

ADVENTURES OF PRINCE MELONSEED.

our palaces. The walls and roof were of green trees and vines, while between the trees, at regular distances, were tall pillars made of nothing but pearly shells. The floor of the Banqueting Hall was of white coral, but the Social Hall was carpeted with very smooth, soft grass, for it was used for the fairies to dance in. Scattered around, in all directions, near the palace, were the sleeping bowers. Of these there were a great number, for the fairies were hospitable folk, from the King downwards, and there were frequent visitors at the Court. There were lime-tree bowers, where the shade was dark and cool, and overhead the pale fruit gleamed among the green, like stars; there were orange bowers, redolent of rich perfume in the Spring-time, and later glittering with golden fruit; there were bowers under graceful satin-wood trees, whose glossy leaves, shaking in the breeze, displayed their smooth, softly-tinted linings; bowers beneath fragrant bay-trees; nooks among gorgeous oleanders. One sleeping chamber was called the Oak-bower; its walls were formed by long streamers of grey moss, the waving "Banner of Death," which hung in thick festoons from the branches of the oak-tree to the ground; this stood a little distance from the other pleasant bowers and was such a gloomy place that it was rarely occupied. Indeed the fairies believed it to be haunted, though how the rumor got afloat no one could say.

Now, though the average height of these little people was nine inches, there were two exceptions to this rule, and they were the King's own sons, two tiny youths measuring from top to toe scarce six inches. Their names were Melonseed and Orangepip. They were twins, and they loved each other dearly.