

JAPANESE FAIRY TALES

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AND OTHERS



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The versions of the first four tales in this volume are by Lafcadio Hearn. The others are by Grace James, Professor Basil Hall Chamberlain and others.

CHIN-CHIN KOBAKAMA

THE floor of a Japanese room is covered with beautiful thick soft mats of woven reeds. They fit very closely together, so that you can just slip a knife-blade between them. They are changed once every year, and are kept very clean. The Japanese never wear shoes in the house, and do not use chairs or furniture such as English people use. They sit, sleep, eat, and sometimes even write upon the floor. So the mats must be kept very clean indeed, and Japanese children are taught, just as soon as they can speak, never to spoil or dirty the mats.

Now Japanese children are really very good. All travelers, who have written pleasant books about Japan, declare that Japanese children are much more obedient than English children and much less mischievous. They do not spoil and dirty things, and they do not even break their own toys. A little Japanese girl does not break her doll. No, she takes great care of it, and keeps it even after she becomes a woman and is married. When she becomes a mother, and has a daughter, she gives the doll to that little daughter. And the child takes the same care of the doll that her mother did, and preserves it until she grows up, and gives it at last to her own children, who play with it just as nicely as their grandmother did. So I—who am writing this little story for you—have seen in Japan, dolls more than a hundred years old, looking just as pretty as when they were new. This will show you how very good Japanese children are; and you will be able to understand why the floor of a Japanese room is nearly always kept clean—not scratched and spoiled by mischievous play.

You ask me whether all, *all* Japanese children are as good as that? Well—no, there are a few, a very few naughty ones. And what happens to the mats in the houses of these naughty children? Nothing very bad—because there are fairies who take care of the mats. These fairies tease and frighten children who dirty or spoil the mats. At least—they used to tease and frighten such mischievous children. I am not quite sure whether those little fairies still live in Japan—because the new railways and the telegraph-poles have frightened a great many fairies away. But here is a little story about them:

Once there was a little girl who was very pretty, but also very lazy. Her parents were rich, and had a great many servants; and these servants were very fond of the little girl, and did everything for her which she ought to have been able to do for herself. Perhaps this was what made her so lazy. When she grew up into a beautiful woman, she still remained lazy; but as the servants always dressed and undressed her, and arranged her hair, she looked very charming, and nobody thought about her faults.

At last she was married to a brave warrior, and went away with him to live in another house where there were but few servants. She was sorry not to have as many servants as she had had at home, because she was obliged to do several things for herself, which other

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folks had always done for her. It was such trouble to her to dress herself, and take care of her own clothes, and keep herself looking neat and pretty to please her husband. But as he was a warrior, and often had to be far away from home with the army, she could sometimes be just as lazy as she wished. Her husband's parents were very old and good-natured, and never scolded her.

Well, one night while her husband was away with the army, she was awakened by queer little noises in her room. By the light of a big paper-lantern she could see very well; and she saw strange things. What?

Hundreds of little men, dressed just like Japanese warriors, but only about one inch high, were dancing all around her pillow. They wore the same kind of dress her husband wore on holidays (*Kamishimo*, a long robe with square shoulders), and their hair was tied up in knots, and each wore two tiny swords. They all looked at her as they danced, and laughed, and they all sang the same song, over and over again:

*“Chin-chin Kobakama,
Yomo fuké sōro,
Oshizumare, Hime-gimi!
Ya ton ton!”*

Which meant: “We are the Chin-chin Kobakama; the hour is late; sleep, honorable noble darling!”

The words seemed very polite; but she soon saw that the little men were only making cruel fun of her. They also made ugly faces at her.

She tried to catch some of them; but they jumped about so quickly that she could not. Then she tried to drive them away; but they would not go, and they never stopped singing

“Chin-chin Kobakama,”

and laughing at her. Then she knew they were little fairies, and became so frightened that she could not even cry out. They danced around her until morning; then they all vanished suddenly.

She was ashamed to tell anybody what had happened—because, as she was the wife of a warrior, she did not wish anybody to know how frightened she had been.

Next night, again the little men came and danced, and they came also the night after that, and every night—always at the same hour, which the old Japanese used to call the “Hour of the Ox;” that is, about two o'clock in the morning by our time. At last she became very sick, through want of sleep and through fright. But the little men would not leave her alone.

When her husband came back home, he was very sorry to find

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her sick in bed. At first she was afraid to tell him what had made her ill, for fear that he would laugh at her. But he was so kind, and coaxed her so gently, that after a while she told him what happened every night.

He did not laugh at her at all, but looked very serious for a time. Then he asked:

“At what time do they come?”

She answered: “Always at the same hour—the ‘Hour of the Ox.’”

“Very well,” said her husband, “to-night I shall hide and watch for them. Do not be frightened.”

So that night the warrior hid himself in a closet in the sleeping room, and kept watch through a chink between the sliding doors.

He waited and watched until the “Hour of the Ox.” Then, all at once, the little men came up through the mats, and began their dance and their song:—

*“Chin-chin Kobakama,
Yomo fuké sōro”*

They looked so queer, and danced in such a funny way, that the warrior could scarcely keep from laughing. But he saw his young wife’s frightened face; and then remembering that nearly all Japanese ghosts and goblins are afraid of a sword, he drew his blade, and rushed out of the closet, and struck at the little dancers. Immediately they all turned into—what do you think?

Toothpicks!

There were no more little warriors—only a lot of old toothpicks scattered over the mats.

The young wife had been too lazy to put her toothpicks away properly; and every day, after having used a new toothpick, she would stick it down between the mats on the floor, to get rid of it. So the little fairies who take care of the floor-mats became angry with her, and tormented her.

Her husband scolded her, and she was so ashamed that she did not know what to do. A servant was called, and the toothpicks were taken away and burned. After that the little men never came back again.

There is also a story told about a lazy little girl, who used to eat plums, and afterward hide the plum-stones between the floor-mats. For a long time she was able to do this without being found out. But at last the fairies got angry and punished her.

For every night, tiny, tiny women—all wearing bright red robes with very long sleeves—rose up from the floor at the same hour, and danced, and made faces at her and prevented her from sleeping.

Her mother one night sat up to watch, and saw them, and struck

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at them—and they all turned into plum-stones! So the naughtiness of that little girl was found out. After that she became a very good girl indeed.

THE GOBLIN-SPIDER

IN very ancient books it is said that there used to be many goblin-spiders in Japan. Some folks declare there are still some goblin-spiders. During the daytime they look just like common spiders; but very late at night, when everybody is asleep, and there is no sound, they become very, very big, and do awful things. Goblin-spiders are supposed also to have the magical power of taking human shape—so as to deceive people. And there is a famous Japanese story about such a spider.

There was once, in some lonely part of the country, a haunted temple. No one could live in the building because of the goblins that had taken possession of it. Many brave *samurai* went to that place at various times for the purpose of killing the goblins. But they were never heard of again after they had entered the temple.

At last one who was famous for his courage and his prudence, went to the temple to watch during the night. And he said to those who accompanied him there: "If in the morning I be still alive, I shall drum upon the drum of the temple." Then he was left alone, to watch by the light of a lamp.

As the night advanced he crouched down under the altar, which supported a dusty image of Buddha. He saw nothing strange and heard no sound till after midnight. Then there came a goblin, having but half a body and one eye, and said: "*Hitokusai!*" (There is the smell of a man). But the *samurai* did not move. The goblin went away.

Then there came a priest and played upon a *samisen* so wonderfully that the *samurai* felt sure it was not the playing of a man. So he leaped up with his sword drawn. The priest, seeing him, burst out laughing, and said: "So you thought I was a goblin? Oh no! I am only the priest of this temple; but I have to play to keep off the goblins. Does not this *samisen* sound well? Please play a little."

And he offered the instrument to the *samurai* who grasped it very cautiously with his left hand. But instantly the *samisen* changed into a monstrous spider-web, and the priest into a goblin-spider; and the warrior found himself caught fast in the web by the left hand. He struggled bravely, and struck at the spider with his sword, and wounded it; but he soon became entangled still more in the net, and could not move.

However, the wounded spider crawled away, and the sun rose. In a little while the people came and found the *samurai* in the horrible web, and freed him. They saw tracks of blood upon the floor, and followed the tracks out of the temple to a hole in the deserted garden.

Out of the hole issued a frightful sound of groaning. They found the wounded goblin in the hole, and killed it.

THE OLD WOMAN WHO LOST HER DUMPLINGS

LONG, long ago there was a funny old woman, who liked to laugh and to make dumplings of rice-flour.

One day, while she was preparing some dumplings for dinner, she let one fall; and it rolled into a hole in the earthen floor of her little kitchen and disappeared. The old woman tried to reach it by putting her hand down the hole, and all at once the earth gave way, and the old woman fell in.

She fell quite a distance, but was not a bit hurt; and when she got up on her feet again, she saw that she was standing on a road, just like the road before her house. It was quite light down there; and she could see plenty of rice-fields, but no one in them. How all this happened, I cannot tell you. But it seems that the old woman had fallen into another country.

The road she had fallen upon sloped very much: so, after having looked for her dumpling in vain, she thought that it must have rolled farther away down the slope. She ran down the road to look, crying:

“My dumpling, my dumpling! Where is that dumpling of mine?”

After a little while she saw a stone *Fizō* standing by the roadside, and she said:

“O Lord *Fizō*, did you see my dumpling?” *Fizō* answered:

“Yes, I saw your dumpling rolling by me down the road. But you had better not go any farther, because there is a wicked *Oni* living down there, who eats people.”

But the old woman only laughed, and ran on further down the road, crying: “My dumpling, my dumpling! Where is that dumpling of mine?” And she came to another statue of *Fizō*, and asked it:

“O kind Lord *Fizō*, did you see my dumpling?”

And *Fizō* said:

“Yes, I saw your dumpling go by a little while ago. But you must not run any further, because there is a wicked *Oni* down there, who eats people.”

But she only laughed, and ran on, still crying out: “My dumpling, my dumpling! Where is that dumpling of mine?” And she came to a third *Fizō*, and asked it:

“O dear Lord *Fizō*, did you see my dumpling?”

But *Fizō* said:

“Don’t talk about your dumpling now. Here is the *Oni* coming. Squat down here behind my sleeve, and don’t make any noise.”

Presently the *Oni* came very close, and stopped and bowed to

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Fizō, and said:

“Good-day, *Fizō San!*”

Fizō said good-day, too, very politely.

Then the *Oni* suddenly snuffed the air two or three times in a suspicious way, and cried out: “*Fizō San, Fizō San!* I smell a smell of mankind somewhere—don’t you?”

“Oh!” said *Fizō*, “perhaps you are mistaken.”

“No, no!” said the *Oni* after snuffing the air again, “I smell a smell of mankind.”

Then the old woman could not help laughing—“*Te-he-he!*”—and the *Oni* immediately reached down his big hairy hand behind *Fizō*’s sleeve, and pulled her out, still laughing, “*Te-he-he!*”

“Ah! ha!” cried the *Oni*.

Then *Fizō* said:

“What are you going to do with that good old woman? You must not hurt her.”

“I won’t,” said the *Oni*. “But I will take her home with me to cook for us.”

“*Te-he-he!*” laughed the old woman.

“Very well,” said *Fizō*; “but you must really be kind to her. If you are not, I shall be very angry.”

“I won’t hurt her at all,” promised the *Oni*; “and she will only have to do a little work for us every day. Good-by, *Fizō San!*”

Then the *Oni* took the old woman far down the road, till they came to a wide deep river, where there was a boat. He put her into the boat, and took her across the river to his house. It was a very large house. He led her at once into the kitchen, and told her to cook some dinner for himself and the other *Oni* who lived with him. And he gave her a small wooden rice-paddle, and said:

“You must always put only one grain of rice into the pot, and when you stir that one grain of rice in the water with this paddle, the grain will multiply until the pot is full.”

So the old woman put just one rice-grain into the pot, as the *Oni* told her, and began to stir it with the paddle; and, as she stirred, the one grain became two—then four—then eight—then sixteen, thirty-two, sixty-four, and so on. Every time she moved the paddle the rice increased in quantity; and in a few minutes the great pot was full.

After that, the funny old woman stayed a long time in the house of the *Oni*, and every day cooked food for him and for all his friends. The *Oni* never hurt or frightened her, and her work was made quite easy by the magic paddle—although she had to cook a very, very great quantity of rice, because an *Oni* eats much more than any human being eats.

But she felt lonely, and always wished very much to go back to her own little house, and make her dumplings. And one day, when the *Oni* were all out somewhere, she thought she would try to run

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away.

She first took the magic paddle, and slipped it under her girdle; and then she went down to the river. No one saw her; and the boat was there. She got into it, and pushed off; and as she could row very well, she was soon far away from the shore.

But the river was very wide; and she had not rowed more than one-fourth of the way across, when the *Oni*, all of them, came back to the house.

They found that their cook was gone, and the magic paddle, too. They ran down to the river at once, and saw the old woman rowing away very fast.

Perhaps they could not swim: at all events they had no boat; and they thought the only way they could catch the funny old woman would be to drink up all the water of the river before she got to the other bank. So they knelt down, and began to drink so fast that before the old woman had got half way over, the water had become quite low.

But the old woman kept on rowing until the water had got so shallow that the *Oni* stopped drinking, and began to wade across. Then she dropped her oar, took the magic paddle from her girdle, and shook it at the *Oni*, and made such funny faces that the *Oni* all burst out laughing.

But the moment they laughed, they could not help throwing up all the water they had drunk, and so the river became full again. The *Oni* could not cross; and the funny old woman got safely over to the other side, and ran away up the road as fast as she could.

She never stopped running until she found herself at home again.

