonderful tale. The place being small and the gossips many, it was not half an hour before the whole population knew the extraordinary occurrence that had taken place. Even the curé, the magistrate, and the doctor rushed into the street to hear the news, and a pretty uproar there was. "Said I not truly that Wise Peter was in league with the Evil One?" exclaimed one, "for only thus can the miracle of a spring of wine be accounted for." "True, true!" cried the listeners; "a wizzard he must be; and that of a right dangerous sort!" [62]

Just at this moment, the wagon of Wise Peter was seen coming along the road. The impatient villagers could not wait for him to approach them, but rushed toward the wagon and surrounded it on every side. "How now, wretched wizzard!" they one and all shouted; "dare you look us in the face when we have found you out in your sorceries? Away with you to prison!" and, so saying, they laid hold of Wise Peter, dragged him out of the wagon, and bore him toward the magistrate. In vain the wretched man begged for some explanation, declared a hundred times over that he was no wizzard, but an honest peasant; they only shouted, tauntingly, "A pretty story for a man who turns his well springs into the finest wine! no wizzard, indeed! say, rather, a wizzard of the worst kind!" [63] [64]

With these words, they hauled him before the magistrate, where, again, the reaper repeated his story, adding, by way of proof, "If you don't believe me, go and see the other reapers; there they lie drunk, where I left them."

"You hear what this honest man says," said the magistrate. "We have long suspected you of sorcery, but this proves the matter at once. Either you must forfeit a hundred guilders, as ordained by law in such cases, or you must go to prison."

Almost distracted, Wise Peter exclaimed, "You have seen fit, worthy magistrate, to accuse me of a crime of which, so far from being guilty, I know nothing whatever. When I left home this morning, I swear the water was as fresh and pure as possible. I know that some envious people had long accused me of practising black arts, and if Industry and Prudence are black arts, I am certainly guilty; but in this matter of the water, I am as innocent as my own wife!"

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"All this is very fine," answered the magistrate; "but it happens that the bewitched water can be produced;" and turning to the reaper, he said, "Have you any of this water about you?"

"Yes, worthy magistrate," replied the reaper; "as I came away from the field, I filled my flask with what was left, and brought it with me."

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The flask was handed to Peter, and no sooner had he tasted it, than he fell back aghast, exclaiming, "Good heaven, it *is* wine! and very like Tokay!"

"What! you confess it yourself?" cried the magistrate. "Don't hope, then, for mercy! You shall now pay two hundred guilders, or go to prison for a year!"

"Mercy! mercy!" cried the unfortunate man, falling on his knees. "Consider my family, worthy magistrate; do not disgrace them by sending me to prison! I see the water has been changed, but not by me; and though you will not believe me, I can solemnly assure you, with perfect truth, that I am innocent."

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"Pay or go to prison!" answered the magistrate inexorably.

With many tears and groans, the unlucky Peter drew a purse full of guilders from his pocket and paid over the whole proceeds of his sale of wheat, which only amounted to a hundred and five guilders; the magistrate remarking that he would let him off with that if he would solemnly swear never to practise the black art any more, and to unbewitch his well as speedily as possible. This Peter did, in despair of bringing them to reason, and having been thus severely punished for a crime he was utterly guiltless of, he mounted his wagon again, and rode home in a state of mind that can better be imagined than described.

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When he reached his own home he rapped on the window as usual, to warn his wife, and Catharine rushed out to meet him, and, throwing her arms round his neck, cried, "Oh, Peter, I am so glad you have returned; the good cabbage soup is all ready for you; so come right in and eat it!"

"Eat!" exclaimed Wise Peter, "how can I swallow a mouthful when I am so overwhelmed with misfortune?"

"What! you also!" said Catharine; "alas! what has happened?"

With accents that trembled with rage and grief, Wise Peter told how he had been treated in the village; but he had scarcely made an end before Catharine, bursting into tears, exclaimed, "Oh, what will become of me! Have mercy, Peter, for it was I who poured the wine down the well!"

"Poured wine down the well!" cried Peter, starting in astonishment; "then, for heaven's sake, why did you do that?"

"Because," sobbed his wife, "the water tasted of cabbages!"

"Of cabbages!" repeated the peasant, in greater surprise than ever, "and what made it taste of cabbages?"

"Because I dipped up water in the cabbage pot," cried Silly Catharine.

"And where was the bucket?" asked her husband.

"I burnt it, trying to dip the water out of the chimney, that had been drawn up from the cabbage pot!" gasped Catharine, feeling that everything must now be told, since she had begun.

Wise Peter took two or three strides across the room in silence; then, making a violent effort to speak quietly, he said, "And why, Catharine, since you supposed that water could be drawn up a



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PETER'S RETURN HOME.

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chimney, did you leave the pot unwatched?"

Almost in a scream, Silly Catharine broke out, "Because I was sewing on the turkeys' heads that I struck off cutting down the bramble bush!!"

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"Now, was ever any man tormented with such a fool of a wife!" shouted Peter, almost beside himself with rage. "I could beat you with pleasure for acting so witlessly, but that, alas! would not pay for what you have lost for me this day. A hundred and five guilders of my precious money have I been made to pay for your foolery, besides losing my Tokay wine, my field of wheat, and all my fine young turkeys! at least a hundred guilders more!"

"Oh, and that's not the worst!" cried Catharine.

"What! is there any more to come?" exclaimed Peter, almost out of his senses.

