

town with my old grandmother. She's outside there, in the cart, for I can't well bring her in. Perhaps you will take her a glass of mead. Only you must speak very loud, for she is hard of hearing."

"Yes, I will," said mine host, pouring out a large glassful of mead, which he carried to the dead grandame, who was sitting upright in the cart.

"Here's a glass of mead from your grandson," said the landlord but the dead woman did not answer a word, and remained stock still.

"Don't you hear me?" said the landlord. "Here's a glass of mead from your grandson."

This he bawled out a third time, and then a fourth; but as she did not stir, he flew into a passion and flung the mead into her face, right across her nose, when she fell backwards over the cart; for she had only been set up, and not tied fast.

"Holloa!" cried Little Klaus, rushing to the door, and seizing hold of the landlord; "you have killed my grandmother. Look! here's a great hole in her forehead!"

"What a misfortune!" exclaimed the landlord, wringing his hands. "This all comes of my hasty temper! My dear Little Klaus: I'll give you a bushel of money, and I'll have your grandmother buried, as if she were my own, if you will but say nothing about what has happened, for else my head will be struck off, and that would be rather disagreeable, you know."

So Little Klaus received a whole bushel of money, and the landlord buried the old dame, as if she had been his own grandmother.

When Little Klaus had once more reached home with his load of money, he immediately sent a lad to Big Klaus to borrow a bushel of him.

"What's the meaning of this?" said Big Klaus. "Haven't I struck him dead? I must look into the matter myself." And so he went over himself with the bushel to Little Klaus's dwelling.

"Why, where did you get all that money?" asked he in great astonishment on beholding the addition to his neighbours wealth.

"You killed my grandmother instead of me," said Big Klaus; "so I've sold her for a bushel of money."

"That's handsomely paid for, at all events!" quoth Big Klaus; and hastening home, he seized his hatchet and killed his old grandmother at a blow; after which he placed her in a cart, and drove to a town where an apothecary lived, and asked if he would purchase a dead body.

"Whose is it? and how did you come by it?" asked the apothecary.

"It is my grandmother's," said Big Klaus; "I struck her dead to get a bushel of money in exchange."

"Lord help us!" said the apothecary, "you are out of your mind! Don't say such things, or your head will be in jeopardy." And he now dilated on the heinousness of the deed which he had committed, and told him he was a most wicked man, and would assuredly be punished; all of which frightened Big Klaus to such a degree, that he ran out of the apothecary's shop, jumped into his cart and

drove home like mad. But as the apothecary and everybody else, believed him to be beside himself, they let him go whenever he pleased.

"You shall pay me for this," said Big Klaus, the moment he was on the high road—"that you shall, Little Klaus!" And the moment he reached home, he took the largest bag he could find, and went to Little Klaus, and said: "You have played me another trick; I first killed my horses, and now I've killed my old grandmother, and all through your fault; but you shall never play me any more tricks." And he seized hold of Little Klaus, and popped him into his bag, which he slung across his shoulder, saying, "Now, I'll go and drown you!"

He had a long way to go before he reached the river, and Little Klaus was none of the lightest to carry. On passing by the church, the organ was pealing forth, and the people were singing so beautifully! So Big Klaus set down his load beside the church-door, and thought he might as well go in and hear a psalm before he went any further. He felt certain Little Klaus could not get out, and everybody was inside the church; so in he went.

"Heigh-ho!" sighed Little Klaus, turning and twisting about in the bag, but without being able to untie the string. An old grey-haired drover, with a large staff in his hand, chanced to come by, he was driving a flock of cows and bullocks, and as they pushed against the bag containing Little Klaus, he was thrown down.

"Heigh-ho!" sighed Little Klaus; "I'm very young to be already bound for the kingdom of heaven!"

"And I," said the drover, "who am so old, have not yet had the good luck to reach it."

"Open the bag," cried Little Klaus, "and creep into it instead of me, and you'll go to heaven in a trice."

"With all my heart," said the drover, and opened the bag, when out sprang Little Klaus in a moment.

"But will you take care of my cattle?" said the old man, creeping into the bag, which Little Klaus had no sooner closed, than he went his ways with all the cows and bullocks.

Soon after, Big Klaus went out of the church, and slung his bag over his shoulder, though it seemed to him as if it had become somewhat lighter; for the old drover was not half so heavy as Little Klaus. "How light he now seems!" quoth he. "That comes of my having heard a psalm." So he went towards the river, that was broad and deep, and flung the bag and the drover into the water, exclaiming, in the belief that it was Little Klaus: "There you may lie! and now you won't be able to play me any more tricks."

Thereupon, he began to walk home; but, on coming to a cross-way, who should he meet but Little Klaus, who was driving along his cattle.

"How's this?" said Big Klaus. "Didn't I drown you?"

"Yes," said Little Klaus; "you threw me into the river, some half-hour ago."

"But where did you get all this fine cattle?" asked Big Klaus.

"It is sea-cattle," said Little Klaus. "I'll

tell you the whole story, and thank you into the bargain for having drowned me; for, since I have escaped, I shall be very wealthy. I was much frightened while I was still in the bag, and the wind whistled through my ears as you flung me down from the bridge into the cold waters. I sank immediately to the bottom; but I did not hurt myself, for the softest and most beautiful grass grows below. The moment I fell upon it, the bag was opened, and the loveliest girl imaginable, dressed in snow-white robes, and wearing a green wreath on her wet hair, took me by the hand, saying: "Is that you, Little Klaus? First of all, there's some cattle for you. A mile further down the road, there is another herd that I will make you a present of." I now perceived that the river is a great high-road for the sea-folks. They were walking and driving below, from the sea far away into the land, to the spot where the river ceases. And it was so beautiful, and there were such a quantity of flowers, and the grass looked so fresh! The fishes that were swimming in the water shot past my ears, just as the birds do here in the air. And what handsome people they were!—and what splendid cattle were grazing on the dykes and ditches!"

"But why have you returned hither so soon?" asked Big Klaus. "I should not have done so, since it is so beautiful below."

"Why," said Little Klaus, "it is a piece of policy on my part. You heard me say, just now, that the sea-nymph told me that a mile further down the road—and by road she meant the river, for she can't journey any other way—there was another large herd of cattle for me. But I, who know the river's many windings, thought it rather a round-about way; so I preferred making a short cut, by coming up to land, and crossing right over the fields back to the river; by doing which, I shall save almost half a mile, and shall reach my sea-cattle all the sooner."

"Oh, what a lucky man you are!" exclaimed Big Klaus. Do you think that I, too, should obtain some sea-cattle, if I went down to the bottom of the river?"

"No doubt you would," said Little Klaus; "only I can't carry you in a bag to the river, for you are too heavy; but if you like to go there, and then creep into the bag, I would throw you in, with all the pleasure in the world."

"Thank you," said Big Klaus. But if I don't get any sea-cattle by going down, I'll beat you famously when I return."

"No—now, don't be so hard upon me," said Little Klaus. And then they went to the river. The cattle, being very thirsty, no sooner saw the water, than they ran down to drink.

"Look what a hurry they are in!" said Little Klaus. "They are longing to be below again."

"Now, make haste and help me," said Big Klaus, "or else you shall be beaten." And he crept into the large bag, that had been lying across the back of one of the bullocks. "Put in a stone, for fear I should not sink," said Big Klaus.

"There's no fear about that," said Little Klaus; still he put a large stone into the bag, and gave it a push.

Plump! into the river fell Big Klaus, and immediately sank to the bottom.

"I am afraid he won't find any cattle," said Little Klaus; and away he drove his beasts home.—*Hans Christian Andersen.*