

wards made a prisoner, until all the barbers in the country were shut up in prison but one, whose mother was a widow.

When the king sent for this barber, his mother came instead, and begged the king to spare her son, as it was well known in the country that a barber never came back again when the king's hair was cut.

"Send the barber to me," said the king, "and perhaps I may grant your request." And when the barber came, the king said to him in a stern voice, "If you will make me a solemn promise never, never to tell what you see, I shall let you go." And when the barber saw the king's head, he understood and gave the promise never, never to tell what he had seen.

But on his way downstairs after cutting the king's hair, the barber could not help saying to himself, "Oh, the king has ass's ears, the king has ass's ears," until at last he clapped his hand over his mouth to keep the words in. He wandered away out into the country and felt he must shout, "The king has ass's ears!" So when he came to a forest, he found his way to the darkest and thickest part of the deep woods, and there stood a large oak-tree with a round hole in the trunk; so putting his hands up to his mouth, the barber shouted into the