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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A CHILD'S STORY GARDEN ***

A CHILD'S STORY GARDEN

By Various

Compiled by Elizabeth Heber

TO THE LITTLE CHILDREN

NOTE

These selected stories have been used by teachers of the kindergarten and primary grades in the Indianapolis Schools. This little book has been compiled for mothers and teachers with the purpose of meeting a demand for children's literature that will not only add to the child's literary culture, but will also suggest high ideals through the story form. For material used we gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to: Rev. Neil McPherson, Sarah L. Kirlin, Leonore D. Eldridge, Martha A. Gill, Bessie Brown Adkinson, Edith D. Wachstetter, Grace Erskine DeVere, Fords Hulburt Publishing Co., for the selections, "The Anxious Leaf" and "Coming and Going" from Henry Ward Beecher's, "Norwood."

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Illustrations by Grace Garfield (Illustrations not present in this file)

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SIEGFRIED, THE KING'S SON

Siegfried was the son of the good King Siegmund. He lived in the great palace with his father and the gentle queen, his mother.

Siegfried had everything his heart could desire. He was loved by every one about the palace. He had many servants to wait upon him, and beautiful clothes to wear at all times. More than this, the stables of the great palace were full of horses, and Siegfried could ride or drive whenever he wished to do so.

Now, the king was as wise as he was good, and he knew that if Siegfried would grow to be a good king he must learn to work with his hands. The king and queen talked of it, and, although they disliked to part with their son, they decided to send Siegfried to Mimer, the wonderful blacksmith.

Mimer was a queer little man. His back was bent and his hair was long and white. He had a long white beard and two very sharp, black eyes. Mimer's shop was out in the great, dark forest, and many boys came to learn of this wonderful master, for Mimer, you must know, was the best blacksmith in all the king's country.

To this shop Siegfried was sent. At first he was very lonely and unhappy. There were no servants now to wait upon him. His soft, beautiful clothing had been exchanged for a suit of the coarsest material and a huge leather apron. There was no soft bed waiting for him at night, only a pile of straw in the corner. But Siegfried was a brave boy, and lost no time complaining. He worked patiently at his anvil, day after day, learning from his master to make strong chains of iron, as well as dainty chains of gold and silver, for the queen to wear. One day Mimer came into the shop and sat down beside Siegfried's anvil. The boys could see that he was troubled, and they left their anvils and came to the master, begging him to tell them what troubled him.

Slowly he raised his head and looked at them all. Then he said: "A giant has come into the country, who says he is the most wonderful smith of all. He says he has made a coat of armor that no sword can pierce. I have worked day and night, and cannot make a strong sword. Who is willing to try for me?"

The boys all hung their heads, for they knew not how to help Mimer. Then Siegfried stood before his master and said: "Let me try, oh, Mimer!" And the master was willing. Siegfried went to work at once, and for seven long days he did not leave his place at the anvil.

At the end of the time he brought to Mimer a sword that was strong and bright. "We will try it," said Mimer, and called together all the boys, and took them to a little stream near the shop. Mimer then took a single

thread of wool and threw it into the water. As it was carried along, Mimer took the sword and held it before the thread. The water carried the thread along until it reached the sword. Then one half of the thread passed to the right of the sword and the other to the left, and the thread was not moved from its course. "This is a good blade," said Mimer proudly. But Siegfried was not satisfied. He took the sword and broke it in pieces and put it into the fire again. For three long weeks Siegfried worked patiently at the anvil. Then he brought to Mimer a sword that was sharper and brighter and stronger than the first.

Again the boys were taken to the little stream, and this time a handful of wool was thrown into the water. When it reached the edge of the sword half of the wool passed to the right and half to the left of the sword, and not one single thread was moved from its place. Siegfried, however, was not satisfied, and again broke the sword into pieces and put it back into the fire.

Patiently and faithfully he worked for seven long weeks. The sword that he brought to Mimer now was stronger and brighter and more beautiful than either of the others. The handle was wound with flowers, and the edge was as bright as the lightning.

This time, when the boys gathered at the little stream, a pack of wool was thrown into the water. When the wool reached the edge of the blade, half passed to one side and half to the other, and not one thread was moved from its place.

"We will give it another trial," said Siegfried. He ran quickly to the shop and paused a moment before the great anvil. Then he swung the sword, once, twice, thrice, about his head, and then brought it down onto the iron. There was no noise, but the great anvil fell apart, and the sword was as sharp and bright as ever.

"This is the best I can do," said Siegfried. "Good master, my sword is done!" Then Mimer sent his swiftest messenger to the king to tell him that he was ready to meet the giant.

The day of the contest came. Mimer's friends sat on one side of the road, the giant's friends on the other. At the top of the hill the two masters were to meet, the giant with his armor, Mimer with his sword. Soon a mighty shout arose! The giant, wearing the wonderful coat of glittering steel, came up the hill. He sat down on a huge rock at the top of the hill. As the people waited, a queer little man was seen coming slowly up the hill. His back was bent, and his white hair hung about his shoulders. At his side he carried a sword so bright that the lightning seemed to play about its edge, as he walked.

Slowly he went to the top of the hill and stood before the giant. It was Mimer, the master. He loosed the sword from his side and raised it above his head. "Are you ready?" he asked. "Yes; strike," said the giant, laughing, for he was not afraid. One, two, three times the sword flashed about Mimer's head. Then it fell again at his side. "I do not wish to hurt you," he said, "but if you will take off your armor and place it on that stone, I will show you what this wonderful blade can do." The giant only laughed again—laughed so loud and so long that the very earth seemed to tremble. Then he took off the armor and laid it on the rock. Mimer stepped back, raised the sword again, swung it about his head until the light seemed to blind the people. Then it came down. The people waited. There was no clash of iron. All was still.

Then Mimer stepped up to the armor and touched it with his foot. It fell apart, and the rock beneath it fell apart, too. Half the rock started to roll down the hill. On, on it went, faster and faster, and fell with a mighty splash into the river at the foot of the hill, and if you should go to that far-away country you could see it lying there, far down below the surface of the water.

Then a mighty shout arose! Mimer's friends, and the great king, too, joined in the applause. The giant, no longer boastful, stooped down, gathered up the two parts of the armor, and went with his friends into a far country. Mimer took the wonderful sword and went back to his place in the blacksmith shop, still the master of all the smiths.

Very few people, however, knew that it was the king's own son, Siegfried, who had made the wonderful sword.

THE SONG OF THE PINE TREE

It was a wee pine tree in a very large forest. It could not see anything around it, for the other pine trees about it were so very tall. They could only tell the little pine tree what they saw. At night the little tree would often gaze at the sky and the stars that peeped out. And sometimes the big, round moon would pass over the sky. And all day long, all that the little pine tree could see above it was the blue sky, and the beautiful white clouds that went sailing by like so many ships on the sea. The little pine tree wished to grow and be tall, like the rest of the trees, for it wanted to see what was in the world outside of the forest. The tall pine trees would sing songs as the wind whistled through their branches, and the little pine tree waited day after day, so that it might be tall and sing songs, too. When summer came the birds would rest on the branches of this wee tree, but would not build nests, because it was too low. When winter came little white snowflakes came fluttering down and rested on the branches of the little pine tree.

Year after year the little tree waited, but it grew all this time, and seemed to stretch higher and higher its beautiful green branches.

One day, when the little snowflakes had fluttered down and made all the world white, and the wind was whistling a merry tune, the little pine tree heard some strange noises. The tall pine trees nodded their heads, for they knew who were coming. They were the woodmen. They had a sled with them, drawn by horses. The sight was strange to the pine tree, for it had never before seen woodmen, nor a sled, nor horses. But the old pine trees knew what it all meant, for they had seen the woodmen many times. They wondered which tree the

woodmen would choose. Now, the little pine tree had grown, and it was not a wee tree any longer, but was a straight, strong, beautiful tree. The woodmen walked about with something very bright and shining in their hands. When they came to this pine tree they looked at it, shook it and sounded the ax against its trunk.

How queer the pine tree felt! It wondered what they were going to do with it. Suddenly a sharp sound rang out in the air, and another, and still another one. And the pine tree felt itself swaying and swaying, and down it went, lower and lower, until its branches touched the soft white snow on the ground. The woodmen lifted the pine tree very carefully, placed it on the sled and drove the horses away. Pine Tree was happy now, for he was going to see something of the great, wonderful world.

The woodmen drove the horses out of the forest into the beautiful white world. On and on they went until at last they came to a little village by the sea. They drove through the village and into a great shipyard, where saws were buzzing, hammers were pounding, and busy men were hurrying about. Pine Tree had never seen anything like this before. He was lifted from the sled and his beautiful branches were taken from the trunk. Then he lay with, many other logs for a long time, until one day the carpenters took him away, and he found that he was helping to make a part of a ship. Boards were nailed on, and the busy carpenters worked day after day.

At last the strong and stately ship was finished. It glided gracefully into the water and sailed away. Pine Tree was very happy now, for he was seeing new and strange things. The waves dashed carelessly against the ship. They seemed to have a song, too. Pine Tree had not forgotten the songs that the old pines used to sing. The waves did not always sing the same song—sometimes they would rush and roll against the ship very hard until they grew tired, and then they would roll on, and sing a quiet song again.

Sometimes the ship would stop at strange countries, people would get off, other people would get on, and then the ship would sail off out into the sea again. Now, the pine tree had been a part of the ship for many years, when one night while the ship was sailing the seas the waves grew so high and strong that the parts of the ship could not stay together. So Pine Tree was thrown out upon the angry waves and was rocked all night long—very roughly at first, but gently afterwards. When the sunshine looked down upon the sand the next morning it saw Pine Tree. Pine Tree lay there many days.

How lonesome Pine Tree was! He seemed to hear the songs of the old pines, and sometimes the songs of the waves. One day he heard another song. It was a new song to the pine tree, for the song was sung by some little children who were digging in the sand close by. They came here every day to play, and once a man came with them. When he saw Pine Tree lying upon the sand he said: "This is just what I have been looking for. I will use this for the ridge-pole for my little cottage." So he took Pine Tree away with him. After a time Pine Tree found himself a part of the man's cottage, and, of course, he could not hear the songs of the forest, nor the songs of the waves, but he heard new songs. They were rock-a-bye-baby songs that the mother in this little cottage would sing to her children in the evening, when it was time for them to go to sleep.

Years passed, and the children grew to be men and women, and after a while all the songs Pine Tree heard were those of the grandmother, which were soft and low. At last these, too, were heard no more—the little cottage grew quiet and everything was still. Pine Tree wondered where everybody was. The only company he had were the birds that came in through the window and built nests in the attic. Now the cottage was no longer a home, but was used as a barn, and the gentle cows, the woolly sheep and the kind horses rested there at night. They, too, seemed to sing a song to Pine Tree, but by and by even their song could not be heard—nothing but the wind and the owls in the trees outside—because what had once been the cottage, and then a barn, was now a forsaken little hut.

