

The Strawberry Thief.

FROM THE TREASURES OF THE LITTLE SISTER.

The mid-day sun was shining brightly as two children ran merrily down to a steep grassy slope leading from a little village to the neighboring forest. Their loose, sooty clothing of head, neck and feet bare. But this did not trouble them, for the sun's rays kissed their little round limbs, and the children liked to feel their warm kisses.

They were brother and sister; each carried a small jar to fill with straw berries, which their mother would sell in the town on the morrow. They were very poor, almost the poorest people in the village. Their mother, a widow, had to work hard to procure bread for herself and children.

When strawberries or nuts were in season, or even the early violets, the children went into the forest to seek them, and by the fruit or flowers they gathered helped to earn many a groshon. The happy children ran joyously along as though they were the rulers of the beautiful world that stretched so seductively before them.

The forest borders were still scarce, and would fetch a high price in the town; this is why they started so early in the afternoon, whilst other people still rested in their cool rooms. Deep in the forest was many a spot, well known to the children, where large masses of strawberry plants flourished and bloomed, covering the ground with a luxurious carpet.

White star-like blossoms in profusion looked richly out from the apple foliage; the little green and bright-red berries were there in crowds, but the ripe, dark-red fruit was difficult to find.

Very slowly the work proceeded, and as the gathered treasures in their small jars grew higher and higher, the sun sank lower and lower. Busy with their task, the children forgot laughter and chattering; they tasted none of the lovely berries, scarcely looked at the violets and anemones; the sun's rays peeping through the branches, the cool-chafers and butterflies were alike unheeded.

Lorchen, Fried, at length, throwing back his sunburnt, hoarse face; "Look, Lorchen, my jar is full!" Lorchen looked up, her face flushed with toil; her poor little jar was scarcely half full. Oh, how she envied her brother his full jar! Fried was a good boy—he loved his little sister dearly. He made her sit down on the soft grass, placed his jar beside her, and did not cease his work until Lorchen's jar was likewise filled. Their day's work was now ended. But it was so beautiful in the forest. The birds sang so joyfully among the leaves, everything exhaled the fragrance of the dewy evening that crept slowly between the trembling branches.

At a little distance a small stretch of meadow shimmered through the trees. The bright sunshine still rested on the fresh green grass, and thousands of daisies, bluebells, pinks, and forget-me-nots unfolded there their varied beauties. It was a delightful play place for the children. They hastened thither, placed their jars carefully behind a large tree trunk, and soon forgot their hard afternoon's work in a merry game. Gray grew the shadows, closer the dusk of evening veiled the lonely forest. Then the brother and sister thought of returning—the rest had strengthened their weary limbs, and their game in the flowery meadow had made them cheerful and merry.

all the storm a our grandmother used to tell of wicked spirits in the forests, hobgoblins who tease children, will-o'-the-wisps, and mountain demons who store their treasures beneath the earth.

Lorchen shuddered and looked fearfully around—she was a timid, weakly child. Wrapping her little arms in her apron, she wept bitterly.

"Come home with me, Fried," she pleaded. "I am afraid to go through the gloomy forest alone!"

Fried took her hand and went with her until they saw the lights of the village. Then he stopped and said: "Now run along alone; see, there is the light burning in our mother's window. I shall turn back, I cannot go home empty handed."

He turned quickly into the forest. Lorchen waited a moment, and cried, "Fried, Fried!" Then, receiving no answer, she fled swiftly up the grassy slope she had descended so merrily a few hours previously.

The mother grew sad as she listened—she had scarcely any bread left, and knew not whence to procure more; but Fried remaining in the forest was worse than all, for she, like all the villagers, firmly believed in hobgoblins. So, she lay down to rest beside her little daughter.

Fried ran over farther and farther into the forest, through whose thick foliage the stars looked down timidly. He said his evening prayer, and no longer feared the rustling of the leaves, the cracking of the branches, or the whisper of the night wind in the trees.

Soon the moon arose, and it was light enough for Fried to seek his jars. In vain his search—the hours passed and he found nothing. At length he saw a small mountain overgrown with shrubs. Then the moon crept behind a thick cloud, and all was dark. Tired out, Fried sank down behind a tree and almost fell asleep. Suddenly he saw a bright light moving about close to the mountains. He sprang up and hastened towards it.