"Yes," stammered Silly Catharine; "the man came here to gather the tax, and I told him, as you said, that you were far too clever to pay it, and that he would get nothing more out of me. Then he said you were a beggarly fellow, not worth five kreutzers, and, of course, I couldn't allow that; so I showed him the guilders in the store room, to prove that he spoke falsely, and he took every one of them! I am so sorry, but never mind, there is excellent cabbage soup for supper!"

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At this, Peter could restrain himself no longer, and falling upon Silly Catharine, he trounced her well with his stick, until she cried out for mercy. "There!" he said at last, throwing down the stick, "you have been well punished, though not half enough to pay for the mischief you have done."

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Silly Catharine dried her eyes upon her apron, and with a reproachful look exclaimed, "Still you have beaten me, Wise Peter, for what I could not help; for, if the turkeys had not been killed, I should never have stayed away so long; if the water had not flown up chimney, I should not have burnt the bucket; and if the well had not tasted of cabbages, I should not have thrown in the wine. And, above all, dear Peter, if that abominable man spoke ill of you, how could I, your wife, avoid showing him that he lied? Besides, the case is not so bad; we have lost nearly all, it is true; but, thank heaven, we still have delicious cabbages!"

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In spite of himself, Wise Peter could not help bursting out laughing. "After all, Catharine," he exclaimed, "I see you did not intend doing me any harm; if you are a fool, that, certainly, is not your fault; therefore, in future let us never be separated. Come, you pretty goose, let us go and eat cabbage soup."

So saying, Wise Peter kissed his wife's blooming cheek, and led her into the house. They sat down with contented hearts to the nice, smoking soup, and after supper walked out among the spreading cabbages.

THE WONDERFUL LEGEND OF THE GOLD STONE.

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IN those far away times when the world was yet in its baby clothes, and people were not as wise as they are nowadays, there dwelt in the good town of London a poor tailor's apprentice named Bartlemy Bowbell. He might be called poor in a double sense; for not only was he such a lazy, idle fellow that he scarcely ever took a stitch, and so seldom had a copper of his own, but he was a miserable workman, and, like an organ-grinder's monkey, or a blind man's dog, obtained more kicks than halfpence.

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In the same room with him were several other tailors; who sang together one of two tunes as they stitched. If they were paid for every day's work, be it much or little, they sang, "By the d-a-y! by the d-a-a-y! by the d-a-a-a-y!" and the needles went in and out as slowly as the coaches of a funeral procession; but if they were paid for every garment they finished, then they sang, "By the job! by the job! by the job!" and the needles stitched away like an express train! Bartlemy, however, crossed his legs, put his thimble firmly on, and stitched briskly for five minutes; then his attention would wander, and presently, dropping work, thimble, shears, and needle, he began singing to himself,

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"Oh, if I were only possessed of my riches,
I never would sew on a pair of old breeches!
Thimbles and thread!
Buttons and braid!
Oh, who would be bound to this rascally trade?"

"If money I had, I'd be free from all care,
And what *master* must *make*, I should have but to *wear*!
Needles and pins!
Shears and cloth ends!
When the work's ended then pleasure begins!"

"What's that you're singing about riches?" cried his master, sharply; "Riches, forsooth! you will die in the poor house, I can tell you, if you don't stitch more diligently! Come, sew away! sew away!" So saying, he gave him a good thwack with his yard stick, to make him continue working.

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All the beatings in the world, however, could not thump out of Bartlemy Bowbell a belief that had got into his head that he should one day become rich and famous, through the agency of a wonderful jewel called the Gold Stone. As I said, people, in those days, were by no means so wise as they are at present, and so it fell out that the most learned philosophers of that olden time believed as firmly as did the tailor's apprentice in the existence of this Gold Stone, the peculiar property of which was, that if it came in contact with any common metal, it changed it, on that instant, into gold. Now, this story had come to the ears of Bartlemy Bowbell, and by one of those odd cranks that not otherwise people sometimes take in their heads, he was perfectly persuaded that, sooner or later, he was fated to find the miraculous gem.

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Matters soon rose to such a pitch, as may easily be seen, that his master finally turned him out of doors, saying "that he ate more than he would ever earn."

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"Very well, master," quoth Bartlemy, "I don't regret your goose and cabbage!" and having said this, he ran away as hard as he could, dropping one of his slipshod shoes as he went along, with his master pursuing after, yard stick in hand, whom, however, he soon contrived to outstrip.

As he had not earned a penny during the week, he was entirely without money, and nobody would lodge a shabby apprentice with only one shoe, for nothing. He wandered on until he was clear of London and in the open fields, begging of those he met on the road, but who always replied to his solicitation, "Why don't you go to work, you lazy 'prentice?" for they knew what he was, because he wore a 'prentice's flat cap. Worst of all, night now came on, and Bartlemy was at last compelled to lie down beneath a tree, where he soon fell asleep. The moon rose high, and still Bartlemy snored, when, all of a sudden, he was roused by a smart blow on the shoulder from what he could have sworn was a yard stick.



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"Needles and pins!" cried Bartlemy, sitting up in haste; "what's that?"

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"Bartlemy Bowbell," croaked a strange voice, "look at me."