One day Pine Tree heard a man whistling. Oh! how he hoped he would come in, for he had not seen anybody nor heard any of the songs he had loved for so long. Pine Tree heard the whistle come nearer and nearer, and at last the man stepped through the doorway. He looked about him and saw the spider webs hanging in the corners and the birds flying in and out of the windows, and he wondered how long it had been since people had lived there. He looked up and saw the ridge-pole, which had once been Pine Tree. "Oh!" he said, "I have found what I have long been looking for." So he climbed up and loosened the boards and took Pine Tree out of his resting place. Now Pine Tree was going once more out into the world. The man carried him on and took him into a little shop. It was a queer shop, too, for there were many bright, shining things lying on the work-bench. They were tools, you know. The man had a kind face and he handled Pine Tree very carefully. He sawed and smoothed Pine Tree many days, and as he worked he whistled and sang, for he was happy. Sometimes he would whistle some of the songs that Pine Tree had heard when he lived in the forest, and then sometimes those he had heard on the ocean, and again he would whistle the songs that Pine Tree had heard in the home of the children.

At last the man's work was finished. Pine Tree had been made into a wonderful musical instrument—a violin. The man took a bow and drew it across the strings, and as he did so he smiled and nodded his head, for the music was very sweet. The violin, which had once been Pine Tree, and then part of a ship, and the ridge-pole of the cottage and the barn, seemed to sing to the man the songs of the forest, the songs of the ocean, the songs of the home, and the songs of the lowly barn.

One day the man put the violin in a case and took it away on a long journey. When the case was opened, the violin saw that they were in a strange hall full of people, and many of them were talking of this man—the violin-maker.

The man lifted the violin from the case and went out upon a large platform before the people, and began playing for them. He seemed to say to the violin, "Sing for me," and as he drew the bow across the strings the violin sang. It sang to the people, first the very songs that the tall pines sang in the forest. The song changed, and the lap of the waters, and the dip of the oar could be heard as on a moonlight summer night; then the angry wind and the dash of the waves could be heard as in a fierce storm. Slowly this song died, and everything was quiet. Then, after a little while, the faraway sound of children's voices—their laughter and singing—was heard, and then came the sweet lullaby to the sleepy babes.

These songs all died away, and the violin sang the songs of the birds in the summer-time, and the lowing of cattle, and the bleating of sheep in the cold winter-time.

At last the violin could sing no longer the songs it knew, but a new song came forth which was also very beautiful, and which caused the people to bend forward and listen with eager faces, for it was the song that came from the heart of the old man who was master of the violin.

A CHRISTMAS STORY

It was so long ago that the whole world has forgotten the date and even the name of the little town in which lived a little boy whose name was Hans.

Little Hans lived with his aunt, who was quite an old lady. She was not always kind to Hans, but this made no difference to him. He loved her just the same, and forgot that she was ever cross and very unkind to him at times.

Hans went to school with many other boys, but he was not clothed as they were. He had to wear the same clothes both week days and Sundays; the same even in the summer that he wore in the winter.

It was now midwinter, when everything was wrapped in snow and glazed with ice, while the north winds sang loud and whistled down the chimneys, played very roughly with the bare trees, and crept through every crack and crevice of the house. The frost, too, was busy pinching the cheeks and biting the toes of the boys, and making them run, jump and dance to keep warm.

The children were wild with the excitement and the joy that was astir at this time. For there were secrets in the air. Every one was busy making gifts for some loved one.

It was the night before Christmas, the one great birthday on which the whole world rejoiceth and when all endeavor to make their fellow men happy.

The schoolmaster and all of his pupils started for the midnight worship and prayer at the church. All of the boys were well clothed, with heavy coats, fur caps, thick mittens, and very heavy and warm shoes. But little Hans had only a poor, plain, ragged suit, with no overcoat, no mittens, and his shoes were only wooden ones. It was a very cold night, and the boys and the schoolmaster had to walk very fast to keep warm. But little Hans did not mind the cold so much, because the stars smiled down upon him and seemed like so many diamonds set in a deep blue canopy, each one glittering and flashing in the darkness. The snow, too, was a sparkling mass, and Hans wondered if the stars could see themselves reflected in the tiny snow crystals which covered the earth.

At last they reached the church, whose windows were shedding forth a soft, golden light on the stillness and darkness of the cold winter night. This little group of worshipers quietly passed into the church and sank noiselessly into their pews. It was a beautiful place to Hans. He loved it dearly, and was always happy to come here. The candles were all lighted, and they burned steadily brighter and brighter, filling the church with a beautiful mellow light. The grand old organ softly and clearly sent forth its tones, each one growing richer, deeper and sweeter, and gradually the voices of the choir boys and the tones of the organ filled the old church with such beautiful music that little Hans's heart seemed to bound within him, and his whole soul was enraptured, while there shone from his face a radiance that only a divine inspiration could bring forth.

At length, after the people had sung, each one knelt and offered thanksgiving to the Heavenly Father, little Hans, too, knelt and offered thanks for the blessings which he had received during that year, and for the tender care of the Father of all.

The people then quietly passed out of the warm church into the cold of the night. Hans was the last one out, and as he carefully made his way down the icy steps he noticed a little boy no larger than himself sitting on the steps, with his head resting against the church. He was fast asleep. His face was beautiful, and seemed clothed in a golden light. Beside him, tied in a cloth, were a square, a hammer, a saw and other tools of a carpenter. He had neither shoes nor stockings on his feet, although his clothing was spotless and of the purest white. It grieved Hans that the child should have no shoes, not even one to place for the Christ-child to fill with gifts.

Hans stooped and took from his right foot the wooden shoe and placed it in front of the sleeping child, so that the Christ-child would not pass him by. Hans then limped along on the ice and snow, not feeling how cold it was, but only thinking of the poor child asleep out in the cold.

The other boys were talking of the good things awaiting them at home, of the feasts, the plum pudding, the Christmas trees, and the many drums, wagons and blocks the Christ-child would put in their shoes that night.

When Hans arrived home he found his aunt awaiting him, and when she saw that he had only one shoe, and he had told her all about the other one, she was very angry with him, and sent him to bed. Hans placed the wooden shoe from his left foot at the fireside, hoping that the Christ-child would remember him as he passed by.

The first sunbeam that crept into Hans's bedroom and kissed him the next morning awoke him, and he bounded downstairs, and flew to the great open fireplace to find his shoe.

Hans rubbed his eyes and caught his breath, for, to his great surprise, there were both of his wooden shoes, filled with beautiful toys; by the fireside he found warm clothing and many other things to make him comfortable and happy.

Hearing loud voices, Hans went to the door. The people were standing in a crowd about the priest, who was talking to them. He told Hans that where he had seen the child asleep on the church steps there was now in the window above a beautiful crown set with precious jewels. He said that the child was the Christ-child,

whom the Heavenly Father had again sent among men on earth for that night, and that it was He with whom Hans had shared his wooden shoes.

The people bowed themselves before that miracle that the good God had seen fit to work, to reward the faith and charity of a child.

Francois Coppee, {Adapted}

THE MYTH OF ARACHNE

A long time ago there lived a maiden whose name was Arachne. She could weave the most beautiful fabrics that people had ever seen. She chose the most exquisite colors. They were the colors that were found in the flowers, the green of the trees and grass, and the varied, dainty tints and shades from the blue sky and its gorgeous sunsets.

People had said that Arachne learned to weave from the birds, although some of them thought that Arachne had been taught to weave by the goddess Athena. When Arachne heard that the people thought that Athena had taught her to weave she became very angry. She declared that Athena had not taught her to weave; that no one had taught her. She said she would compete with the goddess Athena in weaving. The goddess Athena was a noble goddess. She was the Goddess of Wisdom, and of all the Arts and Crafts. When she heard what Arachne had declared she said: "It is very wrong that Arachne should be so proud and envious. I will go to see her."

The goddess Athena disguised herself in humble apparel and visited Arachne. She talked with her about her weaving, and still Arachne boasted of the wonderful weaving she could do; but the goddess told her that she was foolish to be so boastful.

This made Arachne angry, and she said: "I am not afraid at all, not of any one in the world." At this moment the goddess threw aside her plain garments and revealed herself the goddess Athena. This did not frighten Arachne. She looked calmly at Athena and told her that she would give up anything, even her life, to prove to the people that she could weave even better than the goddess.

They then set about to arrange their looms, to select their threads, and to begin work. At last they began. Whirr! Whirr! went the shuttles. Spin! Spin! they sang, faster and faster, in and out, over and under, flew the shuttles.

Arachne had chosen the most delicate, lovely threads that she could find, but while she wove these beautiful threads she was thinking of her revenge and other evil and wicked thoughts, while her skillful and swift fingers moved faster and faster.

At the same time Athena was sitting in the sunlight, busily and carefully weaving over and under, and in and out, her dainty, beautiful silken threads, which seemed to have come from the very sunbeams themselves. The colors were most harmonious and exquisite. Even the rainbow was surpassed. Athena was thinking of the fleecy clouds, which were to her as white ships that sailed through the blue sea of the sky. She thought of the brown earth, with its emerald decking of trees and meadows; of the buttercups and daisies of gold, and the roses and lilies which dotted Mother Earth's carpet. She thought of the butterflies that flitted about, and of the birds, in coats of red, blue, glossy black, and dazzling gold.

When Arachne looked at Athena's work she shuddered with shame, for, although her own work had been skillfully done, it was marred by the envy, malice and evil thoughts she had woven into it. While Athena's work was no more skillfully woven, it was by far the more beautiful. The azure sky, with fluffy white clouds; the meadows, dotted with flowers, and fields, with their shady green trees, filled with birds of gorgeous hues, all made a wonderful picture.

Poor Arachne knew her fate. She hastened away and took with her the threads that she had been using in weaving, and wrapped them about her neck. She thought she would end her life by hanging to a tree. This made the beautiful and kind Athena sad, and she said to Arachne: "You must live—live on forever," and she touched Arachne and changed her form. Arachne gradually grew smaller and smaller, until she was no larger than a honeybee. She had many legs and wore a brown, fuzzy coat. Instead of hanging by the threads she had used she now hung from a dainty silken spider web, for Arachne was still a weaver, but not a weaver as of old.

Today, perchance, if you should see a busy little spider, it might be one of Arachne's children, or perhaps Arachne herself. No one knows—neither you nor I.

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

It was spring, and the little town of Killingworth told of the joy of living again. Every little rivulet had broken from its frozen chain, which had held it fast during the long winter, and was rushing on, rejoicing at

its freedom. The purple buds, holding wonderful secrets of things to come, were bursting forth from every tree and bush, while from the topmost boughs the birds called and sang to their mates: "Oh! be happy, be happy, for spring has come!"

