

ANDREW LANG



THE CRIMSON  
FAIRY BOOK



# **The Crimson Fairy Book**

**Andrew Lang**

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*The Crimson Fairy Book, A. Lang  
Jazzybee Verlag Jürgen Beck  
86450 Altenmünster, Loschberg 9  
Germany*

*ISBN: 9783849609269*

*www.jazzybee-verlag.de  
www.facebook.com/jazzybeeverlag  
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**ANDREW LANG (1844-1912)**

Biographical Sketch from "Portraits And Sketches" by  
Edmund Gosse

INVITED to note down some of my recollections of Andrew Lang, I find myself suspended between the sudden blow of his death and the slow development of memory, now extending in unbroken friendship over thirty-five years. The magnitude and multitude of Lang's performances, public and private, during that considerable length of time almost paralyse expression; it is difficult to know where to begin or where to stop. Just as his written works are so extremely numerous as to make a pathway through them a formidable task in bibliography, no one book standing out predominant, so his character, intellectual and moral, was full -of so many apparent inconsistencies, so many pitfalls for rash assertion, so many queer caprices of impulse, that in a whole volume of analysis, which would be tedious, one could scarcely do justice to them all. I will venture to put down, almost at haphazard, what I remember that seems to me to have been overlooked, or inexactly stated, by those who wrote, often very sympathetically, at the moment of his death, always premising that I speak rather of a Lang of from 1877 to 1890, when I saw him very frequently, than of a Lang whom younger people met chiefly in Scotland.

When he died, all the newspapers were loud in proclaiming his "versatility." But I am not sure that he was not the very opposite of versatile. I take "versatile" to mean changeable, fickle, constantly ready to alter direction with the weather-cock. The great instance of versatility in literature is Ruskin, who adopted diametrically different views of the same subject at different times of his life, and defended them with equal ardour. To be versatile seems to be unsteady, variable. But Lang was through his long career singularly unaltered; he never changed his point of view; what he liked and admired as a youth he liked and admired as an elderly man.

It is true that his interests and knowledge were vividly drawn along a surprisingly large number of channels, but while there was abundance there does not seem to me to have been versatility. If a huge body of water boils up from a crater, it may pour down a dozen paths, but these will always be the same; unless there is an earthquake, new cascades will not form nor old rivulets run dry. In some authors earthquakes do take place as in Tolstoy, for instance, and in S. T. Coleridge but nothing of this kind was ever manifest in Lang, who was extraordinarily multiform, yet in his varieties strictly consistent from Oxford to the grave. As this is not generally perceived, I will take the liberty of expanding my view of his intellectual development.

To a superficial observer in late life the genius of Andrew Lang had the characteristics which we are in the habit of identifying with precocity. Yet he had not been, as a writer, precocious in his youth. One slender volume of verses represents all that he published in book-form before his thirty-fifth year. No doubt we shall learn in good time what he was doing before he flashed upon the world of journalism in all his panoply of graces, in 1876, at the close of his Merton fellowship. He was then, at all events, the finest finished product of his age, with the bright armour of Oxford burnished on his body to such a brilliance that humdrum eyes could hardly bear the radiance of it. Of the terms behind, of the fifteen years then dividing him from St. Andrews, we know as yet but little; they were years of insatiable acquirement, incessant reading, and talking, and observing gay preparation for a life to be devoted, as no other life in our time has been, to the stimulation of other people's observation and talk and reading. There was no cloistered virtue about the bright and petulant Merton don. He was already flouting and jesting, laughing with Ariosto in the sunshine, performing with a snap of his fingers tasks

which might break the back of a pedant, and concealing under an affectation of carelessness a literary ambition which knew no definite bounds.