After that she was very happy; for she could make dumplings whenever she pleased. Besides, she had the magic paddle to make rice for her. She sold her dumplings to her neighbors and passengers, and in quite a short time she became rich.

THE BOY WHO DREW CATS

A LONG, long time ago, in a small country-village in Japan, there lived a poor farmer and his wife, who were very good people. They had a number of children, and found it very hard to feed them all. The elder son was strong enough when only fourteen years old to help his father; and the little girls learned to help their mother almost as soon as they could walk.

But the youngest child, a little boy, did not seem to be fit for hard work. He was very clever—cleverer than all his brothers and sisters; but he was quite weak and small, and people said he could never grow very big. So his parents thought it would be better for him to become a priest than to become a farmer. They took him with them to the village-temple one day, and asked the good old priest who lived there,

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if he would have their little boy for his acolyte, and teach him all that a priest ought to know.

The old man spoke kindly to the lad, and asked him some hard questions. So clever were the answers that the priest agreed to take the little fellow into the temple as an acolyte, and to educate him for the priesthood.

The boy learned quickly what the old priest taught him, and was very obedient in most things. But he had one fault. He liked to draw cats during study-hours, and to draw cats even where cats ought not to have been drawn at all.

Whenever he found himself alone, he drew cats. He drew them on the margins of the priest's books, and on all the screens of the temple, and on the walls, and on the pillars. Several times the priest told him this was not right; but he did not stop drawing cats. He drew them because he could not really help it. He had what is called "the genius of an *artist*," and just for that reason he was not quite fit to be an acolyte;—a good acolyte should study books.

One day after he had drawn some very clever pictures of cats upon a paper screen, the old priest said to him severely: "My boy, you must go away from this temple at once. You will never make a good priest, but perhaps you will become a great artist. Now let me give you a last piece of advice, and be sure you never forget it. *Avoid large places at night;—keep to small!*"

The boy did not know what the priest meant by saying, "*Avoid large places;—keep to small.*" He thought and thought, while he was tying up his little bundle of clothes to go away; but he could not understand those words, and he was afraid to speak to the priest any more, except to say good-by.

He left the temple very sorrowfully, and began to wonder what he should do. If he went straight home he felt sure his father would punish him for having been disobedient to the priest: so he was afraid to go home. All at once he remembered that at the next village, twelve miles away, there was a very big temple. He had heard there were several priests at that temple; and he made up his mind to go to them and ask them to take him for their acolyte.

Now that big temple was closed up but the boy did not know this fact. The reason it had been closed up was that a goblin had frightened the priests away, and had taken possession of the place. Some brave warriors had afterward gone to the temple at night to kill the goblin; but they had never been seen alive again. Nobody had ever told these things to the boy;—so he walked all the way to the village hoping to be kindly treated by the priests.

When he got to the village it was already dark, and all the people were in bed; but he saw the big temple on a hill at the other end of the principal street, and he saw there was a light in the temple. People who tell the story say the goblin used to make that light, in order to tempt lonely travelers to ask for shelter. The boy went at once to the

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temple, and knocked. There was no sound inside. He knocked and knocked again; but still nobody came. At last he pushed gently at the door, and was quite glad to find that it had not been fastened. So he went in, and saw a lamp burning—but no priest.

He thought some priest would be sure to come very soon, and he sat down and waited. Then he noticed that everything in the temple was gray with dust, and thickly spun over with cobwebs. So he thought to himself that the priests would certainly like to have an acolyte, to keep the place clean. He wondered why they had allowed everything to get so dusty. What most pleased him, however, were some big white screens, good to paint cats upon. Though he was tired, he looked at once for a writing-box, and found one, and ground some ink, and began to paint cats.

He painted a great many cats upon the screens; and then he began to feel very, very sleepy. He was just on the point of lying down to sleep beside one of the screens, when he suddenly remembered the words, "*Avoid large places;—keep to small!*"

The temple was very large; he was all alone; and as he thought of these words—though he could not quite understand them—he began to feel for the first time a little afraid; and he resolved to look for a small place in which to sleep. He found a little cabinet, with a sliding door, and went into it, and shut himself up. Then he lay down and fell fast asleep.

Very late in the night he was awakened by a most terrible noise—a noise of fighting and screaming. It was so dreadful that he was afraid even to look through a chink of the little cabinet: he lay very still, holding his breath for fright.

The light that had been in the temple went out; but the awful sounds continued, and became more awful, and all the temple shook. After a long time silence came; but the boy was still afraid to move. He did not move until the light of the morning sun shone into the cabinet through the chinks of the little door.

Then he got out of his hiding-place very cautiously, and looked about. The first thing he saw was that all the floor of the temple was covered with blood. And then he saw, lying dead in the middle of it, an enormous, monstrous rat—a goblin-rat—bigger than a cow!

But who or what could have killed it? There was no man or other creature to be seen. Suddenly the boy observed that the mouths of all the cats he had drawn the night before, were red and wet with blood. Then he knew that the goblin had been killed by the cats which he had drawn. And then also, for the first time, he understood why the wise old priest had said to him, "*Avoid large places at night;—keep to small.*"

Afterward that boy became a very famous artist. Some of the cats which he drew are still shown to travelers in Japan.

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THE SILLY JELLY-FISH

ONCE upon a time the King of the Dragons, who had till then lived as a bachelor, took it into his head to get married. His bride was a young Dragonette just sixteen years old—lovely enough, in very sooth, to become the wife of a King. Great were the rejoicings on the occasion. The Fishes, both great and small, came to pay their respects, and to offer gifts to the newly wedded pair; and for some days all was feasting and merriment.

But alas! even Dragons have their trials. Before a month had passed, the young Dragon Queen fell ill. The doctors dosed her with every medicine that was known to them, but all to no purpose. At last they shook their heads, declaring that there was nothing more to be done. The illness must take its course, and she would probably die. But the sick Queen said to her husband:

“I know of something that will cure me. Only fetch me a live Monkey’s liver to eat, and I shall get well at once.” “A live Monkey’s liver!” exclaimed the King. “What are you thinking of, my dear? Why! you forget that we Dragons live in the sea, while Monkeys live far away from here, among the forest-trees on land. A Monkey’s liver! Why! darling, you must be mad.” Hereupon the young Dragon Queen burst into tears: “I only ask you for one small thing,” whimpered she, “and you won’t get it for me. I always thought you didn’t really love me. Oh! I wish I had stayed at home with my own m-m-m-mamma and my own papa-a-a-a!” Here her voice choked with sobs, and she could say no more.

Well, of course the Dragon King did not like to have it thought that he was unkind to his beautiful young wife. So he sent for his trusty servant the Jelly-Fish, and said: “It is rather a difficult job; but what I want you to try to do is to swim across to the land, and persuade a live Monkey to come here with you. In order to make the Monkey willing to come, you can tell him how much nicer everything is here in Dragon-Land than away where he lives. But what I really want him for is to cut out his liver, and use it as medicine for your young Mistress, who, as you know, is dangerously ill.”

So the Jelly-Fish went off on his strange errand. In those days he was just like any other fish, with eyes, and fins, and a tail. He even had little feet, which made him able to walk on the land as well as to swim in the water. It did not take him many hours to swim across to the country where the Monkeys lived; and fortunately there just happened to be a fine Monkey skipping about among the branches of the trees near the place where the Jelly-Fish landed. So the Jelly-Fish said: “Mr. Monkey! I have come to tell you of a country far more beautiful than this. It lies beyond the waves, and is called Dragon-Land. There is pleasant weather there all the year round, there is always plenty of ripe fruit on the trees, and there are none of those mischievous creatures called Men. If you will come with me, I will take you there. Just

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get on my back.”

The Monkey thought it would be fun to see a new country. So he leapt onto the Jelly-Fish's back, and off they started across the water. But when they had gone about halfway, he began to fear that perhaps there might be some hidden danger. It seemed so odd to be fetched suddenly in that way by a stranger. So he said to the Jelly-Fish: “What made you think of coming for me?” The Jelly-Fish answered: “My Master, the King of the Dragons, wants you in order to cut out your liver, and give it as medicine to his wife, the Queen, who is sick.”

“Oh! that's your little game—is it?” thought the Monkey. But he kept his thoughts to himself, and only said: “Nothing could please me better than to be of service to Their Majesties. But it so happens that I left my liver hanging to a branch of that big chestnut-tree, which you found me skipping about on. A liver is a thing that weighs a good deal. So I generally take it out, and play about without it during the daytime. We must go back for it.” The Jelly-Fish agreed that there was nothing else to be done under the circumstances. For—silly creature that he was—he did not see that the Monkey was telling a story in order to avoid getting killed, and having his liver used as medicine for the fanciful young Dragon Queen.

When they reached the shore of Monkey-Land again, the Monkey bounded off the Jelly-Fish's back, and up to the topmost branch of the chestnut-tree in less than no time. Then he said: “I do not see my liver here. Perhaps somebody has taken it away. But I will look for it. You, meantime, had better go back and tell your Master what has happened. He might be anxious about you, if you did not get home before dark.”

So the Jelly-Fish started off a second time; and when he got home, he told the Dragon King everything just as it had happened. But the King flew into a passion with him for his stupidity, and hallooed to his officers, saying: “Away with this fellow! Take him, and beat him to a jelly! Don't let a single bone remain unbroken in his body!” So the officers seized him, and beat him, as the King had commanded. That is the reason why, to this very day, Jelly-Fishes have no bones, but are just nothing more than a mass of pulp.

As for the Dragon Queen, when she found she could not have the Monkey's liver—why! she made up her mind that the only thing to do was to get well without it.

THE HARE OF INABA

NOW, there were once eighty-one brothers, who were Princes in the land. They were all jealous of one another, each one wishing to be King, to rule over the others, and over the whole Kingdom. Besides this, each one wanted to marry the same Princess. She was the Princess of Yakami in Inaba.

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At last they made up their minds that they would go together to Inaba, and each one try to persuade the Princess to marry him. Although eighty of these brothers were jealous of one another, yet they all agreed in hating, and being unkind to the eighty-first, who was good and gentle, and did not like their rough, quarrelsome ways. When they set out upon their journey, they made the poor eighty-first brother walk behind them, and carry the bag, just as if he had been their servant, although he was their own brother, and as much a Prince as any of them all.

By and by, the eighty Princes came to Cape Keta, and there they found a poor hare, with all his fur plucked out, lying down very sick and miserable. The eighty Princes said to the hare:

“We will tell you what you should do. Go and bathe in the sea water, and then lie down on the slope of a high mountain, and let the wind blow upon you. That will soon make your fur grow, we promise you.”

So the poor hare believed them, and went and bathed in the sea, and afterwards lay down in the sun and the wind to dry. But, as the salt water dried, the skin of his body all cracked and split with the sun and the wind, so that he was in terrible pain, and lay there crying, in a much worse state than he was before.

Now the eighty-first brother was a long way behind the others, because he had the luggage to carry, but at last he came up staggering under the weight of the heavy bag. When he saw the hare he asked:

“Why are you lying there crying?”

“Oh dear!” said the hare, “just stop a moment and I will tell you all my story. I was in the island of Oki, and I wanted to cross over to this land. I didn’t know how to get over, but at last I hit upon a plan. I said to the crocodiles:

“‘Let us count how many crocodiles there are in the sea, and how many hares there are in the land. And now to begin with the crocodiles. Come, every one of you, and lie down in a row, across from this island to Cape Keta, then I will step upon each one, and count you as I run across. When I have finished counting you, we can count the hares, and then we shall know whether there are most hares, or most crocodiles.’

“The crocodiles came and lay down in a row. Then I stepped on them and counted them as I ran across, and was just going to jump on shore, when I laughed and said, ‘You silly crocodiles, I don’t care how many of you there are. I only wanted a bridge to get across by.’ Oh! why did I boast until I was safe on dry land? For the last crocodile, the one which lay at the very end of the row, seized me, and plucked off all my fur.”

“And serve you right too, for being so tricky,” said the eighty-first brother. “However, go on with your story.”

“As I was lying here crying,” continued the hare, “the eighty Princes who went by before you, told me to bathe in salt water, and

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lie down in the wind. I did as they told me, but I am ten times worse than before, and my whole body is smarting and sore.”

Then the eighty-first brother said to the hare, “Go quickly now to the river, it is quite near. Wash yourself well with the fresh water, then take the pollen of the sedges growing on the river bank, spread it about on the ground, and roll among it; if you do this, your skin will heal, and your fur grow again.”

So the hare did as he was told; and this time he was quite cured, and his fur grew thicker than ever.

Then the hare said to the eighty-first brother, “As for those eighty Princes, your brothers, they shall not get the Princess of Inaba. Although you carry the bag, yet your Highness shall at last get both the princess and the country.”

Which things came to pass, for the Princess would have nothing to do with those eighty bad brothers, but chose the eighty-first who was kind and good. Then he was made King of the country, and lived happily all his life.

SHIPPEITARO

LONG, long ago, in the days of fairies and giants, ogres and dragons, valiant knights and distressed damsels; in those good old days, a brave young warrior went out into the wide world in search of adventures.

For some time he went on without meeting with anything out of the common, but at length, after journeying through a thick forest, he found himself, one evening, on a wild and lonely mountain side. No village was in sight, no cottage, not even the hut of a charcoal burner, so often to be found on the outskirts of the forest. He had been following a faint and much overgrown path, but at length even that was lost sight of. Twilight was coming on, and in vain he strove to recover the lost track. Each effort seemed only to entangle him more hopelessly in the briars and tall grasses which grew thickly on all sides. Faint and weary he stumbled on in the fast gathering darkness, until suddenly he came upon a little temple, deserted and half ruined, but which still contained a shrine. Here at least was shelter from the chilly dews, and here he resolved to pass the night. Food he had none, but wrapped in his mantle, and with his good sword by his side, he lay down, and was soon fast asleep.