There were all the messengers of spring—the robin, the oriole, and the bluebird—filling the orchard with their glad melody. The little sparrow chirped in glee for the very joy of living, and the hungry crows, in great crowds, called loudly the tidings of spring. But not long could they stop to sing, for the homes must be made, and soon from every tree and bush could be seen these dainty, downy nests, and in every nest the eggs, and in every egg a wonderful secret about which all the happy birds twittered and sang together.

The farmers, as they plowed their fields and made their gardens that spring, heard these tree-top concerts, and saw the multitude playing and working about them, and they shook their heads and said: "Never before have we had so many birds in Killingworth. We must surely do something, or they will eat up half of our crops, and take the grain and fruits that should go to feed our own children." Then it was decided to have a meeting. All in the town were free to come, and here they were to decide what was to be done with the troublesome birds. The meeting was held in the new town hall, and to it came all the great men of the town, and from far and near the farmers gathered. The great hall was crowded. The doors and windows were open, and through them came a beautiful flood of bird music, but the sturdy farmers and great men shook their heads as they heard it. And then they told how the birds were eating the grains and spoiling the fruit, and every one said the birds must go. There seemed to be not a single friend to the singers outside, until one man arose—the teacher in the town, much loved by the children, and himself loving everything that God had made. He looked sadly on the men around him, and then he said:

"My friends, can you drive away these birds that God has made and sent to us, for a few handfuls of grain and a little fruit? Will you lose all this music that you hear outside? Think of the woods and orchard without the birds, and of the empty nests you will see. You say the birds are robbing you; but instead they are your greatest helpers. With their bright little eyes they see the little bugs and worms which destroy the fruit. Think who has made them. Who has taught them the songs and the secret of building their nests. You will be sorry when they are gone and will wish them back."

But still the farmers shook their heads and said: "The birds must go." So the birds of Killingworth were driven away, until not a single note was heard, and only empty nests were left. The little children of the town were hoping each day to see their friends again, and a strange stillness and loneliness seemed to fill the little town, for the music in the air had ceased.

The summer came, and never before had it been so hot. The little insects and worms which the little birds had always driven away covered every tree and bush, eating the leaves until nothing was left but the bare twigs. The streets were hot and shadeless. In the orchard the fruit dropped, scorched and dried by the sun. When the grains were gathered one-half of the crop had been destroyed by the insects. Now the old farmers said among themselves:

"We have made a great mistake. We need the birds."

One day in the early spring a strange sight was seen in the little town of Killingworth. A great wagon covered with green branches was driven down the main street, and among the branches were huge cages, and the cages were filled with birds. Oh! they were all there—the robin, the bluebird, the lark and the oriole—birds of every color and kind. When the great wagon reached the town hall it stopped. The cages were taken down from the branches of green, and little children, with eager hands and happy eyes, threw open the doors. Out came the birds and away they flew to field and orchard and wood, singing again and again:

"Oh! we are glad to be here! We are glad to be here!"

The little children sang, too, and the gray-haired farmers said: "The birds must always stay in Killingworth."

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow {Adapted}

THE MYTH OF PAN

In a very far-away country, a long time ago, there lived a man who loved music and little children and the birds and flowers. And the little children loved Pan—for that was his name—because he told them such beautiful stories and played on a set of pipes which he had made from the reeds which grew by the river. Every evening, when it was time for the sun to go to sleep and all the little stars to wake up, Pan would take his pipes, go down to the river side, and play all the songs he knew. Everybody could hear Pan's music for miles and miles, but many of them did not like his music, and wished that he would not play. Once some of these people gathered together and planned how they could stop Pan from playing his pipes, and while they were talking, some beetles near by heard their plans. Now, one of these beetles had hurt his wing at one time and had fallen down in the dust on the road, and could go no farther. It was a very hot day, and the poor little beetle was almost dead from the heat. Soon Pan came walking along and saw the beetle, and, picking it up very carefully, he carried it on some green leaves to a shady place, where he left it to rest and get well. The beetle had never forgotten Pan's kindness, and when he heard the plans these bad people had made he said: "Come, friends, and go with me, for we must hurry and tell Pan what the wicked people have planned, so that he will not be there when they go to push him into the river."

The beetles had only one day in which to reach Pan, for the evil people were going to carry out their plans the next night, so they spread their wings and flew as fast as they could fly. They could not travel far at a time, because their wings grew very tired and their bodies were so heavy. When they could fly no longer they

would walk, and when they were tired walking they would fly again. In this way they hurried on and on, for the day was growing into night, and they could hear Pan playing his beautiful songs way down by the river bank. They had almost reached him when they heard what seemed to be a crowd of people running through the bushes and among the trees, and it seemed that they were going toward the river. Next there was a big splash and many voices talking loudly, and after that—silence. When the beetles reached the place where Pan always sat they could not find him; but there in the river were his pipes, which he loved so well.

The people had reached Pan before the beetles, and had pushed him into the river, and his pipes fell in, too, but Pan did not wait to get them. He climbed out and ran as fast as his feet would carry him. The people ran after him, but he leaped and bounded over the bushes and flowers, and ran on and on. Sometimes they were almost upon him, but he always out-ran them. He wished to hide, but could find no place. He could not climb the trees, for the people could climb trees, too, and he could not hide in the grass or under the bushes, for they would be sure to find him there.

At last, along the river bank, he spied the little violets that had closed their eyes, but were still gazing at the stars. One little violet seemed to say to him, "I will hide you," and it folded its little petals around him. Pan was safe now, and from his hiding place he could hear the people searching for him. They looked for a long time, but they did not find him. He was happy and thankful, and, as he was very tired and the soft petals of the violets made a pleasant resting place, he was soon fast asleep.

Away back on the river bank, where Pan always sat, were the beetles. They were very sorry that they had not reached him in time to tell him that the people were coming, and that they could not get his pipes out of the water, where they had fallen. And, though they never saw him again, they always remembered him and the beautiful music he used to play.

One day some little children were picking violets by the river, and they found one little violet that had eyes just like Pan's eyes. They took it home and named it Pan's Eye, in memory of their old friend, but, as that was rather a hard name for the little children to say, they called it Pansy.

THE BELL OF ATRI

In the little town of Atri, which was nestled on the side of a wooded hill, there was a strange custom.

The king had one day brought to the town a great bell, which he hung in the market place beneath a shed, protected from the sun and rain. Then he went forth with all his knightly train through the streets of Atri and proclaimed to all the people that whenever a wrong was done to any one, he should go to the market place and ring the great bell, and immediately the king would see that the wrong was righted.

Many years had gone by. Many times the great bell had rung in the little town of Atri, and, as the king had said, the wrongs of which it told, were always righted.

In time, however, the great rope by which the bell was rung, unraveled at the end and was unwound, thread by thread. For a long time it remained this way, while the great bell hung silent. But close by, a grape-vine grew, and, reaching upward, finally entwined its tendrils around the ragged end of the bell rope, making it strong and firm again as it grew around it, up toward the great bell itself.

Now, in the town of Atri there lived a knight, who, in his younger days, had loved to ride and hunt; but as he grew old he cared no more for these things. He sold his lands, his horses and hounds, for he now loved only the gold which the sale of them brought to him. This he hoarded and saved, living poorly, that he might save the more.

Only one thing he kept—his favorite horse, who had served him faithfully all his life. But even this faithful friend he kept in a poor old stable, often allowing him to go cold and hungry.

Finally the old man said: "Why should I keep this beast now? He is old and lazy, and no longer of any use to me. Besides, his food costs me much that I might save for myself. I will turn him out and let him find food where he can."

So the faithful old horse, who had served his master all his days, was turned out without a home. He wandered through the streets of the town, trying to find something to eat. Often the dogs barked at him, and the cold winds made him shiver as he wandered about, hungry and homeless, with no one to care for him.

One summer afternoon, when all the drowsy little town seemed sleeping, the tones of the great bell rang out, loud and clear, waking the people from their naps and calling them forth to see who was ringing the bell of justice.

The judge, with a great crowd following, hurried to the market place, but when they came near, they stopped in surprise. No man was near, who might have rung the bell; no one but a thin old horse, who stood quietly munching the vine which grew around the bell rope. He had spied the green leaves growing there, and, being hungry, had reached for them, thus ringing the great bell of Atri, and calling forth the judge and all the people.

"'Tis the old knight's horse," the people cried. Then many told the tale of how the old horse had been turned out to starve, while his master hoarded and saved his gold.

"The horse has rung the bell for justice, and justice he shall have," said the judge. "Go, bring the old knight to me."

The knight was hurried to the place, where, before all the people, the judge censured him for his cruel treatment of his faithful old horse, and asked him to give a reason for it.

"The old beast is useless," said his master. "He is mine, and I have a right to do with him as I wish."

"Not so," said the judge. "He has served you faithfully all his life. He can not speak to tell of his wrongs, so we must speak for him. Go, now; take him home. Build a new stable and care for him well."

The old knight walked slowly home, while the horse was led behind by the crowd.

So the Great Bell of Atri had righted one more wrong, for it was even as the judge had commanded. The faithful old horse lived in comfort all the rest of his life, for his master, in caring for him, learned to love him again, and treated him as only a faithful friend should be treated.

When the king heard the story he said:

"Surely, never will the bell ring in a better cause than in speaking for a suffering dumb creature who can not speak for himself."

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow {Adapted}

THE ANXIOUS LEAF

Once upon a time a little leaf was heard to sigh and cry, as leaves often do when a gentle wind is about. And the twig said: "What is the matter, little leaf?" And the leaf said: "The wind just told me that one day it would pull me off and throw me down to die on the ground!"

The twig told it to the branch on which it grew, and the branch told it to the tree. And when the tree heard it, it rustled all over, and sent back word to the leaf: "Do not be afraid. Hold on tightly, and you shall not go till you want to."

And so the leaf stopped sighing, but went on nestling and singing. Every time the tree shook itself and stirred up all its leaves, the branches shook themselves, and the little twig shook itself, and the little leaf danced up and down merrily, as if nothing could ever pull it off. And so it grew all summer long, till October.

And when the bright days of autumn came the little leaf saw all the leaves around becoming very beautiful. Some were yellow and some scarlet, and some striped with both colors. Then it asked the tree what it meant. And the tree said: "All these leaves are getting ready to fly away, and they have put on these beautiful colors because of joy."

Then the little leaf began to want to go, too, and grew very beautiful in thinking of it, and when it was very gay in color it saw that the branches of the tree had no bright color in them, and so the leaf said: "O branches! why are you lead-color and we golden?"

"We must keep on our work-clothes, for our life is not done; but your clothes are for holiday, because your tasks are over," said the branches.