In those days, and when he appeared for the first time in London, the poet was paramount in him. Jowett is said to have predicted that he would be greatly famous in this line, but I know not what evidence Jowett had before him. Unless I am much mistaken, it was not until Lang left Balliol that his peculiar bent became obvious. Up to that time he had been a promiscuous browser upon books, much occupied, moreover, in the struggle with ancient Greek, and immersed in Aristotle and Homer. But in the early days of his settlement at Merton he began to concentrate his powers, and I think there were certain influences which were instant and far-reaching. Among them one was pre-eminent. When Andrew Lang came up from St. Andrews he had found Matthew Arnold occupying the ancient chair of poetry at Oxford. He was a listener at some at least of the famous lectures which, in 1865, were collected as "Essays in Criticism"; while one of his latest experiences as a Balliol undergraduate was hearing Matthew Arnold lecture on the study of Celtic literature. His conscience was profoundly stirred by "Culture and Anarchy" (1869); his sense of prose-form largely determined by "Friendship's Garland" (1871). I have no hesitation in saying that the teaching and example of Matthew Arnold prevailed over all other Oxford influences upon the intellectual nature of Lang, while, although I think that his personal acquaintance with Arnold was very slight, yet in his social manner there was, in early days, not a little imitation of Arnold's aloofness and superfine delicacy of address. It was unconscious, of course, and nothing would have enraged Lang more than to have been accused of "imitating Uncle Matt."

The structure which his own individuality now began to build on the basis supplied by the learning of Oxford, and in particular by the study of the Greeks, and "dressed" by courses of Matthew Arnold, was from the first eclectic. Lang eschewed as completely what was not sympathetic to him as he assimilated what was attractive to him. Those who speak of his "versatility" should recollect what large tracts of the literature of the world, and even of England, existed outside the dimmest apprehension of Andrew Lang. It is, however, more useful to consider what he did apprehend; and there were two English books, published in his Oxford days, which permanently impressed him: one of these was "The Earthly Paradise," the other D. G. Rossetti's "Poems." In after years he tried to divest himself of the traces of these volumes, but he had fed upon their honey-dew and it had permeated his veins.

Not less important an element in the garnishing of a mind already prepared for it by academic and aesthetic studies was the absorption of the romantic part of French literature. Andrew Lang in this, as in everything else, was selective. He dipped into the wonderful lucky-bag of France wherever he saw the glitter of romance. Hence his approach, in the early seventies, was threefold: towards the mediaeval *lais* and *chansons*, towards the sixteenth-century Pleiade, and towards the school of which Victor Hugo was the leader in the nineteenth century. For a long time Ronsard was Lang's poet of intensest predilection; and I think that his definite ambition was to be the Ronsard of modern England, introducing a new poetical dexterity founded on a revival of pure humanism. He had in those days what he lost, or at least dispersed, in the weariness and growing melancholia of later years a splendid belief in poetry as a part of the renown of England, as a heritage to be received in reverence from our fathers, and to be passed on, if possible, in a brighter flame. This honest and beautiful

ambition to shine as one of the permanent benefactors to national verse, in the attitude so nobly sustained four hundred years ago by Du Bellay and Ronsard, was unquestionably felt by Andrew Lang through his bright intellectual April, and supported him from Oxford times until 1882, when he published "Helen of Troy." The cool reception of that epic by the principal judges of poetry caused him acute disappointment, and from that time forth he became less eager and less serious as a poet, more and more petulantly expending his wonderful technical gift on fugitive subjects. And here again, when one comes to think of it, the whole history repeated itself, since in "Helen of Troy" Lang simply suffered as Ronsard had done in the "Franciade." But the fact that 1882 was his year of crisis, and the tomb of his brightest ambition, must be recognised by every one who closely followed his fortunes at that time. Lang's habit of picking out of literature and of life the plums of romance, and these alone, comes to be, to the dazzled observer of his extraordinarily vivid intellectual career, the principal guiding line. This determination to dwell, to the exclusion of all other sides of any question, on its romantic side is alone enough to rebut the charge of versatility. Lang was in a sense encyclopaedic; but the vast dictionary of his knowledge had blank pages, or pages pasted down, on which he would not, or could not, read what experience had printed. Absurd as it sounds, there was always something maidenly about his mind, and he glossed over ugly matters, sordid and dull conditions, so that they made no impression whatever upon him. He had a trick, which often exasperated his acquaintances, of declaring that he had "never heard" of things that everybody else was very well aware of. He had "never heard the name" of people he disliked, of books that he thought tiresome, of events that bored him; but, more than this, he used the formula for things and persons whom he did not wish to discuss. I remember meeting in the street a famous professor, who advanced with uplifted



hands, and greeted me with " What do you think Lang says now? That he has never heard of Pascal! " This merely signified that Lang, not interested (at all events for the moment) in Pascal nor in the professor, thus closed at once all possibility of discussion.