Coming closer, he heard a peculiar noise, as of groans uttered by a man engaged in heavy toil. He crept softly forward, and beheld, to his astonishment, a little dwarf, who was trying to push some heavy object into a hole, that apparently led to the mountain. The little man wore a silver coat and a red cap with points, to which the wonderful light, a large, sparkling precious stone, was fastened.

Fried soon stood close behind the dwarf, who in his eagerness had not observed the boy's approach, and saw with indignation that the object the little man was striving so hard to push into the hole was his jar of strawberries. In great wrath Fried seized a branch that lay near, and gave the little man a mighty blow. The young dwarf uttered a cry very like the squeak of a small mouse and tried to creep into the hole.

But Fried held him fast by his silver coat, and angrily demanded where he had put his other jar of strawberries. The dwarf replied that he had no other jar, and strove to free himself from the grasp of the little giant.

Fried again seized his branch, which so terrified the dwarf that he cried: "The other jar is inside, I will fetch it you."

"I should wait a long time," said Fried, "if I once let you escape; no, I will go with you and fetch my own jar."

The dwarf stepped forward, the light in his cap shining brighter than the brightest candle. Fried followed, his jar in one hand and the branch in the other. Thus they journeyed far into the mountains. The dwarf crept along like a lizard, but Fried, whose head almost touched the roof, could scarcely get along.

At length strains of lovely music resounded through the vaulted passages; a little farther on their journey was stopped by a grey stone wall. Taking a silver hammer from his doublet, the little dwarf gave three sounding knocks on the wall; it sprang asunder, and as it opened such a flood of light streamed forth that Fried was obliged to close his eyes. Half-blinded, with hand shading his face, he followed the dwarf, the stone door closed behind them, and Fried was in the secret dwellings of the gnomes.

A murmur of soft voices, mingled with the sweet strains of the music, sounded in his ears. When at length he was able to remove his hand from his eyes, he saw a wondrous sight. A beautiful, lofty hall, hewn out of the rock, lay before him; on the walls sparkled thousands of precious stones such as his guide had worn in his cap. They served instead of candles, and shed forth a radiance that almost blinded human eyes.

the dwarf, Fried's guide, stood relating his adventure.

When the dwarf ceased speaking, the King rose, approached the boy, who still stood by the door, surrounded by the gnomes, and said: "You, human child, what has brought you to my secret dwelling?"

"My Lord Dwarf," replied Fried, politely, "I desire my strawberries which yonder dwarf has stolen. I pray you order them to be restored to me, and then suffer me to return to my mother."

"The King thought for a few moments, then he said: 'Listen, to-day we hold a great feast, for which your strawberries are necessary. I will, therefore, buy them. I will also allow you to remain with us a short time, then my servants shall lead you back to the entrance of the mountain.'"

"Have you money to buy my strawberries?" asked the boy.

"Foolish child, know you not that the gold, silver, and copper come out of the earth? Come with me and see my treasure-chambers."

So saying, the King led him from the hall through long rooms, in which mountains of gold, silver and copper were piled; in other rooms lay like masses of precious stones. Presently they came to a grotto, in the centre of which stood a large vase. From out this vase poured three sparkling streams, each of a different color—they flowed out of the grotto and discharged themselves into the veins of the rocks.

Beside these streams knelt dwarfs, filling buckets with the flowing gold, silver and copper, which other dwarfs carried away and stored in the King's treasure-chambers. But the greatest quantity flowed into the crevices of the mountain, from whence men dig it out, with much toil.

Fried would have liked to fill his pockets with the precious metals, but did not dare ask the gnome-King's permission. They soon returned to the hall where the feast was prepared. On a long white marble table stood rows of golden dishes filled with various dainties, prepared from Fried's strawberries. In the background sat the musicians, bees and grasshoppers, that the dwarfs had caught in the forest. The dwarfs ate off little gold plates, and Fried ate with them. But the pieces were so tiny, they melted on his tongue before he could taste them.

After the feast came dancing. The gnome-men were old and shriveled, with faces like roots or trees; all wore silver coats and red caps. The gnome-maidens were tall and stately, and wore on their heads wreaths of flowers that sparkled as though wet with dew. Fried danced with them, but because his clothes were so poor, his partner took a wreath of flowers from the wall and placed it on his head. Very pretty it looked on his bright, brown hair—but he could not see this, for the dwarfs have no looking-glasses. The bees buzzed and hummed like flies and trombones, the grasshoppers chirped like fiddles.

