THE TOPAZ STORY BOOK

PART ONE

LEGENDS OF AUTUMN FROM MANY LANDS

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INTRODUCTION

Nature stories, legends, and poems appeal to the young reader's interest in various ways. Some of them suggest or reveal certain facts which stimulate a spirit of investigation and attract the child's attention to the beauty and mystery of the world. Others serve an excellent purpose by quickening his sense of humour.

Seedtime and harvest have always been seasons of absorbing interest and have furnished the story-teller with rich themes. The selections in "The Emerald Story Book" emphasize the hope and promise of the spring; the stories, legends, and poems in this volume, "The Topaz Story Book," express the joy and blessing which attend the harvest-time when the fields are rich in golden grain and the orchard boughs bend low with mellow fruit.

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AUTUMN STORIES AND LEGENDS

EACH IN HIS OWN TONGUE

A haze on the far horizon,
  The infinite, tender sky,
The rich, ripe tint of the cornfields,
  And the wild geese sailing high;
And, all over upland and lowland
  The charm of the golden-rod,——
Some of us call it Autumn,
  And others call it—God.

WILLIAM HERBERT CARRUTH.

NIPON AND THE KING OF THE NORTHLAND

(Algonquin Legend)

The Summer Queen whom the Indians called Nipon lived in the land of sunshine where the life-giving beams of the mighty Sun shone all the year round on the blossoming meadows and green forests. The maiden's wigwam faced the sunrise. It was covered with a vine which hung thick with bell-shaped blossoms.

The fair queen's trailing green robe was woven from delicate fern leaves and embroidered with richly coloured blossoms. She wore a coronet of flowers and her long dusky braids were entwined with sprays of fragrant honeysuckle. Her moccasins were fashioned from water-lily leaves.

Nipon was very busy in her paradise of flowers. Every day she wandered through the green forests where she spoke words of en-

couragement and praise to the great trees, or she glided over the meadows and helped the flower buds to unfold into perfect blossoms.

Sometimes the maiden's grandmother, whose name was K'me-wan, the Rain, came from afar to visit the land of Sunshine. The Summer Queen always welcomed her and listened carefully to the words of warning which K'me-wan solemnly gave before leaving.

"Nipon, my child, heed what I say. In thy wanderings never go to the Northland where dwells Poon, the Winter King. He is thy deadliest foe and is waiting to destroy thee. This grim old Winter King hates the fair beauty of the Summer Queen. He will cause thy green garments to wither and fade and thy bright hair to turn white like his own frost. All thy youth and strength he will change to age and weakness."

The Summer Maiden promised to heed her grandmother's warning, and for a long time she did not look in the direction of the Northland. But one day when she sat in front of her sun-bathed wigwam a strange longing

crept into her heart—a longing to look at the frozen Northland where Poon the Winter King reigned. Slowly she turned her eyes in the forbidden direction and there she saw a wonderful vision. The far-away Northland was flooded with sunshine. She could see the broad, shining lakes, the white mountain peaks touched with rosy mists, and the winding rivers gleaming with light.

"It is the most beautiful land I have ever seen," said Nipon.

She rose slowly and stood for some time looking at the enchanting beauty of the scene before her. Then she said, "My heart is filled with a strange longing. I shall go to visit the Northland, the Land of Poon, King of Winter."

"My daughter, remember K'me-wan's warning," whispered a voice and Nipon knew that her grandmother was speaking. "Go not to the Northland where death awaits thee. Abide in the land of Sunshine."

"I can not choose," said Nipon. "I must go to the Northland."

"Heed my warning! Heed my warning!"

whispered the faint voice of K'me-wan, the Rain.

"I can not choose," repeated the Summer Queen. "I must go to the Northland."

In her delicate robe of leaves and her coronet of flowers Nipon left the Land of Sunshine and began her long journey northward. For many moons she traveled keeping her eyes fixed on the dazzling beauty of the frost king's land.

One day she noticed that the shining mountains, lakes, and rivers in the land of Poon moved onward before her. She stopped for a moment to consider the marvel and again a faint voice whispered, "Turn back, my child! Destruction awaits thee in the land of King Winter. Heed the warning of K'me-wan."

But the willful Summer Queen closed her ears to the pleading voice and proceeded on her journey. The beautiful vision no longer seemed to move away from her. Surely before long she would win her heart's desire, she would reach the beautiful land of Poon.

Suddenly fear seized the Summer Queen, for she felt that the sunshine was gradually

fading away. A chill wind from the distant mountain rent her frail garments and with sinking heart she saw the leaves of her robe were turning yellow, the blossoms were fading and dying. A cruel wind blew and tore to pieces her coronet of flowers. Then she noticed that her dusky braids were turning white as the frost.

"K'me-wan's warning!" she cried. "How I wish I had heeded K'me-wan's warning! The Frost King is cruel. He will destroy me! O K'me-wan, help me! Save me from destruction!"

Soon after Nipon left for the Northland her grandmother knew what had happened, for from her Skyland she saw that no smoke rose from the Summer Queen's wigwam. K'me-wan hastened to the land of Sunshine. There she saw that the blossoms on the queen's wigwam were beginning to wither, the ground was strewn with fallen petals, and the leaves of the vine had lost their shining green colour.

"A grey mist covers the face of the sun and a change is gradually creeping over this beau-

tiful land," cried K'me-wan. "I'll send my gentlest showers to refresh the woods and meadows."

But the Rain-mother failed to bring back the colour to the Summer Queen's island.

"The trees and flowers need warmth as well as moisture," sighed K'me-wan. "The leaves of the forest are beginning to turn orange, crimson, and brown. Every day there are fewer flowers in the meadows and along the banks of the brook. A great change is creeping over the land of Sunshine."

And as she sat in Nipon's wigwam, grieving, she heard the Summer Queen's cry of agony. She heard Nipon call out, "O K'me-wan! Save me from destruction."

"I'll send my bravest warriors to do battle with Poon," declared K'me-wan, standing and looking toward the Northland. "He shall match his strength with mine!"

Quickly she called together her strong warriors, South-wind, West-wind, and Warm-breeze.

"Go to the Northland, my warriors," she commanded. "Use all your power to rescue

Nipon from Poon, the Winter King. Fly to the Northland!"

K'me-wan's wind warriors fled like lightning to the land of Poon. But the crafty Winter King was not taken by surprise. The mighty North-wind, the biting East-wind, and the Frost-spirit, his strong chieftains, he held in readiness to do battle for possession of the Summer Queen. And when K'me-wan's warriors drew near the Northland, Poon gave his command.

"Fly to meet our foes, my warriors! They come from the land of Sunshine! Vanquish them!"

And as he spoke his chieftains saw that Poon's stalwart figure was growing gaunt and thin, and great drops of sweat were dropping from his brow.

At Winter King's command his giants flew to match their strength with K'me-wan's warriors.

But the Snowflakes and Hailstones led by the Frost-spirit weakened and fell before Warm-breeze and his followers, the Raindrops. The cold wind warriors of the North

shook and roared as they matched strength with the mightier giants from the land of Sunshine. Then, as K'me-wan's warriors pressed nearer and nearer to the Northland, Poon the Winter King weakened and cried out in agony, "Set Nipon free or I shall perish. My warriors are vanquished by the chieftains of the land of Sunshine! Free the Summer Queen and end this strife!"

At this command from Poon, his giant warriors grew silent and fled back to the Northland, leaving K'me-wan's chieftains in possession of Nipon. Gently they led the weary Summer Queen back toward her own land. They travelled for many moons before the beams of the great sun were warm enough to restore her beauty.

Only once on her journey back to her own land did Nipon stop. It was when she reached a place enveloped in grey mists and dark clouds where the wild lightning leaped and flashed. The wind blew and the showers fell continually in this land of K'me-wan. Through the clouds and rain Nipon traveled until she reached the wigwam of the ancient Rain-mother.

"Forgive me, K'me-wan," said the Summer Queen humbly.

"My child, thou hast well nigh killed me," moaned K'me-wan faintly. "Thy disobedience has brought great suffering in my cherished island. My giant warriors conquered or Poon with his cruel ice scepter would have reigned king over all. Never again can I venture on such a struggle."

"Never again shall I disobey thee," declared Nipon, the Summer Queen.

"Hasten back to the land of Sunshine," said K'me-wan, rising. "There thou art sadly needed, for the leaves have changed their color and the blossoms are almost gone. Hasten back and give them new life, my daughter."

Then Nipon bade farewell to the Rain-mother and departed for the land of Sunshine. As she drew near her heart was filled with a wonderful joy and peace.

"Welcome, Nipon," laughed the warm sunbeams.

"Welcome, Nipon," sang the gentle breezes.

"Welcome, our life-giving Summer Queen," nodded the forest trees.

PRINCE AUTUMN

Carl Ewald

On the top of the hills in the West stood the Prince of Autumn and surveyed the land with his serious eyes.

His hair and beard were dashed with gray and there were wrinkles on his forehead. But he was good to look at, still and straight and strong. His splendid cloak gleamed red and green and brown and yellow and flapped in the wind. In his hand he held a horn.

He smiled sadly and stood awhile and listened to the fighting and the singing and the cries. Then he raised his head, put the horn to his mouth and blew a lusty flourish:

> Summer goes his all-prospering way,
>   Autumn's horn is calling.
> Heather dresses the brown hill-clay,
>   Winds whip crackling across the bay,
> Leaves in the grove keep falling.

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All the trees of the forest shook from root to top, themselves not knowing why. All the birds fell silent together. The stag in the glade raised his antlers in surprise and listened. The poppy's scarlet petals flew before the wind.

But high on the mountains and on the bare hills and low down in the bog, the heather burst forth and blazed purple and glorious in the sun. And the bees flew from the faded flowers of the meadow and hid themselves in the heather-fields.

But Autumn put his horn to his mouth again and blew:

Autumn lords it with banners bright
  Of garish leaves held o'er him,
Quelling Summer's eternal fight,
Heralding Winter, wild and white,
  While the blithe little birds flee before him.

The Prince of Summer stopped where he stood in the valley and raised his eyes to the hills in the West. And the Prince of Autumn took the horn from his mouth and bowed low before him.

"Welcome!" said Summer.

He took a step towards him and no more, as befits one who is the greater. But the Prince of Autumn came down over the hills and again bowed low.

They walked through the valley hand in hand. And so radiant was Summer that, wherever they passed, none was aware of Autumn's presence. The notes of his horn died away in the air; and one and all recovered from the shudder that had passed over them. The trees and birds and flowers came to themselves again and whispered and sang and fought. The river flowed, the rushes murmured, the bees continued their summer orgy in the heather.

