

15. Poor girls! They were at their wits' end to know what to do. The babies in their charge were beginning to cry with hunger, but they had no food to give them. The girls tried to soothe them with the song that every baby of the land knows so well, and which begins,

When mother has finished soling the boots, she will
come to thee!

But, at the mention of their mothers, the poor little babies only cried still more.

16. At last, tired out with their crying, one by one the babies fell asleep; and then the girls slept too. A sad little party they were, with tear-stained cheeks; and sobs, every now and again, broke from one or the other as they slept.

17. Thus the night passed. At dawn one of the elder girls was aroused from sleep by a rustling sound within the cave. Opening her eyes, she saw a flock of white-winged gulls, that circled round and round the little group of sleeping children. Each bird in turn flew down and around; then, alighting on the floor of the cavern, it placed on a certain spot something which it held in its beak, though what it was the girl could not see from where she lay. Having done this, each bird, in its turn, flew up and away through the opening at the top of the cave.

18. As soon as the last of the gulls had flown away, the girl who had been watching sprang up and ran to the spot where she had seen the