It must not be forgotten that we have lived to see him, always wonderful indeed, and always passionately devoted to perfection and purity, but worn, tired, harassed by the unceasing struggle, the lifelong slinging of sentences from that inexhaustible ink-pot. In one of the most perfect of his poems, " Natural Theology," Lang speaks of Cagn, the great hunter, who once was kind and good, but who was spoiled by fighting many things. Lang was never " spoiled," but he was injured; the surface of the radiant coin was rubbed by the vast and interminable handling of journalism. He was jaded by the toil of writing many things. Hence it is not possible but that those who knew him intimately in his later youth and early middle-age should prefer to look back at those years when he was the freshest, the most exhilarating figure in living literature, when a star seemed to dance upon the crest of his already silvering hair. Baudelaire exclaimed of Theophile Gautier: " Homme heureux! homme digne d'envie! il n'a jamais aimé que le Beau!" and of Andrew Lang in those brilliant days the same might have been said. As long as he had confidence in beauty he was safe and strong; and much that, with all affection and all respect, we must admit was rasping and disappointing in his attitude to literature in his later years, seems to have been due to a decreasing sense of confidence in the intellectual sources of beauty. It is dangerous, in the end it must be fatal, to sustain the entire structure of life and thought on the illusions of romance. But that was what Lang did he built his house upon the rainbow.

The charm of Andrew Lang's person and company was founded upon a certain lightness, an essential gentleness and elegance which were relieved by a sharp touch; just as a very dainty fruit may be preserved from mawkishness by something delicately acid in the rind of it. His nature was slightly inhuman; it was unwise to count upon its sympathy beyond a point which was very easily reached in social intercourse. If any simple soul showed an inclination, in eighteenth-century phrase, to "repose on the bosom" of Lang, that support was immediately withdrawn, and the confiding one fell among thorns. Lang was like an Angora cat, whose gentleness and soft fur, and general aspect of pure amenity, invite to caresses, which are suddenly met by the outspread paw with claws awake. This uncertain and freakish humour was the embarrassment of his friends, who, however, were preserved from despair by the fact that no malice was meant, and that the weapons were instantly sheathed again in velvet. Only, the instinct to give a sudden slap, half in play, half in fretful caprice, was incorrigible. No one among Lang's intimate friends but had suffered from this feline impulse, which did not spare even the serenity of Robert Louis Stevenson. But, tiresome as it sometimes was, this irritable humour seldom cost Lang a friend who was worth preserving. Those who really knew him recognised that he was always shy and usually tired.

His own swift spirit never brooded upon an offence, and could not conceive that any one else should mind what he himself minded so little and forgot so soon. Impressions swept over him very rapidly, and injuries passed completely out of his memory. Indeed, all his emotions were too fleeting, and in this there was something fairy-like; quick and keen and blithe as he was, he did not seem altogether like an ordinary mortal, nor could the appeal to gross human experience be made to him with much chance of success. This, doubtless, is why almost all imaginative

literature which is founded upon the darker parts of life, all squalid and painful tragedy, all stories that " don't end well" all religious experiences, all that is not superficial and romantic, was irksome to him. He tried sometimes to reconcile his mind to the consideration of real life; he concentrated his matchless powers on it; but he always disliked it. He could persuade himself to be partly just to Ibsen or Hardy or Dostoieffsky, but what he really enjoyed was Dumas père, because that fertile romance-writer rose serene above the phenomena of actual human experience. We have seen more of this type in English literature than the Continental nations have in theirs, but even we have seen no instance of its strength and weakness so eminent as Andrew Lang. He was the fairy in our midst, the wonder-working, incorporeal, and tricky fay of letters, who paid for all his wonderful gifts and charms by being not quite a man of like passions with the rest of us. In some verses which he scribbled to R.L.S. and threw away, twenty years ago, he acknowledged this unearthly character, and, speaking of the depredations of his kin, he said:

Faith, they might steal me, w? ma will,  
And, ken'd I ony fairy hill  
I#d lay me down there, snod and still,  
Their land to win;  
For, man, I maistly had my fill  
O' this world's din

