

Some Modern German Fairy Stories

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The following stories are translations from the
"Neuerdeutscher Märchenschatz" (7 Sonderheft der
"Woche") - August Scherl G.m.b.h. , Berlin.

The book contains the thirty best stories from a
collection of four thousand and twenty-five writ-
ten in a story-writing competition.

The Princess With The Duck-Feet.

The old king had died. The chamberlains draped black crape over their bright silken sleeve-puffs, and the ladies pressed their little lace handkerchiefs to their eyes for grief, that now the court ball, which had been announced for the following day, could not take place.

In the coronation hall, stood the throne; it was snow-white and had gilded feet, and down over it's back hung the purple mantle with the ermine lining,- this the Young Prince was to have put on him. The Court Marshal held the crown between his out-stretched fingers, and brandished the sceptre through the air. That was certainly a fine accession to the throne. Messengers ran incessantly up and down the marble stairs of the castle, but the Young Prince was nowhere to be found.

A herds-boy walked whistling through the court-yard. "You can search here a long time," he laughed. "Over there behind the wood beside the swampy meadow, the Prince lies in the grass and watches the little white clouds flying."

Ah- now they knew it. The messengers were most offended at it, for now they were compelled to run in their sharp-pointed shoes over the clay soil of the forest to the swampy meadow.

Even from the distance they saw the Prince lying in the reed-grass. When he saw the three messengers, he stood up, knocked the reed stalks from his waist-coat, and went toward them. "I know everything already," he said. "The wisest thing will be for me to reconcile myself to the inevitable. But you may be sure I would rather tend swine all my life, on the swamp meadow, than to ascend the throne after my father's death." Really he said that.

Within the castle the Young Prince had the crown placed on his head

2.
by the Court Marshal. "The thing will crush my brains," he said, and shook his head so that his locks flew. But the Court Marshal allowed no objections to have influence; he hung the purple mantle on the shoulders of the Prince, and placed the sceptre in his hand. With this the coronation was completed. The Young King bowed down his head under the weight of his crown, and let his arm sink. "Now I understand for the first time how hard it is to rule," he said, and sighed deeply.

Every night, when the sun was reflected red in the moor-pond, the Young King threw aside the purple mantle and sceptre, and wandered alone through the green wood to the moor-meadow beyond. There he laid down in the reed-grass and stared up in to the evening sky until the stars glittered.

It went on in this manner a good while, until people in the palace began to speak of the peculiar custom of the Young King, and conjecture all sorts of evil and improper things behind it.

One beautiful day, the Court Marshal drew the Young King aside. "Pardon me, your majesty," he whispered in his ear, "but this must not go on. The people murmur, the affairs of state are going backwards, soon a blind man will be able to count the ducats in our treasury. In short, I see only one way in which this may be remedied: your majesty must marry."

The Young King frowned. Nevertheless the Court Marshal did not allow himself to be so easily gotten off the subject. "If I dared allow myself to make a proposition, then first of all, Princess Lilyleaf would come into consideration,-"

But now it proved too much for the Young King. "Stay away from me with your artful princess," he cried, and stamped his feet. "When I marry, I will go in quest of my wife myself!"

3.

"The idea of my getting married," said the Young King, as he lay in the evening on the reed-grass in the meadow. "I would rather jump into the swamp pond there where it is deepest. Then one knows at all events what is before him."

"Ah, that is one view of the case," was croaked suddenly close to him. The Young King raised his head astonished, and saw a big green Frog sitting in the reeds, who stared at him with round eyes and shook his head in amusement. "You seem to have had bad experiences, good friend," said the Frog, and then he laughed.

"I have had no experience at all," replied the Young King, "but I feel no desire to enter into a marriage with a figure in hoop-skirts, which I must whirl around at the court balls. No one who knows the princesses can be astonished at that."

"I do not know them, to be sure", said the Frog, "but I can imagine that they are old and withered. They must be placed once in fresh water and dipped under properly."

"That is an excellent idea", said the Young King and laughed.

"I always have excellent thoughts," answered the Frog, and puffed himself up, "but on account of my outward appearance, they are not considered; and simply for the reason that I am as green as grass. Green, you see, is the color of my body."

"If you have such excellent ideas," said the Young King, "then you can surely help me get a wife. It shall be no frog queen, however, but a beautiful, warm-blooded human-being. I make this condition."

"Nothing is easier than that," said the Frog. "Come tonight, when the full moon shines, to the moor-pond, where you can see the loveliest maiden in the world watching the ducks. She is so pretty, that I thought a long time of marrying her myself. But she has not the ability

4.

to puff up, and has a melodious voice. With these defects, she could never appear among us at court, and I take that into consideration."

"That would be no hindering reason for me," said the Young King. "If the beautiful Duck-keeper pleases me just as well as you, nothing on earth shall prevent me from taking her as my wife."

As soon as the full moon began to rise behind the edge of the wood, the Young King withdrew to his rooms, put on a black mantle, put the hood over his head, and crept out unrecognized through a back door of the castle. Even at a distance, he saw the moor-meadow shining in the moonlight. Will-o-the-wisps ran hither and thither before his feet, and showed him the way.

There, too, was his friend, the Frog. With feet wide apart, he sat in the middle of the high-way and awaited him. "Why there you are," he croaked. "By the moor-slime and fly-legs, you seem to be in a hurry!" And he laughed until he choked.

"Spare your jokes now," said the Young King, who was somewhat anxious in his heart, "show me rather her on whose account I have come hither through night and mist."

"If you had eyes in your head, you would have seen her long ago," answered the Frog. "She sits over there on the edge of the pond, and lets her feet hang in the water. But one must push the noses of you humans into anything, or you do not notice it."

The Young King looked across to the edge of the pond. There sat a maiden who had a face whiter than the moonbeams, eyes darker blue than the night heavens, and hair more golden and softer than the most delicate ducks' down.

"She is certainly wondrously beautiful," said the Young King, who could not take his eyes from the maiden. "I would give my kingdom if

5.

she would become my wife."

"You can peacefully retain your kingdom," said the Frog, "that will not bother her. But let us hop across to her before it becomes too late for at the stroke of one the beautiful Duck-keeper must go home again!"