But, wherever the princes stopped on their progress through the valley, it came about that the foliage turned yellow on the side where Autumn was. A little leaf fell from its stalk and fluttered away and dropped at his feet. The nightingale ceased singing, though it was eventide; the cuckoo was silent and flapped restlessly through the woods; the stork stretched himself in his nest and looked to-

ward the South. But the princes took no heed.

"Welcome," said Summer again. "Do you remember your promise?"

"I remember," answered Autumn.

Then the Prince of Summer stopped and looked out over the kingdom where the noise was gradually subsiding.

"Do you hear them?" he asked. "Now do you take them into your gentle keeping."

"I shall bring your produce home," said Autumn. "I shall watch carefully over them that dream, I shall cover up lovingly them that are to sleep in the mould. I will warn them thrice of Winter's coming."

"It is well," said Summer.

They walked in silence for a time, while night came forth.

"The honeysuckle's petals fell when you blew your horn," said Summer. "Some of my children will die at the moment when I leave the valley. But the nightingale and the cuckoo and the stork I shall take with me."

Again the two princes walked in silence. It was quite still, only the owls hooted in the old oak.

"You must send my birds after me," said Summer.

"I shall not forget," replied Autumn.

Then the Prince of Summer raised his hand in farewell and bade Autumn take possession of the kingdom.

"I shall go tonight," he said. "And none will know save you. My splendour will linger in the valley for a while. And by-the-by, when I am far away and my reign is forgotten, the memory of me will revive once more with the sun and the pleasant days."

Then he strode away in the night. But from the high tree-top came the stork on his long wings; and the cuckoo fluttered out of the tall woods; and the nightingale flew from the thicket with her full-grown young.

The air was filled with the soft murmurings of wings.

Autumn's dominion had indeed begun on the night when Summer went away, with a yellow leaf here and a brown leaf there, but none had noticed it. Now it went at a quicker pace; and as time wore on, there came even more colours and greater splendour.

The lime trees turned bright yellow and the beech bronze, but the elder-tree even blacker than it had been. The bell-flower rang with white bells, where it used to ring with blue, and the chestnut tree blessed all the world with its five yellow fingers. The mountain ash shed its leaves that all might admire its pretty berries; the wild rose nodded with a hundred hips; the Virginia creeper broke over the hedge in blazing flames.

Then Autumn put his horn to his mouth and blew:

> The loveliest things of Autumn's pack
> In his motley coffers lay;
> Red mountain-berries
> Hips sweet as cherries,
> Sloes blue and black
> He hung upon every spray.

And blackbird and thrush chattered blithely in the copsewood, which gleamed with berries, and a thousand sparrows kept them company. The wind ran from one to the other and puffed and panted to add to the fun. High up in the sky, the sun looked gently down upon it all.

And the Prince of Autumn nodded contentedly and let his motley cloak flap in the wind.

"I am the least important of the four seasons and am scarcely lord in my own land," he said. "I serve two jealous masters and have to please them both. But my power extends so far that I can give you a few glad days."

Then he put his horn to his mouth and blew:

To the valley revellers hie!
  They are clad in autumnal fancy dresses,
  They are weary of green and faded tresses,
Summer has vanished, Winter is nigh——
  Hey fol—de—rol—day for Autumn!

But, the night after this happened, there was tremendous disturbance up on the mountain peaks, where the eternal snows had lain both in Spring's time and Summer's. It sounded like a storm approaching. The trees grew frightened, the crows were silent, the wind held its breath. Prince Autumn bent forward and listened:

"Is that the worst you can do?" shouted a hoarse voice through the darkness.

Autumn raised his head and looked straight into Winter's great, cold eyes!

"Have you forgotten the bargain?" asked Winter.

"No," replied Autumn. "I have not forgotten it."

"Have a care," shouted Winter.

The whole night through, it rumbled and tumbled in the mountains. It turned so bitterly cold that the starling thought seriously of packing up and even the red creeper turned pale.

The distant peaks glittered with new snow.

And the Prince of Autumn laughed no more. He looked out earnestly over the land and the wrinkles in his forehead grew deeper.

"It must be so then!" he said.

Then he blew his horn.

Autumn's horn blew a lusty chime;
For the second time, for the second time!
  Heed well the call, complying.
Fling seed to earth!
Fill sack's full girth!
Plump back and side!
Pad belt and hide!
  Hold all wings close for flying!

Then suddenly a terrible bustle arose in the land, for now they all understood.

"Quick," said Autumn.

The poppy and the bell-flower and the pink stood thin and dry as sticks with their heads full of seed. The dandelion had presented each one of his seeds with a sweet little parachute.

"Come, dear Wind, and shake us!" said the poppy.

"Fly away with my seeds, Wind," said the dandelion.

And the wind hastened to do as they asked.

But the beech cunningly dropped his shaggy fruit on to the hare's fur; and the fox got one also on his red coat.

"Quick, now," said Autumn. "There's no time here to waste."

The little brown mice filled their parlors from floor to ceiling with nuts and beech-mast and acorns. The hedgehog had already eaten himself so fat that he could hardly lower his quills. The hare and fox and stag put on clean white woollen things, under their coats. The starling and the thrush and the blackbird saw

to their downy clothing and exercised their wings for the long journey.

The sun hid himself behind the clouds and did not appear for many days.

It began to rain. The wind quickened its pace: it dashed the rain over the meadow, whipped the river into foam and whistled through the trunks in the forest.

"Now the song is finished!" said the Prince of Autumn.

Then he put his horn to his mouth and blew.

> Autumn's horn blew a lusty chime,
> For the last time, for the last time!
>   Ways close when need is sorest:
> Land-birds, fly clear!
> Plunge, frogs, in mere!
> Bee, lock your lair!
> Take shelter, bear!
>   Fall, last leaf in the forest!

And then it was over.

The birds flew from the land in flocks. The starling and the lapwing, the thrush and the blackbird all migrated to the south.

Every morning before the sun rose the wind tore through the forest, and pulled the last

leaves off the trees. Every day the wind blew stronger, snapped great branches, swept the withered leaves together into heaps, scattered them again and, at last, laid them like a soft, thick carpet over the whole floor of the forest.

The hedgehog crawled so far into a hole under a heap of stones that he remained caught between two of them and could move neither forwards nor backwards. The sparrow took lodgings in a deserted swallow's nest; the frogs went to the bottom of the pond for good, settled in the mud, with the tips of their noses up in the water and prepared for whatever might come.

The Prince of Autumn stood and gazed over the land to see if it was bare and waste so that Winter's storms might come buffeting at will and the snow lie wherever it pleased.

Then he stopped before the old oak and looked at the ivy that clambered right up to the top and spread her green leaves as if Winter had no existence at all. And while he looked at it the ivy-flowers blossomed! They sat right at the top and rocked in the wind!

"Now I'm coming," roared Winter from

the mountains. "My clouds are bursting with snow; and my storms are breaking loose. I can restrain them no longer."

The Prince of Autumn bent his head and listened. He could hear the storm come rushing down over the mountains. A snowflake fell upon his motley cloak . . . and another . . . and yet another . . .

For the last time he put his horn to his mouth and blew:

Thou greenest plant and tardiest,
Thou fairest, rarest, hardiest,
  Bright through unending hours!
Round Summer, Winter, Autumn, Spring,
Thy vigorous embraces cling.
Look! Ivy mine, 'tis *I* who sing,
  'Tis *Autumn* wins thy flowers!

Then he went away in the storm.

THE SCARF OF THE LADY

(A French Harvest Legend)

Translated by Hermine de Nagy

THE Field of the Lady was the name which the peasants gave to a large tract of land belonging to a rich estate. The lord of the castle had given these fertile acres to his daughter and had told her to do as she pleased with the grain which the field produced. Each year at harvest time she invited the poor peasants of the neighbourhood to come and glean in her field, and take home with them as much grain as they needed for winter use.

Sometimes when the gleaners were busily at work one of them would cry out joyfully, "Ah, there comes the lady of the castle." They could see her coming in the distance, for she always wore a simple dress of white wool, and over her head was thrown a scarf of white silk

striped with many colours. She loved to come into the field while the people were at work and speak words of encouragement and cheer to them.

One sultry afternoon there were many peasants gleaning in the field. The lady of the castle had been with them for several hours. Suddenly she looked up into the threatening sky and said, "My friends, see what large clouds are gathering. I'm afraid we shall have a storm before long. Let us stop gleaning for today and seek shelter." The peasants hastened away and the lady started toward the castle.

As she drew near the green hedge which bordered the field she saw coming toward her a beautiful young woman and a fair child whose hand she held. The little boy's golden hair fell in waves over his white tunic.

"You came to glean," said the lady of the castle in her sweet voice, full of welcome. "Come then, we'll work together for a little while before the rain falls."

"Thank you," said the young woman.

The three began to pick up the ripe ears and

pile them in small heaps. They had worked but a little while, however, when a gust of wind swept over the field and great raindrops began to fall. The thunder rumbled in the distance and streaks of lightning rent the sky.

"Come, my friends," said the lady of the castle. "We must seek shelter. See, there near the wood is a great oak, thick with foliage. Let us hasten to it and stand there until the storm is over."

In a short time they reached the tree and stood together under the shelter of its great branches.

With his chubby hand the child took hold of the end of his mother's veil and tried to cover his curly head with it.

"You shall have my scarf," said the lady of the castle, smiling.

She slipped it off, wrapped it tenderly around the dear child's head and shoulders, and kissed his fair young brow.

Suddenly the great clouds seemed to roll away. The lady of the castle stepped out from the shelter of the tree to look at the sky. The storm had ceased and the birds were beginning

to twitter in the trees. She stood still, looking at the wonderful golden light which flooded the harvest field. And in the calm silence there came floating through the air the sweetest music she had ever heard. At first it seemed far, far away. Then it came nearer and nearer until the air was filled with harmonious voices chanting tenderly in the purest angelic tones. She turned toward her companions and lo! they had disappeared.

In the distance there was a sound like the light fluttering of wings. The lady of the castle looked toward the hedge where she had first seen her mysterious companions. There she saw them again—the lovely woman and the golden-haired child. They were rising softly, softly upon fleecy clouds. Around them and mounting with them was a band of angels chanting a joyful Hosanna!

The marvelous vision rose slowly into the clear blue of the heavens. Then on the wet ears of grain in the harvest field the lady of the castle knelt in silent adoration, for she knew she had seen the Virgin and the Holy Child. While she worshipped in breathless silence

the heavenly choir halted and in clear, ringing tones the angels sang out:

"Blessed be thou!