His wit had something disconcerting in its impishness. Its rapidity and sparkle were dazzling, but it was not quite human; that is to say, it conceded too little to the exigencies of flesh and blood. If we can conceive a seraph being fanny, it would be in the manner of Andrew Lang. Moreover, his wit usually danced over the surface of things, and rarely penetrated them. In verbal parry, in ironic misunderstanding, in breathless agility of topsy-turvy

movement, Lang was like one of Milton's "yellow-skirted fays," sporting with the helpless, moon-bewildered traveller. His wit often had a depressing, a humiliating effect, against which one's mind presently revolted. I recollect an instance which may be thought to be apposite: I was passing through a phase of enthusiasm for Emerson, whom Lang very characteristically detested, and I was so ill-advised as to show him the famous epigram called "Brahma." Lang read it with a snort of derision (it appeared to be new to him), and immediately he improvised this parody:

If the wild bowler thinks he bowls,  
Or if the batsman thinks he's bowled,  
They know not, poor misguided souls,  
They, too, shall perish unconsolated.  
I am the batsman and the bat,  
I am the bowler and the ball,  
The umpire, the pavilion cat,  
The roller, pitch and stumps, and all

This would make a pavilion cat laugh, and I felt that Emerson was done for. But when Lang had left me, and I was once more master of my mind, I reflected that the parody was but a parody, wonderful for its neatness and quickness, and for its seizure of what was awkward in the roll of Emerson's diction, but essentially superficial. However, what would wit be if it were profound? I must leave it there, feeling that I have not explained why Lang's extraordinary drollery in conversation so often left on the memory a certain sensation of distress.

But this was not the characteristic of his humour at its best, as it was displayed throughout the happiest period of his work. If, as seems possible, it is as an essayist that he will ultimately take his place in English literature, this element will continue to delight fresh generations of enchanted

readers. I cannot imagine that the preface to his translation of "Theocritus," "Letters to Dead Authors," "In the Wrong Paradise," "Old Friends," and "Essays in Little" will ever lose their charm; but future admirers will have to pick their way to them through a tangle of history and anthropology and mythology, where there may be left no perfume and no sweetness. I am impatient to see this vast mass of writing reduced to the limits of its author's delicate, true, but somewhat evasive and ephemeral. genius. However, as far as the circumstances of his temperament permitted, Andrew Lang has left with us the memory of one of our most surprising contemporaries, a man of letters who laboured without cessation from boyhood to the grave, who pursued his ideal with indomitable activity and perseverance, and who was never betrayed except by the loftiness of his own endeavour. Lang's only misfortune was not to be completely in contact with life, and his work will survive exactly where he was most faithful to his innermost illusions.

## **THE CRIMSON FAIRY BOOK**

### **Preface**

Each Fairy Book demands a preface from the Editor, and these introductions are inevitably both monotonous and unavailing. A sense of literary honesty compels the Editor to keep repeating that he is the Editor, and not the author of the Fairy Tales, just as a distinguished man of science is only the Editor, not the Author of Nature. Like nature, popular tales are too vast to be the creation of a single modern mind. The Editor's business is to hunt for collections of these stories told by peasant or savage

grandmothers in many climes, from New Caledonia to Zululand; from the frozen snows of the Polar regions to Greece, or Spain, or Italy, or far Lochaber. When the tales are found they are adapted to the needs of British children by various hands, the Editor doing little beyond guarding the interests of propriety, and toning down to mild reproofs the tortures inflicted on wicked stepmothers, and other naughty characters.

These explanations have frequently been offered already; but, as far as ladies and children are concerned, to no purpose. They still ask the Editor how he can invent so many stories—more than Shakespeare, Dumas, and Charles Dickens could have invented in a century. And the Editor still avers, in Prefaces, that he did not invent one of the stories; that nobody knows, as a rule, who invented them, or where, or when. It is only plain that, perhaps a hundred thousand years ago, some savage grandmother told a tale to a savage granddaughter; that the granddaughter told it in her turn; that various tellers made changes to suit their taste, adding or omitting features and incidents; that, as the world grew civilised, other alterations were made, and that, at last, Homer composed the 'Odyssey,' and somebody else composed the Story of Jason and the Fleece of Gold, and the enchantress Medea, out of a set of wandering popular tales, which are still told among Samoyeds and Samoans, Hindoos and Japanese.