Bartlemy looked round, and to his extreme terror, saw standing beside him a being whom he could only suppose to be a goblin. He was not more than four feet high, with very bow legs, as though from a constant habit of tucking them up on a tailor's shop board; his clothes, fashioned from odd bits of velvet and cloth such as tailors call "cabbage," or, as we should say, the pieces of the customers' stuff left from their coats—were trimmed with thimbles for bell buttons; on his head was a tailor's cotton nightcap, with a long tassel, and hanging at his waist were an immense pair of shears, and a pincushion bristling with needles and pins. In one hand he carried the yard stick with which he had struck the luckless 'prentice, and in the other a tailor's goose, or flat iron.

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His face was expressive of the most jovial good humor, though it could not be called handsome, for his nose was flattened as though he were in the habit of trying his iron against the end; his hair seemed composed of long and short threads mingled together, and he had an abominable squint, as though he were always endeavoring to see how a coat set at the front and back, the collar and tail at the same time.

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"Bartlemy," said the goblin again, "what's the matter with you?"

"Matter, your worship?" gasped Bartlemy.

"Come to the point," said the goblin, severely, accidentally swinging his pincushion against Bartlemy's legs at the same time, and pricking him most atrociously. "You are everlastingly growling and grumbling, instead of working at your trade like an honest tailor, and richly deserve to be thwacked with the yardstick every morning by way of breakfast; but never mind, I choose to help you; so say what you want, quick."

"A-and who might your worship be?" asked Bartlemy, with a cold shudder; for he felt desperately afraid that he had got hold of Old Boguey or Old Nick—it was not much matter which.

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"That's none of your business," said the being; "but if you must know, I am Snippinbitz, the patron of the tailors."

"O lord, your worship, you don't say so!" stammered Bartlemy.

"That's a fact!" returned the goblin. "Come, out with it; what can I do for you?"

Bartlemy scratched his head and took off his cap, looked into it, found no words there, and put it on again; and finally, with a bow that nearly toppled him head over heels, and a kick up of his foot that sent his remaining slipper flying into the nearest mud-puddle, he managed to say:

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"Please, your worship, I want to find the Gold Stone."

The goblin burst into a discordant laugh on hearing this; then, suddenly becoming serious, he said:

"Well, that's a sensible request, Bartlemy, and a modest one, considering the circumstances. Never mind, I have taken a fancy to you; your wish shall be accomplished. See here."

With these words Snippinbitz put his hand in his pocket, and pulled out a magnificent jewel, as it seemed to Bartlemy. It was of the most resplendent purple color imaginable, and sparkled all over with flecks of gold, which seemed to swim beneath the surface. Nothing could look more gorgeously beautiful as the astonished tailor held it up in the moonlight; yes, there could be no doubt of it; the mysterious, the unattainable Gold Stone was really his! [87]

"Now, Bartlemy, attend to me," continued the being. "The Gold Stone is yours, but under certain conditions, which must be faithfully complied with, or no gold! First, you must return to London to-morrow, seek out your old master, and ask him to employ you as a regular workman. You will find yourself able to sew as well as the best, through my assistance, and you must employ this power diligently on the work he gives you to do. I warn you, however, that you must keep the secret of the Gold Stone from everybody; and, in order that you may do so, you must never take it out of your pouch until you are safe in your own chamber. Secondly, when you receive your wages, place the money directly in the pouch containing the Gold Stone, and do not look at it until you go to bed. Then you will find the copper turned into silver, and the silver into gold. But if you count the money first, it will never be any different. Thirdly, in a year's time from to-night, meet me at this spot, and tell me how you have prospered. Will you keep these conditions faithfully?" [88]

"Ye-y-es! your worship!" stammered the 'prentice.

"Then, how are you, Mr. Gold Stone!" exclaimed the goblin, in advance of the age; and, with an outrageous wink, he treated Bartlemy to another whack with the yardstick, and vanished. [89]

The blow struck our tailor insensible; and when his eyes again unclosed it was broad daylight. For a moment he stared about him, wondering how he came to be there; then, remembering the extraordinary events of the previous night, he hastily felt in his pouch, and drew out the miraculous jewel. It flamed in the sunlight like a bright diamond eye, and Bartlemy almost fancied he caught it winking at him. This idea lasted but a moment, and having taken a long and delighted stare at the much-desired Gold Stone, he replaced it carefully in his pouch, and started straight for London. As he passed the newly-opened bakers' shops, he could not help wishing that he had a half-penny in the world, so that he might change it into a crown on the spot, and buy a basketful of hot rolls; but as the Gold Stone was not warranted to *make* money, he was forced to take it out in wishing. Fortunately one of the bakers, seeing him gaze hungrily at the hot bread, had the kindness to toss him a large roll; and, munching this, he arrived at his master's shop. [90]

After the way in which he had been turned out, he hadn't much hope of getting in again, but, afraid of disobeying the goblin's injunctions, he entered with as much courage as he could muster, and found the other tailors stitching away as usual, while his master cut out a coat. [91]

Bartlemy took his cap humbly off, saying, "Please, master, if you will employ me as a workman now, I think I can please you. Do try me; I will be industrious; indeed, I will."

"Oh," grumbled the master tailor, "sleeping out in the fields and going without supper and breakfast has done you good, has it? Well, take this coat and sit you down; but I warn you, beforehand, that if you are not more industrious than usual, I will lay my yardstick over your shoulder, and clear you out again."