Now they went together around the swamp-pond to the place where the girl sat. She uttered a low cry at sight of the two, and drew down her tucked-up garment so that the edge touched the water.

"A beautiful good evening, miss," croaked the Frog. "I have brought here to you a friend, who is a genuine prince and king, and desires to have you for his wife."

The beautiful girl viewed the Young King, and in embarrassment lowered her eyes, which were the color of the night heavens, to the ground. "You can not be in earnest," she said to the Frog. "Who would watch my ducks hereafter by the full moon?"

"Evasions- subterfuges,-" croaked the Frog.

"But the girl shook her head sadly. "However much it pains me to do thus, I cannot marry you," she said to the Young King. The latter was about to open his mouth to a declaration of love, when the wet Frog leaped onto his hand, and caused a slight shiver to run down his back.

"Just keep cool", the Frog calmed the Young King, "she no doubt has her reasons, why she will not marry you." And he urged their departure. Heavy-hearted the Young King took leave of the beautiful girl. "Hope is green," he said sighing, to the Frog, as they went together around the moor-pond. "Green is the color of my body," croaked the Frog and laughed. Splash! Then he sprang with a bound into the moor-pond, and left the poor Young King standing on the bank. Indeed, he now knew as much as before.

From this time on, his melancholy became still worse. To be sure,

6.

he no longer wandered every night out to the swamp-meadow, but on every full moon night, he arose from his bed, dressed himself, and crept stealthily to the moor-pond. But the moor-pond lay black and motionless, and the place where the lovely maiden had watched her ducks, was vacant. Not once more did the Frog permit himself to be seen. But many times, it seemed to the Young King as if he heard a malicious croak from out of the blackish depths. Yet that could have been an illusion, too. And pale and sad he returned to the castle.

One day the Court Marshal drew the Young King aside again. "Your majesty," he said, "your majesty does not endure loneliness. I allow myself to repeat once more: your majesty must marry."

This time the Young King did not stamp his feet; tired and indifferent, he regarded his finger-tips. "If it must be, why not?" he said, and shrugged his shoulders. They might do with him whatever they wished, it was all the same to him.

The Court Marshal, beaming with pleasure, rubbed his hands. And on the very next day, an activity and life began in the quiet castle, which it was a pleasure to see. In the rooms above, velvet and brocades, gold and silver trimmings, furs and waving ostrich plumes accumulated. And all around on stools sat a hundred tailors, who sewed with their needles, and clicked with their scissors, and took the Young King's measure for his wedding garments. That was a task.

Finally the mantles, waist-coats, trousers, and caps hung quite ready in the wardrobe. The Court Marshal had horses put to the court carriage, and placed the Young King in it, and himself at his side, and they rumbled out into the country.

Of course they were welcomed everywhere with joy and due honors. All the princesses of the land were quite ready to become the wife of

7.
the handsome Young King. But as far as the Young King was concerned, he could give his heart to none of them. Involuntarily, he compared the blondes and brunettes, the large and small, the stout and thin, the clever and stupid, with his beautiful Duck-keeper. And they all could not stand the comparison.

Finally they had both visited all the kings' palaces in the world except one. That lay on an infamous alder hill, and belonged to a powerful old king, of whom the people told the strangest things. The Court Marshal could tell things about it, too. Thus it is said the Old King's mother practiced evil arts, and what was worse than that, all sorts of mysterious rumors concerning the origin of the early-diseased queen, were in circulation. In fact many people firmly maintained that she had been nothing more than a very ordinary goose-maid. The Court Marshal shuddered at the mere thought, that the Young King could visit this palace.

The latter, however, rubbed his hands maliciously. "The very one," he said. And then he knocked on the carriage-window, and ordered the coachman to drive straight to the castle. It gave him special pleasure.

The Old King received them in his very own person on the stairs. "It is a great honor," he said, and stroked the Young King's smooth cheeks. He did not pay much attention to etiquette.

He escorted both of his guests into the throne hall, and invited them to be seated; then he sent up a little page, who was occupied with brushing off the throne-seat, to bring his daughter. "I really believe that she will please you," said the Old King to the Young. Then the door opened, and in stepped no other than- the beautiful Duck-keeper herself. Her face was whiter than the moonbeams, her eyes darker blue than the night heavens, and her hair more golden and softer than the

1191
8.
most delicate ducks' down. She wore a bright-colored dress with a train and advanced with a lightly gliding motion to the Old King. "You have commanded, father," she said, and kissed the old man's hand.

The Old King stroked her golden hair with satisfaction. "Here is one, who would have you for his wife," he said, and pointed to the Young King, who alternately flushed and paled for joy and fear.

The maiden looked at the Young King, changed color, and concealed her face in her hands.

"Do not be anxious," said the Old King to the Young, "she is still somewhat shy." Then the lovely Duck-keeper lowered her head, and again went slowly out of the door; and her bright-colored garments trailed rustling behind her.

"I see you love her," the Old King said to the Young, "and since you are an agreeable young man, to whom there is no objection, I will give her to you for your wife."

Now the chief-cook of the royal house-hold was called in, and commanded to prepare the betrothal banquet. In less than a quarter of an hour, the table was ready, and the daintiest odors of roasts filled the air. And see. Hardly had the servant placed the last chair at the table, when the doors opened and courtiers and ladies appeared. They made their reverence to the Old King, offered congratulations, and took their places at the table in festive march.

And again the door opened, and the King's beautiful daughter walked into the hall. She was dressed entirely in white silk, but her face was a thousand times whiter than the silk, and tears stood in her eyes. She seated herself by the Young King's side, and spoke no word. The poor Young King did not know after all what to think.

When the meal came to a close, the King's beautiful daughter arose

1112
9.

and disappeared. The Old King proposed a game of dice to his guests after the dessert. But the Young King thanked him. He would rather take a walk in the garden, he said. He did not want to throw dice.

He went down the marble stairs into the garden, and walked back and forth between the box-tree hedges. At the right and left of the way sat gay-colored parrots on silver perches, who hacked after him with their beaks and laughed at him. The Young King turned his back to the malicious birds, left the garden and wandered into the nearby wood.