"Blessed be the good lady who is ever ready to help the poor and unfortunate! Blessed be this Field of Alms."

The Virgin stretched forth her hands to bless the lady and the harvest field. At the same time the Holy Child took from his head and shoulders the silk scarf which the lady of the castle had wrapped about him, and gave it to two rosy-winged cherubim. Away they flew—one to the right, the other to the left, each holding an end of the scarf which stretched as they flew into a marvelous rainbow arch across the blue vault of the sky. The Virgin and the Holy Child, followed by the angelic choir, rose slowly, slowly into the sky.

Softly and gently as wood breezes the heavenly music died away and the vision disappeared.

The lady of the castle rose to her feet. A marvelous thing had happened. The small heaps of grain gathered by the gleaners had changed into a harvest richer than the field

had ever produced before. Over all in the sky still shone the lovely rainbow arch—the arch of promise across the Field of Alms.

(Adapted.)

THE SICKLE MOON

(Tyrolean Harvest Legend)

Abbie Farwell Brown

When of the crescent moon aware
  Hung silver in the sky,
"See, Saint Nothburga's sickle there!"
  The Tyrol children cry.

It is a quaint and pretty tale
  Six hundred summers old,
When in the green Tyrolean vale,
  The peasant folk is told.

The town of Eben nestled here
  Is little known to fame,
Save as the legends make it dear,
  In Saint Nothburga's name.

For in this quiet country place,
  Where a white church spire reared,
Nothburga dwelt, a maid of grace
  Who loved the Lord and feared.

She was a serving little lass,
Bound to a farmer stern,
Who to and fro all day must pass
Her coarse black bread to earn.

She spun and knit the fleecy wool,
She bleached the linen white,
She drew the water-buckets full,
And milked the herd at night.

And more than this, when harvest-tide
Turned golden all the plain,
She took her sickle, curving wide,
And reaped the ripened grain.

All people yielded to the charm
Of this meek-serving maid,
Save the stern master of the farm,
Of whom all stood afraid.

For he was hard to humble folk,
And cruel to the poor,
A godless man, who evil spoke,
A miser of his store.

Now it was on a Saturday
Near to the Sabbath time,
Which in those ages far away
Began at sunset-chime.

Nothburga in the harvest gold
  Was reaping busily,
Although the day was grown so old
  That dimly could she see.

Close by her cruel master stood,
  And fearsome was his eye;
He glowered at the maiden good,
  He glowered at the sky.

For many rows lacked reaping, yet
  The dark was falling fast,
And soon the round sun would be set
  And working time be past.

"Cling—clang!" The sunset-chime pealed out,
  And Sunday had begun;
Nothburga sighed and turned about——
  The reaping was not done.

She laid her curving sickle by,
  And said her evening hymn,
Wide-gazing on the starless sky,
  Where all was dark and dim.

But hark! A hasty summons came
  To drown her whispered words,
An angry voice called out her name,
  And scared the nestling birds.

"What ho, Nothburga, lazy one!
Bend to your task again,
And do not think the day is done
Till you have reaped this grain."

"But master," spoke Nothburga low,
"It's the Sabbath time;
We must keep holy hours now,
After the sunset-chime."

And then in rage the master cried:
"The day belongs to me!
I'm lord of all the country side,
And hold the time in fee!

"No Sunday-thought shall spoil the gain
That comes a hundred fold
From reaping of my golden grain,
Which shall be turned to gold."

"Nay, Master, give me gracious leave
The Lord's will I must keep;
Upon the holy Sabbath day
My sickle shall not reap!"

The master raised his heavy hand
To deal the maid a blow;
"Thou shalt!" he cried his fierce command,
And would have struck, when lo!

Nothburga whirled her sickle bright
And tossed it in the sky!
A flash, a gleam of silver light,
As it went circling by,

And there, beside a little star
Which had peeped out to see,
The sickle hung itself afar,
As swiftly as could be!

The master stared up, wondering;
Forgetting all his rage,
To see so strange and quaint a thing——
The marvel of the age.

And she, the maid so brave and good,
Thenceforth had naught to fear,
But kept the Sabbath as she would,
And lived a life of cheer.

So when among the stars you see
The silver sickle flame,
Think how the wonder came to be,
And bless Nothburga's name.

WINTER'S HERALD

JANE ANDREWS

IN the days of chivalry, mail-clad knights, armed with shield and spear, rode through the land to defend the right and to punish the wrong. Whenever they were to meet each other in battle at the great tournaments, a herald was first sent to announce the fight and give fair warning to the opponents, that each might be in all things prepared to meet the other, and defend or attack wisely and upon his guard.

So, dear children, you must know that Winter, who is coming clad in his icy armour, with his spear, the keen sleet, sends before him a herald, that we may not be all unprepared for his approach.

It is an autumn night when this herald comes; all the warm September noons have slipped away, and the red October sunsets are

almost gone; still the afternoon light, shining through the two maples, casts a crimson and yellow glow on the white wall of my little room, and on the paths is a delicate carpet of spotted leaves over the brown groundwork.

It is past midnight when the herald is called; and although his knight is so fierce, loud, and blustering, he moves noiselessly forth and carries his warning to all the country round. Through the little birch wood he comes, and whispers a single word to the golden leaves that are hanging so slightly on the slender boughs; one little shiver goes through them, sends them fluttering all to the ground, and the next morning their brown, shriveled edges tell a sad story.

Through the birch wood he hurries and on to the bank of the brook that runs through the long valley; for the muskrat, who has his home under the shelving bank, must hear the news and make haste to arrange his hole with winter comforts before the brook is frozen. While he crosses the meadow the field mouse and the mole hear his warning and lay their heads together to see what is best to be done. Indeed,

the mole, who himself can scarcely see at all, is always of opinion that two heads are better than one in such cases.

Beyond the brook is Farmer Thompson's field of squashes. "I will not hurt you to-night," says the herald as he creeps among them; "only a little nip here and a bite there, that the farmer may see to-morrow morning that it is time to take you into the barn." The turnips stand only on the other side of the fence and cannot fail to know also that the herald has come.

But up in Lucy's flower garden are the heliotropes and fuchsias, tea roses and geraniums,—delicate, sensitive things, who cannot bear a cold word, it must have been really quite terrible what he said there; for before sunrise the beautiful plants hung black and withered and no care from their mistress, no smiles or kind words, could make them look up again. The ivy had borne it bravely, and only showed on his lower leaves, which lay among the grass, a frosty fringe, where the dew used to hang.

My two maples heard the summons and

threw off their gay dresses, which withered and faded as they fell in heaps on the sidewalk. The next morning, children going to school scuffed ankle-deep among them and laughed with delight. And the maples bravely answered the herald: "Now let him come, your knight of the north wind and the storm and the sleet; we have dropped the gay leaves which he might have torn from us. Let him come; we have nothing to lose. His snows will only keep our roots the warmer, and his winds cannot blow away the tiny new buds which we cherish, thickly wrapped from the cold, to make new leaves in the spring." And the elm and the linden and horse-chestnut sent also a like brave answer back by the herald.

Over the whole village green went the whisperer, leaving behind him a white network upon the grass; and before the sun was up to tangle his beams in its meshes and pull it all to pieces, old widow Blake has seen it from her cottage window and said to herself: "Well, winter is coming; I must set up some warm socks for the boys today, and begin little Tommy's mittens before the week is out."

And Farmer Thompson stands at his great barn door, while yet the eastern sky is red, and tells Jake and Ben that the squashes and pumpkins and turnips must all be housed in cellar and barn before night; for a frost like this is warning enough to any man to begin to prepare for winter.

Mr. Winslow, the gardener, is working all day with matting and straw, tying up and packing warmly his tender shrubs and trees; and the climbing rose that is trained against the west end of the piazza must be made safe from the cold winds that will soon be creeping round there.

What will your mother do when she sees the white message that the herald has left in his frosty writing all over the lawn? Will she put away the muslin frocks and little pink or blue calicoes and ginghams, the straw hats, and Frank's white trousers and summer jackets, just as the trees threw aside their summer leaves?

Not quite like the trees; for your clothes can't be made new every spring out of little brown buds, but must be put away in the great

drawers and trunks of the clothes-press, to wait for you through the winter.

And see how your mother will bring out the woolen stockings, warm hoods and caps, mittens, cloaks and plaided dresses; and try on and make over, that all things may be ready. For it is with such things as these that she arms her little boys and girls to meet the knight who is coming with north wind and storm.

Old Margaret, who lives in the little brown house down at the corner, although she cannot read a word from a book, reads the herald's message as well as your mother can. But here are her five boys, barefooted and ragged, ever in summer clothes, and her husband lies back with a fever.

She can't send back so brave an answer as your mother does. But your mother, and Cousin George's mother, and Uncle James can help her to make a good, brave answer; for here is Frank's last winter's jacket, quite too small for him, just right for little Jim; and father's old overcoat will make warm little ones for two of the other boys. And here are stout new shoes and woolen socks, and comfort-

able bedclothes for the sick man. Margaret sends a brave answer now, although this morning she was half ready to cry when she saw the message that Winter had sent.

Look about you, children, when the herald comes, and see what answers the people are giving him; I have told you a few. You can tell me many, if you will, before another year goes by.

JACK FROST

The door was shut as doors should be
   Before you went to bed last night;
Yet Jack Frost has got in, you see,
   And left your windows silver white.

He must have waited till you slept,
   And not a single word he spoke,
But penciled o'er the panes and crept
   Away before you woke.

And now you can not see the trees
   Nor fields that stretch beyond the lane
But there are fairer things than these
   His fingers traced on every pane.

Rocks and castles towering high;
   Hills and dales and streams and fields,
And knights in armour riding by,
   With nodding plumes and shining shields.

And here are little boats, and there
   Big ships with sails spread to the breeze,
And yonder, palm trees waving fair
   And islands set in silver seas.

And butterflies with gauzy wings;
  And herds of cows and flocks of sheep;
And fruit and flowers and all the things
  You see when you are sound asleep.

For creeping softly underneath
  The door when all the lights are out,
Jack Frost takes every breath you breathe
  And knows the things you think about.

He paints them on the window pane
  In fairy lines with frozen steam;
And when you wake, you see again
  The lovely things you saw in dream.

GABRIEL SETOUN.

THE PUMPKIN GIANT

Mary Wilkins Freeman

A VERY long time ago, before our grandmother's time, or our great-grandmother's, or our grandmothers' with a very long string of greats prefixed, there were no pumpkins; people had never eaten a pumpkin-pie, or even stewed pumpkin; and that was the time when the Pumpkin Giant flourished.