Bartlemy took the work, and having planted himself on the shop-board^[A] in his favorite place, near a window, he put on his thimble, threaded his needle with a grand flourish, and began to stitch away for dear life. He sewed faster and better than he had ever done before, and found, to his joy, that the goblin's promises had begun to be fulfilled in reality. But bad habits are not to be conquered as one would pull up weeds: though both must be torn up by the roots, one might weed three gardens in the time it takes to destroy one fault; and so, without really meaning it, Bartlemy at last began to ply his needle less briskly; his thoughts wandered; he took a stitch that was three times too long, then another in a wrong place, a third and fourth all askew, and finally the work came to a dead stand-still. But, thimbles and thread! what happened? The instant his hand stopped, a long yellow yardstick came flying through the window, with no one holding it, hit him such a thwack on the shins that he roared again with the pain, and instantly vanished. [92]

"Why, what's the matter?" asked the other tailors, startled, as they well might be.

"Matter!" cried Bartlemy. "Why, didn't you see that—that horrible yardstick coming at me?"

At this they all laughed at him for a fool; for nobody but our tailor could perceive this terrific weapon, which was doubtless invisible to common eyes. His conscience whispered, however, that his punishment was a reminder from the friendly goblin, and accordingly he set to work with renewed diligence. After a while, lost in dreams of his approaching wealth, he stopped stitching again, when, like a flash, in came the yardstick, touched him up with a vengeance, and vanished as before; and so it continued all the time he was sewing: the watchful yardstick would only allow him to stop to thread his needle or turn the work. [94]

When he had stitched all the seams, he laid the coat on the table and heated his goose, that he might smooth them. He took care to post himself a good way from the window, in order to get rid of the ferocious yardstick; but the goblin was not to be baffled thus. The moment he stopped ironing and began to count the flies on the ceiling, the goose seemed to carry his hand up with it—irresistibly—to the end of his nose, and gave it a good scorching! This was no joke, I can tell you, and in a very short time Bartlemy began so to dread the visits of his two enemies that he never left working a minute, and his needle dashed along like magic. By sunset the coat was done, and sewed in a manner vastly superior to the other tailors, who looked at him with envious eyes. "What! finish a whole coat in one day?" they cried; "we never could do so well! Goose and cabbage! friend Bartlemy! you must have the assistance of some fairy!" [95]

Bartlemy made no answer, but taking the coat in hand, carried it to his master, who viewed it in the greatest astonishment. Never before had a coat been made in a single day, and stitched, too, more finely than anything he had ever seen; but, not wishing to raise his late 'prentice's ideas of himself, he merely grumbled out, "For a wonder you have done your work this time; so now take your wages, and be sure to come early Monday morn."

As he spoke, he slipped a couple of coins into Bartlemy's hand, who, remembering the goblin's words, put them into his pouch without so much as looking at them. [97]

Now, no doubt my clever little readers have guessed quite readily the true solution of this mighty mystery; but to the simple Bartlemy the reality of the Gold Stone's magic power was placed beyond a doubt when, on reaching his chamber and striking a light, he found, instead of the farthing and penny which had always been his weekly payment, a crown and sixpence.

"Huzzah! huzzah!" he cried, fairly jumping for joy; "my beautiful Gold Stone is doing its work bravely." He kissed the stone in his delight, and went to bed, to dream of becoming a master tailor, and making clothes for the king. [98]

The following Monday he repaired to his master's shop the first of any one, and everything happened as on the former time; except that, being more diligent at his work, the goose and the yardstick were less frequent in their favors, and he now made a coat and a vest in the day. His master really knew not what to think; but at least so good a workman was not to be lost; so he kept his surprise and suspicions to himself, and made up by heaping more and more sewing on the luckless Bartlemy.

It didn't make any difference, however; his needle almost seemed to work by itself, and the sewing was finished by sunset; so that, really, the good-natured goblin was the original sewing machine, and no thanks to Messrs. Grover and Baker. At the end of the week his master paid him a crown and a shilling; or, as Bartlemy believed, a farthing and a penny; the next week a guinea, and the week after a guinea and a crown, which was the highest wages ever paid. [99]

So things went on, until Bartlemy had earned enough to make quite a fortune in his eyes; ten whole guineas lay glittering in the old night cap where he kept his savings, and the tailor thought he might now set up for a gentleman. So he bought cloth, made himself, in secret, a fine cloak, coat, and breeches, and in these jackdaw adornments paraded about the streets a whole morning, trying to appear an idle fine gentleman. At last he strutted into the best inn, ordered a grand dinner and a bottle of wine, and feasted like a lord. [100]

But his time was coming. The watchful goblin, though not at his side, knew perfectly well what he was about, and soon led him to betray his quality most fatally. When the bill was brought him, it was so long and so tremendous that Bartlemy sprang up in a rage, crying out:

"*Thimbles and thread!* Do you call this a decent charge for your paltry dinner?"

The landlord stared at him in astonishment; then, suddenly bursting into a loud laugh, he cried, "Why, gentles all, this fine nobleman is nothing but a tailor! ha! ha!" and he put his hands to his fat sides and shook with laughter. [101]

"Be silent, sirrah!" thundered Bartlemy; "or *I'll break my yardstick over your shoulders!*"

"Ha! ha! only hear what he says!" laughed the landlord. "A miserable tailor."

"If you do not stop your impertinence, I will *shear off your ears like cloth clippings!*" retorted the angry tailor. "Goose and cabbage! man; you shall not trifle with me!"