There it was cool and quiet. The fir trees rustled over his head, and murmuring rivulets trickled down between brush-wood and ferns. The Young King laid down on the moss, supported his head in his hands, and dreamed. Because he was sad and weary, it was not long before he had fallen asleep. When he awoke again, the full moon stood in the heavens and shone in his face. Then he was startled, for he realized that he must have lain here a good while, and that perhaps they might have missed him at the palace. He stood up hastily, shook the twigs and moss from his clothes, and set out on the return. But because he had never been in this neighborhood before, he could not find the road again, but always got deeper into the forest. Finally he saw a clearing shining through the trees, he walked between brush-wood and bushes, and came to a fish-pond, which lay in the middle of the wood and glittered like silver in the moonlight. As he now stood thus on the bank, suddenly he heard wings rustling above him. He raised his head and saw a flock of wild ducks, which flew straight over him and into the middle of the fish-pond. And see. It was not long until out of the thick et of trees, stepped forth the beautiful Duck-keeper, sat down on a rock on the bank of the fish-pond, and let her feet hang into the water. "Quack- quack," said the wild ducks, swam to the Princess, and

10.

rubbed their bills on her dress.

The Princess stroked the wild birds' feathers with her white hands. "Alas, my dear ducks," she said, "I am very unhappy," And she sighed.

The ducks pressed closely about her. "What's the matter with you?—what's the matter with you?" they asked, and put their heads together.

"My father wishes me to become the wife of the Young King," the Princess lamented. "But how can I become the wife of the handsome Young King since I have duck-feet?" And at these words the Princess began to weep bitterly.

The ducks beat with their wings. "That is just the finest thing about you," quacked they, and ruffled up their feathers. But the Princess shook her head sadly. "Yes, you think that," she said, "but if the Young King knew of my defects, he would at once reject me." With these words the Princess rose from her seat, and waddled with true yellow duck-feet a little way along the shore, and straight up to the tree, behind which stood the Young King.

"However he sprang out quickly from his hiding-place, and threw himself at the feet of the frightened maiden. "I have heard everything he said, "and if it is nothing more, then you can become my wife without compunction. For I still love you just as before."

Then the beautiful Princess fell on the Young King's neck, and kissed him square on the mouth. "I thank you," she said, and was very happy. And then they went together to the Old King.

The Old King smiled with self-satisfaction when he saw the two thus coming there together, radiating happiness. "I thought that perhaps she could not keep a secret," he said. "But since you know it now once for all that she has duck-feet, I will tell you, also, how she came to that end. She is indebted to no one else for them than her own grandmother.

11.

And it happened in the following manner: When my old father died some time ago, and it came my turn to choose a queen, I chose, to the wrath of my mother, a girl who was really as beautiful as the day, but who watched the ducks on my father's farm. My mother, who hated the poor girl on account of her inferior rank, pronounced the curse at our marriage, that our children come into the world with duck-feet, and should waddle about on them afterward. The young queen died from grief, when she found, at the sight of her first little child, that the evil wish had been fulfilled. Nevertheless, the little child grew up, became a beautiful princess, and from childhood, wore trailing garments, in order that wicked people should not see what was concealed beneath them. That is the whole story. On condition that, nevertheless, you will cherish no hate toward the dead grandmother-in-law, I will make you a gift from her legacy at your wedding festival tomorrow. However insignificant looking it appears, it has its worth, and will be of great usefulness to you and your people."

Thereupon the invitations were sent out.

"Do not forget to invite the Frog of the moor-pond, also," the Young King reminded his bride, "for if it were not for him, who knows whether I should have made your acquaintance."

"Don't trouble yourself," she answered, "he shall not only be invited, but shall take the place of honor at my right hand."

And sure enough, the royal carriage stopped at the moor-pond first of all the next day, in order to fetch the Frog. "Really, I could hop over more quickly on foot," croaked the Frog, "but as a favor to the beautiful Duck-keeper, I will take my place in the state coach for aught I care, even if I don't like to sit on anything dry." And splash. he sprang dripping wet as he was, onto the velvety carriage cushion.

12.

"My best congratulations," croaked the Frog, as the Young King welcomed him into the carriage. "You gain a Princess who is pretty, does not fear the water, and can swim; you have every reason to be happy."

To be sure, he had that, too.

As everyone now sat assembled at the wedding-table, the Old King handed a little ivory box over the table to the bridegroom. The Young King opened it, and, to his astonishment, discovered in it nothing else than very ordinary horn spectacles. In curiosity, he drew them out and placed them on his nose.

Heavens. what peculiarities he was then obliged to perceive. The whole wedding party was changed at a stroke, and, indeed, not at all to their advantage. It began with his Court Marshal opposite. A fox's tail hung dangling down from his coat, and in his pockets were concealed all the royal treasures of the kingdom. The Court Marshal's neighbor on the left had claws on her dainty fingers, and from the mouth of the one on the right a serpent hissed. Many of the gentlemen wore straw heads; others again, in place of human hearts, had rabbit hearts; some had a mill-stone or a piece of black sod under their vests.

Only the Young King's bride remained unchanged, and even though her yellow duck-feet glimmered through her satin dress, her heart in her bosom was white as snow, and pure as crystal.

Then the Young King embraced the Princess, and was very glad that she had nothing more than duck-feet. But he made his Court Marshal empty his pockets, and drove him out of the kingdom. However, he must leave him the fox-tail, for it had grown fast.

"Die Prinzessin mit den Entenfüßen" by Anna Bethe-Kuhn.

The Frog With The Jewel in His Head.

In the middle of the wood lay a meadow, and in the middle of the meadow was a swamp, with dark pools of water and old gnarled willows on the edge. That was the empire of the frog king. On nights in May, when the moon rose like a red ball over the forest, the frogs had great concerts. The game-keeper's apprentice who passed said, "That is certainly a terrible croaking." He did not understand it any better. The King Frog knew that his subjects were very good singers, and that he even had several first-class artists among them.

Therefore he sat every evening with the Queen and the Crown Prince on the largest gnarled willow, and listened to the singing of the frogs. And he and the Queen always looked alternately at the Crown Prince, and then they waited afterwards for him to say something and express his opinion. A few times he opened wide his mouth, that his mother thought wondrously beautiful, but he did not even say "quack", - he simply yawned. And suddenly he gave a leap and sprang into the water.

