

THE COLD HEART

He sprang joyfully to his feet : " You are not dead, Elspeth ! And you, mother !—Ah, how can you ever pardon me ? "

" They will pardon you," said the Glassmanikin, " because you have truly repented, and they will forget everything. Return to your father's cottage, a charcoal-burner as before. If you are good and honest, you will do honour to your trade, and your neighbours will love and respect you more than if you were the possessor of ten tons of gold."

Thus spoke the Glassmanikin, and bade them farewell.

The three praised and blessed him, and set out for home together.

The grand house which had belonged to Peter in his days of splendour was no longer there ; it had been struck by lightning and had been burnt to the ground with all its treasures ; but the cottage which had been his father's home was not far distant ; thither they went their way, quite unmoved by their heavy loss.

But what a surprise was in store for them when they reached the cottage. It had been changed into a fine farmhouse, and everything within, though simple, was good and clean.

" The good Glassmanikin has done all this ! " cried Peter.

" How lovely ! " exclaimed Elspeth. " I shall feel much more at home here than in that big house with all those servants."