There have been a great many giants who have flourished since the world began, and, although a select few of them have been good giants, the majority of them have been so bad that their crimes even more than their size have gone to make them notorious. But the Pumpkin Giant was an uncommonly bad one, and his general appearance and his behaviour were such as to make one shudder to an extent that you would hardly believe possible.

The convulsive shivering caused by the mere mention of his name, and, in some cases where the people were unusually sensitive, by the mere thought of him even, more resembled the blue ague than anything else; indeed was known by the name of "the Giant's Shakes."

The Pumpkin Giant was very tall; he probably would have overtopped most of the giants you have ever heard of. I don't suppose the Giant who lived on the Bean-stalk whom Jack visited was anything to compare with him; nor that it would have been a possible thing for the Pumpkin Giant, had he received an invitation to spend an afternoon with the Bean-stalk Giant, to accept, on account of his inability to enter the Bean-stalk Giant's door, no matter how much he stooped.

The Pumpkin Giant had a very large, yellow head, which was also smooth and shiny. His eyes were big and round, and glowed like coals of fire; and you would almost have thought that his head was lit up inside with candles. Indeed there was a rumour to that effect amongst the common people, but that was all nonsense, of course; no one of the more

enlightened class credited it for an instant. His mouth, which stretched half around his head, was furnished with rows of pointed teeth, and he was never known to hold it any other way than wide open.

The Pumpkin Giant lived in a castle, as a matter of course; it is not fashionable for a giant to live in any other kind of a dwelling—why, nothing would be more tame and uninteresting than a giant in a two-story white house with green blinds and a picket fence, or even a brown-stone front, if he could get into either of them, which he could not.

The Giant's castle was situated on a mountain, as it ought to have been, and there was also the usual courtyard before it, and the customary moat, which was full of bones! All I have got to say about these bones is, they were not mutton bones. A great many details of this story must be left to the imagination of the reader; they are too harrowing to relate. A much tenderer regard for the feelings of the audience will be shown in this than in most giant stories; we will even go so far as to state in advance, that the story has a good end,

thereby enabling readers to peruse it comfortably without unpleasant suspense.

The Pumpkin Giant was fonder of little boys and girls than anything else in the world; but he was somewhat fonder of little boys, and more particularly of fat little boys.

The fear and horror of this Giant extended over the whole country. Even the King on his throne was so severely afflicted with the Giant's Shakes that he had been obliged to have the throne propped, for fear it should topple over in some unusually violent fit. There was good reason why the King shook; his only daughter, the Princess Ariadne Diana, was probably the fattest princess in the whole world at that date. So fat was she that she had never walked a step in the dozen years of her life, being totally unable to progress over the earth by any method except rolling. And a really beautiful sight it was, too, to see the Princess Ariadne Diana, in her cloth-of-gold rolling-suit, faced with green velvet and edged with ermine, with her glittering crown on her head, trundling along the avenues of the royal gardens, which had been furnished

with strips of rich carpeting for her express accommodation.

But gratifying as it would have been to the King, her sire, under other circumstances, to have had such an unusually interesting daughter, it now only served to fill his heart with the greatest anxiety on her account. The Princess was never allowed to leave the palace without a body-guard of fifty knights, the very flower of the King's troops, with lances in rest, but in spite of all this precaution, the King shook.

Meanwhile amongst the ordinary people who could not procure an escort of fifty armed knights for the plump among their children, the ravages of the Pumpkin Giant were frightful. It was apprehended at one time that there would be very few fat little girls, and no fat little boys at all, left in the kingdom. And what made matters worse, at that time the Giant commenced taking a tonic to increase his appetite.

Finally the King, in desperation, issued a proclamation that he would knight any one, be he noble or common, who should cut off

the head of the Pumpkin Giant. This was the King's usual method of rewarding any noble deed in his kingdom. It was a cheap method, and besides everybody liked to be a knight.

When the King issued his proclamation every man in the kingdom who was not already a knight, straightway tried to contrive ways and means to kill the Pumpkin Giant. But there was one obstacle which seemed insurmountable: they were afraid, and all of them had the Giant's Shakes so badly, that they could not possibly have held a knife steady enough to cut off the Giant's head, even if they had dared to go near enough for that purpose.

There was one man who lived not far from the terrible Giant's castle, a poor man, his only worldly wealth consisting in a large potato-field and a cottage in front of it. But he had a boy of twelve, an only son, who rivaled the Princess Ariadne Diana in point of fatness. He was unable to have a body-guard for his son; so the amount of terror which the inhabitants of that humble cottage suffered day and

night was heart-rending. The poor mother had been unable to leave her bed for two years, on account of the Giant's Shakes; her husband barely got a living from the potato-field; half the time he and his wife had hardly enough to eat, as it naturally took the larger part of the potatoes to satisfy the fat little boy, their son, and their situation was truly pitiable.

The fat boy's name was Aeneas, his father's name was Patroclus, and his mother's Daphne. It was all the fashion in those days to have classical names. And as that was a fashion as easily adopted by the poor as the rich, everybody had them. They were just like Jim and Tommy and May in these days. Why, the Princess's name, Ariadne Diana, was nothing more nor less than Ann Eliza with us.

One morning Patroclus and Aeneas were out in the field digging potatoes, for new potatoes were just in the market. The Early Rose potato had not been discovered in those days; but there was another potato, perhaps equally good, which attained to a similar degree of celebrity. It was called the Young Plantagenet, and reached a very large size indeed,

much larger than the Early Rose does in our time.

Well, Patroclus and Aeneas had just dug perhaps a bushel of Young Plantagenet potatoes. It was slow work with them, for Patroclus had the Giant's Shakes badly that morning, and of course Aeneas was not very swift. He rolled about among the potato-hills after the manner of the Princess Ariadne Diana; but he did not present as imposing an appearance as she, in his homespun farmer's frock.

All at once the earth trembled violently. Patroclus and Aeneas looked up and saw the Pumpkin Giant coming with his mouth wide open. "Get behind me, O my darling son!" cried Patroclus.

Aeneas obeyed, but it was of no use; for you could see his cheeks each side his father's waistcoat.

Patroclus was not ordinarily a brave man, but he was brave in an emergency; and as that is the only time when there is the slightest need of bravery, it was just as well.

The Pumpkin Giant strode along faster and

faster, opening his mouth wider and wider, until they could fairly hear it crack at the corners.

Then Patroclus picked up an enormous Young Plantagenet and threw it plump into the Pumpkin Giant's mouth. The Giant choked and gasped, and choked and gasped, and finally tumbled down and died.

Patroclus and Aeneas, while the Giant was choking, had run to the house and locked themselves in; then they looked out of the window; when they saw the Giant tumble down and lie quite still, they knew he must be dead. Then Daphne was immediately cured of the Giant's Shakes, and got out of bed for the first time in two years. Patroclus sharpened the carving-knife on the kitchen stove, and they all went out into the potato-field.

They cautiously approached the prostrate Giant, for fear he might be shamming, and might suddenly spring up at them and Aeneas. But no, he did not move at all; he was quite dead. And, all taking turns, they hacked off his head with the carving-knife. Then Aeneas had it to play with, which was quite appro-

priate, and a good instance of the sarcasm of destiny.

The King was notified of the death of the Pumpkin Giant, and was greatly rejoiced thereby. His Giant's Shakes ceased, the props were removed from the throne, and the Princess Ariadne Diana was allowed to go out without her body-guard of fifty knights, much to her delight, for she found them a great hindrance to the enjoyment of her daily outings.

It was a great cross, not to say an embarrassment, when she was gleefully rolling in pursuit of a charming red and gold butterfly, to find herself suddenly stopped short by an armed knight with his lance in rest.

But the King, though his gratitude for the noble deed knew no bounds, omitted to give the promised reward and knight Patroclus.

I hardly know how it happened—I don't think it was anything intentional. Patroclus felt rather hurt about it, and Daphne would have liked to be a lady, but Aeneas did not care in the least. He had the Giant's head to play with and that was reward enough for him. There was not a boy in the neighbour-

hood but envied him his possession of such a unique plaything; and when they would stand looking over the wall of the potato-field with longing eyes, and he was flying over the ground with the head, his happiness knew no bounds; and Aeneas played so much with the Giant's head that finally late in the fall it got broken and scattered all over the field.

Next spring all over Patroclus's potato-field grew running vines, and in the fall Giant's heads. There they were all over the field, hundreds of them! Then there was consternation indeed! The natural conclusion to be arrived at when the people saw the yellow Giant's heads making their appearance above the ground was, that the rest of the Giants were coming.

"There was one Pumpkin Giant before," said they; "now there will be a whole army of them. If it was dreadful then what will it be in the future? If one Pumpkin Giant gave us the Shakes so badly, what will a whole army of them do?"

But when some time had elapsed and nothing more of the Giants appeared above the

surface of the potato-field, and as moreover the heads had not yet displayed any sign of opening their mouths, the people began to feel a little easier, and the general excitement subsided somewhat, although the King had ordered out Ariadne Diana's body-guard again.

Now Aeneas had been born with a propensity for putting everything into his mouth and tasting it; there was scarcely anything in his vicinity which could by any possibility be tasted, which he had not eaten a bit of. This propensity was so alarming in his babyhood, that Daphne purchased a book of antidotes; and if it had not been for her admirable good judgment in doing so, this story would probably never have been told; for no human baby could possibly have survived the heterogeneous diet which Aeneas had indulged in. There was scarcely one of the antidotes which had not been resorted to from time to time.

Aeneas had become acquainted with the peculiar flavour of almost everything in his immediate vicinity except the Giant's heads; and he naturally enough cast longing eyes at them. Night and day he wondered what a Giant's

head could taste like, till finally one day when Patroclus was away he stole out into the potato-field, cut a bit out of one of the Giant's heads and ate it. He was almost afraid to, but he reflected that his mother could give him an antidote; so he ventured. It tasted very sweet and nice; he liked it so much that he cut off another piece and ate that, then another and another, until he had eaten two-thirds of a Giant's head. Then he thought it was about time for him to go in and tell his mother and take an antidote, though he did not feel ill at all yet.

"Mother," said he, rolling slowly into the cottage, "I have eaten two-thirds of a Giant's head, and I guess you had better give me an antidote."

"O, my precious son!" cried Daphne, "how could you?" She looked in her book of antidotes, but could not find one antidote for a Giant's head.

"O Aeneas, my dear, dear son!" groaned Daphne, "there is no antidote for Giant's head! What shall we do?"