"He is so original," said the Queen Frog, "he is different from all other frogs, he is very important."

"Yes," returned the King Frog, "and I am thinking also, of making him my successor during my lifetime, for I am old, and ruling is no amusement for me any more."

"That is a good idea," cried the Queen, "All the frogs in the world will praise you for it; for the younger such an important frog as our son comes to the throne, so much the better it will be for our kingdom, and therefore, also, for the entire world; there has never yet been a king who had a jewel in his head."

The old King Frog sighed.

14.

"Yes, I have no jewel in my head for it happens only once every five hundred years that a frog wears a jewel in his head,- and since my son has it, I could not have it. That is evident.

He would really have liked to have asked his wife, how she knew that the Prince had a jewel, but it always seemed as if he would compromise his dignity somewhat by asking this question, and therefore he forebore it. Even when the Prince Frog was still a tadpole, his mother had said that he had the jewel, for it was just five hundred years ago that the last frog with a jewel in his head had lived. And then the wives of the ministers had learned it. The ministers had come to the festive congratulations, and the King had given a national festival, at which it was announced to all the frogs in the kingdom: "The Crown Prince has a jewel in his head." And now everyone knew it, and as the Prince ceased to be a tadpole, he learned it also. He carried his head as high, as only a frog can hold his head; it is no small matter, too, if one has the consciousness of possessing something that is given only once every five hundred years. But nevertheless, the Prince was often terribly bored, and he had only one remedy for it; he sought out the little Green Frog, who lived on the other side of the swamp, and who was his young playmate. When he had sprung so unexpectedly into the water, he had just been longing again for the little Green Frog, and since he never restrained himself at any time, he had swam to him. But the Green Frog was not at home, the Prince was obliged to wait, and his humor became still worse on this account.

Finally the Green Frog came.

"Where have you loitered about?" the Prince cried to him, "I am almost perishing from tedium, and you go out for a hop."

"If you are bored, you should wander out into the wide world a lit-

15.
tle with me," said the Green Frog. "All sorts of things are to be seen and heard there----"

"Nonsense," croaked the Prince Frog, "the wide world is only the border of our swamp, and I cannot lose my time in occupying myself with a matter of such secondary importance as your 'wide world!'"

"O", said the Green Frog, "I have already thought many times that our comrades are mistaken. Perhaps our marsh is not the center of the world, and everything else just 'the border of it'."

It usually amused the Prince when the Green Frog spoke such peculiar things, but today it did not suit his mood.

"Keep still," he cried, "plainly you talk high treason, and I ought to have you arrested for thoughts dangerous to the common welfare. But I will kindly pardon you just once more, if you promise never to have such forbidden thoughts again. We and our swamp, we are the center of the world- enough. And then I have still another reason for dissatisfaction; your eyes gleam so that it is horrible to look at you. You must break yourself of it."

The Green Frog bowed courteously, in order to indicate that he would do his utmost, and the Prince continued discontentedly, "Yes, you must most decidedly break yourself of it, for recently the wife of one of the youngest ministers said, that your eyes are so remarkable, that one would think that you, also, had a jewel in your head which shone out through your eyes. But I must forbid it very seriously, for I have the jewel, as you know, and it is bestowed only once every five hundred years."

"I am sorry that I have aroused your dissatisfaction," the Green Frog said, "but the wife of the youngest minister often says more than she can be held accountable for. If my eyes are too brilliant today, it

16.

is probably because I have had a great joy."

"What?" croaked the Prince, "and why do you tell me now for the first time? I am bored to death, and you have a joy and do not even tell me about it?"

"You would listen to nothing about the wide world, and I had the pleasure there."

"Well, tell me at last, what you have experienced?"

And the Green Frog told the story:

"On the other side of the wood stand bushes of wild roses with many bright-colored blossoms. There lives a Princess who is not much larger than we, and wears a simple brown dress. But she has wings, she flies from one rose-bush to another and high upward, indeed almost up to the sky. But the loveliest thing about her is that she can sing—"

"I can too, if I wish," cried the Prince Frog, but the Green Frog continued:

"She sings more wonderfully than I have ever heard before. One's heart becomes glad and joyful as he listens. And when she stopped, I begged her: 'Sing once more.' Then she nodded to me, and sung longer. Really, she did that, and that has made me happy, for the second time she sung just for me."

The Prince was really sorry now, that he had said he did not wish to go out into the wide world; since it had happened, he said:

"You are a dreamer, and the singing was probably not more beautiful than we can hear here every day. But as far as the flying of the Princess is concerned, I set no value at all on it. What's the use of wings? A pair of good web-feet suits me better. And now I will return to my parents; the croaking -solo has already begun, then the concert will soon be at an end, and my father said that he wished to speak to me

about important business; in fact, I always have something important before me."

Thereupon the Prince Frog sprang into the water again, for he found that the Green Frog was not so amusing today as usual, and that the whole visit had not been worth while.

When he came to his parents, the concert was just at an end, and the King and Queen retired to their private swamp-hole.

"You may accompany us," said the King to his son, "I have something to say to you."

And then he told him that the Prince should be king henceforth and reign, while the old royal couple would move to an extra-fine swamp-hole, that had already been long prepared for this purpose.

"I have a jewel in my head, consequently it is also very natural and a matter of course that I should become king even during the lifetime of my father, for indeed, my father is really obliged to transfer the rule to me. So the Prince thought, and therefore, he did not refuse long at first, but said: "Yes, it is good-" and with that it was good.

"He does quite everything differently than other frogs, he is very important, and very original," his mother remarked, and the Old King said nothing at all, and crept into his swamp-hole.

But the Prince climbed to the outermost summit of the gnarled willow under which he lived, looked over the swamp, and thought:

"Now it is my kingdom, the heavens with the stars and the forest with the trees, that is all just my surroundings. Indeed, now I am the center of the world, and must do something very important."

But however much he desired it, nothing occurred to him.

Suddenly he thought that a king must have above all things a queen. The idea suited him so well, that he made one leap from the gnarled

willow into the water. But since frogs have cold blood anyway, it did not cool him off at all, and he crept up again just as excited as he had sprung down from the gnarled willow.