All this has been known to the wise and learned for centuries, and especially since the brothers Grimm wrote in the early years of the Nineteenth Century. But children remain unaware of the facts, and so do their dear mothers; whence the Editor infers that they do not read his prefaces, and are not members of the Folk Lore Society, or students of Herr Kohler and M. Cosquin, and M. Henri Guidoz and Professor Child, and Mr. Max Muller. Though these

explanations are not attended to by the Editor's customers, he makes them once more, for the relief of his conscience. Many tales in this book are translated, or adapted, from those told by mothers and nurses in Hungary; others are familiar to Russian nurseries; the Servians are responsible for some; a rather peculiarly fanciful set of stories are adapted from the Roumanians; others are from the Baltic shores; others from sunny Sicily; a few are from Finland, and Iceland, and Japan, and Tunis, and Portugal. No doubt many children will like to look out these places on the map, and study their mountains, rivers, soil, products, and fiscal policies, in the geography books. The peoples who tell the stories differ in colour; language, religion, and almost everything else; but they all love a nursery tale. The stories have mainly been adapted or translated by Mrs. Lang, a few by Miss Lang and Miss Blackley.

## **Lovely Ilonka**

There was once a king's son who told his father that he wished to marry.

'No, no!' said the king; 'you must not be in such a hurry. Wait till you have done some great deed. My father did not let me marry till I had won the golden sword you see me wear.'

The prince was much disappointed, but he never dreamed of disobeying his father, and he began to think with all his might what he could do. It was no use staying at home, so one day he wandered out into the world to try his luck, and as he walked along he came to a little hut in which he found an old woman crouching over the fire.

'Good evening, mother. I see you have lived long in this world; do you know anything about the three bulrushes?'

'Yes, indeed, I've lived long and been much about in the world, but I have never seen or heard anything of what you ask. Still, if you will wait till to-morrow I may be able to tell you something.'

Well, he waited till the morning, and quite early the old woman appeared and took out a little pipe and blew in it, and in a moment all the crows in the world were flying about her. Not one was missing. Then she asked if they knew anything about the three bulrushes, but not one of them did.

The prince went on his way, and a little further on he found another hut in which lived an old man. On being questioned the old man said he knew nothing, but begged the prince to stay overnight, and the next morning the old man called all the ravens together, but they too had nothing to tell.

The prince bade him farewell and set out. He wandered so far that he crossed seven kingdoms, and at last, one evening, he came to a little house in which was an old woman.

'Good evening, dear mother,' said he politely.

'Good evening to you, my dear son,' answered the old woman. 'It is lucky for you that you spoke to me or you would have met with a horrible death. But may I ask where are you going?'

'I am seeking the three bulrushes. Do you know anything about them?'



'I don't know anything myself, but wait till to-morrow. Perhaps I can tell you then.' So the next morning she blew on her pipe, and lo! and behold every magpie in the world flew up. That is to say, all the magpies except one who had broken a leg and a wing. The old woman sent after it at once, and when she questioned the magpies the crippled one was the only one who knew where the three bulrushes were.

Then the prince started off with the lame magpie. They went on and on till they reached a great stone wall, many, many feet high.

'Now, prince,' said the magpie, 'the three bulrushes are behind that wall.'

The prince wasted no time. He set his horse at the wall and leaped over it. Then he looked about for the three bulrushes, pulled them up and set off with them on his way home. As he rode along one of the bulrushes happened to knock against something. It split open and, only think! out sprang a lovely girl, who said: 'My heart's love, you are mine and I am yours; do give me a glass of water.'



But how could the prince give it her when there was no water at hand? So the lovely maiden flew away. He split the second bulrush as an experiment and just the same thing happened.

How careful he was of the third bulrush! He waited till he came to a well, and there he split it open, and out sprang a maiden seven times lovelier than either of the others, and she too said: 'My heart's love, I am yours and you are mine; do give me a glass of water.'

This time the water was ready and the girl did not fly away, but she and the prince promised to love each other always. Then they set out for home.