Just then a little puff of wind came, and the leaf let go, without thinking of it, and the wind took it up and turned it over and over, and whirled it like a spark of fire in the air, and then it dropped gently down under the edge of the fence, among hundreds of leaves, and fell into a dream, and it never waked up to tell what it dreamed about.

COMING AND GOING

There came to our fields a pair of birds that had never built a nest nor seen a winter. How beautiful was everything! The fields were full of flowers and the grass was growing tall, and the bees were humming everywhere. Then one of the birds began singing, and the other bird said: "Who told you to sing?" And he answered: "The flowers told me, and the bees told me, and the winds and leaves told me, and the blue sky told me, and you told me to sing." Then his mate answered: "When did I tell you to sing?" And he said: "Every time you brought in tender grass for the nest, and every time your soft wings fluttered off again for hair and feathers to line the nest." Then his mate said: "What are you singing about?" And he answered: "I am singing about everything and nothing. It is because I am so happy that I sing."

By and by five little speckled eggs were in the nest, and his mate said: "Is there anything in all the world as pretty as my eggs?" Then they both looked down on some people that were passing by and pitied them because they were not birds.

In a week or two, one day, when the father bird came home, the mother bird said: "Oh, what do you think has happened?"

"What?"

"One of my eggs has been peeping and moving!" Pretty soon another egg moved under her feathers, and then another and another, till five little birds were hatched! Now the father bird sang louder and louder than ever. The mother bird, too, wanted to sing, but she had no time, and she turned her song into work. So hungry were these little birds that it kept both parents busy feeding them. Away each one flew. The moment

the little birds heard their wings fluttering among the leaves, five little yellow mouths flew open wide, so that nothing could be seen but five yellow mouths!

"Can anybody be happier?" said the father bird to the mother bird. "We will live in this tree always, for there is no sorrow here. It is a tree that always bears joy."

Soon the little birds were big enough to fly, and great was their parents' joy to see them leave the nest and sit crumpled up upon the branches. There was then a great time, the two old birds talking and chatting to make the young ones go alone! In a little time they had learned to use their own wings, and they flew away and away, and found their own food, and built their own nests, and sang their own songs with joy.

Then the old birds sat silent and looked at each other, until the mother bird said: "Why don't you sing?" And he answered: "I can't sing—I can only think and think." "What are you thinking of?" "I am thinking how everything changes. The leaves are falling off from this tree, and soon there will be no roof over our heads; the flowers are all going; last night there was a frost; almost all the birds have flown away. Something calls me, and I feel as if I would like to fly away."

"Let us fly away together!"

Then they arose silently, and, lifting themselves far up in the air, they looked to the north. Far away they saw the snow coming. They looked to the south. There they saw flowers and green leaves. All day they flew, and all night they flew and flew, till they found a land where there was no winter—where flowers always blossom, and birds always sing.

HOW THE DIMPLES CAME

One bright, beautiful spring day, when the earth was fresh in its new green dress decked with flowers, while the birds sang their sweetest songs, and the brooks babbled merrily on their way to the rivers, two wee dimples were sent by Mother Nature on a journey to find their work in the world.

It was a delightful journey through the blue sky and past the fleecy white clouds.

They played and danced with the sunbeams who led them on their way to the earth.

The dimples could see nothing for them to do, so on they went, frolicking and playing.

At last they found themselves among the trees and the bright flowers of the earth.

They chased the sunbeams under the leaves, they rode on the butterflies' wings, they sipped the honey with the bees from the flowers. Still, they could find nothing to do. The sunbeams bade the dimples good-by and silently crept home. "Oh," said the dimples, "what shall we do? We have no place to rest tonight." "Here is a bird's nest; let us rest in this," said one dimple. "No, that will never do," said the other dimple, "for there is the mother bird, who rests in her nest all night."

Just then they spied a window swing open on its hinges. The tiny stars came out and peeped into the window, and the lady-moon sent silvery moonbeams down to help the dimples find a resting place. Then the dimples flew through the window, and there, close by, in her crib, curtained around with white, was a wee baby, rosy, sweet, and bright.

"Oh," said one dimple, "I would love to rest on that rosy cheek." "So would I," said the other dimple. And they each took a rosy cheek for a couch, and here they rested the whole night long.

The robins early in the dawn sat on the cheery boughs and sang loud and long, thus waking the dimples, who now knew not what to do. "But," said one dimple, "we have not yet found our work." The other dimple said: "Let us stay here. Baby's eyes are opening, and we must hide," and each dimple nestled away in baby's cheeks. Then her big, blue eyes opened wide, to see the sunbeams that had crept through the windows to her crib.

The sunbeams coaxed the dimples to come out and play, but the dimples would only peep out, and when they did, they brought smiles around baby's rosy lips and sunny eyes.

"So you have found your work at last," said the sunbeams. And they had, for they helped to bring out the smiles in baby's cheeks. If you look the next time you see baby you may see the dimples playing hide and seek.

THE PROUD LITTLE APPLE BLOSSOM

It was the month of May, but the wind still blew cool, for the sun was not yet ready to shed his warmest rays on the waiting earth.

Yet some of the birds had come, and more were on their way, and many beautiful blossoms were already showing their pink and white blooms, so that from bush and tree, field and flower, came the glad cry, "Spring is here! Spring is here." Now, it happened that a young princess rode by a beautiful orchard in full bloom,

and she stopped to pick a branch of apple blossoms to take to her palace. All who saw the apple blossom praised its beauty and fragrance until the blossom became proud, and thought that beauty was the only valuable thing in the world. But as the apple blossom looked out upon the field she thought: "Not all of the plants are rich and beautiful, as I am, some seem poor and plain." And she noticed a little, common, yellow flower, which seemed to lift up its sunny head and grow everywhere.

The apple blossom said to the plain little flower, "What is your name?"

"I am called the dandelion," replied the little flower.

"Poor little plant," said the apple blossom. "It is not your fault; but how sad you must feel to be so plain and to bear such an ugly name."

Before the little plant could reply a lovely little sunbeam came dancing along and said: "I see no ugly flowers. They are all beautiful alike to me." And he kissed the apple blossom; but he stooped low and lingered long to kiss the little yellow dandelion in the field.

And then some little children came tripping across the field. The youngest laughed when they saw the dandelions and kissed them with delight. The older children made wreaths and dainty chains of them. They picked carefully those that had gone to seed, and tried to blow the feathery down off with one breath, making joyous wishes.

"Do you see," said the sunbeam, "the beauty of the dandelion?"

"Only to children are they beautiful," said the proud apple blossom.

By and by an old woman came into the field. She gathered the roots of the dandelions, out of which she made tea for the sick, and she sold others for money to buy milk for the children.

"But beauty is better than all this," still said the proud little apple blossom. Just then the princess came along. In her hand she carried something that seemed like a beautiful flower. She covered it carefully from the wind. What do you think it was? It was the feathery crown of the dandelion. "See!" she said, "how beautiful it is! I will paint it in a picture with the apple blossoms."

Then the sunbeam kissed the apple blossom, and as he stooped low to kiss the dandelion the apple blossom blushed with shame.

Hans Christian Andersen {Adapted}

THE BRAVE KNIGHT

When Christ was on earth, He had a little band of disciples who loved him very much. The night before He went away from them, He took them to a little upstairs room and there had a supper with them. And it was said that at that supper, He used a beautiful golden cup in which He passed the wine to them, and when He went away from earth, the disciples loved everything He had touched, and they seemed to love most of all this golden cup. They called it the Holy Grail, and it was given to a very good man, who cared for it carefully, and for years it passed from one good man to another, for it was said that if it ever fell into the hands of a man who was not good and Christ-loving the cup would be lost.

So for many years it was carefully kept, and people took long journeys to see the Holy Grail, which the Master himself used when He was on earth. But one day the cup passed into the hands of one who was not worthy, and, as it had been said, it was lost.

They searched for it far and near, but it could not be found. Finally there came some men who called themselves knights. They were brave, strong men, who did many wonderful things for the king, and many of them said: "We will spend our lives hunting for the Holy Grail. We will take long pilgrimages until we find it." And so the knights searched over land and sea, over mountain and plain, hunting for the Holy Grail, but still they found it not. Then there came a knight whose name was Sir Launfal. He was very young—so young that he had never made a journey, nor worn an armor, nor had he ever done a wonderful deed. But he was brave, and said in his heart: "I will find the Holy Grail." So he went to the silversmith and had a beautiful silver armor and golden spurs made, and to the helmet-maker, who made him a helmet of shining silver. Next he chose from the stables the finest steed, and he was then ready for the journey, and Sir Launfal's heart was full of hope.

On the night before the pilgrimage he lay in his room, and the armor hung on the wall before him, with the helmet beside it, and the horse stood ready in the stable. At the first ray of morning he was to begin his journey, and as he lay he slept, and dreamed a dream. He thought it was already morning—the morning of his pilgrimage. He had on his armor and his silver helmet, and was riding out of the castle gate on his beautiful steed. It was a June morning, and everything was beautiful. The very flowers and green grass beneath his feet seemed to bring Sir Launfal a message of hope. And as he rode his heart was very glad, and he said: "I shall find the Holy Grail." He was riding out of the great castle gate when he heard a voice which was tired and weak, and it said: "Will you please give me something?" Sir Launfal looked in surprise, and there, crouching beside the castle gate, was a beggar, poor and ragged and weak, and it was he who had asked in a tired voice, "Will you please give me something?" Sir Launfal looked at him and frowned, and said in his heart, "Why does this beggar lie at my castle gate to spoil the beauty of the morning?" But, because he was a knight and felt that he must give something, he took from his purse a piece of gold and threw it to the beggar. But the beggar looked at him and said, seeing his scornful frown: "I do not wish your gold that you give with scorn. Better to me a poor man's crust." But Sir Launfal rode proudly down the road on his way, for he felt

that he could no longer listen to the poor beggar. Then he rode over land and sea, over mountain and plain, searching everywhere for the Holy Grail, and, although it sometimes seemed very near, he did not find it.

He had now grown to be an old man. The helmet and armor were rusted, his clothes had become thin and ragged, he was stooped and gray, and his eyes had grown dim with the years, but still he searched, and said in his heart: "I will find the Holy Grail." Then he seemed to be near his old home one night, and he said to himself: "Before I go on my way I will once more look at my old home." And he entered the gate, and as he was walking up the path he heard a voice, tired and weak, and it said: "Will you please give me something?" He looked down, and there by his feet lay the beggar who had asked for something at his castle gate the morning he had started on his pilgrimage.