Towards midnight he was awakened by a dreadful noise. At first he thought it must be a dream, but the noise continued, the whole place resounding with the most terrible shrieks and yells. The young warrior raised himself cautiously, and seizing his sword, looked through a hole in the ruined wall. He beheld a strange and awful sight. A troop of hideous cats were engaged in a wild and horrible dance, their yells meanwhile echoing through the night. Mingled with their unearthly cries the young warrior could clearly distinguish the words:

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“Tell it not to Shippeitarō! Keep it close and dark! Tell it not to Shippeitarō!”

A beautiful clear full moon shed its light upon this gruesome scene, which the young warrior watched with amazement and horror. Suddenly, the midnight hour being passed, the phantom cats disappeared, and all was silence once more. The rest of the night passed undisturbed, and the young warrior slept soundly until morning. When he awoke the sun was already up, and he hastened to leave the scene of last night's adventure. By the bright morning light he presently discovered traces of a path which the evening before had been invisible. This he followed, and found to his great joy, that it led, not as he had feared to the forest through which he had come the day before, but in the opposite direction, towards an open plain. There he saw one or two scattered cottages, and, a little further on, a village. Pressed by hunger, he was making the best of his way towards the village, when he heard the tones of a woman's voice loud in lamentation and entreaty. No sooner did these sounds of distress reach the warrior's ears than his hunger was forgotten, and he hurried on to the nearest cottage to find out what was the matter, and if he could give any help.

The people listened to his questions and, shaking their heads sorrowfully, told him that all help was vain. “Every year,” said they, “the mountain spirit claims a victim. The time has come, and this very night will he devour our loveliest maiden. This is the cause of the wailing and lamentation.”

And when the young warrior, filled with wonder, enquired further, they told him that at sunset the victim would be put into a sort of cage, carried to that very ruined temple where he had passed the night, and there left alone. In the morning she would have vanished. So it was each year, and so it would be now: there was no help for it. As he listened, the young warrior was filled with an earnest desire to deliver the maiden. And, the mention of the ruined shrine having brought back to his mind the adventure of the night before, he asked the people whether they had ever heard the name of Shippeitarō, and who and what he was. “Shippeitarō is a strong and beautiful dog,” was the reply, “he belongs to the head man of our Prince who lives only a little way from here. We often see him following his master, he is a fine brave fellow.” The young knight did not stop to ask more questions, but hurried off to Shippeitarō's master and begged him to lend his dog for one night. At first the man was unwilling, but at length agreed to lend Shippeitarō on condition that he should be brought back the next day. Overjoyed the young warrior led the dog away.

Next he went to see the parents of the unhappy maiden, and told them to keep her in the house and watch her carefully until his return. He then placed the dog Shippeitarō in the cage which had been prepared for the maiden; and with the help of some of the young men of

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the village, carried it to the ruined temple, and there set it down. The young men refused to stay one moment on that haunted spot, but hurried down the mountain as if the whole troop of hobgoblins had been at their heels. The young warrior, with no companion but the dog, remained to see what would happen.

At midnight when the full moon was high in the heaven, and shed her light over the mountain, came the phantom cats once more. This time they had in their midst a huge black tom cat, fiercer and more terrible than all the rest, and which the young warrior had no difficulty in knowing as the frightful mountain fiend himself. No sooner did this monster catch sight of the cage than he danced and sprang round it with yells of triumph and hideous joy, followed by his companions. When he had long enough jeered at and taunted his victim, he threw open the door of the cage.

But this time he met his match. The brave Shippeitarō sprang upon him, and seizing him with his teeth, held him fast, while the young warrior with one stroke of his good sword laid the monster dead at his feet. As for the other cats, too much astonished to fly, they stood gazing at the dead body of their leader, and were made short work of by the knight and Shippeitarō. The young warrior brought back the brave dog to his master, with a thousand thanks, told the father and mother of the maiden that their daughter was free, and the people of the village that the fiend had claimed his last victim, and would trouble them no more. "You owe all this to the brave Shippeitaro," he said as he bade them farewell, and went his way in search of fresh adventures.

THE MATSUYAMA MIRROR

A LONG, long time ago, there lived in a quiet spot, a young man and his wife. They had one child, a little daughter, whom they both loved with all their hearts. I cannot tell you their names, for they have been long since forgotten, but the name of the place where they lived was Matsuyama, in the province of Echigo.

It happened once, while the little girl was still a baby, that the father was obliged to go to the great city, the capital of Japan, upon some business. It was too far for the mother and her little baby to go, so he set out alone, after bidding them good-by, and promising to bring them home some pretty present.

The mother had never been further from home than the next village, and she could not help being a little frightened at the thought of her husband taking such a long journey, and yet she was a little proud too, for he was the first man in all that countryside who had been to the big town where the King and his great lords lived, and where there were so many beautiful and curious things to be seen.

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At last the time came when she might expect her husband back, so she dressed the baby in its best clothes, and herself put on a pretty blue dress which she knew her husband liked.

You may fancy how glad this good wife was to see him come home safe and sound, and how the little girl clapped her hands, and laughed with delight, when she saw the pretty toys her father had brought for her. He had much to tell of all the wonderful things he had seen upon the journey, and in the town itself.

“I have brought you a very pretty thing,” said he to his wife. “It is called a mirror. Look and tell me what you see inside.” He gave to her a plain, white, wooden box, in which, when she had opened it, she found a round piece of metal. One side was white like frosted silver, and ornamented with raised figures of birds and flowers, the other was bright as the clearest crystal. Into it the young mother looked with delight and astonishment, for, from its depths was looking at her with parted lips and bright eyes, a smiling, happy face.

“What do you see?” again asked the husband, pleased at her astonishment, and glad to show that he had learned something while he had been away. “I see a pretty woman looking at me, and she moves her lips as if she was speaking, and—dear me, how odd, she has on a blue dress just like mine!” “Why, you silly woman, it is your own face that you see,” said the husband, proud of knowing something that his wife didn’t know. “That round piece of metal is called a mirror, in the town everybody has one, although we have not seen them in this country place before.”

The wife was charmed with her present, and for a few days could not look into the mirror often enough, for you must remember, that as this was the first time she had seen a mirror, so, of course, it was the first time she had ever seen the reflection of her own pretty face. But she considered such a wonderful thing far too precious for everyday use, and soon shut it up in its box again, and put it away carefully among her most valued treasures.

Years passed on, and the husband and wife still lived happily. The joy of their life was their little daughter, who grew up the very image of her mother, and who was so dutiful and affectionate that everybody loved her. Mindful of her own little passing vanity on finding herself so lovely, the mother kept the mirror carefully hidden away, fearing that the use of it might breed a spirit of pride in her little girl.

She never spoke of it, and as for the father, he had forgotten all about it. So it happened that the daughter grew up as simple as the mother had been, and knew nothing of her own good looks, or of the mirror which would have reflected them.

But by and by a terrible misfortune happened to this happy little family. The good, kind mother fell sick; and, although her daughter waited upon her day and night, with loving care, she got worse and worse, until at last there was no hope but that she must die.

When she found that she must so soon leave her husband and

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child, the poor woman felt very sorrowful, grieving for those she was going to leave behind, and most of all for her little daughter.

She called the girl to her and said: "My darling child, you know that I am very sick: soon I must die, and leave your dear father and you alone. When I am gone, promise me that you will look into this mirror every night and every morning: there you will see me, and know that I am still watching over you." With these words she took the mirror from its hiding-place and gave it to her daughter. The child promised, with many tears, and so the mother, seeming now calm and resigned, died a short time after.

Now this obedient and dutiful daughter never forgot her mother's last request, but each morning and evening took the mirror from its hiding-place, and looked in it long and earnestly. There she saw the bright and smiling vision of her lost mother. Not pale and sickly as in her last days, but the beautiful young mother of long ago. To her at night she told the story of the trials and difficulties of the day, to her in the morning she looked for sympathy and encouragement in whatever might be in store for her.

So day by day she lived as in her mother's sight, striving still to please her as she had done in her lifetime, and careful always to avoid whatever might pain or grieve her.

Her greatest joy was to be able to look in the mirror and say: "Mother, I have been today what you would have me to be."

Seeing her every night and morning, without fail, look into the mirror, and seem to hold converse with it, her father at length asked her the reason of her strange behavior. "Father," she said, "I look in the mirror every day to see my dear mother and to talk with her." Then she told him of her mother's dying wish, and how she had never failed to fulfil it. Touched by so much simplicity, and such faithful, loving obedience, the father shed tears of pity and affection. Nor could he find it in his heart to tell the child that the image she saw in the mirror was but the reflection of her own sweet face, by constant sympathy and association becoming more and more like her dead mother's day by day.

MY LORD BAG-O'-RICE

ONCE upon a time there was a brave warrior, called My Lord Bag-o'-Rice, who spent all his time in waging war against the King's enemies.

One day, when he had sallied forth to seek adventures, he came to an immensely long bridge, spanning a river just at the place where it flowed out of a fine lake. When he set foot on this bridge, he saw that a Serpent twenty feet long was lying there basking in the sun, in such a way that he could not cross the bridge without treading on it.

Most men would have taken to their heels at so frightful a sight.

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But My Lord Bag-o'-Rice was not to be daunted. He simply walked right ahead—squash, scrunch, over the Serpent's body.

Instantly the Serpent turned into a tiny Dwarf, who, humbly bowing the knee, and knocking the planks of the bridge three times with his head in token of respect, said: "My Lord! you are a man, you are! For many a weary day have I lain here, waiting for one who should avenge me on my enemy. But all who saw me were cowards, and ran away. You will avenge me, will you not? I live at the bottom of this lake, and my enemy is a Centipede who dwells at the top of yonder mountain. Come along with me, I beseech you. If you help me not, I am undone."

The Warrior was delighted at having found such an adventure as this. He willingly followed the Dwarf to his summer-house beneath the waters of the lake. It was all curiously built of coral and metal sprays in the shape of sea-weed and other water-plants, with freshwater crabs as big as men, and water-monkeys, and newts, and tadpoles as servants and bodyguards. When they had rested awhile, dinner was brought in on trays shaped like the leaves of water-lilies. The dishes were watercress leaves—not real ones, but much more beautiful than real ones; for they were of water-green porcelain with a shimmer of gold; and the chop-sticks were of beautiful petrified wood like black ivory. As for the wine in the cups, it *looked* like water; but, as it *tasted* all right, what did its looks signify?

Well, there they were, feasting and singing; and the Dwarf had just pledged the Warrior in a goblet of hot steaming wine, when thud! thud! thud! like the tramp of an army, the fearful monster of whom the Dwarf had spoken was heard approaching. It sounded as if a continent were in motion; and on either side there seemed to be a row of a thousand men with lanterns. But the Warrior was able to make out, as the danger drew nearer, that all this fuss was made by a single creature, an enormous Centipede over a mile long; and that what had seemed like men with lanterns on either side of it, were in reality its own feet, of which it had exactly one thousand on each side of its body, all of them glistening and glinting with the sticky poison that oozed out of every pore.

There was no time to be lost. The Centipede was already half-way down the mountain. So the Warrior snatched up his bow, a bow so big and heavy that it would have taken five ordinary men to pull it—fitted an arrow into the bow-notch, and let fly.

He was not one ever to miss his aim. The arrow struck right in the middle of the monster's forehead. But alas! it rebounded as if that forehead had been made of brass.

A second time did the Warrior take his bow and shoot. A second time did the arrow strike and rebound; and now the dreadful creature was down to the water's edge, and would soon pollute the lake with its filthy poison. Said the Warrior to himself: "Nothing kills Centipedes so surely as human spittle." And with these words, he spat on

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to the tip of the only arrow that remained to him (for there had been but three in his quiver). This time again the arrow hit the Centipede right in the middle of its forehead. But instead of rebounding, it went right in and came out again at the back of the creature's head, so that the Centipede fell down dead, shaking the whole country-side like an earthquake, and the poisonous light on its two thousand feet darkening to a dull glare like that of the twilight of a stormy day.

Then the Warrior found himself wafted back to his own castle; and round him stood a row of presents, on each of which were inscribed the words "From your grateful dwarf." One of these presents was a large bronze bell, which the Warrior, who was a religious man as well as a brave one, hung up in the temple that contained the tombs of his ancestors. The second was a sword, which enabled him ever after to gain the victory over all his enemies. The third was a suit of armor which no arrow could penetrate. The fourth was a roll of silk, which never grew smaller, though he cut off large pieces from time to time to make himself a new court dress.

The fifth was a bag of rice, which, though he took from it day after day for meals for himself, his family and his trusty retainers, never got exhausted as long as he lived.

And it was from this fifth and last present that he took his name and title of "My Lord Bag-o'-Rice"; for all the people thought that there was nothing stranger in the whole world than this wonderful bag, which made its owner such a rich and happy man.

THE SERPENT WITH EIGHT HEADS

DID you ever hear the story of the Eight-Headed Serpent? If not, I will tell it to you. It is rather a long one, and we must go a good way back to get to the beginning of it. In fact, we must go back to the beginning of the world.

After the world had been created, it became the property of a very powerful fairy; and when this fairy was about to die, he divided it between his two boys and his girl.