"Indeed, I must have a queen. I must have a queen most assuredly," he said to himself again and again.

He thought of all the frog misses whom he knew; indeed, he thought even of the wives of the ministers, since there are no hindrances for a king. But they all seemed so common-place to him, there was nothing especial in marrying one of them. And he was something extraordinary, he had a jewel in his head, and for this reason, he might be able to require something similar of his future wife. And since there was nothing like that among the frogs, the flying Princess, who could sing so beautifully, suddenly occurred to his mind. After all, she perhaps had a jewel in her throat. The Prince's heart beat so violently that one could have seen it through his brown body, if anyone had been present to observe it. But he was the only one there to do it, and he set no store by hearts, he only thought:

"My, how clever I am, and what grand thoughts I have. No one else but I would have thought of such a thing. And now I know also, that is certainly just the thing for me- I must have the Princess with the wings.

He swam across to his friend, the Green Frog, immediately in order to tell him so. Again he was not at home. Then the Prince lost his temper so much, that he became quite tired because of it, and fell asleep. At early dawn the Green Frog awakened him.

"What do I see, my Prince," he cried, "you here at this hour and waiting for me?"

The Prince roused himself quickly.

"You hopeless gad-about," he cried, "I will have you tied up, so

that you can not always run away, for today, I assume the government, and can do what I wish."

"Pardon me," begged the Green Frog, "I was at the rose bush again, and have listened to the Princess, for she sings most beautifully at night."

When the Prince heard that he forgot his anger.

"I have just come to you in regard to the Princess," he said, "you must take me to her as quickly as possible." "That will not do now, for she is asleep at present," said the Green Frog, "but after sunrise"

"After sunrise I have no time, then the King will put his crown on me,-- indeed, you can address me as 'your majesty' from now on, and must obey my commands to the letter, for whatever a king orders, must be done under all circumstances."

The Green Frog bowed very low again, and said: "I will be the first to do homage to your majesty, but we must not disturb the sleep of the Princess."

At this moment, a frog call sounded over the swamp, and a ruddy golden light flamed up over the wood.

"There now we have it," cried the Prince, "the croakers are already calling to the coronation, now I have no time any more for my private affairs, but I will thoroughly make up for it."

Thereupon he swam away to the willow knot which had been fitted up for the King's palace, and on which sat the old royal couple, who wore the crowns on their heads today for the last time; and to them the frogs now hastened from all sides, while the croakers exerted themselves so that it sounded like a solemn bell-ringing over the swamp.

With great pomp and ceremony the Prince was now crowned by the King, and the Queen was the first to cry aloud:

20.

"Long live King Beckerax the First."

Then all the frogs cried as loud as they could, and the Young King bowed graciously in all directions, and said:

"My beloved subjects, I take up the reins of government with great pleasure, for I have a jewel in my head, as you of course know, and everything else will turn out alright."

Then all the frogs cried again: "Hail. hail. hail.", and the most beautiful frog misses festooned the throne with golden marigolds and blue forget-me-nots. The old royal couple wept a few tears and embraced their son, and then the Young King escorted his mother to the coronation table, and the Old King sat down at his other side, and ate with appetite. The pages served roasted flies a la Montmorency and gnat pastry a la reine, and the croakers quacked again as loud as they could.

The whole day passed with eating, speech-making, dancing, and eating again, and not until evening could the Young King have the Green Frog called to him.

"I appoint you as my chamberlain," the King said to him, "now we will set out immediately on our journey, and have a look at the Princess. But we will travel entirely incognito, and I bind you to great secrecy."

The Green Frog thanked him for the position of chamberlain, and promised secrecy, but he did not feel good about it, for he considered the Princess as a kind of saint, and it seemed to him a sort of sacrilege that he should bring to her, his old playmate- who had now become king to be sure, but whom he still did not consider of equal birth with his adored Princess. Nevertheless he took great care not to say that, and the King permitted nothing of his further plans to be known. And so they went on their way together into the wide world.

1124
21.

"I did not believe that the world was so large, and that the forest was so long," said the King, when they had gone a little ways.

"Yes, one must have patience, if he goes into the wide world," said the Green Frog.

"But I do not know why my kingdom requires such a wide border," said the King, "half as broad would be enough."

"Certainly, one becomes quite unassuming, when he goes out into the wide world," replied the Green Frog, "for one soon perceives that he does not know so much- of course I speak entirely from my own experience, it may appear entirely different to your majesty."

"O, leave out the 'majesty' now," cried the King, who was afraid in the unfamiliar wood, "we are travelling here as comrades."

But the longer the journey was, the friendlier the King became, for he was so much the more afraid.

Suddenly the Green Frog stopped. "Listen," he cried, "listen."

Then the King heard a sweet strange sound, such as he had never heard before. And it did not sound from below like the singing of the frogs, but it came down from above, as if the notes flew from heaven.

"That is she," whispered the Green Frog.

The wood lighted up before them. It shone white and bright between the trees.

"What is that?" questioned the King. "Is that the end of the world?"

"No, there stand large trees which are very full of white flowers, and the moon shines on them, then they seem to glimmer.

The King opened his eyes still wider than they were before; they fairly stood out from his head in wonder at the unusual things which he saw and heard there.

"There are the rose bushes, and in them lives the Princess," said

22.

the Green Frog.

Then the singing stopped, and a sweet little voice cried out from the branches- "Are you there little Green One? Today I will sing something especially beautiful to you."

"You must introduce me to her," whispered the King, who knew what was proper, "but merely say for the time being, that you have brought a friend with you."

The Green Frog did that, and then Princess Nightingale came flying down very close, sat on a blooming rose branch over the two frogs, and looked at them with bright eyes.

"But your friend is not green like you, he is really almost as brown as I," she chirped.

"Yes," now cried the King who considered this remark especially amiable, "I am as brown as you, and we probably have still other similarities; for instance, I have a jewel in my head, and since I have heard you sing, I am convinced that you have one in your throat."

Then the Nightingale laughed so that the rose branch swung.

"No, no, if I had something in my throat, then I could not sing at all. I only sing because my heart is full of joy and full of love."