This time Sir Launfal looked at him and smiled. Then he said: "I have only a crust of bread, but I will gladly share it with you." Then, taking from his pocket a single crust of bread, he stooped and gave the half to the beggar. Then Sir Launfal said: "I will get you water to quench your thirst," and he went to where the little spring ran merrily along in the twilight, and, taking from his pocket a little tin cup, battered and rusted from years of use, he filled it to the brim with clear, cold water, and returned with it to the beggar. As soon as the tin cup touched the beggar's hand it turned into a shining cup of gold, and behold! the beggar was no longer there, but in his place there stood a man, tall, strong and beautiful, wearing shining white garments, and around his head there seemed a radiant glow of light. The beautiful man looked at Sir Launfal, and he said, in a voice full of love and gentleness: "In your own castle yard you have found the Holy Grail by doing kindly service to one of my needy ones."

The beautiful man was gone. Sir Launfal lay in his room. The morning sunlight came in through the window, telling him it was time to arise and go on his journey. And his helmet and armor still hung on the wall, ready for him; but Sir Launfal lay long in thought. There was no need of his long pilgrimage, for the poor and the needy were close to his door, and he stayed to help them with gifts of love.

James Russell Lowell {Adapted}

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

King Robert was ruler of all Sicily. Many lands and beautiful castles were his, and he had many servants, who obeyed his every word; but they obeyed not because they loved him, but because they feared him. He was a proud king, and haughty—that is, he would look over his lands, and he would say: "Surely, this is a great kingdom, and I am a great king!"

One Easter Sunday morning, King Robert went to church. He wore his finest robes, and riding with him were all of his lords and ladies. The morning was beautiful, and everything seemed to bear a message of love and joy. The grass and flowers that grew by the roadside, the trees that waved their branches above, and the blue sky, all seemed to bear the same message.

But King Robert saw nothing beautiful. He was thinking only of himself. They reached the church, and the sunlight came through the beautiful windows, seeming to speak of God above. The pure white lilies on the altar whispered to each other, "On this day Christ was risen!" The music from the organ seemed to reach every heart, but King Robert sat unmoved in his pew. When the minister spoke, the king heard nothing of the sermon until certain words caught his ear. The minister was saying these words: "The Lord can exalt the humble and can bring down the proud and mighty from their seats." The choir chanted the words again and again.

As the king heard, he threw back his head and said: "Why do they teach such words as these? There is no power on earth or in heaven above that could take my throne."

By and by the king fell asleep in his pew. He must have slept a long time, for when he awoke the great church was dark and the moonlight was streaming through the great glass windows. The king sprang to his feet in alarm, and said: "How dare they go away and leave me alone?" He rushed quickly to the door, but it was locked. He called loudly and knocked upon the door, and finally the old sexton, asleep on the outside, heard the noise and shouted: "Who is there?" And the king answered: "It is I—the king. Open the door!"

The old sexton shook his head and murmured to himself: "It must be some madman locked in the church," but he unlocked the door, and the king rushed wildly out—on out in the street, where the moonlight fell upon him. Then suddenly he stopped and gazed at his clothes in amazement, for instead of wearing his royal robes he wore nothing but rags. His crown was gone, and he seemed a beggar, and he cried out: "How can these things be? Some one has robbed me while I have slept, and left me these rags."

Then he rushed on to the great castle, and at the gate he again called: "Open! I, the king, am here." The great gate swung open and the king rushed on through the great castle halls, never pausing until he reached the throne room, and there he stopped and stood looking in surprise and amazement, for there on his throne sat another king, wearing his crown and wearing his robes, and holding in his hand his scepter. King Robert looked at the new king and cried: "Why do you sit on my throne, wearing my robes and my crown and my scepter?"

The new king only smiled and said: "I am the king, and who art thou?"

King Robert threw back his head haughtily and answered: "I am the king. You have no right on my throne."

At these words the strange king smiled sadly, and replied: "I am the king, and thou shalt be my servant. Yes, thou shalt be the servant of all my servants, for thou shalt be court jester, and wear the cap and bells, and have for your companion the ugly ape."

Before King Robert could say more, the servants came and hurried him through the castle halls, down to a little room, cold and bare, with nothing but a pile of straw in a corner, and there they left him alone, save for the ugly ape, which sat in the corner grinning at him. As King Robert looked down on the rough pile of straw he said: "It must surely be a dream, and I will awaken in the morning and find myself the king."

The morning came, but when he awoke he heard the rustle of the straw beneath him, and there in the corner still sat the ugly ape. That day the new king called him to the throne, and, looking at him, said: "Art thou the king?" And King Robert proudly threw back his head as before and answered: "I am the king."

And each day the new king sent for him and asked him the same question, and each day King Robert gave the same proud and haughty answer. One day there came a summons to the court—King Robert's brother, the Emperor of Rome, sent word for King Robert and all of his court to visit him at Easter-time, and great preparations were made for the journey. When the train was ready it formed a beautiful procession. The new king rode at its head, in his splendor, and all the beautiful ladies and the brave knights came riding behind in their gorgeous robes. At the last of this splendid train rode King Robert on a queer old mule. He had on the cap and bells, and behind him sat the ugly ape, and, as they passed along the street, the boys laughed and jeered; but King Robert said to himself: "They will not laugh long," because his heart was glad now, for they were going to Rome, where his own brother ruled, and now surely he would be restored to his rights, for his brother would see and know that the new king was an impostor. Thus the splendid train rode to Rome, and the emperor was there to meet them.

When the emperor saw the strange king he went to him and embraced him and called him "brother." At this, King Robert rushed forward and cried out: "I am the king, thy brother. This man is an impostor. Do you not know me? I am the king." But the emperor only looked at him strangely, and, turning to the strange king, he said: "Why do you keep this madman at your court?" The new king only smiled, and made no answer.

The visit ended, and again the splendid train passed back to Sicily, and King Robert still rode behind. His heart was very sad, because he thought: "If my own brother knows me not, what hope can there be?"

When the new king came back to Sicily he changed many of the cruel laws, and the whole land was made glad and happy, as it had never been before. King Robert noticed the change and wondered at it.

It was Easter-time again, and King Robert said in his heart, "I will go to church again this morning." Behind all the procession he rode, as usual, and took his seat in the back of the church, so that no one might see him. Everything was beautiful at this Easter-time. The church, the flowers, the music, all bore the Easter message. When the music began it crept into King Robert's heart, and as he listened the tears rolled down his cheek, and he bowed his head in prayer. The first words that he heard were the old, familiar ones: "The Lord can exalt the humble and bring down the proud and mighty from their seats." As poor King Robert listened he humbly bowed his head and said: "Ah, surely that is true; the Lord in heaven is mightiest of all. He is the king."

When the king and his court had reached home again that day, the new king called King Robert immediately to his throne room, and upon his face there seemed to be a glorious light shining forth, and, looking at King Robert with a wondrous smile, he asked the old, old question: "Art thou the king?" But King Robert only bowed his head and said: "I know not who I am. I only know that I am the most humble and most unworthy of all men to be the king." To these words the new king replied: "Thou art indeed the king, and I—I am an angel sent from Heaven to help thee for a little while."

When King Robert raised his head, behold! he was alone. The angel had gone. He again had on his own robes, his own crown, and was bearing his own scepter.

That day, when the courtiers came to wait upon the king, they found him kneeling beside his throne in prayer.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow {Adapted}

THE GREAT STONE FACE

One afternoon, when the sun was going down, a mother and her little boy sat at the door of their cottage talking together and watching the great mountains before them, as they changed with the tints of the setting sun, from gold to crimson, and then to deep purple, till finally the afterglow was gone, leaving only the bare mountains standing out in gray relief against the evening sky.

"Mother," said the child, whose name was Ernest, "the Great Stone Face is smiling at us. I wish it could speak, for it looks so very kind that I know its voice is pleasant."

And what was the Great Stone Face?

Off in the distance one great mountain rose far up above the others, and stood like a great giant among its fellows. By some peculiar art the rocks had been thrown together in such a way as to make the mountain look almost exactly like a human face. There was the broad arch of the forehead, a hundred feet in length; the nose, with its long bridge, and the great lips, which, if they could have spoken, would surely have rolled thunder from one end of the valley to the other.

It was a happy lot for children to grow up to manhood or womanhood with the Great Stone Face before their eyes, because all of its features were noble, so that just to look at it made one wish to be better.

This, then, was what Ernest and his mother sat looking at long after the sun had sunk behind those great piles of stones.

"Mother," said Ernest, "if I were to see a man with such a face I know I should love him."

"If an old prophecy comes true," answered his mother, "we may see a man some time or other with exactly such a face as that."

"Oh, tell me about it, mother. Will it really come true?" eagerly inquired Ernest.

Then his mother told him a story which her mother had told to her when she was a child. No one knew who had heard it first. The Indians had known it years before, and they said it had been murmured by the mountain streams and whispered by the wind among the treetops. And the story was this: At some future day—no one knew when—a child would be born in the valley who would grow up to be the noblest and greatest man of his time, and his face would look exactly like the Great Stone Face which had gazed kindly down on the valley for so many years. Many of the people in the valley said this was only a foolish tale, never to come to pass, but a few still watched and waited, hoping for the great man to come, but as yet he had not appeared.

When Ernest heard the story he clapped his hands, and said eagerly: "Oh, mother, dear mother, I do hope I shall live to see him."

The mother smiled, and, putting her hand on the boy's head, said: "Perhaps you may."

Ernest never forgot the story his mother told him. It was always in his mind whenever he looked upon the Great Stone Face. He spent his boyhood days in the humble little cottage, helping his mother with the simple household duties, and, as he grew older, working in the fields to earn their daily bread.

Ernest was a quiet boy, but happy. There was no school in the little village, but a great teacher was there. After the day's toil was over Ernest would sit for hours watching the Great Stone Face, and to him it became the teacher of all that was good and noble. Many times, as the sunset rays tinted the side of the great mountain and lighted up all the features of the wonderful face, Ernest would imagine that it smiled on him, and perhaps it did. Who knows?

Often a great longing would come to Ernest as he watched the Great Face, and he would say again, "Oh, I wish the great man would come."

But the years passed by, and Ernest grew from a happy little child to a quiet, thoughtful boy, and still the great man did not appear.

But one time a rumor went through all the valley that the great man had at last arrived. His early home had been in the quiet valley, but as a young man he had gone into the world to seek his fortune, and truly he had found it, for everything he attempted prospered exceedingly, till it might be said of him, as of Midas in the fable, that whatever his fingers touched changed at once to piles of gold. His name was Mr. Gathergold. All who saw him declared him to be the exact image of the Great Stone Face on the mountain side, and the man so long expected to fulfill the prophecy.

The whole valley was in a state of great excitement, for the wonderful personage was coming back to his native home to spend his last days in peace and quiet. He sent before him a whole army of architects and workmen, who built for him a palace more beautiful and grand than anything the simple village people had ever before seen.

The outside was of pure marble, dazzling white, while the interior was inlaid with solid gold and precious stones.