The girl, called Ama, was given the sun; the eldest boy, called Susano, was given the sea; and the second boy, whose name I forget, was given the moon. Well, the Moon-Boy behaved himself properly; and you can still see his jolly round face on a clear night when the moon is full. But Susano was very angry and disappointed at having nothing but the cold wet sea to live in. So up he rushed into the sky, burst into the beautiful room inside the sun, where his sister was sitting with her maidens weaving gold and silver dresses, broke their spindles, trampled upon their work, and in short did all the mischief he could, and frightened the poor maids to death. As for Ama, she ran away as fast as she could, and hid herself in a cave on the side of a mountain full of rocks and crags. When she had got into the cave and had shut the

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door, the whole world became pitch-dark. For she was the fairy who ruled the sun, and could make it shine or not as she chose. In fact, some people say that the light of the sun is really nothing else than the brightness of her own bright eyes. Anyhow, there was great trouble over her disappearance. What was to be done to make the world light again? All sorts of plans were tried. At last, knowing that she was curious and always liked to see everything that was going on, the other fairies got up a dance outside the door of the cave.

When Ama heard the noise of the dancing and singing and laughing, she could not help opening the door a tiny bit, in order to peep through the chink at the fun the other fairies were having. This was just what they had been watching for. "Look here!" cried they. "Look at this new fairy more beautiful than yourself!" and therewith they thrust forward a mirror. Ama did not know that the face in the mirror was only a reflection of her own; and, more and more curious to know who the new fairy could be, she ventured outside the door, where she was caught hold of by the other fairies, who piled up the entrance of the cave with big rocks, so that no one could ever go into it again. Seeing that she had been tricked into coming out of the cave, and that there was no use in sulking any longer, Ama agreed to go back to the sun and shine upon the world as before, provided her brother were punished and sent away in disgrace; for really he was not safe to live with. This was done. Susa was beaten to within an inch of his life, and expelled from the society of the other fairies, with orders never to show himself again.

So poor Susa, having been turned out of fairy-land, was obliged to come down to the earth. While walking one day on the bank of a river, he happened to see an old man and an old woman with their arms round their young daughter, and crying bitterly. "What is the matter?" asked Susa. "Oh!" said they, their voice choked with sobs, "we used to have eight daughters. But in a marsh near our hut there lives a huge Eight-Headed Serpent, who comes out once every year, and eats up one of them. We have now only one daughter left, and today is the day when the Serpent will come to eat her, and then we shall have none. Please, good Sir! Can you not do something to help us?"

"Of course," answered Susa; "it will be quite easy. Do not be sad any longer. I am a fairy, and I will save your daughter." So he told them to brew some beer, and showed them how to make a fence with eight gates in it, and a wooden stand inside each gate, and a large vat of beer on each stand. This they did; and just as all had been arranged in the way Susa had bidden them, the Serpent came. So huge was he, that his body trained over eight hills and eight valleys as he wriggled along. But as he had eight heads, he also had eight noses, which made him able to smell eight times as quickly as any other creature. So, smelling the beer from afar off he at once glided towards it, went inside the fence, dipped one of his heads into each of the eight vats, and

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drank and drank and drank, till he got quite tipsy. Then all his heads dropped down fast asleep; and Susa, jumping up from the hole where he had lain hidden, drew his sword, and cut them all off. He cut the body to pieces too. But, strange to say, when cutting the tail, the blade of his sword snapped. It had struck against something hard. As the Serpent was now dead, there was no danger in going up to it, and finding out what the hard thing was. It turned out to be itself a sword all set with precious stones—the most beautiful sword you ever saw. Susa took the sword, and married the beautiful young girl; and he was very kind to her, although he had been so rude to his elder sister. They spent the rest of their lives in a beautiful palace, which was built on purpose for them; and the old father and mother lived there too. When the old father and mother, and Susa and his wife had all died, the sword was handed down to their children, and grandchildren; and it now belongs to the Emperor of Japan, who looks upon it as one of his most precious treasures.

THE OLD MAN AND THE DEVILS

A LONG time ago there was an old man who had a big lump on the right side of his face. One day he went into the mountain to cut wood, when the rain began to pour and the wind to blow so very hard, that, finding it impossible to return home, and filled with fear, he took refuge in the hollow of an old tree. While sitting there doubled up and unable to sleep, he heard the confused sound of many voices in the distance gradually approaching to where he was. He said to himself, “How strange! I thought I was all alone in the mountain, but I hear the voices of many people”; so taking courage he peeped out, and saw a great crowd of strange-looking beings. Some were red and dressed in green clothes; others were black and dressed in red clothes; some had only one eye; others had no mouth; indeed it is quite impossible to describe their varied and strange looks. They kindled a fire, so that it became as light as day. They sat down in two cross rows, and began to drink wine and make merry just like human beings. They passed the winecup around so often that many of them became very drunk. One of the young devils got up and began to sing a merry song and to dance; so also many others; some danced well, others badly. One said, “We have had uncommon fun to-night, but I would like to see something new.” The old man, losing all fear, thought he would like to dance, and saying “Let come what will, if I die for it I will have a dance too,” crept out of the hollow tree, and with his cap slipped over his nose and his ax sticking in his belt began to dance. The devils in great surprise jumped up saying, “Who is this?” but the old man advancing and receding, swaying to and fro, and posturing this way and that way, the whole crowd laughed and enjoyed the fun, saying, “How well the old man dances. You must always come and join us in our

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sport; but for fear you might not come you must give us a pledge that you will." So the devils consulted together and agreeing that the lump on his face, which was a token of wealth, was what he valued most highly, demanded that it should be taken. The old man replied, "I have had this lump many years and would not without good reason part with it; but you may have it, or an eye or my nose, either if you wish." So the devils laid hold of it, twisting and pulling, and took it off without giving him any pain, and put it away as a pledge that he would come back. Just then the day began to dawn and the birds to sing, so the devils hurried away.

The old man felt his face and found it quite smooth and not a trace of the lump left. He forgot all about cutting wood, and hastened home. His wife seeing him, exclaimed in great surprise, "What has happened to you?" So he told her all that had befallen him.

Now among the neighbors there was another old man who had a big lump on the left side of his face. Hearing all about how the old man had got rid of his lump, he determined that he would also try the same plan to get rid of his lump. So he went and crept into the hollow tree and waited for the devils to come. Sure enough, they came just as he was told. They sat down, drank wine and made merry just as they did before. The old man, afraid and trembling, crept out of the hollow tree. The devils welcomed him saying, "The old man has come, now let us see him dance." This old man was awkward and did not dance as well as the other. So the devils cried out, "You dance badly, and are getting worse and worse, we will give you back the lump which we took from you as a pledge." Upon this one of the devils brought the lump and stuck it on the other side of his face; so the old man returned home with a lump on each side of his face.

THE TONGUE-CUT SPARROW

'TIS said that once upon a time a cross old woman laid some starch in a basin intending to put it in the clothes in her wash-tub; but a sparrow that a woman, her neighbor, kept as a pet ate it up. Seeing this, the cross old woman seized the sparrow and, saying, "You hateful thing!" cut its tongue and let it go.

When the neighbor woman heard that her pet sparrow had got its tongue cut for its offense, she was greatly grieved, and set out with her husband over mountains and plains to find where it had gone, crying: "Where does the tongue-cut sparrow stay? Where does the tongue-cut sparrow stay?"

At last they found its home. When the sparrow saw that its old master and mistress had come to see it, it rejoiced and brought them into its house and thanked them for their kindness in old times and spread a table for them, and loaded it with *saké* and fish till there was no more room, and made its wife and children and grandchildren all

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serve the table. At last, throwing away its drinking-cup, it danced a jig called the sparrow's dance. Thus they spent the day. When it began to grow dark, and they began to talk of going home, the sparrow brought out two wicker baskets and said: "Will you take the heavy one, or shall I give you the light one?" The old people replied: "We are old, so give us the light one: it will be easier to carry it." The sparrow then gave them the light basket and they returned with it to their home. "Let us open and see what is in it," they said. And when they had opened it and looked they found gold and silver and jewels and rolls of silk. They never expected anything like this. The more they took out the more they found inside. The supply was inexhaustible. So that house at once became rich and prosperous. When the cross old woman who had cut the sparrow's tongue out saw this, she was filled with envy, and went and asked her neighbor where the sparrow lived, and all about the way. "I will go too," she said, and at once set out on her search.

Again the sparrow brought out two wicker baskets and asked as before: "Will you take the heavy one, or shall I give you the light one?"

Thinking the treasure would be great in proportion to the weight of the basket, the old woman replied: "Let me have the heavy one." Receiving this, she started home with it on her back; the sparrows laughing at her as she went. It was as heavy as a stone and hard to carry; but at last she got back with it to her house.

Then when she took off the lid and looked in, a whole troop of frightful devils came bouncing out from the inside and at once tore the old woman to pieces.

THE WOODEN BOWL

ONCE upon a time there lived an old couple who had seen better days. Formerly they had been well to do, but misfortune came upon them, through no fault of their own, and in their old age they had become so poor that they were only just able to earn their daily bread.

One joy, however, remained to them. This was their only child, a good and gentle maiden, of such wonderful beauty that in all that land she had no equal.

At length the father fell sick and died, and the mother and her daughter had to work harder than ever. Soon the mother felt her strength failing her, and great was her sorrow at the thought of leaving her child alone in the world.

The beauty of the maiden was so dazzling that it became the cause of much thought and anxiety to the dying mother. She knew that in one so poor and friendless as her child it would be likely to prove a misfortune instead of a blessing.

Feeling her end to be very near, the mother called the maiden to

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her bedside, and, with many words of love and warning, entreated her to continue pure and good and true, as she had ever been. She told her that her beauty was a perilous gift which might become her ruin, and commanded her to hide it, as much as possible, from the sight of all men.

That she might do this the better the mother placed on her daughter's head a lacquered wooden bowl, which she warned her on no account to take off. The bowl overshadowed the maiden's face, so that it was impossible to tell how much beauty was hidden beneath it.

After her mother's death the poor child was, indeed, forlorn; but she had a brave heart, and at once set about earning her living by hard work in the fields.

As she was never seen without the wooden bowl, which, indeed, appeared a very funny head-dress, she soon began to be talked about, and was known in all the country round as the Maid with the Bowl on her Head.

Proud and bad people scorned and laughed at her, and the idle young men of the village made fun of her, trying to peep under the bowl, and even to pull it off her head. But it seemed firmly fixed, and none of them succeeded in taking it off, or in getting more than a glimpse of the beautiful face beneath.

The poor girl bore all this rude usage patiently, was always diligent at her work, and when evening came crept quietly to her lonely home. Now, one day, when she was at work in the harvest field of a rich farmer, who owned most of the land in that part, the master himself drew near. He was struck by the gentle and modest behavior of the young girl, and by her quickness and diligence at her work.

Having watched her all that day, he was so much pleased with her that he kept her in work until the end of the harvest. After that, winter having now come on, he took her into his own house to wait upon his wife, who had long been sick, and seldom left her bed.

Now the poor orphan had a happy home once more, for both the farmer and his wife were very kind to her. As they had no daughter of their own, she became more like the child of the house than a hired servant. And, indeed, no child could have made a gentler or more tender nurse to a sick mother than did this little maid to her mistress.

After some time the master's eldest son came home on a visit to his father and mother. He had been living in Kioto, the rich and gay city of the Mikado, where he had studied and learned much. Wearied with feasting and pleasure, he was glad to come back for a little while to the quiet home of his childhood. But week after week passed, and, to the surprise of his friends, he showed no desire to return to the more stirring life of the town.

The truth is, that no sooner had he set eyes on the Maid with the Bowl on her Head than he was filled with curiosity to know all about her. He asked who and what she was, and why she was always seen with such a curious and unbecoming head-dress.

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He was touched by her sad story, but could not help laughing at her odd fancy of wearing the bowl on her head. But, as he saw day by day her goodness and gentle manners, he laughed no more. And one day, having managed to take a sly peep under the bowl, he saw enough of her beauty to make him fall deeply in love with her. From that moment he vowed that none other than the Maid with the Bowl should be his wife. His relations, however, would not hear of the match. "No doubt the girl was all very well in her way," they said, "but after all she was only a servant, and no fit mate for the son of the house. They had always said she was being made too much of, and would one day or another turn against her benefactors. Now their words were coming true, and besides, why did she persist in wearing that ridiculous thing on her head? Doubtless to get a reputation for beauty, which most likely she did not possess. Indeed, they were almost certain that she was quite plain-looking."

The two old maiden aunts of the young man were especially bitter, and never lost an opportunity of repeating the hard and unkind things which were said about the poor orphan. Her mistress even, who had been so good to her, now seemed to turn against her, and she had no friend left except her master, who would really have been pleased to welcome her as his daughter, but did not dare to say as much. The young man, however, remained firm to his purpose. As for all the stories which they brought him, he gave his aunts to understand that he considered them little better than a pack of ill-natured inventions.

At last, seeing him so steadfast in his determination, and that their opposition only made him the more obstinate, they were fain to give in, though with a bad grace.

A difficulty now arose where it was least to have been expected. The poor little Maid with the Bowl on her Head upset all their calculations by gratefully, but firmly, refusing the hand of her master's son, and no persuasion on his part could induce her to change her mind.

Great was the astonishment and anger of the relations. That they should be made fools of in this way was beyond all bearing. What did the ungrateful young minx expect; that her master's son wasn't good enough for her? Little did they know her true and loyal heart. She loved him dearly, but she would not bring discord and strife into the home which had sheltered her in her poverty; for she had marked the cold looks of her mistress, and very well understood what they meant. Rather than bring trouble into that happy home she would leave it at once, and for ever. She told no one, and shed many bitter tears in secret, yet she remained true to her purpose. Then, that night when she had cried herself to sleep, her mother appeared to her in a dream, and told her that she might, without scruple, yield to the prayers of her lover and to the wishes of her own heart. She woke up full of joy, and when the young man once more entreated her she answered yes, with all her heart. "We told you so," said the mother and the aunts,

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but the young man was too happy to mind them. So the wedding-day was fixed, and the grandest preparations were made for the feast. Some unpleasant remarks were doubtless to be heard about the beggar maid and her wooden bowl, but the young man took no notice of them, and only congratulated himself upon his good fortune. Now, when the wedding-day had at last come, and all the company were assembled and ready to assist at the ceremony, it seemed high time that the bowl should be removed from the head of the bride. She tried to take it off, but found, to her dismay, that it stuck fast, nor could her utmost efforts even succeed in moving it; and, when some of the relations persisted in trying to pull off the bowl, it uttered loud cries and groans as of pain.