"Indeed," cried the King, "it is just so with me, too, and I am King Beckerax of Frog-swamp, and I have come to the end of the world just to hear and see you. For we both belong together, and I wish to make you my queen."

The Green Frog was so startled at the unheard-of boldness of the King, that he lay very flat on the ground, and thought that his heart would stop beating. But Princess Nightingale flew quickly up on a higher bough and sang:

"Free I live in field and wood,

Must freein breezes hover,
And even should I be your queen,
In swamps can I live never."

"No, she could not live in the swamp," repeated the Green Frog, who had somewhat recovered from his fright; but the King became very angry.

"What affected behavior that is," he cried. "Why should she not be able to live in the swamp? It is very beautiful in the marsh with us, Miss Princess, it pleases me very well, and you certainly will not again get a husband with a jewel in his head. Therefore, just reflect on this matter."

But the Nightingale had flown far up to the blooming cherries, and there sang her song, quite unconcerned about the angry King Frog. He said that he had now fully determined to get the Princess for his wife, and as the Green Frog remonstrated with him, he became as angry as he possibly could become, since the great forest still lay before him, through which he was obliged to go to get home. For he must go home. First of all, since he would not let the Princess laugh at him, and since he could not fly back after her. So he spoke thus: Let this be enough to begin with, he had had the experience that the journey really improved one extraordinarily, and that was something of value. But during the whole journey home, he made plans how he could continue his wooing of the Princess.

"You must come here again and remonstrate with her," he finally said to the Green Frog, but the latter wouldn't listen to it. Then the King threatened to have him put in prison, if he did not fulfill his wishes; and now the Green Frog was obliged to return once more to the Princess, after he had brought the King safely to the meadow, which surrounded the swamp.

This time he remained away very long, for at first the Princess could not listen to him; never, never, would she become his wife, she said; then she began to laugh about the King Frog, and finally she sang to the little Green Frog, so that he became very happy, and yet also very profoundly sad over it.

"O, if I were only never obliged to go back to the swamp again," he cried. But then he was a frog once for all, so he belonged in the swamp, and must return thither again finally.

As he neared his home, he saw many frogs sitting at the edge of the wood, and when he had reached them, he noticed that they practiced climbing exercises on the trees and bushes.

"What are you doing that for?" he asked in astonishment. Then they told him the King had ordered this training, and had offered prizes for the best climbers.

"If we practice a week more, we will be excellent climbers, and will be able to visit the birds in their nests," said the Major Frog. Then the little Green Frog was frightened, for he surmised that it dealt with the design of the King to get Princess Nightingale into his power. Just as he was still speaking with the Major Frog, the King came to look at the exercises of the troops.

"Ah, there you are at last, and holding private conversation, instead of bringing me the news at once," he cried indignantly, when he observed the little Green Frog. "Come here instantly, and tell me the answer."

"If the answer were good, I would have come to you," said the Green Frog.

Then the King took him aside, and had him report exactly. The little Green Frog clothed the refusal of the Princess in the most beauti-

ful words, but the King became very angry nevertheless, and cried: "Now I want her more than ever, and I will get her. But you, friend Green Frog, I do not trust you any more, and so that you will not perchance warn her, I will have you put in prison, and you can obtain your freedom when I have the Princess."

At a signal from the King, several police-frogs came at once and confined the Green Frog, and the King placed a sentinel before the prison. But the King did not know that it was quite a good friend of the little Green Frog, whom he had set before the door; for the Green Frog had very many good friends, because he was glad to render a service to everyone when the opportunity offered, and was always friendly. The sentinel told the Green Frog that the soldier-frogs were obliged to hold their mouths full of water in their climbing exercises, and the report went about among them that they would learn to capture birds; for it was a recognized fact that the swamp waster had an evil magic power on all animals which are not born in it, and a bird which gets only a drop of it on its wings, can never fly again.

When the little Green Frog heard that, he trembled, for now what the exercises and the plans of the King had in mind. He begged the sentinel to give him information constantly about what happened outside, and when he learned, after some time, that the frogs would march out on the next night, in order to capture a bird princess with their swamp water, he suddenly fell violently on the sentries like a savage, overpowered them and escaped.

Since this was a very unheard-of occurrence in the frog kingdom, it was immediately reported to the King, who thereupon commanded that all the soldier-frogs should march out and capture the fugitive.

"I know where he has gone, and I will lead you myself. But take the

swamp water along, for where he is, there the Princess is also," said the King.

And now they went forth in wild pursuit. The King sprang ahead, and the frogs sprang after him, one always over the other, so that it looked as if the ground in the wood had become living and rose in waves. But however much they hastened, they nevertheless came too late, for the little Green Frog had just warned the Princess, and as the frogs approached she flew high into the air, and disappeared among the cherry trees.

The little Green Frog looked after her, very happy over his rescue work, and then they caught him, and the King held court over him. And however many good friends he had, now they all could not help him—his treason was too plainly evident. He was condemned "to the stork"—which means in the frog language as much as "to death". He did not attempt to plead for mercy at all; he did not wish to live in the swamp any more, and he could not fly,—so it was for the best for him not to live any more, and then the stork might catch him after all.

He went quite voluntarily over the meadow, even to the very place where the stork had his favorite haunt; and the last service which his many friends could do for him, was that they did not bind him fast with rushes, as the King had commanded. He sat very still and waited for the stork. And just as he was coming over the meadow, the Young King crept forth from his hole, and hid behind a willow a willow knot in order to witness the execution. He looked out from his hiding-place with large round eyes, and from the swamp emerged a multitude of frogs' heads, who all wanted to be present, but yet wished to remain in safety. The little Green Frog sat very quiet,—perhaps he had already died from sorrow and longing for the Princess. The stork saw

him at once, came up to him and ran him through with his red beak. But instead of devouring him, he let him fall, blinked at him from all sides, and then he chattered:

"What new style is this? Since when do the frogs wear jewels in their heads? Such a thing really spoils one's appetite."

A many-voiced horrified quack resounded from the swamp, and the Young King was so indignant that he entirely forgot his frog nature, and cried out:

"You're mistaken, Sir Stork, a jewel appears in a frog's head only once every five hundred years, and this time I have it."