The dancing ended, Fried approached the King, who was resting on his green throne, and said: "My Lord King, be so good as to pay for my berries, and have me guided out of the mountain, for it is time I returned to my mother."

The King nodded his carbuncle crown, and wrapping his golden mantle around him, departed to fetch the money. How Fried rejoiced at the thought of taking that money home! Being very tired, he mounted the throne, seated himself on the soft mushroom cushion from which the gnome-King had just risen, and, ere that monarch returned, Fried was sleeping sound as a dormouse.

Day was dawning in the forest when he awoke. His limbs were stiff, and his bare feet icy cold. He rubbed his eyes and stretched himself. He still sat beneath the tree from whence, the previous evening, he had seen the light moving. "Where am I?" he muttered; then he remembered falling asleep on the gnome-King's mushroom cushion. He also remembered the money he had been promised, and felt in his pockets—they were empty. Yes, he remembered it all. This was the morning his mother should have gone to town, and he had neither berries nor money. Tears flowed from his eyes, and he reviled the dwarfs who had carried him sleeping from the mountain, and cheated him out of his money. Rising sorrowfully, he went to the mountain, but though he searched long and carefully, no opening could he find.

There was nothing for it but to return home, and this he did with a heavy heart. No one was stirring when he reached the village. Gently he knocked on the shutter of the room where his mother slept. "Wake up, mother," he cried. "It is I, your Fried."

Quickly the door of the little house opened.

"Thank Heaven you have returned," said his mother, embracing him. "But has nothing happened to you all night alone in the forest?"

shutters. The child obeyed, but on re-entering the room, she cried aloud and placed her hands on her brother's head.

Something heavy and sparkling fell to the ground. They poked it up. It was the wreath of many-colored flowers Fried's partner had given him at the dance. But the flowers were not like those that grow in the fields and meadows—they were cold, and sparkling, like those that adorned the walls of the mountain hall, and which the gnome-maidens wore in their hair.

It was now clear that Fried had really spent the night with the dwarfs. They all thought the flowers were only colored glass; but as they sparkled so brilliantly, and filled the cottage with indescribable splendor, the mother determined to ask advice about them. She therefore broke a tiny branch from the wreath and took it to the town to a goldsmith, who told her, to her great astonishment, that the branch was composed of the most costly gems, rubies, diamonds and sapphires. In exchange for it, he gave her a sack of gold so heavy she could scarcely carry it home.

What was at a end ever for, for the wreath was a hundred times more valuable than the tiny branch. Great excitement prevailed in the village when the widow's good fortune ran into the forest to search for the wonderful hole. But their searching was vain—none ever found the entrance to the mountain. From henceforth the widow and her children lived very happily; they remained pious and industrious in spite of their wealth, did good to the poor, and were contented to the end of their lives.

The Pope and the French Nation.

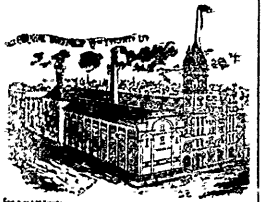
The Observatore Romano, the Vatican organ, publishes a note confirming and defining the views of the Pope in regard to France. It states that the Pope had no intention of recommending a preference or practical form of Government. The faithful are therefore free to choose from a theoretical point of view one or the other form of Government. Neither had his Holiness any intention of wounding the personal feelings of anybody or of showing disrespect for the traditions of the past, but it has been proved to French Catholics, the note continues, that the supreme criterion of the common good, the preservation of society and public tranquility, imposes in practice the acceptance of a new Government established in the place of a previous Government.