The bridegroom comforted and consoled the maiden, and insisted that they should go on with the ceremony without more ado.

And now came the moment when the wine cups were brought in, and the bride and bridegroom must drink together the "three times three," in token that they were now become man and wife. Hardly had the bride put her lips to the sake cup when the wooden bowl burst with a loud noise, and fell in a thousand pieces upon the floor. And with the bowl fell a shower of precious stones, pearls, and diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, which had been hidden beneath it, besides gold and silver in abundance, which now became the marriage portion of the maiden.

But what astonished the wedding guests more even than this vast treasure was the wonderful beauty of the bride, made fully known for the first time to her husband and to all the world. Never was there such a merry wedding, such a proud and happy bridegroom, or such a lovely bride.

THE TEA-KETTLE

LONG ago, as I've heard tell, there dwelt at the temple of Morinji, in the Province of Kotsuke, a holy priest.

Now there were three things about this reverend man. First, he was wrapped up in meditations and observances and forms and doctrines. He was a great one for the Sacred Sutras, and knew strange and mystical things. Then he had a fine exquisite taste of his own, and nothing pleased him so much as the ancient tea ceremony of the *Chano-yu*, and for the third thing about him, he knew both sides of a copper coin well enough and loved a bargain.

None so pleased as he when he happened upon an ancient tea-kettle, lying rusty and dirty and half-forgotten in a corner of a poor shop in a back street of his town.

"An ugly bit of old metal," says the holy man to the shopkeeper. "But it will do well enough to boil my humble drop of water of an evening. I'll give you three *rin* for it." This he did and took the kettle

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home, rejoicing; for it was of bronze, fine work, the very thing for the *Cha-no-yu*.

A novice cleaned and scoured the tea-kettle, and it came out as pretty as you please. The priest turned it this way and that, and upside down, looked into it, tapped it with his fingernail. He smiled. "A bargain," he cried, "a bargain!" and rubbed his hands. He set the kettle upon a box covered over with a purple cloth, and looked at it so long that first he was fain to rub his eyes many times, and then to close them altogether. His head dropped forward and he slept.

And then, believe me, the wonderful thing happened. The tea-kettle moved, though no hand was near it. A hairy head, with two bright eyes, looked out of the spout. The lid jumped up and down. Four brown and hairy paws appeared, and a fine bushy tail. In a minute the kettle was down from the box and going round and round looking at things.

"A very comfortable room, to be sure," says the tea-kettle.

Pleased enough to find itself so well lodged, it soon began to dance and to caper nimbly and to sing at the top of its voice. Three or four novices were studying in the next room. "The old man is lively," they said, "only hark to him. What can he be at?" And they laughed in their sleeves.

Heaven's mercy, the noise that the tea-kettle made! Bang! bang! Thud! thud! thud!

The novices soon stopped laughing. One of them slid aside the *kara-kami* and peeped through.

"Arah, the devil and all's in it!" he cried. "Here's the master's old tea-kettle turned into a sort of a badger. The gods protect us from witchcraft, or for certain we shall be lost!"

"And I scoured it not an hour since," said another novice, and he fell to reciting the Holy Sutras on his knees.

A third laughed. "I'm for a nearer view of the hobgoblin," he said.

So the lot of them left their books in a twinkling, and gave chase to the tea-kettle to catch it. But could they come up with the tea-kettle? Not a bit of it. It danced and it leapt and it flew up into the air. The novices rushed here and there, slipping upon the mats. They grew hot. They grew breathless.

"Ha, ha! Ha, ha!" laughed the tea-kettle; and "Catch me if you can!" laughed the wonderful tea-kettle.

Presently the priest awoke, all rosy, the holy man.

"And what's the meaning of this racket," he says, "disturbing me at my holy meditations and all?"

"Master, master," cry the novices, panting and mopping their brows, "your tea-kettle is bewitched. It was a badger, no less. And the dance it has been giving us, you'd never believe!"

"Stuff and nonsense," says the priest. "Bewitched? Not a bit of it. There it rests on its box, good quiet thing, just where I put it."

Sure enough, so it did, looking as hard and cold and innocent as

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you please. There was not a hair of a badger near it. It was the novices that looked foolish.

“A likely story indeed,” says the priest. “I have heard of the pestle that took wings to itself and flew away, parting company with the mortar. That is easily to be understood by any man. But a kettle that turned into a badger—no, no! To your books, my sons, and pray to be preserved from the perils of illusion.”

That very night the holy man filled the kettle with water from the spring and set it on the *hibachi* to boil for his cup of tea. When the water began to boil—

“Ai! Ai!” the kettle cried. “Ai! Ai! The heat of the Great Hell!” And it lost no time at all, but hopped off the fire as quick as you please.

“Sorcery!” cried the priest. “Black magic! A devil! A devil! A devil! Mercy on me! Help! Help! Help!” He was frightened out of his wits, the dear good man. All the novices came running to see what was the matter.

“The tea-kettle is bewitched,” he gasped. “It was a badger, assuredly it was a badger. It both speaks and leaps about the room.”

“Nay, master,” said a novice, “see where it rests upon its box, good quiet thing.”

And sure enough, so it did.

“Most reverend sir,” said the novice, “let us all pray to be preserved from the perils of illusion.”

The priest sold the tea-kettle to a tinker and got for it twenty copper coins.

“It’s a mighty fine bit of bronze,” says the priest. “Mind, I’m giving it away to you, I’m sure I cannot tell what for.” Ah, he was the one for a bargain! The tinker was a happy man and carried home the kettle. He turned it this way and that, and upside down, and looked into it.

“A pretty piece,” says the tinker. “A very good bargain.” And when he went to bed that night he put the kettle by him, to see it first thing in the morning.

He awoke at midnight and fell to looking at the kettle by the bright light of the moon.

Presently it moved, though there was no hand near it.

“Strange,” said the tinker. But he was a man who took things as they came.

A hairy head, with two bright eyes, looked out of the kettle’s spout. The lid jumped up and down. Four brown and hairy paws appeared, and a fine bushy tail. It came quite close to the tinker and laid a paw upon him.

“Well?” says the tinker.

“I am not wicked,” says the tea-kettle.

“No,” says the tinker.

“But I like to be well treated. I am a badger tea-kettle.”

“So it seems,” says the tinker.

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“At the temple they called me names, and beat me and set me on the fire. I couldn’t stand it, you know.”

“I like your spirit,” says the tinker.

“I think I shall settle down with you.”

“Shall I keep you in a lacquer box?” says the tinker.

“Not a bit of it, keep me with you; let us have a talk now and again. I am very fond of a pipe. I like rice to eat, and beans and sweet things.”

“A cup of *saké* sometimes?” says the tinker.

“Well, yes, now you mention it.”

“I’m willing,” says the tinker.

“Thank you kindly,” says the tea-kettle. “And, as a beginning, would you object to my sharing your bed? The night has turned a little chilly.”

“Not the least in the world,” says the tinker.

The tinker and the tea-kettle became the best of friends. They ate and talked together. The kettle knew a thing or two and was very good company.

One day: “Are you poor?” says the kettle.

“Yes,” says the tinker, “middling poor.”

“Well, I have a happy thought. For a teakettle, I am out-of-the-way—really very accomplished.”

“I believe you,” says the tinker.

“My name is *Bumbuku-Chagama*; I am the very prince of Badger Tea-Kettles.”

“Your servant, my lord,” says the tinker.

“If you’ll take my advice,” says the teakettle, “you’ll carry me round as a show; I really am out-of-the-way, and it’s my opinion you’d make a mint of money.”

“That would be hard work for you, my dear *Bumbuku*,” says the tinker.

“Not at all; let us start forthwith,” says the tea-kettle.

So they did. The tinker bought hangings for a theater, and he called the show *Bumbuku-Chagama*. How the people flocked to see the fun! For the wonderful and most accomplished tea-kettle danced and sang, and walked the tight rope as to the manner born. It played such tricks and had such droll ways that the people laughed till their sides ached. It was a treat to see the tea-kettle bow as gracefully as a lord and thank the people for their patience.

The *Bumbuku-Chagama* was the talk of the country-side, and all the gentry came to see it as well as the commonalty. As for the tinker, he waved a fan and took the money. You may believe that he grew fat and rich. He even went to Court, where the great ladies and the royal princesses made much of the wonderful tea-kettle.

At last the tinker retired from business, and to him the tea-kettle came with tears in its bright eyes.

“I’m much afraid it’s time to leave you,” it says.

“Now, don’t say that, *Bumbuku*, dear,” says the tinker. “We’ll be

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so happy together now we are rich.”

“I’ve come to the end of my time,” says the tea-kettle. “You’ll not see old *Bumbuku* anymore; henceforth I shall be an ordinary kettle, nothing more or less.”

“Oh, my dear *Bumbuku*, what shall I do?” cried the poor tinker in tears.

“I think I should like to be given to the temple of Morinji, as a very sacred treasure,” says the tea-kettle.

It never spoke or moved again. So the tinker presented it as a very sacred treasure to the temple, and the half of his wealth with it.

And the tea-kettle was held in wondrous fame for many a long year. Some persons even worshiped it as a saint.

URASHIMA

URASHIMA was a fisherman of the Inland Sea.

Every night he plied his trade. He caught fishes both great and small, being upon the sea through the long hours of darkness. Thus he made his living.

Upon a certain night the moon shone brightly, making plain the paths of the sea. And Urashima kneeled in his boat and dabbled his right hand in the green water. Low he leaned, till his hair lay spread upon the waves, and he paid no heed to his boat that listed or to his trailing fish-net. He drifted in his boat till he came to a haunted place. And he was neither waking nor sleeping, for the moon made him mad.

Then the Daughter of the Deep Sea arose, and she took the fisherman in her arms, and sank with him, down, down, to her cold sea cave. She laid him upon a sandy bed, and long did she look upon him. She cast her sea spell upon him, and sang her sea songs to him and held his eyes with hers.

He said, “Who are you, lady?”

She told him, “The Daughter of the Deep Sea.”

“Let me go home,” he said. “My little children wait and are tired.”

“Nay, rather stay with me,” she said:

*“Urashima,
Thou Fisherman of the Inland Sea,
Thou art beautiful;
Thy long hair is twisted round my heart;
Go not from me,
Only forget thy home.”*

“Ah, now,” said the fisherman, “let be, for the dear gods’ sake. I would go to mine own.”

But she said again:

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*“Urashima,
Thou Fisherman of the Inland Sea,
I’ll set thy couch with pearl;
I’ll spread thy couch with seaweed and sea flowers;
Thou shalt be King of the Deep Sea,
And we will reign together.”*

“Let me go home,” said Urashima. “My little children wait and are tired.”

But she said:

*“Urashima,
Thou Fisherman of the Inland Sea,
Never be afraid of the Deep Sea tempest;
We will roll rocks about our cavern doors;
Neither be afraid of the drowned dead;
Thou shalt not die.”*

“Ah, now,” said the fisherman, “let be, for the dear gods’ sake. I would go to mine own.”

“Stay with me this one night.”

“Nay, not one.”

Then the Daughter of the Deep Sea wept, and Urashima saw her tears.

“I will stay with you this one night,” he said.

So after the night was passed, she brought him up to the sand and the seashore.

“Are we near your home?” she said.

He told her, “Within a stone’s throw.”

“Take this,” she said, “in memory of me.” She gave him a casket of mother-of-pearl; it was rainbow-tinted and its clasps were of coral and of jade.

“Do not open it,” she said. “O fisherman, do not open it.” And with that she sank and was no more seen, the Daughter of the Deep Sea.

As for Urashima, he ran beneath the pine trees to come to his dear home. And as he went he laughed for joy. And he tossed up the casket to catch the sun.

“Ah, me,” he said, “the sweet scent of the pines!” So he went calling to his children with a call that he had taught them, like a sea-bird’s note. Soon he said, “Are they yet asleep? It is strange they do not answer me.”

Now when he came to his house he found four lonely walls, moss-grown. Nightshade flourished on the threshold, death lilies by the hearth, dianthus and lady fern. No living soul was there.

“Now what is this?” cried Urashima. “Have I lost my wits? Have

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I left my eyes in the deep sea?"

He sat down upon the grassy floor and thought long. "The dear gods help me!" he said. "Where is my wife, and where are my little children?"

He went to the village, where he knew the stones in the way, and every tiled and tilted eave was to him most familiar; and here he found folk walking to and fro, going upon their business. But they were all strange to him.

"Good morrow," they said, "good morrow, wayfarer. Do you tarry in our town?"

He saw children at their play, and often he put his hand beneath their chins to turn their faces up. Alas! he did it all in vain.

"Where are my little children," he said, "O Lady Kwannon the Merciful? Peradventure the gods know the meaning of all this; it is too much for me."

When sunset came, his heart was heavy as stone, and he went and stood at the parting of the ways outside the town. As men passed by he pulled them by the sleeve:

"Friend," he said, "I ask your pardon, did you know a fisherman of this place called Urashima?"

And the men that passed by answered him, "We never heard of such an one."