Ernest watched the great palace grow, and his heart was glad, for finally his hopes were to come true. He waited eagerly for the great man himself to come. He spent more time than usual gazing at the face on the mountain side, that he might know exactly how Mr. Gathergold would look.

Finally the day of the great man's arrival came. The whole village came out to see him. The rumbling of wheels was heard, and a carriage drawn by four horses dashed down the road.

"Here he comes!" cried the people. "Here comes the great Mr. Gathergold!"

As the carriage drew near the people pressed around, and there through the window they saw the great man. He was little and old, with a face as hard and yellow as the piles of gold he had gathered together. He had a low forehead, small, sharp eyes, puckered about with many wrinkles, and very sharp lips.

"The very image of the Great Stone Face!" shouted the people. "Sure enough, the old prophecy is true, and here we have the great man come at last."

By the roadside there chanced to be a poor woman and her two children, who, as the carriage passed, held out their hands and asked for help. A hand was thrust out of the window, and a few pennies were thrown on the ground. Then the carriage rolled on, and the people continued to shout, "He is the very image of the Great Stone Face."

But Ernest stood apart from the crowd, nor did he join in the shout, for his heart was full of sorrow and disappointment. Through an opening in the trees he saw the Great Stone Face looking benignly down upon him, and the great lips seemed to say: "He will come. Fear not, Ernest. The man will come."

The years went on, and Ernest ceased to be a boy. He had grown to be a young man now. He was not much noticed in the valley, for he was still quiet and modest. They saw nothing remarkable about his way of living, save that when the work of the day was done he loved to go apart and gaze upon the Great Stone Face.

They knew not that it had become his greatest teacher, filling his heart and mind with thoughts and hopes far above earthly things.

By this time poor old Mr. Gathergold was dead and buried, and the strange part about the matter was that when his wealth left him, as it did some time before he died, and he became a poor old man, the people seemed to forget that there ever had been a resemblance to the Great Stone Face. Indeed, they said it was all a mistake, and the great man was yet to come.

Suddenly through the valley there ran another rumor. Years before a young man had left the valley, had gone into the world as a warrior, and finally had become a great commander. Such had been his character and life that the illustrious man was called by the name of Old Blood-and-Thunder. This old general, being worn out with warfare, decided to return to his native valley and spend his last days in peace. But the most

wonderful thing about Old Blood-and-Thunder was the fact that all who knew him said that he was the man so long hoped for in the valley, for he looked exactly like the Great Stone Face.

Great preparations, therefore, were made to receive the General—a banquet was to be given and speeches made in his honor. On the day of the festival Ernest, with all the others of the village, left their work and went to the woods, where the banquet was held. A great crowd surrounded the tables, so that Ernest at first could not see the great man for whom he had waited and hoped so long, so he contented himself with looking at the great face on the mountain side, which he could see plainly through the trees. Meanwhile he could hear those around him talking about Old Blood-and-Thunder and the Great Stone Face.

"'Tis the same face, to a hair," cried one man, clapping his hands for joy.

"Wonderfully like, that's a fact," said another.

"Like! Why, I call it Old Blood-and-Thunder himself, in a monstrous looking-glass," cried a third.

Just then a silence fell on the crowd, for the General rose to speak, and as he did so Ernest for the first time saw the hero. There he stood, head and shoulders above the crowd, with the golden epaulets glittering on his uniform. Long and eagerly Ernest gazed on his face, and then beyond, to the one on the mountain side. Were they, indeed, alike? Ernest saw in the warrior's face only cruelty and hardness, with none of the tender sympathy he knew so well in the other face.

"This is not the man," sighed Ernest, as he turned sadly away. "Must we wait longer yet?"

But as the great mountain rose before him, once again the lips seemed to say: "Fear not, Ernest; fear not. He will come."

The years sped swiftly by. Ernest still lived in the valley, a quiet and gentle man, doing his work as best he knew. But gradually the people of the village had come to know and feel that Ernest knew more than they. Not a day passed by that the world was not better because this man, humble as he was, had lived. He would always help a neighbor in need, and the people had learned to know where to come for aid. His thoughts were of things good and noble, and so his deeds and words were always good.

By this time the people had seen their mistake in thinking Old Blood-and-Thunder was the great man of prophecy; but now again there were reports saying that without doubt the great man had at last appeared. He, like Mr. Gathergold and Old Blood-and-Thunder, was a native of the valley, but had left it as a young man, and had now become a great man. He had not the rich man's wealth, nor the honor of the General, but he had a tongue which could speak more beautiful words than the world had ever heard before. Great crowds flocked to hear him from all parts of the country.

The people of the village were proud to think that they could claim the great man, for it was said he bore an exact likeness to the Great Stone Face—so much so that they called him "Old Stony Phiz."

And now the illustrious man was once more coming to visit his native land, and great preparations were made to receive him.

With great eagerness and hope Ernest waited for his coming, and on the day appointed went with the crowd to meet him. The air was filled with music and the shouts of the people, for now they felt that surely the old prophecy was to be fulfilled.

Then the great man's carriage came in view. There he sat, smiling and bowing to the people, while they threw up their hats in wild excitement and enthusiasm, and shouted: "Hoorah for Old Stony Phiz. The great man has come at last."

Ernest looked long at the man as he sat in his carriage, but finally turned away sadly and slowly, and said: "The features are alike, but he has not the heart nor the love and sympathy which make a face beautiful. He is not the man, but he might have been, had he lived the best he knew."

Then again he turned to his great teacher on the mountain side, and, as the late afternoon sun tinted all its features, it seemed to smile on Ernest, and once more the lips seemed to speak:

"Lo, here I am, Ernest. I have waited longer than thou, and am not yet weary. Fear not. The man will come."

The years hurried onward, and now they began to bring white hairs and scatter them over the head of Ernest. They made wrinkles across his forehead and furrows in his cheeks. He was an old man; but more than the white hairs on his head were the beautiful thoughts in his mind, and the loving words from his lips, and the kindly deeds from his hands. He was no longer unknown. Great men from far and near came to see and talk with him, and as they went away their hearts were better for having been with him. He had become a preacher, and often, just as the sun set, he would stand on a little knoll and talk with the people who crowded to hear the words he spoke.

One evening, as Ernest sat at his doorstep, a friend came to talk with him. He was a poet, and wrote of things which God had made, in language so beautiful that one wished always to hear it. Ernest loved to read his words, and this evening, as they sat together, he looked long and earnestly at the poet and then up at the Great Stone Face, which seemed to be smiling down upon them. Then he sighed and shook his head sadly.

"Why are you sad?" asked the poet.

Then Ernest told him of the prophecy which he had longed all his life to see fulfilled. "And," he said, "when I read your beautiful words, I think surely you are worthy to be the man I have longed to see, and yet I see no likeness."

The poet sadly shook his head, and said: "No, Ernest. I am not worthy. My words, indeed, may be beautiful, but my life has not been so great and good as the words I write."

Then, as sunset drew near, the two walked to the little knoll where Ernest was to talk to the people.

He stood in a little niche, with the mountains above him, and the glory of the evening sun shone around his silvered hair. At a distance could be seen the Great Stone Face, surrounded by a golden light.

As Ernest talked his face glowed with the depth of his feeling, and suddenly the poet threw his arms above his head and shouted:

"Behold! Behold! Ernest is himself the likeness of the Great Stone Face!"

Then all the people looked and saw that what the poet had said was true. The prophecy was fulfilled. The Great Man had come at last.

Nathaniel Hawthorne {Adapted}

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE

In a forest in the far, far East grew a great many pine trees. Most of them were tall trees, higher than the houses that we see, and with wide, strong branches. But there was one tree that was not nearly so tall as the others; in fact, it was no taller than some of the children in the kindergarten.

Now, the tall trees could see far, far out over the hilltops and into the valleys, and they could hear all the noises that went on in the world beyond the forest, but the Little Tree was so small and the other trees grew so high and thick about it that it could not see nor hear these things at all; but the other trees were very kind, and they would stoop down and tell them to the Little Tree. One night in the winter time there seemed to be something strange happening in the little town among the hills, for the trees did not go to sleep after the sun went down, but put their heads together and spoke in strange, low whispers that were full of awe and wonder. The Little Tree, from its place close down to the ground, did not understand what it was all about. It listened awhile, and then lifted its head as high as ever it could and shouted to its tall neighbor: "Will you not stoop and tell me what is happening?" And the big tree stooped down and whispered: "The shepherds out on the hilltops are telling strange stories while they watch their sheep. The air is filled with sweet music, and there is a wonderful star coming up in the east, traveling westward always, and the shepherds say that they are waiting for it to stop and shine over a humble stable in their little town. I have not heard why it is going to stop there, but I will look again and listen." So the tall tree lifted up its head again, and reached far out so that it might hear more of the wonderful story.

Bye and bye it stooped down again, and whispered to the Little Tree: "Oh, Little Tree, listen! There are angels among the shepherds on the hills, and they are all talking together. They seem to be awaiting the birth of a little child, who will be a king among the people, and the beautiful star will shine above the stable where the little king will be laid in a manger." The tree again raised its head to listen, and the Little Tree, much puzzled, thought within itself: "It is very strange, indeed. * * * Oh, how I wish that I could see it all!"

It waited a little longer, and everything grew quiet, and a great peace came upon the forest. * * * Then suddenly the town, and even the forest was illuminated with a strange, white light that made everything as bright as day, and the air was filled with the flutter of angels' wings, and with music such as the world had never heard before.

The people and the trees, even the stars in the heaven, lifted up their voices and sang together * * * and the whole world was filled with music and joy and love for the little Christ-child who had come to dwell upon the earth.

The Little Tree was filled with fear and wonder, for so great was the excitement that the other trees had almost forgotten it, and it could not understand the mysterious sounds; but bye and bye its tall friend said: "Listen, listen, Little Tree! Such news I have to tell! The Christ has come—the King! And the whole world is singing such beautiful music. There are wise men coming from the East, bringing beautiful gifts to the Christ-child. The angels, too, are upon the earth, and they bear gifts of gold and rare, beautiful stones. Wait! I will tell you more."

The tall tree had scarcely lifted up its head when it stooped again and whispered to the Little Tree: "Look! Look! Little Tree! They are coming this way; the angels are coming here, into our forest! Lift up your head high and you will see them as they pass."

The Little Tree lifted up its head and saw the white flutter of angel robes and heard the weird, sweet voices of the heavenly host who came with precious gifts into the forest.

"Oh," said the Little Tree, "they are coming here, toward me! What shall I do?" And in fear it bent its head so low that it almost touched the ground. But the music came nearer and nearer, and the Little Tree felt a tender hand upon its branches, and a soft, gentle voice said to it: "Arise, Little Tree, and come with us, for we have come into the forest to seek you. Yes, you, the very smallest among the trees, are to be our gift-bearer. Come; lift up your head."