Hence it follows that French Catholics should neither directly nor indirectly oppose the constituted Government. They should, on the contrary, range themselves on legal and constitutional grounds in order to secure a compact union of their strength in order to deprive their adversaries of a motive for singling them out as enemies of existing institutions, and also that the loftier cause of religion should not appear identified with a political party. Further, Catholics should place on one side political dissensions and employ all honorable and legal means to gradually improve legislation, for if power is to be always regarded as worthy of respect and sacred the laws which wound rights of conscience should be amended. To this end an appeal is made to honest and impartial men of all shades to assure respect for the sovereign rights of God. This is the duty and interest of all, especially of Roman Catholics, since the good of religion, to which is united the good of the principal part of their life. It will be very blameworthy on their part to help in this work with the earnestness and indifference, even though they did not actually resist it. They fail in respect due to the Supreme Head of religion who, in spite of their protests of attachment to the Holy See, look with an unfavorable eye on the advice of the Pope, and especially those who combat it, distort it, or point to it as being in contradiction with the advice of his predecessors. Among those who fail in this matter are outside Pontifical guidance, under the futile and irrelevant pretext that it trespasses on the domain of politics, and that it does not represent the ideas of the Pope; they who, taking their stand on private letters and criticisms, even of eminent personages, wish to circumscribe and weaken the precise instructions of the Holy See; and finally they who instead of devoting themselves to the work of religious pacification and bringing men's minds into concord aim rather at creating difficulties and sowing mistrust and discouragement. The Pope is moved by no human interest, but only by the welfare of men's souls and by his great and constant affection for the French nation in the hope that with the allaying of passions his word will be heeded by all, and he doubts not that the blessing of God will descend abundantly on those expending themselves generously for the common good.

"One of my sick headaches," you will hear people frequently say, as if the complaint was hopelessly incurable. As a matter of fact, Ayer's Pills not only relieve sick headache but effectually remove the cause of this distressing complaint, and so bring about a permanent cure.

NOT DRUGGED WITH AMMONIA OR CHEAPENED WITH ALUM- PURE BAKING POWDER GOLD ITS EXCELLENCE LIES IN ITS HEALTHFULNESS- ITS POWER IS IN ITS PURITY- AT ALL GROCERS- IN TINS ONLY

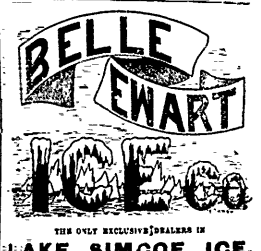
Household Necessities THE E. B. EDDY CO.'S Telegraph Telephone Tiger.... Parlor... MATCHES They have never been known to fail



PURE WATER. In addition to the many modern improvements recently introduced into the O'Keefe Brewery, the latest is a powerful water filter, erected by the New York Filter Co., having a capacity of two thousand gallons per hour, and rendering the water absolutely pure before being used in their Ales, Porter and Lager.

THE O'KEEFE BREWERY CO. OF TORONTO, (LTD.) GEO. J. FOY - IMPORTER OF - Wines, Liquors, Spirits & Cigars, 47 FRONT STREET E., TORONTO. MARSALA ALTAR WINE SOLE AGENT IN ONTARIO.

The Cosgrave Brewery Co OF TORONTO, Ltd. Malsters, Brewers and Bottlers, TORONTO. Are applying the Trade with their superior ALES AND BROWN STOUTS Awarded the Highest Prize at the International Exhibition, Philadelphia, for Purity of Flavor and General Excellence of Quality. Honorable Mentions, Paris, 1875. Medal and Diploma, Antwerp, 1885. Brewing Office, 295 Niagara St. TELEPHONE No. 264.



THE ONLY EXCLUSIVE DEALERS IN LAKE SIMCOE ICE. Pure ice, liberal weights, obliging men and double supply on Saturdays. Low for the yellow waxed, as they are the only ones that carry Lake Simcoe ice exclusively. Telephone or post card for full particulars. TELERPHONES 1947-4935. Office 18 Melinda St. FOR Marbel and Granite TRY ROBERT POWELL, 386 YONGE STREET. CHURCH WORK A SPECIALTY.

THE CATHOLIC REGISTER'S Job Printing Department.

We beg to call attention to this branch of THE CATHOLIC REGISTER'S business, which affords every facility for the execution of Job Printing of all Descriptions. Amongst the lines of work we have been and are doing may be included Books, Pamphlets, Commercial Printing, Letter-heads, Bill-heads, Monthly Statements, Circulars, Catalogues, Posters, Programmes, Tickets, Memorial Cards (large or small, and in plain black or brown), Appeal Cases, Factums, Law Blanks, Indentures, Mortgages, &c., &c. Religious and Society Printing a Specialty. Neat Workmanship. Reasonable Prices. ORDERS FROM THE COUNTRY PROMPTLY FILLED Telephone 489, or address THE CATHOLIC REGISTER, 40 Lombard Street, Toronto.