There passed by the peasant people from the mountains. Some went a-foot, some rode on patient pack-horses. They went singing their country songs, and they carried baskets of wild strawberries or sheaves of lilies bound upon their backs. And the lilies nodded as they went. Pilgrims passed by, all clad in white, with staves and rice-straw hats, sandals fast bound and gourds of water. Swiftly they went, softly they went, thinking of holy things. And lords and ladies passed by, in brave attire and great array, borne in their gilded *kago*. The night fell.

"I lose sweet hope," said Urashima.

But there passed by an old, old man.

"Oh, old, old man," cried the fisherman, "you have seen many days; know you aught of Urashima? In this place was he born and bred."

Then the old man said, "There was one of that name, but, sir, that one was drowned long years ago. My grandfather could scarce remember him in the time that I was a little boy. Good stranger, it was many, many years ago."

Urashima said, "He is dead?"

"No man more dead than he. His sons are dead and their sons are dead. Good even to you, stranger."

Then Urashima was afraid. But he said, "I must go to the green valley where the dead sleep." And to the valley he took his way.

He said, "How chill the night wind blows through the grass. The trees shiver and the leaves turn their pale backs to me."

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He said, "Hail, sad moon, that showest me all the quiet graves. Thou art nothing different from the moon of old."

He said, "Here are my sons' graves and their sons' graves. Poor Urashima, there is no man more dead than he. Yet am I lonely among the ghosts."

"Who will comfort me?" said Urashima.

The night wind sighed and nothing more.

Then he went back to the seashore. "Who will comfort me?" cried Urashima. But the sky was unmoved, and the mountain waves of the sea rolled on.

Urashima said, "There is the casket." And he took it from his sleeve and opened it. There rose from it a faint white smoke that floated away and out to the far horizon.

"I grow very weary," said Urashima. In a moment his hair turned as white as snow. He trembled, his body shrank, his eyes grew dim. He that had been so young and lusty swayed and tottered where he stood.

"I am old," said Urashima.

He made to shut the casket lid, but dropped it, saying, "Nay, the vapor of smoke is gone for ever. What matters it?"

He laid down his length upon the sand and died.

GREEN WILLOW

TOMODATA, the young *samurai*, owed allegiance to the Lord of Noto. He was a soldier, a courtier, and a poet.

He had a sweet voice and a beautiful face, a noble form and a very winning address. He was a graceful dancer, and excelled in every manly sport. He was wealthy and generous and kind. He was beloved by rich and by poor. Now his *daimyo*, the Lord of Noto, wanted a man to undertake a mission of trust. He chose Tomodata, and called him to his presence.

"Are you loyal?" said the *daimyo*.

"My lord, you know it," answered Tomodata.

"Do you love me, then?" asked the *daimyo*. "Ay, my good lord," said Tomodata, kneeling before him.

"Then carry my message," said the *daimyo*. "Ride and do not spare your beast. Ride straight, and fear not the mountains nor the enemies' country. Stay not for storm nor any other thing. Lose your life; but betray not your trust. Above all, do not look any maid between the eyes. Ride, and bring me word again quickly."

Thus spoke the Lord of Noto.

So Tomodata got him to horse, and away he rode upon his quest. Obedient to his lord's commands, he spared not his good beast. He rode straight, and was not afraid of the steep mountain passes nor of the enemies' country. Ere he had been three days upon the road the

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autumn tempest burst, for it was the ninth month. Down poured the rain in a torrent. Tomodata bowed his head and rode on. The wind howled in the pine-tree branches. It blew a typhoon. The good horse trembled and could scarcely keep its feet, but Tomodata spoke to it and urged it on. His own cloak he drew close about him and held it so that it might not blow away, and in this wise he rode on.

The fierce storm swept away many a familiar landmark of the road, and buffeted the *samurai* so that he became weary almost to fainting. Noontide was as dark as twilight, twilight was as dark as night, and when night fell it was as black as the night of Yomi, where lost souls wander and cry. By this time Tomodata had lost his way in a wild, lonely place, where, as it seemed to him, no human soul inhabited. His horse could carry him no longer, and he wandered on foot through bogs and marshes, through rocky and thorny tracks, until he fell into deep despair.

"Alack!" he cried, "must I die in this wilderness and the quest of the Lord of Noto be unfulfilled?"

At this moment the great winds blew away the clouds of the sky, so that the moon shone very brightly forth, and by the sudden light Tomodata saw a little hill on his right hand. Upon the hill was a small thatched cottage, and before the cottage grew three green weeping-willow trees.

"Now, indeed, the gods be thanked!" said Tomodata, and he climbed the hill in no time. Light shone from the chinks of the cottage door, and smoke curled out of a hole in the roof. The three willow trees swayed and flung out their green streamers in the wind. Tomodata threw his horse's rein over a branch of one of them, and called for admittance to the longed-for shelter.

At once the cottage door was opened by an old woman, very poorly but neatly clad.

"Who rides abroad upon such a night?" she asked, "and what wills he here?"

"I am a weary traveler, lost and benighted upon your lonely moor. My name is Tomodata. I am a *samurai* in the service of the Lord of Noto, upon whose business I ride. Show me hospitality for the love of the gods. I crave food and shelter for myself and my horse."

As the young man stood speaking the water streamed from his garments. He reeled a little, and put out a hand to hold on by the side-post of the door.

"Come in, come in, young sir!" cried the old woman, full of pity. "Come in to the warm fire. You are very welcome. We have but coarse fare to offer, but it shall be set before you with great good-will. As to your horse, I see you have delivered him to my daughter; he is in good hands."

At this Tomodata turned sharply round. Just behind him, in the dim light, stood a very young girl with the horse's rein thrown over her arm. Her garments were blown about and her long loose hair

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streamed out upon the wind. The *samurai* wondered how she had come there. Then the old woman drew him into the cottage and shut the door. Before the fire sat the good man of the house, and the two old people did the very best they could for Tomodata. They gave him dry garments, comforted him with hot rice wine, and quickly prepared a good supper for him.

Presently the daughter of the house came in, and retired behind a screen to comb her hair and to dress afresh. Then she came forth to wait upon him. She wore a blue robe of homespun cotton. Her feet were bare. Her hair was not tied nor confined in any way, but lay along her smooth cheeks, and hung, straight and long and black, to her very knees. She was slender and graceful. Tomodata judged her to be about fifteen years old, and knew well that she was the fairest maiden he had even seen.

At length she knelt at his side to pour wine into his cup. She held the wine-bottle in two hands and bent her head. Tomodata turned to look at her. When she had made an end of pouring the wine and had set down the bottle, their glances met, and Tomodata looked at her full between the eyes, for he forgot altogether the warning of his *dai-myō*, the Lord of Noto.

“Maiden,” he said, “what is your name?”

She answered: “They call me the Green Willow.”

“The dearest name on earth,” he said, and again he looked her between the eyes. And because he looked so long her face grew rosy red, from chin to forehead, and though she smiled her eyes filled with tears.

Ah me, for the Lord of Noto’s quest!

Then Tomodata made this little song:

*“Long-haired maiden, do you know
That with the red dawn I must go?
Do you wish me far away?
Cruel long-haired maiden, say—
Long-haired maiden, if you know
That with the red dawn I must go,
Why, oh why, do you blush so?”*

And the maiden, the Green Willow, answered:

*“The dawn comes if I will or no;
Never leave me, never go.
My sleeve shall hide the blush away.
The dawn comes if I will or no;
Never leave me, never go.
Lord, I lift my long sleeve so. . . .”*

“Oh, Green Willow, Green Willow,” sighed Tomodata.

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That night he lay before the fire—still, but with wide eyes, for no sleep came to him though he was weary. He was sick for love of the Green Willow. Yet by the rules of his service he was bound in honor to think of no such thing. Moreover, he had the quest of the Lord of Noto that lay heavy on his heart, and he longed to keep truth and loyalty.

At the first peep of day he rose up. He looked upon the kind old man who had been his host, and left a purse of gold at his side as he slept. The maiden and her mother lay behind the screen.

Tomodata saddled and bridled his horse, and mounting, rode slowly away through the mist of the early morning. The storm was quite over and it was as still as Paradise. The green grass and the leaves shone with the wet. The sky was clear, and the path very bright with autumn flowers; but Tomodata was sad.

When the sunlight streamed across his saddle-bow, "Ah, Green Willow, Green Willow," he sighed; and at noontide it was "Green Willow, Green Willow"; and "Green Willow, Green Willow," when the twilight fell. That night he lay in a deserted shrine, and the place was so holy that in spite of all he slept from midnight till the dawn. Then he rose, having it in his mind to wash himself in a cold stream that flowed near by, so as to go refreshed upon his journey; but he was stopped upon the shrine's threshold. There lay the Green Willow, prone upon the ground. A slender thing she lay, face downwards, with her black hair flung about her. She lifted a hand and held Tomodata by the sleeve. "My lord, my lord," she said, and fell to sobbing piteously.

He took her in his arms without a word, and soon he set her on his horse before him, and together they rode the livelong day. It was little they recked of the road they went, for all the while they looked into each other's eyes. The heat and the cold were nothing to them. They felt not the sun nor the rain; of truth or falsehood they thought nothing at all; nor of filial piety, nor of the Lord of Noto's quest, nor of honor nor plighted word. They knew but the one thing. Alas, for the ways of love!

At last they came to an unknown city, where they stayed. Tomodata carried gold and jewels in his girdle, so they found a house built of white wood, spread with sweet white mats. In every dim room there could be heard the sound of the garden waterfall, whilst the swallow flitted across and across the paper lattice. Here they dwelt, knowing but the one thing. Here they dwelt three years of happy days, and for Tomodata and the Green Willow the years were like garlands of sweet flowers.

In the autumn of the third year it chanced that the two of them went forth into the garden at dusk, for they had a wish to see the round moon rise; and as they watched, the Green Willow began to shake and shiver.

"My dear," said Tomodata, "you shake and shiver; and it is no

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wonder, the night wind is chill. Come in." And he put his arm around her.

At this she gave a long and pitiful cry, very loud and full of agony, and when she had uttered the cry she failed, and dropped her head upon her love's breast.

"Tomodata," she whispered, "say a prayer for me; I die."

"Oh, say not so, my sweet, my sweet! You are but weary; you are faint."

He carried her to the stream's side, where the iris grew like swords, and the lotus-leaves like shields, and laved her forehead with water. He said: "What is it, my dear? Look up and live."

"The tree," she moaned, "the tree. They have cut down my tree. Remember the Green Willow."

With that she slipped, as it seemed, from his arms to his feet; and he, casting himself upon the ground, found only silken garments, bright colored, warm and sweet, and straw sandals, scarlet-thonged.

In after years, when Tomodata was a holy man, he traveled from shrine to shrine, painfully upon his feet, and acquired much merit.

Once, at nightfall, he found himself upon a lonely moor. On his right hand he beheld a little hill, and on it the sad ruins of a poor thatched cottage. The door swung to and fro with broken latch and creaking hinge. Before it stood three old stumps of willow trees that had long since been cut down. Tomodata stood for a long time still and silent. Then he sang gently to himself:

*"Long-haired maiden, do you know
That with the red dawn I must go?
Do you wish me far away?
Cruel long-haired maiden, say—
Long-haired maiden, if you know
That with the red dawn I must go,
Why, oh why, do you blush so?"*

"Ah, foolish song! The gods forgive me. I should have recited the Holy Sutra for the Dead," said Tomodata.

THE FLUTE

LONG since, there lived in Yedo a gentleman of good lineage and very honest conversation. His wife was a gentle and loving-lady. To his secret grief, she bore him no sons. But a daughter she did give him, whom they called O'Yoné, which, being interpreted, is "Rice in the ear." Each of them loved this child more than life, and guarded her as the apple of their eye. And the child grew up red and white, and long-eyed, straight and slender as the green bamboo.

When O'Yoné was twelve years old, her mother drooped with

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the fall of the year, sickened, and pined, and ere the red had faded from the leaves of the maples she was dead and shrouded and laid in the earth. The husband was wild in his grief. He cried aloud, he beat his breast, he lay upon the ground and refused comfort, and for days he neither broke his fast nor slept. The child was quite silent.

Time passed by. The man perforce went about his business. The snows of winter fell and covered his wife's grave. The beaten pathway from his house to the dwelling of the dead was snow also, undisturbed save for the faint prints of a child's sandaled feet. In the spring-time he girded up his robe and went forth to see the cherry blossom, making merry enough, and writing a poem upon gilded paper, which he hung to a cherry-tree branch to flutter in the wind. The poem was in praise of the spring and of *saké*. Later, he planted the orange lily of forgetfulness, and thought of his wife no more. But the child remembered.

Before the year was out he brought a new bride home, a woman with a fair face and a black heart. But the man, poor fool, was happy, and commended his child to her, and believed that all was well.

Now because her father loved O'Yoné, her stepmother hated her with a jealous and deadly hatred, and every day she dealt cruelly by the child, whose gentle ways and patience only angered her the more. But because of her father's presence she did not dare to do O'Yoné any great ill; therefore she waited, biding her time. The poor child passed her days and her nights in torment and horrible fear. But of these things she said not a word to her father. Such is the manner of children.

Now, after some time, it chanced that the man was called away by his business to a distant city. Kioto was the name of the city, and from Yedo it is many days' journey on foot or on horseback. Howbeit, go the man needs must, and stay there three moons or more. Therefore he made ready, and equipped himself, and his servants that were to go with him, with all things needful; and so came to the last night before his departure, which was to be very early in the morning.

He called O'Yoné to him and said: "Come here, then, my dear little daughter." So O'Yoné went and knelt before him.

"What gift shall I bring you home from Kioto?" he said.

But she hung her head and did not answer.