In fear and trembling the Little Tree did as the angel bade it. But when it looked into the angel's face and saw the love and kindness there, all fear was gone, and it said to the angel: "Yes; make me ready. I will come with you to the little Christ-child in the manger." So all the angels brought their gifts of precious jewels and shining gold, and fastened them upon the branches of the Little Tree. Then the leader of the angels' band took up the Little Tree from the ground and bore it, laden with its precious burden, to the feet of the Christ-child.

THE STORY OF ABRAHAM

Long, long ago there lived in the far away land of Ur a man who was very wealthy. His name was Abraham. The country in which he lived was beautiful and very rich. The fields were not only well watered by rivers and streams, but were carefully cultivated. Corn, dates, apples and grapes grew there abundantly. Fine harvests were reaped from their farms. Splendid herds of cattle and flocks of sheep were pastured in the meadows. In the city were beautiful homes, for the people were prosperous. They painted fine pictures and cut beautiful figures out of marble blocks, and were fond of music. But Abraham was not so much interested in the city as in the country, for he belonged to a family of shepherds. He did not care so much for walled cities as for meadow lands, forest trees and running streams. When Abraham grew a little older he became very thoughtful, and began to dislike the ways of the people of Ur, for they were idolaters. So when some of the servants brought back from the city, idols into his father's home, he broke them. His one desire was to do right and to be good.

One day, when he was herding his cattle not far from his father's home, he heard a strange Voice saying to him: "Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and come unto a land which I shall show thee." He was greatly surprised, and looked around to find out who was speaking to him. He saw no man, so he thought that the Voice was only a fancy or a day dream. A few days after, when he was bringing home some wandering sheep, he heard the same Voice, the same words, and thought he saw a gleam of light. He felt that God was speaking to him, but the words made him very sad. If he obeyed the Voice he knew that he would have to leave his friends, the fields where he sported with his boy companions and loved ones, but something within him kept saying that he ought to obey the Voice, because it was God's Voice. So he resolved to take his nephew, Lot, with him, and set out for the Promised Land. The day for starting came. Great bundles of goods were put upon the camels and led off by the drivers. Flocks of sheep and herds of cattle filled the morning air with their bleatings and their bellowings. Some of the people thought that Abraham was very foolish to undertake such a journey, and would certainly come to grief. His brother Nahor pleaded with Abraham not to go. He told Abraham about a great desert that he would have to cross. Even if he crossed it safely, the people in that far away country were very cruel, and would fight them and kill them, and make slaves of their children. Abraham listened to his brother, and said that he knew there were difficulties ahead of him, but he must obey the Voice of God. Then his face brightened, when he added that he felt sure God would watch over them all as a shepherd watches over his sheep. He looked brave and noble as he bade them all good-by and started off.

At the close of the first day they halted beside a stream, where the cattle drank and rested until morning. The servants pitched a number of tents and made Abraham and his family comfortable. Abraham rolled together a few big stones and built an altar, and in the presence of his family and servants offered up an evening sacrifice and prayed that God should guide them and their little ones into the Promised Land. After many weary days and nights they reached Canaan. It was a beautiful country, full of vines and harvest fields, and pasture lands. The valleys were warm and the highlands were cool. Here and there on the hillsides they saw the oak, the sycamore, and the pine growing. Best of all, the people were kind to Abraham and his servants, and helped them to get settled in their new homes. Their new friends were not so rich as their old ones. They wore rough garments made of camel's hair and fastened round the waist with a belt. They lived in rough huts and rocky caves, and were warlike. But they treated Abraham generously and were very kind to the little children. Abraham was delighted with the Promised Land, although he passed through many a severe trial in it.

There was one joy, however, that brightened his life—God had given him a beautiful son. The little boy had grown to be a strong, beautiful youth. His mother took loving care in making his little garments, and his father gave him a pet lamb, and often brought home to him a wild bird. Abraham was growing old, and thought of the day when his boy would be a strong man, caring for herds and flocks. Many a time he prayed to God for his boy, that he might be true and brave and good, and worthy of the promises that God had made to him concerning his people. But one day, when he was returning from a visit to his herdsmen and was resting beside a well in the grove which he had planted in Beersheba, he heard the Voice again saying: "Take thy son, thine only son Isaac, and offer him up for a sacrifice on a mount which I shall show thee." Abraham was grieved. He said to himself: "I have left Ur and the land of my brother and my father. I have endured many hardships, and surely I will not be called upon to sacrifice my only son, my sweet, loving boy. I can not bear it. His mother can not live when she hears of it." But the Voice said more earnestly than ever: "Take thy son, thine only son Isaac, and offer him up for a sacrifice on the mount that I shall show thee." He knew that it was the same Voice that had spoken to him many times, and that he must obey it. And there gradually came into his life strength and a willingness to obey the Voice. After necessary preparation Abraham, his son, and his servants set out for the mountain. For three days they journeyed under divine guidance, until they came to the foot of the mount. Then Abraham said to his servants: "Abide ye here, and I and the lad will go and worship yonder, and come unto you again." The young lad was happy over the coming sacrifice. He shouldered the bundle of wood and started off up the hillside. But he did not see the lamb, and, turning to his father, said: "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" The question so innocently asked grieved the father's heart, for he knew that God had commanded him to offer up his son instead of a lamb. He felt that he could not tell his boy about it, so he said: "God Himself will provide a lamb for the burnt offering." At last they came to the spot where the sacrifice was to be offered. The father, very sad and broken-hearted, began rolling together some stones for an altar. Slowly he laid the wood in its place, and wept when he thought of the sacrifice. Then with a tearful voice he told the lad that he was to be the sacrifice. He laid the boy upon the altar and kissed him. At that moment he heard a Voice, louder than ever before, saying: "Abraham." He answered, "Here am I." The Voice said: "Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do any harm unto him, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." With glad wonder Abraham looked around, and there, to his great surprise, a ram was caught in some thick bushes. Hurriedly he caught the ram, unbound his son, and offered up the ram as a sacrifice with great joy. And, kneeling beside the altar, the aged father thanked God, and homeward they

returned with glad hearts and happy spirits.

And Isaac grew to be a good and noble man, and the Lord prospered him. His father, Abraham, lived many years in the Promised Land, and when he died the whole country was full of grief, and with sorrow mingled with love they followed the aged saint to the sunny slopes of beautiful Macpelah and laid him in the tomb. Each whispered to the other that he was a good and brave man. Many a time they would visit the cave where the great man lay and tell one another about his wonderful life, his many trials, his noble faith, and how he always obeyed the Voice of God.

On a rough stone beside the tomb a friend chiseled the words: "Abraham, the Friend of God."

Bible {Adapted}

THE STORY OF MOSES

Many years ago, the Heavenly Father sent a baby boy into a home in a far country.

When a baby comes to your home you want to tell every one you see, do you not?

But in that little home it was very different. Miriam, the baby's sister, could not tell any one about the little brother, and the poor mother had to keep the baby hidden away. Shall I tell you why?

In that country there lived a wicked king, who did not love little children, and whenever he heard that a boy baby had come into a house he sent his soldiers to take the baby away.

This mother loved her baby dearly, and she wanted to keep him always. But when the baby began to grow, and to laugh and to cry, just as all babies do, the mother's heart was very sad, for she knew she could hide him no longer.

One day she took the baby and went down to the river. There she gathered a great many of the tall grasses that grew on the river bank, and of these grasses she made a little basket, or ark, just large enough to hold the baby. She wove it carefully, and when it was finished she covered it over with pitch and slime, so that no water could come into it.

Then she lifted her baby, put him into the queer little basket, carried the basket to the river and set it down carefully in the water. The tall rushes growing there held the little cradle, that the water might not wash it away.

The mother turned and went quickly to her home. But do you think she left the baby alone? Ah, no. Among the tall grasses near the river's brim stood Miriam, the sister, patiently watching the queer cradle.

While Miriam watched, the princess came to the river to bathe. The maidens who had come to help her walked along the river's side.

Presently the princess saw the queer little basket and sent one of her maids to get it.

When the princess opened the basket, the baby wakened and began to cry, and the princess felt very sorry for the little one.

Miriam, who had watched so faithfully beside the river, now came to the princess.

"Shall I go and find thee a woman who will take care of the child?" she said. And the princess said, "Go."

What did Miriam do, do you think? She ran as fast as she could and brought the baby's own mother.

When the princess saw the mother she did not know that it was the baby's own mother, and she said to her: "Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages."

Do you not think that mother's heart was glad as she took her own baby home? The baby could run and play now, and laugh and crow as much as it liked, for the great princess loved him, and no harm could come to him.

The mother called the baby's name "Moses," she said, "because I drew him out of the water," and in that far country that is what the name "Moses" means.

Bible {Adapted}

THE STORY OF DAVID

Long, long ago, on the green hills of Bethlehem, a little shepherd boy tended his sheep.

Ruddy and strong was little David, for the sun gave him rosy cheeks, and the bracing wind made him long to run races with his own shadow, just from pure happiness.

Many a time he lay on the soft grass, gazing up at the blue sky, dotted with fleecy white clouds—white as his own lambs. Many a time, as he led his flock homeward at evening, he saw the sun sink in the gold and crimson west, and, as the dusk deepened, the great round moon rise above the hills, flooding the world with silvery light.

With all this beauty around him, do you wonder that he was good and happy?

One day, while David was watching his sheep in the field, Samuel, the High Priest of the Lord, appeared before Jesse, David's father.

On a very wonderful errand had he come.

He told David's father that the Lord had chosen one of his sons to be the new king of Israel, because Saul, the old king, was no longer fit to rule.

"Call all your sons before me," said Samuel, "that I may anoint the Lord's chosen one."

Oh, how proudly Jesse called his eldest son!

Tall, and straight, and strong, he stood there, looking every inch a king.

"Surely," thought Samuel, "I have found him!"

But the Lord looked down into his heart—just as he looks into our hearts today—and saw that all was not right there, and so the Lord said to Samuel: "He is not the chosen one."

Then Samuel asked Jesse to call his second son.

But when the Lord read his thoughts He said to the priest: "No; I have not chosen this one."

Jesse called his third son, but Samuel only shook his head. In haste, Jesse called all his other sons before the High Priest, but Samuel was forced to say sadly, "The Lord hath not chosen these." Almost in despair, he turned to Jesse, asking: "Are all thy children here?" And he answered: "There remaineth yet the youngest, and behold, he keepeth the sheep."

Joyfully Samuel cried: "Send and fetch him, for we will not sit down till he come hither." And he sent and brought him in.

When Samuel looked into his pure, innocent face, he knew that now the chosen one of the Lord stood before him.

Taking his horn of oil, he anointed him King of Israel, "and the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward."