Then she sat down and wept, and Aeneas

wept, too, as loud as he possibly could. And he apparently had excellent reason to; for it did not seem possible that a boy could eat two-thirds of a Giant's head and survive it without an antidote. Patroclus came home, and they told him, and he sat down and lamented with them. All day they sat weeping and watching Aeneas, expecting every moment to see him die. But he did not die; on the contrary he had never felt so well in his life.

Finally at sunset Aeneas looked up and laughed. "I am not going to die," said he; "I never felt so well; you had better stop crying. And I am going out to get some more of that Giant's head; I am hungry."

"Don't, don't!" cried his father and mother; but he went; for he generally took his own way, very like most only sons. He came back with a whole Giant's head in his arms.

"See here, father and mother," cried he; "we'll all have some of this; it evidently is not poison, and it is good—a great deal better than potatoes!"

Patroclus and Daphne hesitated, but they were hungry, too. Since the crop of Giant's

heads had sprung up in their field instead of potatoes, they had been hungry most of the time; so they tasted.

"It is good," said Daphne; "but I think it would be better cooked." So she put some in a kettle of water over the fire, and let it boil awhile; then she dished it up, and they all ate it. It was delicious. It tasted more like stewed pumpkin than anything else; in fact it was stewed pumpkin.

Daphne was inventive; and something of a genius; and next day she concocted another dish out of the Giant's heads. She boiled them, and sifted them, and mixed them with eggs and sugar and milk and spice; then she lined some plates with puff paste, filled them with the mixture, and set them in the oven to bake.

The result was unparalleled; nothing half so exquisite had ever been tasted. They were all in ecstasies, Aeneas in particular. They gathered all the Giant's heads and stored them in the cellar. Daphne baked pies of them every day, and nothing could surpass the felicity of the whole family.

One morning the King had been out hunting, and happened to ride by the cottage of Patroclus with a train of his knights. Daphne was baking pies as usual, and the kitchen door and window were both open, for the room was so warm; so the delicious odour of the pies perfumed the whole air about the cottage.

"What is it smells so utterly lovely?" exclaimed the King, sniffing in a rapture.

He sent his page in to see.

"The housewife is baking Giant's head pies," said the page, returning.

"What?" thundered the King. "Bring out one to me!"

So the page brought out a pie to him, and after all his knights had tasted to be sure it was not poison, and the King had watched them sharply for a few moments to be sure they were not killed, he tasted too.

Then he beamed. It was a new sensation, and a new sensation is a great boon to a king.

"I never tasted anything so altogether superfine, so utterly magnificent in my life," cried the King; "stewed peacocks' tongues from the

Baltic are not to be compared with it! Call out the housewife immediately!"

So Daphne came out trembling, and Patroclus and Aeneas also.

"What a charming lad!" exclaimed the King, as his glance fell upon Aeneas. "Now tell me about these wonderful pies, and I will reward you as becomes a monarch!"

Then Patroclus fell on his knees and related the whole history of the Giant's head pies from the beginning.

The King actually blushed. "And I forgot to knight you, oh, noble and brave man, and to make a lady of your admirable wife!"

Then the King leaned gracefully down from his saddle, and struck Patroclus with his jeweled sword and knighted him on the spot.

The whole family went to live at the royal palace. The roses in the royal gardens were uprooted, and Giant's heads (or pumpkins, as they came to be called) were sown in their stead; all the royal parks also were turned into pumpkin-fields.

Patroclus was in constant attendance on the King, and used to stand all day in his ante-

chamber. Daphne had a position of great responsibility, for she superintended the baking of the pumpkin pies, and Aeneas finally married the Princess Ariadne Diana.

They were wedded in great state by fifty archbishops; and all the newspapers united in stating that they were the most charming and well-matched young couple that had ever been united in the kingdom.

The stone entrance of the Pumpkin Giant's Castle was securely fastened, and upon it was engraved an inscription composed by the first poet in the kingdom, for which the King made him laureate, and gave him the liberal pension of fifty pumpkin pies per year.

The following is the inscription in full:

"Here dwelt the Pumpkin Giant once.
He's dead the nation doth rejoice,
For, while he was alive, he lived
By e——g dear, fat, little boys."

The inscription is said to remain to this day; if you were to go there you would probably see it.

LADY WHITE AND LADY YELLOW

(A Legend of Japan)

FREDERICK HADLAND DAVIS

LONG ago there grew in a meadow a white and a yellow chrysanthemum side by side. One day an old gardener chanced to come across them and he took a great fancy to Lady Yellow. He told her that if she would come along with him he would make her far more attractive; that he would give her delicate food and fine clothes to wear.

Lady Yellow was so charmed with what the old man said, that she forgot all about the white sister and consented to be lifted up, carried in the arms of the old gardener and to be placed in his garden.

When Lady Yellow and her master had departed, Lady White wept bitterly. Her own simple beauty had been despised; but, what

was far worse, she was forced to remain in the meadow alone, without the companionship of her sister, to whom she had been devoted.

Day by day Lady Yellow grew more fair in her master's garden. No one would have recognized the common flower of the field, but though her petals were long and curled and her leaves so clean and well cared for, she sometimes thought of Lady White alone in the field, and wondered how she managed to make the long and lonely hours pass by.

One day a village chief came to the old man's garden in quest of a perfect chrysanthemum that he might take to his lord for a crest design. He informed the old man that he did not want a fine chrysanthemum with long petals. What he wanted was a simple white chrysanthemum with sixteen petals. The old man told the village chief to see Lady Yellow, but this flower did not please him, and, thanking the gardener, he took his departure.

On his way home he happened to enter a field when he saw Lady White weeping. She told him the sad story of her loneliness, and when she had finished her tale of woe the vil-

lage chief informed her that he had seen Lady Yellow and did not consider her half so beautiful as her own white self. At these cheery words Lady White dried her eyes and she nearly jumped off her little feet when this kind man told her that he wanted her for his lord's crest!

In another happy moment the happy Lady White was being carried in a palanquin. When she reached the Daimyo's palace all warmly praised her perfection of form. Great artists came from far and near, set about her and sketched the flower with wonderful skill. She soon saw her pretty white face on all the Daimyo's most precious belongings. She saw it on his armour and lacquer boxes, on his quilts and cushions and robes. She was painted floating down a stream and in all manner of quaint and beautiful ways. Every one acknowledged that the white chrysanthemum with her sixteen petals made the most wonderful crest in all Japan. While Lady White's happy face lived forever designed upon the Daimyo's possessions, Lady Yellow met with a sad fate. She had bloomed for her-

self alone and had drunk in the visitor's praise as eagerly as she did the dew upon her finely curled petals. One day, however, she felt a stiffness in her limbs and a cessation of the exuberance of life. Her once proud head fell forward, and when the old man found her he pulled her up and tossed her upon a rubbish heap.

The sixteen petal chrysanthemum is one of the crests of the Imperial family.

THE SHET-UP POSY

ANN TRUMBULL SLOSSON

ONCE there was a posy. 'Twa'n't a common kind o' posy, that blows out wide open, so's everybody can see its outsides and its insides too. But 'twas one of them posies like what grows down the road, back o' your pa's sugar-house, Danny, and don't come till way towards fall. They're sort o' blue, but real dark, and they look's if they was buds 'stead o' posies—only buds opens out, and these doesn't. They're all shet up close and tight, and they never, never, never opens. Never mind how much sun they get, never mind how much rain or how much drouth, whether it's cold or hot, them posies stay shet up tight, kind o' buddy, and not finished and humly. But if you pick 'em open, real careful, with a pin,—I've done it,—you find they're dreadful pretty inside.

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You couldn't see a posy that was finished off better, soft and nice, with pretty little stripes painted on 'em, and all the little things like threads in the middle, sech as the open posies has, standing up, with little knots on their tops, oh, so pretty,—you never did! Makes you think real hard, that does; leastways, makes me. What's they that way for? If they ain't never goin' to open out, what's the use o' havin' the shet-up part so slicked up and nice, with nobody never seein' it? Folks has different names for 'em, dumb foxgloves, blind gen-shuns, and all that, but I allers call 'em the shet-up posies.

"Well, 'twas one o' that kind o' posy I was goin' to tell you about. 'Twas one o' the shet-uppest and the buddiest of all on 'em, all blacky-blue and straight up and down, and shet up fast and tight. Nobody'd ever dream't was pretty inside. And the funniest thing, it didn't know 'twas so itself! It thought 'twas a mistake somehow, thought it had oughter been a posy, and was begun for one, but wasn't finished, and 'twas terr'ble unhappy. It knew there was pretty posies all 'round there,

goldenrod and purple daisies and all; and their inside was the right side, and they was proud of it, and held it open, and showed the pretty lining, all soft and nice with the little fuzzy yeller threads standin' up, with little balls on their tip ends. And the shet-up posy felt real bad; not mean and hateful and be-grudgin', you know, and wantin' to take away the nice part from the other posies, but sorry, and kind o' 'shamed.

"Oh, deary me!" she says,—I most forgot to say 'twas a girl posy—"deary me, what a humly, skimpy, awk'ard thing I be! I ain't more'n half made; there ain't no nice, pretty lining inside o' me, like them other posies; and on'y my wrong side shows, and that's jest plain and common. I can't chirk up folks like the goldenrod and daisies does. Nobody won't want to pick me and carry me home. I ain't no good to anybody, and I never shall be."

So she kep' on, thinkin' these dreadful sorry thinkin's, and most wishin' she'd never been made at all. You know 'twa'n't jest at fust she felt this way. Fust she thought she was a bud, like lots o' buds all 'round her, and she lotted

on openin' like they did. But when the days kep' passin' by, and all the other buds opened out, and showed how pretty they was, and she didn't open, why, then she got terr'ble discouraged; and I don't wonder a mite. She'd see the dew a-layin' soft and cool on the other posies' faces, and the sun a-shinin' warm on 'em as they held 'em up, and sometimes she'd see a butterfly come down and light on 'em real soft, and kind o' put his head down to 'em's if he was kissin' 'em, and she thought 'twould be powerful nice to hold her face up to all them pleasant things. But she couldn't.