They soon reached the prince's country, and as he wished to bring his promised bride back in a fine coach he went on to the town to fetch one. In the field where the well was, the king's swineherds and cowherds were feeding their droves, and the prince left Ilonka (for that was her name) in their care.

Unluckily the chief swineherd had an ugly old daughter, and whilst the prince was away he dressed her up in fine clothes, and threw Ilonka into the well.

The prince returned before long, bringing with him his father and mother and a great train of courtiers to escort Ilonka home. But how they all stared when they saw the swineherd's ugly daughter! However, there was nothing for it but to take her home; and, two days later, the prince married her, and his father gave up the crown to him.

But he had no peace! He knew very well he had been cheated, though he could not think how. Once he desired to

have some water brought him from the well into which Ilonka had been thrown. The coachman went for it and, in the bucket he pulled up, a pretty little duck was swimming. He looked wonderingly at it, and all of a sudden it disappeared and he found a dirty looking girl standing near him. The girl returned with him and managed to get a place as housemaid in the palace.

Of course she was very busy all day long, but whenever she had a little spare time she sat down to spin. Her distaff turned of itself and her spindle spun by itself and the flax wound itself off; and however much she might use there was always plenty left.

When the queen—or, rather, the swineherd's daughter—heard of this, she very much wished to have the distaff, but the girl flatly refused to give it to her. However, at last she consented on condition that she might sleep one night in the king's room. The queen was very angry, and scolded her well; but as she longed to have the distaff she consented, though she gave the king a sleeping draught at supper.

Then the girl went to the king's room looking seven times lovelier than ever. She bent over the sleeper and said: 'My heart's love, I am yours and you are mine. Speak to me but once; I am your Ilonka.' But the king was so sound asleep he neither heard nor spoke, and Ilonka left the room, sadly thinking he was ashamed to own her.

Soon after the queen again sent to say that she wanted to buy the spindle. The girl agreed to let her have it on the same conditions as before; but this time, also, the queen took care to give the king a sleeping draught. And once more Ilonka went to the king's room and spoke to him; whisper as sweetly as she might she could get no answer.

Now some of the king's servants had taken note of the matter, and warned their master not to eat and drink anything that the queen offered him, as for two nights running she had given him a sleeping draught. The queen had no idea that her doings had been discovered; and when, a few days later, she wanted the flax, and had to pay the same price for it, she felt no fears at all.

At supper that night the queen offered the king all sorts of nice things to eat and drink, but he declared he was not hungry, and went early to bed.

The queen repented bitterly her promise to the girl, but it was too late to recall it; for Ilonka had already entered the king's room, where he lay anxiously waiting for something, he knew not what. All of a sudden he saw a lovely maiden who bent over him and said: 'My dearest love, I am yours and you are mine. Speak to me, for I am your Ilonka.'

At these words the king's heart bounded within him. He sprang up and embraced and kissed her, and she told him all her adventures since the moment he had left her. And when he heard all that Ilonka had suffered, and how he had been deceived, he vowed he would be revenged; so he gave orders that the swineherd, his wife and daughter should all be hanged; and so they were.

The next day the king was married, with great rejoicings, to the fair Ilonka; and if they are not yet dead—why, they are still living.

[From Ungarische Mahrehen.]

**Lucky Luck**

Once upon a time there was a king who had an only son. When the lad was about eighteen years old his father had to go to fight in a war against a neighbouring country, and the king led his troops in person. He bade his son act as Regent in his absence, but ordered him on no account to marry till his return.

Time went by. The prince ruled the country and never even thought of marrying. But when he reached his twenty-fifth birthday he began to think that it might be rather nice to have a wife, and he thought so much that at last he got quite eager about it. He remembered, however, what his father had said, and waited some time longer, till at last it was ten years since the king went out to war. Then the prince called his courtiers about him and set off with a great retinue to seek a bride. He hardly knew which way to go, so he wandered about for twenty days, when, suddenly, he found himself in his father's camp.

The king was delighted to see his son, and had a great many questions to ask and answer; but when he heard that instead of quietly waiting for him at home the prince was starting off to seek a wife he was very angry, and said: 'You may go where you please but I will not leave any of my people with you.'