On this the landlord and waiters turned him bodily out of the house, after seizing upon all his remaining money; and the moment he was in the street, the knowledge of how he had betrayed himself broke upon his mind. Mortified and miserable, he hurried home, determined, after this, to stick to his trade and play fine gentleman no more. [102]

The year at last drew to a close, and Bartlemy had now earned enough to set up for a master tailor; when, one bright moonlight night, he suddenly remembered that it was the very anniversary of his meeting with the goblin. Starting up, he ran to where his pouch was placed, took out the Gold Stone and enjoyed a long look at it, and then, throwing his cloak around him, he hastened forth. The moonlight beamed brightly on the path he was taking, and seemed to throw all sorts of queer shadows before him; now it was an immense yardstick, now a thimble supported on two needles like a pair of spindle legs, then a goose with a pair of shears astride on the handle. [103]

At last, as he paused under the old tree, he heard a familiar croaking laugh, and found himself unexpectedly in the presence of Snippinbitz, the friendly goblin.

"Well, Bartlemy," croaked the being; "and how have you prospered with the Gold Stone?"

"Marvellously well, your worship!" replied Bartlemy, in a joyous tone.

"And you found a crown and a shilling, and a guinea and a crown, instead of your penny and farthing; did you, Bartlemy?" [104]

"Why, yes, your worship, I did, certainly."

"And the Gold Stone changed them, did it, Bartlemy?"

"Why, yes, your worship; of course it did."

"Now, Bartlemy," said the goblin, in a confidential tone, laying his hand on the other's shoulder, "I want to tell you something. It isn't the Gold Stone!"

"It's—not—the—Gold—Stone!!" gasped Bartlemy.

"Why, no, you donkey! there's no such thing!"

Bartlemy turned fairly green and yellow with horror and disappointment. [105]

"Listen to me, Bartlemy Bowbell," said the goblin; "nobody but a donkey would suppose that a round bit of purple glass—"

"Of purple glass!" repeated Bartlemy, in a sort of dream.

"Don't interrupt, Bartlemy—that a bit of purple glass could change copper into gold. Your master paid you the wages your work was worth, that is all. There is no such preposterous jewel on the face of the earth as you imagine; but there *is* a true Gold Stone, and its name is

'FAITHFUL INDUSTRY!'"

As the goblin spoke these words, he suddenly began to change his form, and grew taller and broader. His bell-button thimbles fell off, his flat nose became long and sharp, his thread hair gave place to a bald pate, and his whole appearance became wonderfully like Bartlemy's master. He raised his yardstick, brought it down with a tremendous crack—and—Bartlemy WOKE! [106]

Yes! he was lying under the tree where he had thrown himself down the night before. The whole of what had passed, Gold Stone, money, goblin, and all, was but the fantastic tracery of a dream; and above him really stood his master, who had repented of having turned away his luckless 'prentice, and had come to seek him.

The lesson was not lost, however, on our hero. He returned to his master's shop, where he worked diligently, without any yardstick coming after him; and in three years' time rose to be a master tailor, married his old master's daughter, cut the coats of the king himself, and took for his arms a Gold Stone, supported by two shears, and the motto: [107]

FAITHFUL INDUSTRY.

FOOTNOTES:

[A] A shop-board is a kind of table on which tailors sit when at work.

THE PHILOSOPHERS' TOUR. [108]

THERE were once five learned men, who had been shut up all their lives in their studies, poking their noses into saucepans full of cookeries, which did not resemble savory soups or well-flavored ragouts, wearing their eyes out with reading books printed in the crabbedest black letter possible, and shrivelling up their brains with thinking, until they quite rattled inside their skulls, all in pursuit of out-o'-the-way knowledge.

There was really nothing scientific with which they were not acquainted; while, in the mean time, one or two little things, perfectly familiar to people who use their eyes for the purpose of noticing the common occurrences and habits of every-day existence, and exercise their understanding in everything that can make life comfortable and agreeable, had entirely escaped the observation of our philosophers. [109]

As the emperor allowed them each a handsome pension to advance the interests of science, they went on with their discoveries rejoicing, and for a long time had never stirred from their apartments in one of His Majesty's country palaces. They scarcely left off thinking, when they were asleep; never had the least idea what they were eating for dinner, or even what the materials of that dinner looked like; and, in short, were sublimely unconscious of any of the ordinary affairs or interests of life; and thought only of sciences, and high-flown theories of [110]

Health, of Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Botany, and goodness knows what beside. The fifth and last of the learned men was supposed to consider silence as an art or science, since he hardly ever said anything; and for that reason was thought to be wiser than the other four put together.

At last, one fine morning, one of our learned men chanced to poke his head out of the window, to see what on earth had become of one of his glass retorts, which he had filled with gas until it went off like a rocket; and could not help being struck with the blue sky, the fresh green herbage, and the thousands of beautiful wild flowers that sprinkled the grass. It was a charming summer day; the birds had not yet left off singing, and the fresh breeze, fanning the bald forehead of the philosopher, appeared wonderfully pleasant.

[111]

"Why, bless me!" cried the philosopher, whose name was Dr. Skihi; "while I have been trying to reduce chemistry to the uses of a penny post, I never thought of remarking whether it was a pleasant day or not. How bright and beautiful everything looks! Out-of-doors is a very good sort of thing, after all. I declare, I've a great mind—pooh! nonsense; science—glorious science, is a great deal more to be regarded than a fine day in the country."

[112]



DR. MUMBUDGET LOOKING OUT OF THE WINDOW.