But one day, afore she'd got very old, 'fore she'd dried up or fell off, or anything like that, she see somebody comin' along her way. 'Twas a man, and he was lookin' at all the posies real hard and partic'lar, but he wasn't pickin' any of 'em. Seems's if he was lookin' for somethin' diff'rent from what he see, and the poor little shet-up posy begun to wonder what he was arter. Bimeby she braced up, and she asked him about it in her shet-up, whisp'rin' voice. And says he, the man says: "I'm a-pickin' posies. That's what I work at

most o' the time. 'Tain't for myself," he says, "but the one I work for. I'm on'y his help. I run errands and do chores for him, and it's a partic'lar kind o' posy he's sent me for to-day." "What for does he want 'em?" says the shet-up posy. "Why, to set out in his gardin," the man says. "He's got the beautif'lest gardin you never see, and I pick posies for 't." "Deary me," thinks she to herself, "I jest wish he'd pick me. But I ain't the kind, I know." And then she says, so soft he can't hardly hear her, "What sort o' posies is it you're arter this time?" "Well," says the man, "it's a dreadful sing'lar order I've got to-day. I got to find a posy that's handsomer inside than 'tis outside, one that folks ain't took no notice of here, 'cause 'twas kind o' humly and queer to look at, not knowin' that inside 'twas as handsome as any posy on the airth. Seen any o' that kind?" says the man.

Well, the shet-up posy was dreadful worked up. "Deary dear!" she says to herself, "now if they'd on'y finished me off inside! I'm the right kind outside, humly and queer enough, but there's nothin' worth lookin' at inside,—

I'm certain sure o' that." But she didn't say this nor anything else out loud, and bimeby, when the man had waited, and didn't get any answer, he begun to look at the shet-up posy more partic'lar, to see why she was so mum. And all of a suddent he says, the man did, "Looks to me's if you was somethin' that kind yourself, ain't ye?"

"Oh, no, no, no!" whispers the shet-up posey. "I wish I was, I wish I was. I'm all right outside, humly and awk'ard, queer's I can be, but I ain't pretty inside,—oh! I most know I ain't." "I ain't so sure o' that myself," says the man, "but I can tell in a jiffy." "Will you have to pick me to pieces?" says the shet-up posy. "No, ma'am," says the man; "I've got a way o' tellin', the one I work for showed me." The shet-up posy never knowed what he done to her. I don't know myself, but 'twas somethin' soft and pleasant, that didn't hurt a mite, and then the man he says, "Well, well, well!" That's all he said, but he took her up real gentle, and begun to carry her away. "Where be ye takin' me?" says the shet-up posy. "Where ye belong," says the

man; "to the gardin o' the one I work for," he says. "I didn't know I was nice enough inside," says the shet-up posy, very soft and still. "They most gen'ally don't," says the man.

THE GAY LITTLE KING

MARY STEWART

So gay it looked, that young maple tree standing in the centre of the pasture with rows and rows of dark cedars and hemlocks growing all around it! They towered above the little maple and yet seemed to bow before it, as with their size and strength they shielded it from the wind which tossed their branches. It was covered, this small tree, with leaves of flaming crimson and gold which danced and fluttered merrily in the sunshine.

"Is it after all only a maple tree?" thought the little lad Jamie, who lay upon the ground in the old pasture watching. Ever since the frost in a single night had painted the leaves with splendour, that young tree had been a real comrade to the cripple boy. Jamie had hurt his back the year before, and this summer, while the other boys climbed mountains

and swam streams, Jamie could only hobble upon his crutches as far as the pasture. There he lay for hours upon the grass watching the clouds drift across the sky and wishing he were a cloud or a bird, so he could fly also. The days seemed very long, and to make them pass more quickly Jamie made up stories about the mountains in the distance, the stream which rippled at the foot of the pasture and the dark evergreen trees which surrounded that flaming maple. "They are dull old courtiers, and he is a gay little king in his coronation robes," thought the boy and then—he sat up in astonishment and rubbed his eyes. Was he dreaming? No, it was all real, the young maple was gone and in its place was a little king! A crown of gleaming jewels was upon his head, he was dressed in robes of flaming crimson and over all was flung a mantle of woven gold. And the dark evergreens, where were they? There was no sign of them, and around the king stood a throng of grave and solemn courtiers dressed in green velvet, all gazing frowningly at the King. He was stamping his foot, Jamie heard the stamp, and

then he heard the King cry in a clear, boyish voice, "I won't be a King! I won't sit upon a throne all day long and make laws and punish people and be bowed down to; I want to be a little boy and have fun, I do!"

At that moment a gust of wind blew the King's mantle from his shoulders; it looked like a handful of golden leaves flying through the air, and the King himself—or was it only a branch of scarlet leaves?—no, it was the little King who came scampering over the grass toward Jamie. "Come," he said gleefully, "we are going to run away, you and I. We're going to have the merriest day of our whole lives!"

"But my crutches," sighed Jamie. "See, I can't run."

"Can't you?" whispered the little King gently. "Close your eyes and keep tight hold of my hand."

As Jamie shut his eyes he felt something very soft, like a bit of thistle down against his cheek, and then as light as that same thistle he felt himself rising from the ground, drifting, floating, flying, up, up—— "Now open your

eyes," said the little King's laughing voice. Jamie obeyed, and for a moment he was puzzled. Was he a King, too, he wondered, for his clothes were of crimson velvet like the lad's beside him, or were they but leaves fluttering through the air?

"Never mind what you are," cried the King, reading his look of bewilderment. "We can all be lots more things than we dream of until the Spirit of Autumn takes hold of us. The folks below think us only leaves, but we know better, and now, where shall we go? This is my last gorgeous day, for tonight Autumn flies away from the cold breath of Winter. Let's fly to the spot you wish to see more than anything else in the world."

"Flying like this is such fun that I don't care where we go," answered Jamie, then suddenly both leaves—but let us say boys—stopped drifting and gazed in wonder at the sight before them. They were in the sunshine, but a shower was falling in the distance and opposite them, across the sky, stretched a perfect rainbow.

"Did you ever hear of the pot of gold at

the rainbow's foot?" asked Jamie excitedly. "Let's go there now and find it!"

"All right," answered the little King, "let's go there, and if we don't find the pot of gold we may find something still more wonderful."

Through the air they flew toward the rainbow, whose colours were paling a little in the center, but growing more and more glorious at the end.

"Shut your eyes again and hold my hand tight," said the King. "I must fill your eyes with mist or you would be blinded by the sight you are going to see. No boy has ever seen it before except in dreams."

For a moment Jamie shivered, they seemed to be passing through a thick fog, and then—"Open your eyes," cried the King. Jamie looked——

Picture to yourself a great golden hall filled with streams of colours, each as radiant as the sunshine, and yet, seen through spectacles of mist, so soft they could not dazzle your eyes. Each great sheath of colour was moving, shifting and weaving itself in and out among the others like the figure of a dancer, so quickly

that it was almost impossible to catch it. And yet that was just what hundreds of gay little fairies with butterfly wings and scarfs of thistle down were trying to do. Each one carried a golden pot, and as they caught one colour after another their captives rushed away, leaving a bit of colour in the fairy's hand. Hastily dropping that bit into his golden pot with a merry, tinkling laugh, the fairy was off again after another dancing, gleaming bit of rainbow.

"So there are the pots of gold," cried Jamie. "But what do the fairies do with the rainbow's colours?"

Just then a very merry sprite came tearing past, his pot brimming over with glowing crimson. "My colour is the favourite just now," he cried. "I've got one billion trees to paint and all that's left over goes to the cardinal flowers." "Mine is just as popular," sang out another fairy, his pot overflowing with gold. "There are millions of goldenrods for me to colour as well as the trees!" "And autumn loves mine too," chanted a delicate little sprite whose pot was filled with violet. "Think of

all the asters without which your golden-rods would be very tiresome." "And mine," rippled another, his pot filled with blue like the sea. "Autumn always wants mine! The gentians are rare because one blossom takes more colour than a thousand of spring's forget-me-nots."

Just then a flaming orange stream rushed past, and Jamie and the little king made one grab at it.

"Thieves! Robbers!" cried the colours in a whirl of fury. In a second they were all dancing madly before the eyes of the terrified boys. Then there was a crash as of thunder and the lads found themselves lying upon the ground, wet, thick, gray mist all about them. The glorious dance at the rainbow's foot had vanished.

"I suppose we deserved that," sighed Jamie, "but I did want a pocketful of colour stuff to show the boys."

"Never mind, let's fly out of this mist and have more fun!" cried the little King. Up they floated into the sunshine and they found that the winds had been busy while they were

gone. Almost every tree stood dark and bare—the air was full of brilliant, whispering leaves. "Winter is surely coming soon," said the little King. "Look at the spot below us where I grew." Beneath them, in the centre of the pasture, stood the maple tree, only one crimson leaf still fluttering from its branches.

"When that leaf is gone, I'll have to say good-night for many months," said the King. "Come, before that happens we'll go to the Cavern of the winds and see how Autumn plays upon them."

This time they flew upward, and now it was so cold that Jamie drew his scarlet robes close about him. Through the first thin clouds they flew; then right into a great cloud, looking like an enormous castle, they floated. It was one huge hall, so vast that Jamie couldn't see the other end, but he could hear, far, far away beyond great arches, the rumbling of a mighty organ. Crashing and thunderous it sounded until the vast hall shook and echoed with the sound. "That is Autumn playing upon the organ of the winds," said the little King, and although he shouted in Jamie's ear

it sounded like a whisper above the music. "When she touches the keys the winds fill the pipes and go roaring off to carry away the leaves below," he explained. "But listen—she knows the leaves have almost all fallen and now she is singing her good-night to them."

The crashing had ceased, and through the great hall echoed a slumber song, as sweet as a thrush's note at twilight, as tender as a wood-dove's call.

Jamie closed his eyes and thought of lapping waves, and sunsets, the new moon rising and the first stars blossoming in the sky.

Did he sleep there in the Winds' Cavern with the Spirit of Autumn singing good-night to her flaming world? He never knew. When he opened his eyes he found himself standing upon the doorstep of his own home! He was drawing something soft and white about him to keep out the cold and he heard a whispered "Good-night, Comrade, until next Autumn," and a flutter as of leaves flying through the air, then the house door opened and as he stood with the light of the blazing

fire falling upon him he heard his mother's voice:

"Why, Jamie, you're covered with snow! And, my boy, where are your crutches?"

Into the house he ran, right into his mother's outstretched arms, although his crutches were still lying out on the pasture, buried beneath the snow! And Jamie was well! Was it a gift from the Spirit of Autumn to a little lad? Just another of her precious gifts given with her flaming leaves, her wind's music, her glorious flowers. Has she not a gift for you, too, among all these? Open your eyes and your ears and find your heart's desire!

October's touch paints all the maple leaves
With brilliant crimson, and his golden kiss
Lies on the clustered hazels; scarlet glows
The sturdy oak, and copper-hued the beech.
A russet gloss lingers in the elm;
The pensile birch is yellowing apace,
And many-tinted show the woodlands all,
With autumn's dying slendours.