Only one faithful servant stayed with the prince and refused to part from him. They journeyed over hill and dale till they came to a place called Goldtown. The King of Goldtown had a lovely daughter, and the prince, who soon heard about her beauty, could not rest till he saw her.

He was very kindly received, for he was extremely good-looking and had charming manners, so he lost no time in asking for her hand and her parents gave her to him with joy. The wedding took place at once, and the feasting and rejoicings went on for a whole month. At the end of the month they set off for home, but as the journey was a long one they spent the first evening at an inn. Everyone in the house slept, and only the faithful servant kept watch. About midnight he heard three crows, who had flown to the roof, talking together.

'That's a handsome couple which arrived here tonight. It seems quite a pity they should lose their lives so soon.'

'Truly,' said the second crow; 'for to-morrow, when midday strikes, the bridge over the Gold Stream will break just as they are driving over it. But, listen! whoever overhears and tells what we have said will be turned to stone up to his knees.'

The crows had hardly done speaking when away they flew. And close upon them followed three pigeons.

'Even if the prince and princess get safe over the bridge they will perish,' said they; 'for the king is going to send a carriage to meet them which looks as new as paint. But when they are seated in it a raging wind will rise and whirl the carriage away into the clouds. Then it will fall suddenly to earth, and they will be killed. But anyone who hears and betrays what we have said will be turned to stone up to his waist.'

With that the pigeons flew off and three eagles took their places, and this is what they said:



'If the young couple does manage to escape the dangers of the bridge and the carriage, the king means to send them each a splendid gold embroidered robe. When they put these on they will be burnt up at once. But whoever hears and repeats this will turn to stone from head to foot.'

Early next morning the travellers got up and breakfasted. They began to tell each other their dreams. At last the servant said:

'Gracious prince, I dreamt that if your Royal Highness would grant all I asked we should get home safe and sound; but if you did not we should certainly be lost. My dreams never deceive me, so I entreat you to follow my advice during the rest of the journey.'

'Don't make such a fuss about a dream,' said the prince; 'dreams are but clouds. Still, to prevent your being anxious I will promise to do as you wish.'

With that they set out on their journey.

At midday they reached the Gold Stream. When they got to the bridge the servant said: 'Let us leave the carriage here, my prince, and walk a little way. The town is not far off and we can easily get another carriage there, for the wheels of this one are bad and will not hold out much longer.'

The prince looked well at the carriage. He did not think it looked so unsafe as his servant said; but he had given his word and he held to it.

They got down and loaded the horses with the luggage. The prince and his bride walked over the bridge, but the servant said he would ride the horses through the stream so as to water and bathe them.

They reached the other side without harm, and bought a new carriage in the town, which was quite near, and set off once more on their travels; but they had not gone far when they met a messenger from the king who said to the prince: 'His Majesty has sent your Royal Highness this beautiful carriage so that you may make a fitting entry into your own country and amongst your own people.'

The prince was so delighted that he could not speak. But the servant said: 'My lord, let me examine this carriage first and then you can get in if I find it is all right; otherwise we had better stay in our own.'

The prince made no objections, and after looking the carriage well over the servant said: 'It is as bad as it is smart'; and with that he knocked it all to pieces, and they went on in the one that they had bought.

At last they reached the frontier; there another messenger was waiting for them, who said that the king had sent two splendid robes for the prince and his bride, and begged that they would wear them for their state entry. But the servant implored the prince to have nothing to do with them, and never gave him any peace till he had obtained leave to destroy the robes.

The old king was furious when he found that all his arts had failed; that his son still lived and that he would have to give up the crown to him now he was married, for that was the law of the land. He longed to know how the prince had escaped, and said: 'My dear son, I do indeed rejoice to have you safely back, but I cannot imagine why the beautiful carriage and the splendid robes I sent did not please you; why you had them destroyed.'

'Indeed, sire,' said the prince, 'I was myself much annoyed at their destruction; but my servant had begged to direct everything on the journey and I had promised him that he should do so. He declared that we could not possibly get home safely unless I did as he told me.'

The old king fell into a tremendous rage. He called his Council together and condemned the servant to death.

The gallows was put up in the square in front of the palace. The servant was led out and his sentence read to him.