When Samuel left him, David went quietly back to the field, and tended his sheep, just as of old.

Day by day he tried to do every duty well, so that by and by he would be worthy to be a king.

Meanwhile, up in his royal palace, King Saul was in deep trouble. In his distress he longed to hear the beautiful music of the harp. He therefore sent for David, that he might play for him. When David came he paused beside the throne, and Saul, looking up, saw before him a tall and handsome youth, bearing a golden harp.

Bowing low, David begged permission to play for his King. Gladly Saul bade him begin.

First, the young harpist struck a ringing chord that thrilled through the vast hall.

Then he began to play a low, sweet melody!

It sounded like the summer breeze sighing softly over a grassy meadow, and setting the dainty daisies and buttercups swaying on their stems. Suddenly the music swelled stronger, until it seemed like a flashing fountain, springing up in a burst of sparkling spray.

Then the sweet tones slowly softened.

Fainter they grew—and yet fainter—like the music of a dream—till at last they died away into silence.

Spellbound sat King Saul when the player ceased.

And David came to Saul and stood before him, and Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor bearer.

Long afterward David wore the crown of Israel.

He was a wise and good king, for the Heavenly Father, who blessed his youth, watched over him all his days.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH

Many years ago there lived a little lad named Joseph. He was comely, and his face was beautiful, because his heart was pure and good.

Joseph had many brothers, but because of his gentleness and comeliness the old father loved him more than all the others. One time he gave Joseph a coat woven with many beautiful colors, as a token of his love for his favorite son.

Now, when the older brothers saw this they were angry and jealous, and from that time on they sought to do him harm.

Jacob, the father, owned many sheep, and the sons cared for them, sometimes leading them far from home to find the best pastures. Joseph often went with the brothers to tend the flocks, but he loved best to care for the tender little lambs, leading them into the greenest pastures and beside the quiet water.

One time the brothers were far from home with the flocks, and the father, being anxious for them and longing to know how they fared, sent Joseph, the beloved son, with many provisions, to the place where his brothers were. The lad started on his journey with a light and merry heart, for all the world looked bright to him. He wore the beautiful coat of many colors, and the people often stopped to look at the lad, with his comely face and beautiful coat.

As he approached the place where his brothers were they saw him when he was yet some distance away, but the anger and jealousy arose in their hearts, and they said: "Ah! Here comes the best beloved son. Let us do away with him. Then the love which our father gives to him may be bestowed upon us." So, as the lad drew nearer, they planned how they might destroy him. But one, the oldest brother, loved Joseph, and tried to save him from the hands of his evil brothers. So when they said, "Let us destroy him," Reuben, the eldest, said: "Nay, but let us cast him into a pit near by," thinking he would save him when the other brothers left.

So when Joseph drew near they seized him, stripped him of his coat of many colors, and cast him into a pit, and left him there alone.

Then they said: "Let us make a feast. See, our father hath sent us many things." And they sat down and made a feast with the things which their brother Joseph had brought to them.

As they were eating they looked up, and, coming down the roadway, they saw a large company of merchantmen passing on their way to Egypt. Then an evil plan came to the mind of one brother, and he said: "It is going to bring us no gain to keep Joseph in the pit. Let us sell him to those men and gain money for ourselves." The brothers agreed, and Joseph, the beloved son, was sold into Egypt for twenty pieces of silver.

When the brothers went home they took the coat of many colors to the old father, and said: "Is not this thy son's coat which we found? An evil beast hath surely destroyed him." And the old father wept for Joseph, his son, and would not be comforted.

PART II.

The great caravan moved toward Egypt, and there the boy was sold again into the hands of a very rich man, in whose sight he found great favor, and who placed him in a position of honor in his own household. And Joseph grew in comeliness and beauty, for his heart was pure and the Lord was his friend and helper, prospering him in all that he did. He grew in favor with his master, who in turn made him ruler over all his house.

But Joseph had an enemy in the house, one who was jealous of his great honor and position, and she tried in every way to do Joseph harm. One day she falsely told the master of the house that Joseph had done a very evil thing. The master, being exceedingly angry, and thinking Joseph had betrayed his trust, stripped him of his fine garments and cast him into prison.

But the Lord was still with Joseph in his great trouble, so that he found favor with the keeper of the prison, who treated him most kindly, and Joseph sought in many ways to relieve the suffering and sorrow of those in the prison with him.

One day he helped two of the king's servants by telling them the meaning of two strange dreams they had, for dreams in those olden days were often sent to people by God to warn them, or prepare them for something which would happen, and God gave to Joseph the wisdom to understand the meaning and interpretation of those dreams. Thus, when the two servants were troubled because of their dreams, Joseph told them the meaning. One servant was released from the prison, and as he left, Joseph asked that he might remember him when he came before the king, that he, too, might be released. But the servant, when he was free, forgot the one who had helped him when in trouble.

Two years passed away, and Joseph remained in prison, but he still trusted in his God.

One night Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, was much troubled by his strange dreams. He called together all of his wise men and magicians, to know the interpretation of them, but none could tell the meaning. The king's trouble became known to his servants, and suddenly the one who had been in prison remembered Joseph, the man who had interpreted his own dream. He quickly told the king, who ordered Joseph to be brought immediately before him.

When Joseph stood before Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, he humbly bowed his head, and said: "The wisdom is not mine, but God in heaven shall tell thee the interpretation of thy dreams." And Joseph spoke to the king as God gave him wisdom, and told him the meaning of his dreams. And this was the meaning:

There should be seven years of plenty in the land of Egypt, and after that, seven years of famine throughout the land.

Then Joseph said: "Let Pharaoh, the king, choose a man, wise and discreet, who will sow and gather the harvest for the seven years of plenty, to fill the barns and storehouses with grain, so that when the seven years of famine come there will be grain enough and to spare in the land of Egypt."

As Pharaoh, the king, looked upon Joseph and heard him speak, he loved him, and said: "In all Egypt there is no man so wise as thou. Gather the harvest, to fill the barns and storehouses, in the seven years of plenty. I will make thee ruler over all Egypt. Thou shalt dwell with me and all men shall obey thee."

And Pharaoh took off the ring from his own hand and put it upon Joseph's hand, and dressed him in beautiful garments, and put a gold chain about his neck. And Joseph rode in the chariot next to the king of Egypt, and as they rode through the streets all the people bowed before Joseph and knew him as their ruler, and loved him.

Then Joseph went throughout all Egypt and commanded the people to build great storehouses and barns, and to gather in the corn and grain, and fill them full, against the seven years of famine which were to come. When the seven years of plenty were passed, and the famine was over all the land, there was grain and to spare in all Egypt, because Joseph had gathered the storehouses full.

When the people from other countries heard this they came to Egypt to buy bread, and the king sent them to Joseph. And Joseph opened the great storehouses, and sold grain to all who came. And the Lord was with Joseph and prospered him in all that he did.

PART III.

Now, Jacob, with his eleven sons, Joseph's brothers, still lived in the land of Canaan, and the famine was over all the land, so that there was no bread in the house to eat.

Then Jacob, the father, called his sons to him and said: "I have heard that there is corn in Egypt. Go down there and buy for us, that we may live and not die."

So Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy grain, and Joseph was ruler over all Egypt, and sold grain to all who came. His brothers came before him and bowed their faces to the ground as they asked for food, for the famine was sore in their land. Now, Joseph knew his brothers when he saw them, but they knew not the little lad they had sold into the land of Egypt for twenty pieces of silver.

Joseph did not make himself known to his brothers, but asked them about their country and their homes, if they had a father and other brothers; and when they spoke of the old father, Jacob, and the youngest brother, Benjamin, who had stayed with the old father, Joseph longed to tell them that he was the brother whom the father had mourned as lost; but he waited, and treated his brothers as strangers, for they knew him not. Then he sent them home with their sacks full of grain, and took no money for it. But when they returned the second time to Egypt, Joseph's heart yearned for them, and for his old father and youngest brother. When they were alone, he stood before his brothers, and, looking at them, said: "Do you not know me? I am your brother, Joseph, the little lad whom you sold into Egypt."

But when his brothers heard this they were much afraid, and drew away from him, for they thought, now that he was ruler over all Egypt, he would surely punish them for their evil treatment of him. But Joseph said: "Come near me and do not be afraid, nor grieve that you sold me into Egypt, for God has been with me and kept me, and made me ruler, so that I have been able to save many people from the famine."

Then the brothers drew near, and Joseph wept with them, for he loved them. Then he said: "Go back and bring my father, Jacob, and my youngest brother, Benjamin, that we may live together once more."

And Joseph went to meet his father in a chariot, and brought him before Pharaoh, and the king was much pleased, for he loved Joseph and all his household.

Then Joseph gave to his father and brothers houses and lands, so that they all lived together in peace in the land of Egypt.

And the Lord was with Joseph and prospered him all the days of his life.

THE COURTESY OF THE SPARTAN BOY

There were, hundreds of years ago, two very large and grand cities, which strove to excel each other. The one city was Sparta, the other was Athens. These cities were not like our cities of today. They had beautiful, broad streets, but no street cars. They had magnificent buildings, but no electric lights. They did have schools, but they were unlike our schools. The boys in both Athens and Sparta were taken away to school when they were six years of age.

In Athens the boys were taught that they must become very strong and manly. They had running, jumping, leaping, swimming, and racing exercises, to give them rigid muscles and strong, healthy bodies. Occasionally they were allowed to visit at their homes for a day or two. The boys were also taught to sing and to read.

The Spartan boy was taught that he must become very strong and self-reliant. His schoolroom was very plain and bare. He was never allowed to go home to visit. He had to wear, in both summer and winter, the same plain, loose clothing. He slept out of doors in the summer-time, under the trees. In the wintertime he slept in a very open building, on a bed of reeds and rushes, which he had to gather from the river in the long, heated summer days for his winter bed. He had no bedclothing except the down which the wild ducks had shed, and which he had gathered in the forests. He learned to read, write, and to sing. He learned to run, to leap, to swim, and to throw the javelin.

One time the boys from both Athens and Sparta were to meet in a great amphitheater to hear a very wise and learned old man speak. The boys had all gathered, and with them many other people. The amphitheater was full. Not a vacant seat was left, and the people were patiently waiting for the old man to appear. At last he came. He came in so quietly that he was not noticed, except by two boys, one on each side of the aisle. One was a Spartan boy and one was an Athenian. The Athenian boy and Spartan boy both rose immediately. The Athenian boy sat down, but the Spartan boy still stood. He insisted that the old man take his seat, but the old man gently refused, and passed on up the aisle to the place from which he was to address the people.

Then the Spartan boy sat down. The old man recognized this act of courtesy, and, while talking to the boys, said that the Athenian boy knew what to do, but did not do it. The Spartan boy had the courage to do it.

TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A CHILD'S STORY GARDEN ***

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