—*Selected.*

THE STORY OF THE OPAL

ANN DE MORGAN

THE sun was shining brightly one day, and a little Sunbeam slid down his long golden ladder, and crept unperceived under the leaves of a large tree. All the Sunbeams are in reality tiny Sun-fairies, who run down to earth on golden ladders, which look to mortals like rays of the Sun. When they see a cloud coming they climb their ladders in an instant and draw them up after them into the Sun. The Sun is ruled by a mighty fairy, who every morning tells his tiny servants, the beams, where they are to shine, and every evening counts them on their return, to see he has the right number. It is not known, but the Sun and Moon are enemies, and that is why they never shine at the same time. The fairy of the Moon is a woman, and all her beams are tiny women, who come down on the loveliest little ladders,

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The opal is the stone associated with the month of October.

like threads of silver. No one knows why the Sun and Moon quarrelled. Once they were very good friends. But now they are bitter enemies, and the Sunbeams and Moonbeams may not play together.

One day a little Sunbeam crept into a tree, and sat down near a Bullfinch's nest, and watched the Bullfinch and its mate.

"Why should I not have a mate also?" he said to himself. He was the prettiest little fellow you could imagine. His hair was bright gold, and he sat still, leaning one arm on his tiny ladder, and listening to the chatter of the birds.

"But I shall try to keep awake to-night to see her," said a young Bullfinch.

"Nonsense!" said its mother. "You shall do no such thing."

"But the Nightingale says she is so very lovely," said a Wren, looking out from her little nest in a hedge close by.

"The Nightingale!" said the old Bullfinch, scornfully. "Every one knows that the Nightingale was moonstruck long ago. Who can trust a word he says?"

"Nevertheless, I should like to see her," said the Wren.

"I have seen her, and the Nightingale is right," said a Wood-dove in its soft, cooing tones. "I was awake last night and saw her; she is more lovely than anything that ever came here before."

"Of whom were you talking?" asked the Sunbeam; and he shot across to the Bullfinch's nest. All the birds were silent when they saw him. At last the Bullfinch said, "Only of a Moonbeam, your Highness. No one your Highness would care about," for the Bullfinch remembered the quarrel between the Sun and Moon, and did not like to say much.

"What is she like?" asked the Sunbeam. "I have never seen a Moonbeam."

"I have seen her, and she is as beautiful as an angel," said the Wood-dove. "But you should ask the Nightingale. He knows more about her than any one, for he always comes out to sing to her"

"Where is the Nightingale?" asked the Sunbeam.

"He is resting now," said the Wren, "and

will not say a word. But later, as the Sun begins to set, he will come out and tell you."

"At the time when all decent birds are going to roost," grumbled the Bullfinch.

"I will wait till the Nightingale comes," said the Sunbeam.

So all day long he shone about the tree. As the sun moved slowly down, his ladder dropped with it lower and lower, for it was fastened to the Sun at one end; and if he had allowed the Sun to disappear before he had run back and drawn it up, the ladder would have broken against the earth, and the poor little Sunbeam could never have gone home again, but would have wandered about, becoming paler and paler every minute, till at last he died.

But some time before the sun had gone, when it was still shining in a glorious bed of red and gold, the Nightingale arose, began to sing loud and clear.

"Oh, is it you at last?" said the Sunbeam. "How I have waited for you. Tell me quickly about this Moonbeam of whom they are all talking."

"What shall I tell you of her?" sang the Nightingale. "She is more beautiful than the rose. She is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen. Her hair is silver, and the light of her eyes is far more lovely than yours. But why should you want to know about her? You belong to the Sun, and hate Moonbeams."

"I do not hate them," said the Sunbeam. "What are they like? Show this one to me some night, dear Nightingale."

"I cannot show her to you now," answered the Nightingale; "for she will not come out till long after the sun has set; but wait a few days, and when the Moon is full she will come a little before the Sun sets, and if you hide beneath a leaf you may look at her. But you must promise not to shine on her, or you might hurt her, or break her ladder."

"I will promise," said the Sunbeam, and every day he came back to the same tree at sunset, to talk to the Nightingale about the Moonbeam, till the Bullfinch was quite angry.

"To-night I shall see her at last," he said to himself, for the Moon was almost full, and would rise before the Sun had set. He hid in

the oak-leaves, trembling with expectation.

"She is coming!" said the Nightingale, and the Sunbeam peeped out from the branches, and watched. In a minute or two a tiny silver ladder like a thread was placed among the leaves, near the Nightingale's nest, and down it came the Moonbeam, and our little Sunbeam looked out and saw her.

She did not at all look as he had expected she would, but he agreed with the Nightingale that she was the loveliest thing he had ever seen. She was all silver, and pale greeny blue. Her hair and eyes shone like stars. All the Sunbeams looked bright, and hot, but she looked as cool as the sea; yet she glittered like a diamond. The Sunbeam gazed at her in surprise, unable to say a word, till all at once he saw that his little ladder was bending. The sun was sinking, and he had only just time to scramble back, and draw his ladder after him.

The Moonbeam only saw his light vanishing, and did not see him.

"To whom were you talking, dear Nightingale?" she asked, putting her beautiful white

arms round his neck, and leaning her head on his bosom.

"To a Sunbeam," answered the Nightingale. "Ah, how beautiful he is! I was telling him about you. He longs to see you."

"I have never seen a Sunbeam," said the Moonbeam, wistfully. "I should like to see one so much;" and all night long she sat close beside the Nightingale, with her head leaning on his breast whilst he sang to her of the Sunbeam; and his song was so loud and clear that it awoke the Bullfinch, who flew into a rage, and declared that if it went on any longer she would speak to the Owl about it, and have it stopped. For the Owl was chief judge, and always ate the little birds when they did not behave themselves.

But the Nightingale never ceased, and the Moonbeam listened till the tears rose in her eyes and her lips quivered.

"To-night, then, I shall see him," whispered the Moonbeam, as she kissed the Nightingale, and bid him adieu.

"And to-night he will see you," said the

Nightingale, as he settled to rest among the leaves.

All that next day was cloudy, and the Sun did not shine, but towards evening the clouds passed away and the Sun came forth, and no sooner had it appeared than the Nightingale saw our Sunbeam's ladder placed close to his nest, and in an instant the Sunbeam was beside him.

"Dear, dear Nightingale," he said, "you are right. She is more lovely than the dawn. I have thought of her all night and all day. Tell me, will she come again to-night? I will wait to see her."

"Yes, she will come, and you may speak to her, but you must not touch her," said the Nightingale; and then they were silent and waited.

Underneath the oak-tree lay a large white Stone, a common white Stone, neither beautiful nor useful, for it lay there where it had fallen, and bitterly lamented that it had no object in life. It never spoke to the birds, who scarcely knew it could speak; but sometimes, if the Nightingale lighted upon it, and

touched it with his soft breast, or the Moonbeam shone upon it, it felt as if it would break with grief that it should be so stupid and useless. It watched the Sunbeams and Moonbeams come down on their ladders, and wondered that none of the birds but the Nightingale thought the Moonbeam beautiful. That evening, as the Sunbeam sat waiting, the Stone watched it eagerly, and when the Moonbeam placed her tiny ladder among the leaves, and slid down it, it listened to all that was said.

At first the Moonbeam did not speak, for she did not see the Sunbeam, but she came close to the Nightingale, and kissed it as usual.

"Have you seen him again?" she asked. And, on hearing this, the Sunbeam shot out from among the green leaves, and stood before her.

For a few minutes she was silent; then she began to shiver and sob, and drew nearer to to the Nightingale, and if the Sunbeam tried to approach her, she climbed up her ladder, and went farther still.

"Do not be frightened, dearest Moonbeam,"

cried he piteously; "I would not, indeed, do you any harm, you are so very lovely, and I love you so much."

The Moonbeam turned away, sobbing.

"I do not want you to leave me," she said, "for if you touch me I shall die. It would have been much better for you not to have seen me; and now I cannot go back and be happy in the Moon, for I shall be always thinking of you."

"I do not care if I die or not, now that I have seen you; and see," said the Sunbeam sadly, "my end is sure, for the Sun is fast sinking, and I shall not return to it, I shall stay with you."

"Go, while you have time," cried the Moonbeam. But even as she spoke the Sun sank beneath the horizon, and the tiny gold ladder of the Sunbeam broke with a snap, and the two sides fell to earth and melted away.

"See," said the Sunbeam, "I cannot return now, neither do I wish it. I will remain here with you till I die."

"No, no," cried the Moonbeam. "Oh, I shall have killed you! What shall I do? And

look, there are clouds drifting near the Moon; if one of them floats across my ladder it will break it. But I cannot go and leave you here;" and she leaned across the leaves to where the Sunbeam sat, and looked into his eyes. But the Nightingale saw that a tiny white cloud was sailing close by the Moon—a little cloud no bigger than a spot of white wool, but quite big and strong enough to break the Moonbeam's little ladder.

"Go, go at once. See! your ladder will break," he sang to her; but she did not notice him, but sat watching the Sunbeam sadly. For a moment the moon's light was obscured, as the tiny cloud sailed past it; then the little silver ladder fell to earth, broken in two and shrunk away, but the Moonbeam did not heed it.

"It does not matter," she said, "for I should never have gone back and left you here, now that I have seen you."

So all night long they sat together in the oak tree, and the Nightingale sang to them, and the other birds grumbled that he kept them awake. But the two were very happy,

though the Sunbeam knew he was growing paler every moment, for he could not live twenty-four hours away from the Sun.

When the dawn began to appear, the Moonbeam shivered and trembled.

"The strong Sun," she said, "would kill me, but I fear something even worse than the Sun. See how heavy the clouds are! Surely it is going to rain, and rain would kill us both at once. Oh, where can we look for shelter before it comes?"

The Sunbeam looked up, and saw that the rain was coming.

"Come," he said, "let us go;" and they wandered out into the forest, and sought for a sheltering place, but every moment they grew weaker.

When they were gone, the Stone looked up at the Nightingale, and said:

"Oh, why did they go? I like to hear them talk, and they are so pretty; they can find no shelter out there, and they will die at once. See! in my side there is a large hole where it is quite dark, and into which no rain can come. Fly after them and tell them to come, that I

will shelter them." So the Nightingale spread his wings, and flew, singing:

"Come back, come back! The Stone will shelter you. Come back at once before the rain falls."

They had wandered out into an open field, but when she heard the Nightingale, the Moonbeam turned her head and said:

"Surely that is the Nightingale singing. See! he is calling us."