"Answer, then, rude little one," he bade her. "Shall it be a golden fan, or a roll of silk, or a new *obi* of red brocade, or a great battledore with images upon it and many light-feathered shuttlecocks?"

Then she burst into bitter weeping, and he took her upon his knees to soothe her. But she hid her face with her sleeves and cried as if her heart would break. And, "O father, father, father," she said, "do not go away—do not go away!"

"But, my sweet, I needs must," he answered, "and soon I shall be back—so soon, scarcely it will seem that I am gone, when I shall be here again with fair gifts in my hand."

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“Father, take me with you,” she said.

“Alas, what a great way for a little girl! Will you walk on your feet, my little pilgrim, or mount a pack-horse? And how would you fare in the inns of Kioto? Nay, my dear, stay; it is but for a little time, and your kind mother will be with you.”

She shuddered in his arms.

“Father, if you go, you will never see me more.”

Then the father felt a sudden chill about his heart, that gave him pause. But he would not heed it. What! Must he, a strong man grown, be swayed by a child’s fancies? He put O’Yoné gently from him, and she slipped away as silently as a shadow.

But in the morning she came to him before sunrise with a little flute in her hand, fashioned of bamboo and smoothly polished. “I made it myself,” she said, “from a bamboo in the grove that is behind our garden. I made it for you. As you cannot take me with you, take the little flute, honorable father. Play on it sometimes, if you will, and think of me.” Then she wrapped it in a handkerchief of white silk, lined with scarlet, and wound a scarlet cord about it, and gave it to her father, who put it in his sleeve. After this he departed and went his way, taking the road to Kioto. As he went he looked back thrice, and beheld his child, standing at the gate, looking after him. Then the road turned and he saw her no more.

The city of Kioto was passing great and beautiful, and so the father of O’Yoné found it. And what with his business during the day, which sped very well, and his pleasure in the evening, and his sound sleep at night, the time passed merrily, and small thought he gave to Yedo, to his home, or to his child. Two moons passed, and three, and he made no plans for return.

One evening he was making ready to go forth to a great supper of his friends, and as he searched in his chest for certain brave silken *hakama* which he intended to wear as an honor to the feast, he came upon the little flute, which had lain hidden all this time in the sleeve of his traveling dress. He drew it forth from its red and white handkerchief, and as he did so, felt strangely cold with an icy chill that crept about his heart. He hung over the live charcoal of the *hibachi* as one in a dream. He put the flute to his lips, when there came from it a long-drawn wail.

He dropped it hastily upon the mats and clapped his hands for his servant, and told him he would not go forth that night. He was not well, he would be alone. After a long time he reached out his hand for the flute. Again that long, melancholy cry. He shook from head to foot, but he blew into the flute. “Come back to Yedo—come back to Yedo—Father! Father!” The quavering childish voice rose to a shriek and then broke.

A horrible foreboding now took possession of the man, and he was as one beside himself. He flung himself from the house and from the city, and journeyed day and night, denying himself sleep and food.

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So pale was he and wild that the people deemed him a madman and fled from him, or pitied him as the afflicted of the gods. At last he came to his journey's end, travel-stained from head to heel, with bleeding feet and half-dead of weariness.

His wife met him in the gate.

He said: "Where is the child?"

"The child?" she answered.

"Ay, the child—my child. Where is she?" he cried in an agony.

The woman laughed: "Nay, my lord, how should I know? She is within at her books, or she is in the garden, or she is asleep, or mayhap she has gone forth with her playmates, or—"

He said: "Enough; no more of this. Come, where is my child?"

Then she was afraid. And, "In the Bamboo Grove," she said, looking at him with wide eyes.

There the man ran, and sought O'Yoné among the green stems of the bamboos. But he did not find her. He called, "Yoné Yoné!" and again, "Yoné! Yoné!" But he had no answer; only the wind sighed in the dry bamboo leaves. Then he felt in his sleeve and brought forth the little flute, and very tenderly put it to his lips. There was a faint sighing sound. Then a voice spoke, thin and pitiful:

"Father, dear father, my wicked stepmother killed me. Three moons since she killed me. She buried me in the clearing of the Bamboo Grove. You may find my bones. As for me, you will never see me any more—you will never see me more."

* * *

With his own two-handed sword the man did justice, and slew his wicked wife, avenging the death of his innocent child. Then he dressed himself in coarse white raiment, with a great rice-straw hat that shadowed his face. And he took a staff and a straw rain-coat and bound sandals on his feet, and thus he set forth upon a pilgrimage to the holy places of Japan.

And he carried the little flute with him, in a fold of his garment, upon his breast.

REFLECTIONS

LONG enough ago there dwelt within a day's journey of the city of Kioto a gentleman of simple mind and manners, but good estate. His wife, rest her soul, had been dead these many years, and the good man lived in great peace and quiet with his only son. They kept clear of women-kind, and knew nothing at all either of their winning or their bothering ways. They had good steady men-servants in their house, and never set eyes on a pair of long sleeves or a scarlet *obi*

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from morning till night.

The truth is that they were as happy as the day is long. Sometimes they labored in the rice-fields. Other days they went a-fishing. In the spring, forth they went to admire the cherry flower or the plum, and later they set out to view the iris or the peony or the lotus, as the case might be. At these times they would drink a little sake, and twist their blue and white *tenegui* about their heads and be as jolly as you please, for there was no one to say them nay. Often enough they came home by lantern light. They wore their oldest clothes, and were mighty irregular at their meals.

But the pleasures of life are fleeting—more's the pity!—and presently the father felt old age creeping upon him.

One night, as he sat smoking and warming his hands over the charcoal, "Boy," says he, "it's high time you got married."

"Now the gods forbid!" cries the young man. "Father, what makes you say such terrible things? Or are you joking? You must be joking," he says.

"I'm not joking at all," says the father. "I never spoke a truer word, and that you'll know soon enough."

"But, father, I am mortally afraid of women."

"And am I not the same?" says the father. "I'm sorry for you, my boy."

"Then what for must I marry?" says the son.

"In the way of nature I shall die before long, and you'll need a wife to take care of you."

Now the tears stood in the young man's eyes when he heard this, for he was tender-hearted; but all he said was, "I can take care of myself very well."

"That's the very thing you cannot," says his father.

The long and short of it was that they found the young man a wife. She was young, and as pretty as a picture. Her name was Tassel, just that, or Fusa, as they say in her language.

After they had drunk down the "Three Times Three" together and so became man and wife, they stood alone, the young man looking hard at the girl. For the life of him he did not know what to say to her. He took a bit of her sleeve and stroked it with his hand. Still he said nothing and looked mighty foolish. The girl turned red, turned pale, turned red again, and burst into tears.

"Honorable Tassel, don't do that, for the dear gods' sake," says the young man.

"I suppose you don't like me," sobs the girl. "I suppose you don't think I'm pretty."

"My dear," he says, "you're prettier than the bean-flower in the field; you're prettier than the little bantam hen in the farm-yard; you're prettier than the rose carp in the pond. I hope you'll be happy with my father and me."

At this she laughed a little and dried her eyes. "Get on, another

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pair of *hakama*," she says, "and give me those you've got on you; there's a great hole in them—I was noticing it all the time of the wedding!"

Well, this was not a bad beginning, and taking one thing with another they got on pretty well, though of course things were not as they had been in that blessed time when the young man and his father did not set eyes upon a pair of long sleeves or an *obi* from morning till night.

By and by, in the way of nature, the old man died. It is said he made a very good end, and left that in his strong-box which made his son the richest man in the country-side. But this was no comfort at all to the poor young man, who mourned his father with all his heart. Day and night he paid reverence to the tomb. Little sleep or rest he got, and little heed he gave to his wife, Mistress Tassel, and her whimsies, or even to the delicate dishes she set before him. He grew thin and pale, and she, poor maid, was at her wits' end to know what to do with him. At last she said, "My dear, and how would it be if you were to go to **Kioto** for a little?"

"And what for should I do that?" he says.

It was on the tip of her tongue to answer, "To enjoy yourself," but she saw it would never do to say that.

"Oh," she says, "as a kind of a duty. They say every man that loves his country should see **Kioto**; and besides, you might give an eye to the fashions, so as to tell me what like they are when you get home. My things," she says, "are sadly behind the times! I'd like well enough to know what people are wearing!"

"I've no heart to go to **Kioto**," says the young man, "and if I had, it's the planting-out time of the rice, and the thing's not to be done, so there's an end of it."

"All the same, after two days he bids his wife get out his best *hakama* and *haouri*, and to make up his *bento* for a journey. "I'm thinking of going to **Kioto**," he tells her.

"Well, I am surprised," says Mistress Tassel. "And what put such an idea into your head, if I may ask?"

"I've been thinking it's a kind of duty," says the young man.

"Oh, indeed," says Mistress Tassel to this, and nothing more, for she had some grains of sense. And the next morning as ever was she packs her husband off bright and early for **Kioto**, and betakes herself to some little matter of house cleaning she has on hand.

The young man stepped out along the road, feeling a little better in his spirits, and before long he reached **Kioto**. It is likely he saw many things to wonder at. Amongst temples and palaces he went. He saw castles and gardens, and marched up and down fine streets of shops, gazing about him with his eyes wide open, and his mouth too, very like, for he was a simple soul.

At length, one fine day he came upon a shop full of metal mirrors that glittered in the sunshine.

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“Oh, the pretty silver moons!” says the simple soul to himself. And he dared to come near and take up a mirror in his hand.

The next minute he turned as white as rice and sat him down on the seat in the shop door, still holding the mirror in his hand and looking into it.

“Why, father,” he said, “how did you come here? You are not dead, then? Now the dear gods be praised for that! Yet I could have sworn—But no matter, since you are here alive and well. You are something pale still, but how young you look. You move your lips, father, and seem to speak, but I do not hear you. You’ll come home with me, dear, and live with us just as you used to do? You smile, you smile, that is well.”

“Fine mirrors, my young gentleman,” said the shopman, “the best that can be made, and that’s one of the best of the lot you have there. I see you are a judge.”

The young man clutched his mirror tight and sat staring stupidly enough no doubt. He trembled. “How much?” he whispered. “Is it for sale?” He was in a taking lest his father should be snatched from him.

“For sale it is, indeed, most noble sir,” said the shopman, “and the price is a trifle, only two *bu*. It’s almost giving it away I am, as you’ll understand.”

“Two *bu*—only two *bu*! Now the gods be praised for this their mercy!” cried the happy young man. He smiled from ear to ear, and he had the purse out of his girdle, and the money out of his purse, in a twinkling.

Now it was the shopman who wished he had asked three *bu* or even five. All the same he put a good face upon it, and packed the mirror in a fine white box and tied it up with green cords.

“Father,” said the young man, when he had got away with it, “before we set out for home we must buy some gauds for the young woman there, my wife, you know.”

Now, for the life of him, he could not have told why, but when he came to his home the young man never said a word to Mistress Tassel about buying his old father for two *bu* in the Kioto shop. That was where he made his mistake, as things turned out.

She was as pleased as you like with her coral hair-pins, and her fine new *obi* from Kioto. “And I’m glad to see him so well and so happy,” she said to herself. “But I must say he’s been mighty quick to get over his sorrow after all. But men are just like children.” As for her husband, unbeknown to her he took a bit of green silk from her treasure-box and spread it in the cupboard of the *toko no ma*. There he placed the mirror in its box of white wood.

Every morning early and every evening late, he went to the cupboard of the *toko no ma* and spoke with his father. Many a jolly talk they had and many a hearty laugh together, and the son was the happiest young man of all that countryside, for he was a simple soul.

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But Mistress Tassel had a quick eye and a sharp ear, and it was not long before she marked her husband's new ways.

"What for does he go so often to the *toko no ma*," she asked herself, "and what has he got there? I should be glad enough to know." Not being one to suffer much in silence, she very soon asked her husband these same things.

He told her the truth, the good young man. "And now I have my dear old father home again, I'm as happy as the day is long," he says.

"H'm," she says.

"And wasn't two *bu* cheap," he says, "and wasn't it a strange thing altogether?"

"Cheap, indeed," says she, "and passing strange; and why, if I may ask," she says, "did you say naught of all this at the first?"

The young man grew red.

"Indeed, then, I cannot tell you, my dear," he says. "I'm sorry, but I don't know," and with that he went out to his work.

Up jumped Mistress Tassel the minute his back was turned, and to the *toko no ma* she flew on the wings of the wind and flung open the doors with a clang.

"My green silk for sleeve-linings!" she cried at once. "But I don't see any old father here, only a white wooden box. What can he keep in it?"

She opened the box quickly enough.

"What an odd flat shining thing!" she said, and, taking up the mirror, looked into it.

For a moment she said nothing at all, but the great tears of anger and jealousy stood in her pretty eyes, and her face flushed from forehead to chin.

"A woman!" she cried, "a woman! So that is his secret! He keeps a woman in this cupboard. A woman, very young and very pretty—no, not pretty at all, but she thinks herself so. A dancing-girl from Kioto, I'll be bound; ill-tempered too—her face is scarlet; and oh, how she frowns, nasty little spitfire. Ah, who could have thought it of him? Ah, it's a miserable girl I am—and I've cooked his *daikon* and mended his *hakama* a hundred times. Oh! oh! oh!"

With that, she threw the mirror into its case, and slammed-to the cupboard door upon it. Herself she flung upon the mats, and cried and sobbed as if her heart would break.

In comes her husband.

"I've broken the thong of my sandal," says he, "and I've come to—But what in the world?" and in an instant he was down on his knees beside Mistress Tassel doing what he could to comfort her, and to get her face up from the floor where she kept it.

"Why, what is it, my own darling?" says he.

"Your own darling!" she answers very fierce through her sobs; and "I want to go home," she cries.