So saying, he drew his head in again, and turned to his books and saucepans; for, you see, he was trying to condense gas, and make it dart through the air like a skyrocket, carrying a letter, or a telegraphic message, or even a traveller with it, if it was made strong enough; but, so far, he had only succeeded in breaking his retorts, and blowing himself up till his head came bump against the ceiling, and knocked off little bits of plaster. Everything in the study looked remarkably dingy after the freshness of the fields, and the doctor could not refrain from taking another peep. This time, the contrast appeared even greater than before, while directly underneath his window there now stood two pretty little girls, one holding a great bunch of roses and other blooming flowers, and both intent on a long leaf of manuscript, which they were puzzling and laughing over, calling it "such a silly thing!" Our doctor, to his great dudgeon, recognized it as part of a learned treatise, his own production, which had accidentally blown out of the window; but, as to be known as the writer of silly things is not specially dignified, he preferred saying nothing about the matter.

[113]

"I have a great mind," he said again; "yes, I'll go and ask Dr. Sheepshanks if he does not think it would be a good plan for us to take a short trip into the country. No doubt we should make some very important discoveries."

[114]

Excusing the idea to himself in this way, Dr. Skihi toddled up one pair of stairs and down two pair of stairs, and straight along a crooked corridor, and all round a square hall, until he arrived at the apartments of Dr. Sheepshanks. He knocked at the door, and peeped through the keyhole until he was told to come in, when he opened the door softly, and shut it with an astonished bang, that made all the spiders, who were dancing hornpipes in all the corners (for the learned men would have died rather than have their sacred studies disturbed by a house-cleaning) stand on one leg for several minutes with surprise, as a noise in the philosophers' palace was a thing rather more seldom met with than a crononhotonthologos.

[115]

The sight that caused Dr. Skihi to commit such a breach of good manners was Dr. Sheepshanks in the very middle of a summersault! with his flowered dressing gown about his ears and his spindle shanks and black stockings in the air, looking not unlike a two-legged radish growing upside down.

To him rushed Dr. Skihi, who, catching his friend by the tails of his dressing gown, had him right side up in a hurry, exclaiming, "Crucibles and gasbags! my good sir, have you gone crazy?"

[116]

"No, indeed," returned Dr. Sheepshanks, with a gleeful laugh. "I have made a discovery, sir—a great discovery. I happened to look out of the window, a moment ago, and I saw a couple of little chaps racing up and down, and playing at that topsy-turvy game you saw me trying just now. Their cheeks were so fat, and their frames so sturdy, that I feel convinced such exercises are the best promoters of health in the world; and as I am getting rather broken down myself, while I am finding out what is the best way for other people to keep healthy, I thought I would try the experiment. It does make the blood rush to the head somewhat, I must confess; but it's a glorious thing, you may depend! I feel twenty years younger and better already, I assure you!"

[117]

All this time Dr. Sheepshanks was puffing and panting, with a very red face and astonished air; but the new theory had taken possession of him, and he would have died at the stake rather than allow that turning summersaults was not the exercise best adapted to old gentlemen of sixty.

Finding his friend so prepossessed in favor of exercise, Dr. Skihi proposed to him that they should go and take a walk, to which he readily agreed. Then they went to Dr. Smelfungus, the great botanist, who was at present trying to graft japonicas on bramble bushes: "It would improve the appearance of the roadside so much!" and Dr. Van Noostile, who was writing a splendid work, in twenty-five volumes, to prove that people's feeling hot and cold was perfect fancy and nonsense; and also giving a number of scientific ways of finding out whether it would rain or be clear, and what time o' day it was, without looking to see if the wind were east, or running to stare at a clock; which, no doubt, would be of the greatest use to the world, and leave all the weathercocks and watchmakers quite in the shade. Last of all, they came to Dr. Mumbudget, who had on his study door the great doorplate you see in the picture, with his name engraved on it in letters six inches long. As usual, he said not a word in reply to the invitation of his friends, but nodded his head at them instead, until he nearly nodded it off; and so, being all of one mind, our philosophers locked up their studies, put on their five-cornered caps, and taking their gold-headed canes and their note books, to be ready to put down any new fact that might turn up, started off for a country ramble. [118] [119]

At first they walked along quietly enough, admiring the prospect, and enjoying the fresh air; but after a few moments, Dr. Sheepshanks could no longer resist the desire to put his new theory of health into practice. [120]

"Really," he began, "it would be much better for us always to pursue our studies in the open air. Science teaches us that the most healthy people are the wild Indians—those children of nature, who live under the trees, dine off fresh fruits, and take plenty of exercise. Let us be children of nature, my friends, and improve our health by running to that tree," pointing to one at some distance.

Accordingly, the philosopher started off at an amble, followed by his companions, who, with dressing gowns flying in the wind, and books flying, out of their pockets every minute, presented rather ridiculous spectacles. They were so deeply engaged that they did not see Dr. Mumbudget quietly walking along behind, picking up their scattered property. [121]

So far so good; but unhappily, not being accustomed to the habits of children of nature, this sudden introduction to the true mode of life discomposed our learned doctors in no small degree. Fairly aching from head to foot with fatigue, Dr. Sheepshanks was the first to pause, so out of breath that he could hardly speak, yet exclaiming, with a beaming face, "Ah! you may depend, gentlemen, that the only way to enjoy life is to take plenty of exercise!"

