

GRANDMOTHER.

GRANDMOTHER is so old, she has so many wrinkles, and her hair is quite white; but her eyes! they shine like two stars, nay, they are much finer—they are so mild, so blissful to look into. And then she knows the most amusing stories, and she has a gown with large, large flowers on it, and it is of such thick silk that it actually rustles. Grandmother knows so much, for she has lived long before father and mother—that is quite sure.

Grandmother has a psalm-book with thick silver clasps, and in that book she often reads. In the middle of it lies a rose, which is quite flat and dry; but it is not so pretty as the roses she has in the glass, yet she smiles the kindest to it, nay, even tears come into her eyes!

Why does Grandmother look thus on the withered flower in the old book? Do you know why?

Every time that Grandmother's tears fall on the withered flower the colors become fresher; the rose then swells, and the whole room is filled with fragrance; the walls sink as if they were but mists; and round about it is the green, the delightful grove, where the sun shines between the leaves. And Grandmother—yes, she is quite young; she is a beautiful girl, with yellow hair, with round red cheeks, pretty and charming—no rose is fresher. Yet the eyes, the mild, blissful eyes,—yes, they are still Grandmother's! By her side sits a man, young and strong; he presents the rose to her and she smiles. Yet Grandmother does not smile so,—yes; the smile comes,—he is gone. Many thoughts and many forms go past. That handsome man is gone; the rose lies in the psalm-book, and grandmother,—yes, she again sits like an old woman, and looks on the withered rose that lies in the book.

Now grandmother is dead!

She sat in the arm-chair, and told a long, long, sweet story. "And now it is ended!" said she, "and I am quite tired: let me now sleep a little!" And so she laid her head back to rest. She drew her breath, she slept, but it became more and more still; and her face was so full of peace and happiness—it was as if the sun's rays passed over it. She smiled, and then they said that she was dead.

She was laid in the black coffin; she lay swathed in the white linen: she was so pretty, and yet the eyes were closed—but all the wrinkles were gone. She lay with a smile around her mouth; her hair was so silvery white, so venerable, one was not at all afraid to look on the dead, for it was the sweet, benign grandmother. And the psalm-book was laid in the coffin under her head (she herself had requested it), and the rose lay in the old book—and then they buried grandmother.

On the grave, close under the church wall, they planted a rose-