"But, my sweet, you are at home, and with your own husband."

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“Pretty husband!” she says, “and pretty goings-on, with a woman in the cupboard! A hateful, ugly woman that thinks herself beautiful; and she has my green sleeve-linings there with her to boot.”

“Now, what’s all this about women and sleeve-linings? Sure you wouldn’t grudge poor old father that little green rag for his bed? Come, my dear, I’ll buy you twenty sleeve-linings.”

At that she jumped to her feet and fairly danced with rage.

“Old father! old father! old father!” she screamed. “Am I a fool or a child? I saw the woman with my own eyes.”

The poor young man didn’t know whether he was on his head or his heels. “Is it possible that my father is gone?” he said, and he took the mirror from the *toko no ma*.

“That’s well; still the same old father that I bought for two *bu*. You seem worried, father; nay, then, smile as I do. There, that’s well.”

Mistress Tassel came like a little fury and snatched the mirror from his hand. She gave but one look into it and hurled it to the other end of the room. It made such a clang against the woodwork, that servants and neighbors came rushing in to see what was the matter.

“It is my father,” said the young man. “I bought him in Kioto for two *bu*.”

“He keeps a woman in the cupboard who has stolen my green sleeve-linings,” sobbed the wife.

After this there was a great to-do. Some of the neighbors took the man’s part and some the woman’s, with such a clatter and chatter and noise as never was; but settle the thing they could not, and none of them would look into the mirror, because they said it was bewitched.

They might have gone on the way they were till doomsday, but that one of them said, “Let us ask the Lady Abbess, for she is a wise woman.” And off they all went to do what they might have done sooner.

The Lady Abbess was a pious woman, the head of a convent of holy nuns. She was the great one at prayers and meditations and at mortifyings of the flesh, and she was the clever one, none the less, at human affairs. They took her the mirror, and she held it in her hands and looked into it for a long time. At last she spoke:

“This poor woman,” she said, touching the mirror, “for it’s as plain as daylight that it is a woman—this poor woman was so troubled in her mind at the disturbance that she caused in a quiet house, that she has taken vows, shaved her head, and become a holy nun. Thus she is in her right place here. I will keep her, and instruct her in prayers and meditations. Go you home, my children; forgive and forget, be friends.”

Then all the people said, “The Lady Abbess is the wise woman.”

And she kept the mirror in her treasure.

Mistress Tassel and her husband went home hand in hand.

“So I was right, you see, after all,” she said.

“Yes, yes, my dear,” said the simple young man, “of course. But

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I am wondering how my old father is going to get on at the holy convent. He was never much of a one for religion."

THE SPRING LOVER AND THE AUTUMN LOVER

THIS is a story of the youth of Yamato, when the gods still walked upon the Land of the Reed Plains and took pleasure in the fresh and waving rice-ears of the country-side.

There was a lady having in her something of earth and something of heaven. She was a king's daughter. She was augustly radiant and renowned. She was called the Dear Delight of the World, the Greatly Desired, the Fairest of the Fair. She was slender and strong, at once mysterious and gay, fickle yet faithful, gentle yet hard to please. The gods loved her, but men worshiped her.

The coming of the Dear Delight was on this wise. Prince Ama Boko had a red jewel of one of his enemies. The jewel was a peace-offering. Prince Ama Boko set it in a casket upon a stand. He said, "This is a jewel of price." Then the jewel was transformed into an exceeding fair lady. Her name was the Lady of the Red Jewel, and Prince Ama Boko took her to wife. There was born to them one only daughter, who was the Greatly Desired, the Fairest of the Fair.

It is true that eighty men of name came to seek her hand. Princes they were, and warriors, and deities. They came from near and they came from far. Across the Sea Path they came in great ships, white sails or creaking oars, with brave and lusty sailors. Through the forests dark and dangerous they made their way to the Princess, the Greatly Desired; or lightly, lightly they descended by way of the Floating Bridge in garments of glamour and silver-shod. They brought their gifts with them—gold, fair jewels upon a string, light garments of feathers, singing birds, sweet things to eat, silk cocoons, oranges in a basket. They brought minstrels and singers and dancers and tellers of tales to entertain the Princess, the Greatly Desired.

As for the Princess, she sat still in her white bower with her maidens about her. Passing rich was her robe, and ever and anon her maidens spread it afresh over the mats, set out her deep sleeves, or combed her long hair with a golden comb.

Round about the bower was a gallery of white wood, and here the suitors came and knelt in the presence of their liege lady.

Many and many a time the carp leapt in the garden fish-pond. Many and many a time a scarlet pomegranate flower fluttered and dropped from the tree. Many and many a time the lady shook her head and a lover went his way, sad and sorry.

Now it happened that the God of Autumn went to try his fortune with the Princess. He was a brave young man indeed. Ardent were his eyes; the color flamed in his dark cheek. He was girded with a sword that ten men could not lift. The chrysanthemums of autumn burned

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upon his coat in cunning broidery. He came and bent his proud head to the very ground before the Princess, then raised it and looked her full in the eyes. She opened her sweet red lips—waited—said nothing—but shook her head.

So the God of Autumn went forth from her presence, blinded with his bitter tears.

He found his younger brother, the God of Spring.

“How fares it with you, my brother?” said the God of Spring.

“Ill, ill indeed, for she will not have me. She is the proud lady. Mine is the broken heart.”

“Ah, my brother!” said the God of Spring.

“You’d best come home with me, for all is over with us,” said the God of Autumn.

But the God of Spring said, “I stay here.”

“What,” cried his brother, “is it likely, then, that she will take you if she’ll have none of me? Will she love the smooth cheeks of a child and flout the man full grown? Will you go to her, brother? She’ll laugh at you for your pains.”

“Still I will go,” said the God of Spring.

“A wager! A wager!” the God of Autumn cried. “I’ll give you a cask of *saké* if you win her—*saké* for the merry feast of your wedding. If you lose her, the *saké* will be for me. I’ll drown my grief in it.”

“Well, brother,” said the God of Spring, “I take the wager. You’ll have your *saké* like enough indeed.”

“And so I think,” said the God of Autumn, and went his ways.

Then the young God of Spring went to his mother, who loved him.

“Do you love me, my mother?” he said.

She answered, “More than a hundred existences.”

“Mother,” he said, “get me for my wife the Princess, the Fairest of the Fair. She is called the Greatly Desired; greatly, oh, greatly, do I desire her.”

“You love her, my son?” said his mother.

“More than a hundred existences,” he said.

“Then lie down, my son, my best beloved, lie down and sleep, and I will work for you.”

So she spread a couch for him, and when he was asleep she looked on him.

“Your face,” she said, “is the sweetest thing in the world.”

There was no sleep for her the live-long night. But she went swiftly to a place she knew of, where the wistaria drooped over a still pool. She plucked her sprays and tendrils and brought home as much as she could carry. The wistaria was white and purple, and you must know it was not yet in flower, but hidden in the unopened bud. From it she wove magically a robe. She fashioned sandals also, and a bow and arrows.

In the morning she waked the God of Spring.

JAPANESE FAIRY TALES

“Come, my son,” she said, “let me put this robe on you.”

The God of Spring rubbed his eyes. “A sober suit for courting,” he said. But he did as his mother bade him. And he bound the sandals on his feet, and slung the bow and the arrows in their quiver on his back.

“Will all be well, my mother?” he said.

“All will be well, beloved,” she answered him.

So the God of Spring came before the Fairest of the Fair. And one of her maidens laughed and said:

“See, mistress, there comes to woo you today only a little plain boy, all in sober gray.”

But the Fairest of the Fair lifted up her eyes and looked upon the God of Spring. And in the same moment the wistaria with which he was clothed burst into flower. He was sweet-scented, white and purple from head to heel.

The Princess rose from the white mats.

“Lord,” she said, “I am yours if you will have me.”

Hand in hand they went together to the mother of the God of Spring.

“Ah, my mother,” he said, “what shall I do now? My brother the God of Autumn is angry with me. He will not give me the *saké* I have won from him in a wager. Great is his rage. He will seek to take our lives.”

“Be still, beloved,” said his mother, “and fear not.”

She took a cane of hollow bamboo, and in the hollow she put salt and stones; and when she had wrapped the cane round with leaves, she hung it in the smoke of the fire. She said:

“The green leaves fade and die. So you must do, my eldest born, the God of Autumn. The stone sinks in the sea, so must you sink. You must sink, you must fail, like the ebb tide.”

Now the tale is told, and all the world knows why Spring is fresh and merry and young, and Autumn the saddest thing that is.

MOMOTARO

IF you'll believe me there was a time when the fairies were none so shy as they are now. That was the time when beasts talked to men, when there were spells and enchantments and magic every day, when there was great store of hidden treasure to be dug up, and adventures for the asking.

At that time, you must know, an old man and an old woman lived alone by themselves. They were good and they were poor and they had no children at all.

One fine day, “What are you doing this morning, good man?” says the old woman.

JAPANESE FAIRY TALES

“Oh,” says the old man, “I’m off to the mountains with my bill-hook to gather a faggot of sticks for our fire. And what are you doing, good wife?”

“Oh,” says the old woman, “I’m off to the stream to wash clothes. It’s my washing day,” she adds.

So the old man went to the mountains and the old woman went to the stream.

Now, while she was washing the clothes, what should she see but a fine ripe peach that came floating down the stream? The peach was big enough, and rosy red on both sides.

“I’m in luck this morning,” said the dame, and she pulled the peach to shore with a split bamboo stick.

By-and-by, when her good man came home from the hills, she set the peach before him. “Eat, good man,” she said. “This is a lucky peach I found in the stream and brought home for you.”

But the old man never got a taste of the peach. And why did he not?

All of a sudden the peach burst in two and there was no stone to it, but a fine boy baby where the stone should have been.

“Mercy me!” says the old woman.

“Mercy me!” says the old man.

The boy baby first ate up one half of the peach and then he ate up the other half. When he had done this he was finer and stronger than ever.

“Momotaro! Momotaro!” cries the old man. “The eldest son of the peach.”

“Truth it is indeed,” says the old woman. “He was born in a peach.”

Both of them took such good care of Momotaro that soon he was the stoutest and bravest boy of all that country-side. He was a credit to them, you may believe. The neighbors nodded their heads and they said, “Momotaro is the fine young man!”

“Mother,” says Momotaro one day to the old woman, “make me a good store of *kimi-dango*” (which is the way that they call millet dumplings in those parts).

“What for do you want *kimi-dango*?” says his mother.

“Why,” says Momotaro, “I’m going on a journey, or as you may say, an adventure, and I shall be needing the *kimi-dango* on the way.”

“Where are you going, Momotaro?” says his mother.

“I’m off to the Ogres’ Island,” says Momotaro, “to get their treasure, and I should be obliged if you’d let me have the *kimi-dango* as soon as may be,” he says.

So they made him the *kimi-dango*, and he put them in a wallet, and he tied the wallet to his girdle and off he set.

“*Sayonara*, and good luck to you, Momotaro!” cried the old man and the old woman.

“*Sayonara! Sayonara!*” cried Momotaro.

JAPANESE FAIRY TALES

He hadn't gone far when he fell in with a monkey.

"Kia! Kia!" says the monkey. "Where are you off to, Momotaro?"

Says Momotaro, "I'm off to the Ogres' Island for an adventure."

"What have you got in the wallet hanging at your girdle?"

"Now you're asking me something," says Momotaro. "Sure, I've some of the best millet dumplings in all Japan."

"Give me one," says the monkey, "and I will go with you."

So Momotaro gave a millet dumpling to the monkey, and the two of them jogged on together. They hadn't gone far when they fell in with a pheasant.

"Ken! Ken!" said the pheasant. "Where are you off to, Momotaro?"

Says Momotaro, "I'm off to the Ogres' Island for an adventure."

"What have you got in your wallet, Momotaro?"

"I've got some of the best millet dumplings in all Japan."

"Give me one," says the pheasant, "and I will go with you."

So Momotaro gave a millet dumpling to the pheasant, and the three of them jogged on together.

They hadn't gone far when they fell in with a dog.

"Bow! Wow! Wow!" says the dog. "Where are you off to, Momotaro?"

Says Momotaro, "I'm off to the Ogres' Island."

"What have you got in your wallet, Momotaro?"

"I've got some of the best millet dumplings in all Japan."

"Give me one," says the dog, "and I will go with you."

So Momotaro gave a millet dumpling to the dog, and the four of them jogged on together. By-and-by they came to the Ogres' Island.

"Now, brothers," says Momotaro, "listen to my plan. The pheasant must fly over the castle gate and peck the Ogres. The monkey must climb over the castle wall and pinch the Ogres. The dog and I will break the bolts and bars. He will bite the Ogres, and I will fight the Ogres."

Then there was the great battle.

The pheasant flew over the castle gate: "Ken! Ken! Ken!"

Momotaro broke the bolts and bars, and the dog leapt into the castle courtyard. "Bow! Wow! Wow!"

The brave companions fought till sundown and overcame the Ogres. Those that were left alive they took prisoners and bound with cords—a wicked lot they were.

"Now, brothers," says Momotaro, "bring out the Ogres' treasure."

So they did.

The treasure was worth having, indeed. There were magic jewels there, and caps and coats to make you invisible. There was gold and silver, and jade and coral, and amber and tortoise-shell and mother-of-pearl.

"Here's riches for all," says Momotaro. "Choose, brothers, and take your fill."

JAPANESE FAIRY TALES

“Kia! Kia!” says the monkey. “Thanks, my Lord Momotaro.”

“Ken! Ken!” says the pheasant. “Thanks, my Lord Momotaro.”

“Bow! Wow! Wow!” says the dog. “Thanks, my dear Lord Momotaro.”