This was drawing rather too hard on the patience of his friends, after what they had just endured, and Dr. Skihi exclaimed, rather crossly, "At the same time, your exercise is a famous thing to make one thirsty! I would give a great deal to obtain a drink of spring water; but that is impossible at present." [122]

"Impossible! why, there is nothing easier!" said Dr. Smelfungus. "Science teaches us that some vegetables are nearly all water; turnips, for instance. All you have to do is to get a turnip and express the juice, and there's your drink of water."

"How about going to a well?" said Mumbudget; but nobody appeared to hear him.

"And pray, are there any turnips hereabout?" asked the chemist, impatiently.

Now, the fact was that Dr. Smelfungus had never seen a turnip; he had only read in books that turnips were round, watery vegetables, yellow outside and full of juice; for he was so interested in finding out all about flowers and plants that came from Australia, and other out of the way places, that he never troubled his head with common, homemade turnips—those were too vulgar; but as he wished to appear informed on all subjects, he pointed hap-hazard to a field beside the road saying, carelessly, "Certainly; there are some." [123]

Now, what do you think Dr. Smelfungus had really pointed out? Why, a musk-melon patch! and as his companions knew no more than himself, Dr. Skihi scrambled through the hedge without more ado, cut with his penknife as many as he could carry, and returned to his friends. You may believe how they enjoyed the feast, sitting on the soft moss, in the cool shade of the trees; and after they were through, Dr. Smelfungus gravely wrote down, "Turnip—a large, round vegetable growing on vines, with a rough, yellow outside, ever so many seeds in the middle, and tastes of nutmegs!" [124]

After these exploits, the philosophers continued on their way, and Drs. Smelfungus and Sheepshanks felt more proud of their learning than ever. Meanwhile Dr. Mumbudget said nothing; so they gave him credit either for thinking a great deal, or being too big a donkey to admire such splendid experiments. [125]

The sun had now mounted high, and our travellers began to feel its rays inconveniently warm. Dr. Van Noostile, however, laughed them all to scorn.

"Too warm! fiddlestick's end!" he cried. "This feeling warm and cold is all humbug. Dr. Skihi can tell you that I went to the top of the house with him every night for a week, last winter, to look at a comet, in nothing but a night gown and an umbrella, and I never was better in my life! Other people might have felt cold, or caught cold; but I—I enjoyed the science of the thing! If you feel too warm, follow my plan; make up your minds you *won't* feel so, and the thing's done!" and Dr. Van Noostile marched proudly along in the hottest part of the road, with his nose in the air, [126]

though the sun blistered the end most abominably! while the others, not to be behindhand in wisdom, followed his example; all but Mumbudget, who kept in the shade of the trees growing beside the road, and was secretly voted a greater donkey than ever.

Fortunately for the rest, who might otherwise have been sunstruck, a friendly cloud bank, which had been for some time gathering in the east, now began to cover the sky completely; and Dr. Mumbudget, speaking for the second time, just said, "Rain coming; better hurry on," and then relapsed into silence.

[127]

"Rain! no such thing!" cried Dr. Van Noostile. "When it is about to rain, you will observe *that the swallows fly low!* and as I don't see a sign of a swallow, you may depend that—" His speech was interrupted by a thunderclap, and then down poured the flood! in one of those sudden, heavy showers that so often take place in summer, wetting the whole party to the skin in less than two minutes. It was of no use to run, and as they plodded along in the wet, our philosophers looked at Dr. Van Noostile with faces in which anger and dismay were equally mingled.

"Is this your knowledge of weather?" exclaimed Dr. Skihi, in a pet.

"Science teaches us that even a child of nature should go in when it rains!" snapped Dr. Sheepshanks.

[128]

"And though water is undoubtedly necessary for internal refreshment; external application, in the form of a hard shower, is only suitable to plants!" snarled Dr. Smelfungus.

In short, they all set upon the luckless weather prophet, except Dr. Mumbudget, who, when they had all scolded themselves out of breath, quietly pointed out a farm house they were now approaching, and led the way thither himself.

There was no need for words. Gladly did the wretched philosophers hasten to its shelter, and avail themselves of the bright kitchen fire to dry their flowered dressing gowns, and wet stockings and shoes. While they were drying, and steaming like the safety valve of a high-pressure steamboat, the good woman of the house, not without some doubts of their sanity, set about preparing a savory meal. In a short time this was ready, and the others were just sitting down to a dish of nice broiled ham and some light wheaten biscuits, when Dr. Sheepshanks exclaimed, with an air of amazement, "Is it possible, my friends, that you are willing to violate the natural laws of health by eating dishes at which a child of nature would be horrified! Not for me be so degenerate a meal! *I shall lunch on fare such as a wild Indian best loves!*" So saying, he tucked up his sleeves, called for some unground corn, and having pounded it in a mortar until it was in coarse bits, he mixed with it a little water, and baked this horrible mess before the fire, in the hot ashes. Then he asked for a slice of bacon, as venison was not at hand, frizzled the out side slightly by holding it up on a cleft stick before the fire, burning his ten fingers several times in the process, and bearing it with heroic fortitude. Finally, he served up these atrocious specimens of cookery on pieces of board instead of dishes, as the proper diet for children of nature—and philosophers!