"We will see at once," answered the Stork, and with one bound, he was beside the Young King, and speared him.

"No sign of a jewel, a very good frog for eating," he chattered. For according to his opinion, the frogs were there to be eaten by the storks.

He therefore consumed the King with great relish, and then walked back over the meadow, as if nothing had happened.

But the frogs buried the little Green Frog, whom he had not desired, with great cries, and they placed the jewel as a monument over his grave.

Now they knew that they must wait five hundred years, until once more another would come with a jewel in his head. And they believed that the frogs in five hundred years would be wiser than they had been.

"Der Frosch mit dem Edelstein im Kopf"

by Gräfin Valeska Bethusy-Huc.

Little Greedy Girl.

The mother had sat down to rest for a half-hour in her easy chair, and Mary, the cook, had gone to the garret. Thus it happened that Little Rose was all alone in the kitchen.

The kitchen was her favorite haunt, and when the cook clapped her hands and cried, "Oh dear, how it looks today," then she liked it best in the kitchen. There was no little pot that she did not take in her hand, no little spoon with which she did not stir, no egg-beater with which she did not beat eggs, no lid with which she did not cover up. How fine it seemed to cook the cabbage-stems, the potato-parings and apple-parings, the withered lettuce leaves, and similar kitchen refuse; everything was cut up fine by Rosy, and put in the little kettle, and stirred, and beaten, and covered.

But today nothing of this was to be seen in the kitchen. Dinner was already over, and Mary had made the kitchen clean and neat as a pin before she went away. But if everything was in order, then Rosy knew quite well that she must meddle with nothing, -if she did Mary would become angry, very angry.

Then Rosy stood there in the kitchen, and felt somewhat bored. She let her little eyes roam about- nowhere was anything with which she could have beguiled the time. To be sure, beneath the kitchen table lay Puss, but she kept her eyes closed, and pretended to be asleep; perhaps, too, she really slept; for it was after dinner to be sure, and then everyone likes to take a rest. Consequently, she could not play with Puss.

Her little eyes looked further and she now discovered something

very strange- the door into the pantry stood open a little way.

Ordinarily the key was turned, or mama even carried it in her pocket; today mama may perhaps have forgotten to lock up. In the next moment, Rosy stood at the crack, and peeped into the room. What fine things there were to see inside. Rosy had been in the pantry frequently of course, but always when mama or Mary were present.

Rosy preferred the pantry even to the kitchen. Ah, the door was really not locked, why should she not venture in then? She would only look once at all the stores in there, quietly and leisurely,- nothing gets into disorder by being looked at. She would really do nothing further at all, then her mother could certainly not become angry about it.

Rosy hesitated a moment, she cast one glance at the Cat who did not open her eyes, and- in a jiffy- Rosy was already in the room.

And when she was once in there, she thought no longer of anyone, neither of her mother, nor of Mary, nor of the Cat; nor did she think of the stick which was concealed somewhere in the nursery, and perhaps would not be brought forth again.

There in long rows, stood the glasses and jars of preserved fruit; these looked very pretty, and the fruit would taste very good, but- everything was closed up tight. Here was a little pot of cream, there red-cheeked apples peeped out of a basket, and there stood also the cake from yesterday, a very large piece. If one were only allowed to take a little taste of everything. Her eyes looked around more and more covetously, and the little fingers had already gotten into the cream pot, and presto- a little apple was eaten up, and a piece of cake was nibbled up. But the little hands reached still further toward the bag of almonds- when all at once the door opened- Rosy was so much

frightened that she sprang aside; in doing so, she knocked her elbow against the cream-pot, and heavens- there it lay in a thousand fragments on the floor, together with it's sweet contents.

Had her mother opened the door, or Mary? No, it had been the Cat. She had softly crept near, she also wished perhaps to look at the pantry just once at her leisure. Then the little pot fell down with a loud crash just in front of Puss, and the cream splashed up on her black silky fur. The cat was not less frightened than Rosy; with one leap she was under the kitchen table, and began to wash herself immediately.

But what should Rosy do? She stood there trembling, and stared at the big white lake on the floor. Now Mary would return soon, and then she would tell it to mama, and thereupon mama would become very, very angry, and the day after tomorrow was Rosy's birthday,- alas, then there will surely be no gift-table. How terribly sad all that was. But what should she do? Weep? That would not help to be sure. - Scream? Indeed, that would help still less. - Run to mother and plead for forgiveness? But mother was surely asleep. - Wait until Mary came? Ah, she would go straight to mama, who would become very angry, and on the birthday- Thus the thoughts whirled about in her little head.

The cat sat under the table, and washed her fur just as if nothing had happened.

Then all at once a very, very wicked thought came to Rosy. "I will act as if nothing had happened," she thought. Softly, gently she stole out of the room, went past mama's chamber-door on tip-toe in order not to awaken the sleeper, and slipped just as softly into the nursery. There she sat down in her doll nook, and took up her youngest little doll in her arms, and rocked it to sleep.

"Lullaby, my darling art thou,

So close your little peepers now".

Thus she sang as she rocked. At first to be sure her voice trembled very much, but it soon improved. And as she began to sing the verse for the third time, her little voice sounded very happy and joyous.

Suddenly there resounded another voice, which sounded loud and angry: "Oh, you detestable Cat", it cried. "But wait you shall suffer for it." It was Mary that cried in this manner. Rosy listened with bated breath. Then in the midst of it, her mother's voice sounded: "What's the matter, Mary? Why are you so angry?"

"The horrid animal," she scolded, "it stolen into the pantry, has tasted the cream, and knocked the pot down in doing so. Her fur is still very wet with it."

"Oh, you wicked cat," said the mother meanwhile.

"But just wait," Mary continued scolding, "you won't get off so easy this time. Now I'll get my broom!"

Rosy's whole body trembled. Now Puss would receive blows, and she alone was guilty. She even wanted to hurry out and say: "The cat is innocent"- but alas- Rosy remained seated, and the cat received her punishment. The poor animal mewed and cried loudly, Rosy heard it distinctly; she pressed her little hands to her face and wept bitterly.

"Why are you crying?" she now heard asked, and her mother's gentle hand caressed her head.