"Follow me," sang the bird. "Back at once to shelter in the Stone." But the Moonbeam tottered and fell.

"I am grown so weak and pale," she said, "I can no longer move."

Then the Nightingale flew to earth. "Climb upon my back," he said, "and I will take you both back to the Stone." So they both sat upon his back, and he flew with them to the large Stone beneath the tree.

"Go in," he said, stopping in front of the hole; and both passed into the hole, and nestled in the darkness within the Stone.

Then the rain began. All day long it rained, and the Nightingale sat in his nest

half asleep. But when the Moon rose, after the sun had set, the clouds cleared away, and the air was again full of tiny silver ladders, down which the Moonbeams came, but the Nightingale looked in vain for his own particular Moonbeam. He knew she could not shine on him again, therefore he mourned, and sang a sorrowful song. Then he flew down to the Stone, and sang a song at the mouth of the hole, but there came no answer. So he looked down the hole, into the Stone, but there was no trace of the Sunbeam or the Moonbeam—only one shining spot of light, where they had rested. Then the Nightingale knew that they had faded away and died.

"They could not live away from the Sun and Moon," he said. "Still, I wish I had never told the Sunbeam of her beauty; then she would be here now."

When the Bullfinch heard of it she was quite pleased. "Now, at least," she said, "we shall hear the end of the Moonbeam. I am heartily glad, for I was sick of her."

"How much they must have loved each other!" said the Dove. "I am glad at least

that they died together," and she cooed sadly.

But through the Stone wherein the beams had sheltered, shot up bright, beautiful rays of light silver and gold. They coloured it all over with every colour of the rainbow, and when the Sun or Moon warmed it with their light it became quite brilliant. So that the Stone, from being the ugliest thing in the whole forest, became the most beautiful.

Men found it and called it the Opal. But the Nightingale knew that it was the Sunbeam and Moonbeam who, in dying, had suffused the Stone with their mingled colours and light; and the Nightingale will never forget them, for every night he sings their story, and that is why his song is so sad.

In sapphire, emerald, amethyst,
Sparkles the sea by the morning kissed;
And the mist from the far-off valleys lie
Gleaming like pearl in the tender sky;
Soft shapes of cloud that melt and drift,
With tints of opal that glow and shift.

CELIA THAXTER.

LOST: THE SUMMER

Where has the summer gone?
She was here just a minute ago,
  With roses and daisies
  To whisper her praises——
And every one loved her so!

Has any one seen her about?
She must have gone off in the night!
  And she took the best flowers
  And the happiest hours,
And asked no one's leave for her flight.

Have you noticed her steps in the grass?
The garden looks red where she went;
  By the side of the hedge
  There's a golden-rod edge,
And the rose vines are withered and bent.

Do you think she will ever come back?
I shall watch every day at the gate
  For the robins and clover,
  Saying over and over:
"I know she will come, if I wait."

RAYMOND MACDONALD ALDEN.

BY THE WAYSIDE

On the hill the golden-rod,
  And the aster in the wood,
And the yellow sunflower by the brook,
  In autumn beauty stood.

C440574

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

THE KING'S CANDLES

ONCE upon a time there lived a good king who was driven from his throne by an enemy. A few faithful knights and servants fled with his majesty to a forest where they found shelter in deep, rocky caves.

The flight from the king's palace had been so hasty that the knights and servants could bring only a few things for their king's comfort. It was in the early autumn and his majesty feared it would be necessary to live in secret during the coming winter. You may be sure the king was well pleased to find his knights had brought a few warm blankets and robes. After he had praised his followers for their thoughtfulness in providing for the winter, a young page stepped forward and said, "Your Majesty, I did not bring clothing, but I brought as many candles as I could carry."

"Candles," laughed the king, "now pray tell me, lad, why you brought candles. You served

me well in the palace by seeing that my throne was properly lighted, but in our forest exile we shall have little use for candles, I fear."

"Sire," replied the page, "I thought that your majesty would wish to hold council in the evenings, and that I could light your throne seat with candles as was the custom in the palace."

"I fear my throne seat, as you call it, will be nothing more than a rocky ledge for some time," said the king. "See, there is one in the inner cave which will serve. So long as the candles last, my faithful lad, your king will not be obliged to hold council in darkness."

"So long as the candles last," repeated the king's page to himself. "I hope our king's soldiers, who are seeking help, will be able to drive the usurper away before winter comes."

The king and his followers soon adapted themselves to life in exile. During the daytime they hunted game which lurked in the thickets; in the evening they gathered together in the deep cave and held council. Then it was that the king sat on his rude throne lit by two candles.

The king's page with sinking heart saw the candles grow fewer and fewer until there were but two left. Then at last came an evening when the lights were missing from the king's throne. In a dark corner of the cave the little page sat grieving because he could not see his king's face.

It happened one morning that the lad wandered to the edge of the woodland where the highway separated the richly coloured forest trees from a stretch of meadowland where the white mist was slowly lifting. On the roadside was an old woman carrying a large sack on her bent shoulders. When she reached the place where the king's page was standing she set her sack on the ground and looked wistfully at the meadow, then at the deep ditch which separated the field from the highway.

"Shall I help you across the ditch?" asked the king's page.

"Thank you, my lad," said the old woman. "Perhaps I'd better not go across. It would be hard for me to reach the highway again. But I should like a few of those tall mullein

spikes. I've none in my bag so fine as tnose growing in the meadow."

"I'll gather some for you," said the king's page.

He leaped across the ditch, and soon filled his hands with the tall mullein spikes.

The old woman was delighted. She tucked them into her bag and said, "They make such fine winter candles. Thank you, my lad."

"Winter candles!" exclaimed the king's page.

"Aye," nodded the old woman. "Dip them in tallow, a thin coat will do—and you have candles fit for a king. Thank you kindly."

"We are in sore need of candles where I live, but——" the page stopped.

"Use mullein spikes. They make candles fit for a king, I say," and the old woman picked up her sack.

"But we have no tallow," said the lad.

"I can spare you a lump of tallow, my boy. Come along with me to my cottage," said the old woman.

So the king's page carried the sack of mullein spikes to the old woman's cottage and she

gave him a large lump of tallow. On his way back he leaped across the ditch again and filled his arms with tall mullein spikes. He hurried back to the cave, melted the tallow, and dipped the weeds into the liquid fat.

When the king and his party returned that evening to the cave, two tall candles were standing on the rude throne.

"See," cried the king's page, "we have a fresh supply of candles."

"Tell us where you got them," said the surprised king.

"They are made from spikes of the mullein weed," explained the king's page. Then he told his majesty about the afternoon's adventure.

"The mullein weed shall have a new name," declared the king. "It shall be called the King's Candles."

A few days later the king called his followers around his throne seat and said, "A message has come to me declaring that the usurper has been driven out of my country. Tomorrow we'll hold a feast in the palace, and the table shall be lighted by 'King's Candles.' "

Every year since that far-off time when the reigning king holds an autumn festival, the banquet table is lighted with mullein spikes dipped in tallow, and they are called the "King's Candles."

> "The mullein's yellow candles burn
> Over the heads of dry, sweet fern."

A LEGEND OF THE GOLDEN-ROD

Frances Weld Danielson

Once there were a great many weeds in a field. They were very ugly-looking weeds, and they didn't seem to be the least bit of use in the world. The cows would not eat them, the children would not pick them, and even the bugs did not seem to like them very well.

"I don't see what we're here for," said one of the weeds. "We are not any good."

"No good at all," growled a dozen little weeds, "only to catch dust."

"Well, if that's what we're here for," cried a very tall weed, "then I say let's catch dust! I suppose somebody's got to do it. We can't all bear blueberries or blossom into hollyhocks."

"But it isn't pleasant work at all," whined a tiny bit of a weed.

From "Story-Telling Time." Used by permission of Pilgrims Press.

"No whining allowed in this field," laughed a funny little fat weed, with a hump in his stalk. "We're all going to catch dust, so let's see which one can catch the most. What do you say to a race?"

The little fat weed spoke in such a jolly voice that the weeds all cheered up at once, and before long they were as busy as bees, and as happy as Johnnie-jump-ups. They worked so well stretching their stalks and spreading out their fingers that before the summer was half over they were able to take every bit of dust that flew up from the road. In the field beyond, where the clover grew and the cows fed, there was not any to be seen.

One morning, toward the end of summer, the weeds were surprised to see a number of people standing by the fence looking at them. Pretty soon some children came and gazed at them. Then the weeds noticed that people driving by called each other's attention to them. They were much surprised at this, but they were still more surprised when one day some children climbed the fence and commenced to pick them.

"See," cried a little girl, "how all the dust has been changed to gold!"

The weeds looked at each other, and, sure enough, they were all covered with gold-dust.

"A fairy has done it," they whispered one to the other.

But the fairies were there on the spot, and declared they had had nothing to do with it.

"You did it yourselves," cried the queen of the fairies. "You were happy in your work, and a cheerful spirit always changes dust into gold. Didn't you know it?"

"You're not weeds any more, you're flowers," sang the fairies.

"Golden-rod, golden-rod!" shouted the children.

GOLDEN-ROD

Pretty, slender golden-rod,
  Like a flame of light,
On the quiet, lonely way,
  Glows your torch so bright.

With your glorious golden staff,
  Gay in autumn hours,
Now you lead to wintry rest,
  All the lovely flowers.

Cheering with a joyous face,
  All that pass you by,
How you light the meadows round,
  With your head so high.

ANNA E. SKINNER.

THE LITTLE WEED

"YOU'RE nothing but a weed," said the children in the fall. The little weed hung its head in sorrow. No one seemed to think that a weed was of any use.

By and by the snow came and the cold winds blew. There were many hungry little birds hunting for food.

"Twit! Twit Twee!
See! See! See!"

sang a merry little bird one cold morning.

"Here is a lovely weed full of nice brown seeds!" And he made a good meal from those seeds that morning. Then three other little birds came to share the feast.

The little weed was so happy that she held her head up straight and tall again.

"That is what I was meant for," she said.

"I am good for something. Four hungry little birds had as many seeds as they wished for their breakfast. Next year I'll grow as many seeds as I can to feed many more hungry little birds. Good-bye, little birds," she called out to the little feathery friends. "Come again next year. I'll have another dinner for you."

"Good-bye, little weed," sang the birds. "We have had a fine meal and we thank you very much. You'll see us again next year. It is so hard to get enough to eat during the cold weather, and we are grateful to you for holding your seeds for us."

"It's nice to find that one is of some use after all, isn't it?" called out the little weed to her neighbour in the next field.

—*Selected.*