The rope was being placed round his neck, when he begged to be allowed a few last words. 'On our journey home,' he said, 'we spent the first night at an inn. I did not sleep but kept watch all night.' And then he went on to tell what the crows had said, and as he spoke he turned to stone up to his knees. The prince called to him to say no more as he had proved his innocence. But the servant paid no heed to him, and by the time his story was done he had turned to stone from head to foot.

Oh! how grieved the prince was to lose his faithful servant! And what pained him most was the thought that he was lost through his very faithfulness, and he determined to travel all over the world and never rest till he found some means of restoring him to life.

Now there lived at Court an old woman who had been the prince's nurse. To her he confided all his plans, and left his wife, the princess, in her care. 'You have a long way before you, my son,' said the old woman; 'you must never return till you have met with Lucky Luck. If he cannot help you no one on earth can.'

So the prince set off to try to find Lucky Luck. He walked and walked till he got beyond his own country, and he wandered through a wood for three days but did not meet a living being in it. At the end of the third day he came to a river near which stood a large mill. Here he spent the night. When he was leaving next morning the miller asked him: 'My gracious lord, where are you going all alone?'

And the prince told him.

'Then I beg your Highness to ask Lucky Luck this question: Why is it that though I have an excellent mill, with all its machinery complete, and get plenty of grain to grind, I am so poor that I hardly know how to live from one day to another?'

The prince promised to inquire, and went on his way. He wandered about for three days more, and at the end of the third day saw a little town. It was quite late when he reached it, but he could discover no light anywhere, and walked almost right through it without finding a house where he could turn in. But far away at the end of the town he saw a light in a window. He went straight to it and in the house were three girls playing a game together. The prince asked for a night's lodging and they took him in, gave him some supper and got a room ready for him, where he slept.

Next morning when he was leaving they asked where he was going and he told them his story. 'Gracious prince,' said the maidens, 'do ask Lucky Luck how it happens that here we are over thirty years old and no lover has come to woo us, though we are good, pretty, and very industrious.'

The prince promised to inquire, and went on his way.

Then he came to a great forest and wandered about in it from morning to night and from night to morning before he got near the other end. Here he found a pretty stream which was different from other streams as, instead of flowing, it stood still and began to talk: 'Sir prince, tell me what brings you into these wilds? I must have been flowing here a hundred years and more and no one has ever yet come by.'

'I will tell you,' answered the prince, 'if you will divide yourself so that I may walk through.'

The stream parted at once, and the prince walked through without wetting his feet; and directly he got to the other side he told his story as he had promised.

'Oh, do ask Lucky Luck,' cried the brook, 'why, though I am such a clear, bright, rapid stream I never have a fish or any other living creature in my waters.'

The prince said he would do so, and continued his journey.

When he got quite clear of the forest he walked on through a lovely valley till he reached a little house thatched with rushes, and he went in to rest for he was very tired.

Everything in the house was beautifully clean and tidy, and a cheerful honest-looking old woman was sitting by the fire.

'Good-morning, mother,' said the prince.

'May Luck be with you, my son. What brings you into these parts?'

'I am looking for Lucky Luck,' replied the prince.

'Then you have come to the right place, my son, for I am his mother. He is not at home just now, he is out digging in the vineyard. Do you go too. Here are two spades. When you find him begin to dig, but don't speak a word to him. It is now eleven o'clock. When he sits down to eat his dinner sit beside him and eat with him. After dinner he will question you, and then tell him all your troubles freely. He will answer whatever you may ask.'

With that she showed him the way, and the prince went and did just as she had told him. After dinner they lay down to rest.

All of a sudden Lucky Luck began to speak and said: 'Tell me, what sort of man are you, for since you came here you have not spoken a word?'

'I am not dumb,' replied the young man, 'but I am that unhappy prince whose faithful servant has been turned to stone, and I want to know how to help him.'

'And you do well, for he deserves everything. Go back, and when you get home your wife will just have had a little boy. Take three drops of blood from the child's little finger, rub them on your servant's wrists with a blade of grass and he will return to life.'

'I have another thing to ask,' said the prince, when he had thanked him. 'In the forest near here is a fine stream but not a fish or other living creature in it. Why is this?'

'Because no one has ever been drowned in the stream. But take care, in crossing, to get as near the other side as you can before you say so, or you may be the first victim yourself.'