"Oh, the cat, the cat," Rosy moaned.

"Don't cry any more," her mother consoled; "Puss has certainly deserved the punishment, because she was disobedient and loved dainties. Now she will never do it again. You are my good compassionate child."

But Rosy wept still more; then her mother took her on her lap, and

told her stories, and promised her a very great surprise on her birthday.

During the whole day, Rosy remained quiet and sad. At night as she lay in her little bed, and said her little evening prayer, she could hardly utter the words,- the dear Lord could certainly have no pleasure in them, he must still be dreadfully angry with her. And sadly Little Rose finally fell asleep.

That had hardly happened when bad, evil dreams came and plagued her, so that she threw herself restlessly back and forth, and suddenly she awoke, for it seemed as if something warm and soft touched her hand.

With frightened eyes, she looked up. It was very dark in the room, and through the darkness, she saw two bright spots gleaming. But what was it?

The spots now stood close before her, and now she recognized them too: they were the eyes of the Cat. The cat stood up on her bed and looked at her fixedly. Rosy wanted to cry, but the Cat laid her paw on her mouth as a sign that she should be quiet. Then she crept still nearer to Rosy, bent over to her ear, and whispered very distinctly: "Come with me." And as Rosy shook her head in fear, the Cat said once more: "Come with me," but in such a decided tone, that little Rose attempted no further resistance, but stood up obediently, and stole toward the Cat, who now opened the door noiselessly, and disappeared in the dark corridor.

Then they went once more through a door, and again through another.

As they went it was quite pitch dark, and Rosy would never have found the way, if the Cat had not continually glanced back with her gleaming eyes, which illuminated the way like two little lanterns.

Whither the way lead Little Rose could not fathom, and she did not

dare to ask. When they had walked quite a while, the Cat stopped suddenly, and knocked three times on a wall, then the wall opened, and a brilliantly-lighted hall became visible.

"Come along," said the Cat once more, for she had observed that Rose made an attempt to turn back. Then the two stepped into the hall, while the wall closed behind them.

It was a strange room; Rosy had never seen one like it. The walls changed color in the most gorgeous hues; and as she looked closely, she discovered that they were covered from top to bottom with glittering beetles.

From the ceiling hung costly crowns; but how astonished Rosy was, when she observed that many, many thousand little glow-worms sat up there and disseminated the light of day with their soft lustre. Bright colored garlands decorated the walls, nevertheless they were not made of flowers, but gay-colored little birds fluttered there beside each other, with their gorgeous-colored feathers looking like flowers.

From astonishment and amazement, Little Rose entirely forgot her fear, but it came back again at once when now a deep voice said: "Step nearer, human being."

It was a mighty Lion that had spoken thus. Since he wore a crown on his head, he must probably be a king. Rosy could not take a step forward, her knees trembled so. Then two dogs, at a sign from the King, stepped to her side, and drew her gently up in front of the royal throne.

The Lion looked sternly down upon her.

"My true subject, named Puss," so he began, "has entered complaint against you. In your presence, before my entire court, she shall repeat her accusation. Speak, Puss, what have you to put forward?"

The Cat placed herself beside Rosy, and began to relate aloud, so that everyone could hear, what had happened to her. The remembrance of the injustice which she had suffered, was so painful to Puss, that she could not keep back the tears, and broke out in a doleful mew.

The listeners were very strongly affected. But the King looked much more serious than before. "What have you to say in excuse," he questioned.

Then she sank on her knees: "Oh, I am a wicked child, I can never be happy again," she sobbed.

"There that shall be your punishment," said the Lion, "you shall never be happy again. But perhaps there is one among you," the King turned to the company, "who can advance something for the defense of the child, let him speak."

Then an old stepped forward; he looked very learned.

"King," he said, "the child has behaved badly, but she is not wicked. Her heart is so full of repentance that I believe she will never do such a wicked thing a second time. Nevertheless, question all your subjects, roundabout, whether there is still one who can advance complaint against her."

The King looked questioningly about the circle.

"And she scattered food when we were hungry in the winter," the sparrows twittered.

"And she set wool and little feathers out for us, when we built our nest," said the swallows.

"When I stepped on the glass splinter with my foot, she refreshed my wound, and bound it with a small cloth," said Karo.

Even the little fish did not remain silent, and said: "And she threw crumbs into the water for us!"

"What do you say, oh king," the old dog finally spoke again, "is this child wicked and does she deserve such severe punishment?"

"No," said the King, "I will withdraw my harsh judgment, since I have heard all this. But I cannot entirely remit your punishment. So hear my words then, Little Rose. Here I give you a little flask with a liquid as bitter as gall, there is nothing else on earth as bitter as it. Whenever you eat something sweet, then you must pour out a drop from the little bottle, only a little drop,- the bitterness will still taste, and that shall be your punishment. When the little flask is once empty, then your wrong-doing is atoned for. And now go, my child."

When the King had thus spoken, all the beetles on the walls raised their wings, and hummed about Rosy's head, and the birds flew about, and the glow-worms circled around her, so that she could see nothing but changing colors, and glittering, and glare around her. Then all at once everything vanished, and she stood alone in a pitch-dark room, and did not know which way to turn. Then she gave a shrill cry, and opened her eyes wide.

And now it became light around her again, and her mother stood in front of her.

"Rosy, what is the matter with you, are you crying so loud in your dreams?" she asked very anxiously.

"Oh, mother, mother, the Cat has accused me, and now I must always swallow the drops which are bitter as gall, from this little bottle here," at which she held up her little hand- but it was empty.

"The Cat?" the mother now asked. "Why has the Cat accused you, Rosy?"

Then Little Rose embraced her mother with both arms, and with tears confessed to her everything wicked that she had done. Then she told

35.

1139

her too, how she had stood before the tribunal of the Lion.

"That was only a dream, to be sure," said her mother. "But there is truth in the idea of the drops bitter as gall; you know, child, these bitter drops which embitter all sweetness to you, these are remorse, child. And if you feel very deep remorse, then the flask will soon be empty too, and then you can be as happy as before again. And now, go to sleep, my child, the Kitten and I will pardon you."

"Naschkatzchen" by Berti Brunetti.