[129]

[130]

As he could not induce the other *savants* to prefer the luncheon of wild Indians to that of civilized Christians, Dr. Sheepshanks ate it all up himself, though, in fact, his rebellious palate steadily refused to relish the dainties prepared for it. Science must be made to triumph, however, and the little doctor gallantly charged these "What is It's" of cookery and finished the last morsel under furious protest of stomach.

[131]

Somewhat comforted by the meal, and seeing that the clouds had given place to a clear sky, the philosophers resumed their dressing gowns, woefully shrunken by the wetting and drying they had received, and having liberally paid their hostess, started on the homeward road; concluding that they had seen enough for one day. They were in the very poorest condition for a long walk, for their theories, so far from making them any happier, had produced only ill effects. Dr. Sheepshanks' healthful exercise had given them all stitches in the sides, and aches in the back; Dr. Smelfungus's knowledge of botany had betrayed them into such excesses of melon alias turnip eating, that various queer doublings up in the epigastric region began to make themselves apparent; the natural philosophy, which had led Dr. Van Noostile and his good friends to parade along the middle of the road in the sun, had given them furious headaches; and, to crown all, Dr. Skihi now made the most brilliant proposal of anybody.

[132]

Our good doctor was evidently brimming, one might say creaming, over with the milk of human kindness; beyond a possible doubt he was about to propound a discovery of benefit to the whole world. His bald head beamed benevolence, overflowing beneficence to all mankind radiated from the very tails of his dressing gown as he cried:

[133]

"My dear friends, you are all too tired to walk home now, ain't you? You would like to get there before you could say 'Jack Robinson'—now, wouldn't you? and if I were to accomplish that happy end, you could never be grateful enough—now, could you?"

"Certainly not!" exclaimed the advocate of exercise, who wished from his inmost soul, either that he had taken less turnip, or that the famous seven league boots were on his legs at that moment.

[134]

"Then all you have to do," cried Dr. Skihi with sparkling eyes, "is to get in a convenient posture; allow me to set off this retort of mine behind you—" here he produced a "glass concern" from a side pocket, to the horror of his friends—"and heigh, presto! you will find yourself flying

home like a skyrocket"—

"And coming down like the stick!" gasped Dr. Smelfungus, retiring in a hurry, for the tails of his dressing gown and the gas retort of Dr. Skihi were in inconvenient proximity.

Dr. Skihi vouchsafed not another word, but with an air of indescribable dignity adjusted the retort, took out a cork—and—but words fail me to describe the catastrophe! Before Dr. Mumbudget could rush forward to prevent it, the gas had come in contact with the air, become inflamed instantly, and sent Dr. Skihi whirling above the heads of his friends! [135]

Vesuvius in eruption, coal mines on fire, mad bulls in the full rush, and crackers exploding in a barrel, rushed wildly through the heads of our philosophers, and when, finally, the rocket-riding doctor was discharged on a hayrick, the only person who retained sufficient presence of mind to go and pick him up was Mumbudget.

Poor Dr. Skihi! The victim to science remained insensible for some time; and when he finally recovered his consciousness, could not at first be persuaded that he was not in innumerable pieces. When he was, at last, enabled to walk on, it was discovered that while they were experimenting they had lost their way, and might be close to home or in the middle of Kamtschatka for all they knew of the road. It was again Mumbudget who helped them out of this difficulty, by speaking for the third time that day; and this third remark of the sage was as much to the point as the two first. "Ask somebody!" propounded Mumbudget, and after hobbling miserably along for some time, this somebody turned up in the person of a very small, ragged, dirty urchin; and under the guidance of this contemptible little snipe did our prodigies of wisdom arrive at last at the abode of Science and Knowledge! [136] [137]

As they entered the hall, Dr. Smelfungus, with an admiring glance at the speechless Mumbudget, exclaimed, "After all, gentlemen, there must be a science far higher than ours, since we, with all our knowledge, find practical life a matter of such difficulty. Only one man, it appears, is master of it, and there he stands!" and he made a low bow to Mumbudget, who returned it by another, without a word of reply.

Dr. Skihi, at this, glanced with profound contempt at Smelfungus, and gave a "hum!" that was echoed by the professor of health and him of natural science; then raising himself on the tips of his toes, and seesawing up and down at every word, he inquired, superciliously, "And pray, sir, may I ask, in the name of my scientific friends, what branch of science you profess, which is superior to every other?" [138]

Mumbudget looked with a quiet smile at the excited little doctor, and replied, calmly:

"Gentlemen, I am the professor of COMMON SENSE."

At this reply, the learned friends, Smelfungus not excepted, presented a series of remarkably open countenances, as respected eyes and mouths, while Dr. Mumbudget went on: [139]

"Chemistry, Botany, Natural Philosophy, and Hygienics—all put together, gentlemen, have failed to ensure us one day of rational enjoyment or ease; for all these sciences are pure absurdities, unless they are put in the hands of men who are governed by the wholesome dictates of common sense. My wise philosophers, will you come to school to me?"

The doctors gazed a moment yet; first at the proposer of this new doctrine, then at each other; and then, all rushing forward at once, they seized his hands.

"You are right, my dear Mumbudget!" they exclaimed in a breath; "with all our science we are most greatly in want of common sense! Open your school at once; we will be the first to join its classes, and celebrate the triumph of Reason over Philosophy!" [140]

THE END OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

Transcriber's Notes:

Obvious punctuation errors repaired.

The remaining correction made is indicated by a dotted line under the correction. Scroll the mouse over the word and the original text will appear.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK FUNNY BIG SOCKS ***

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