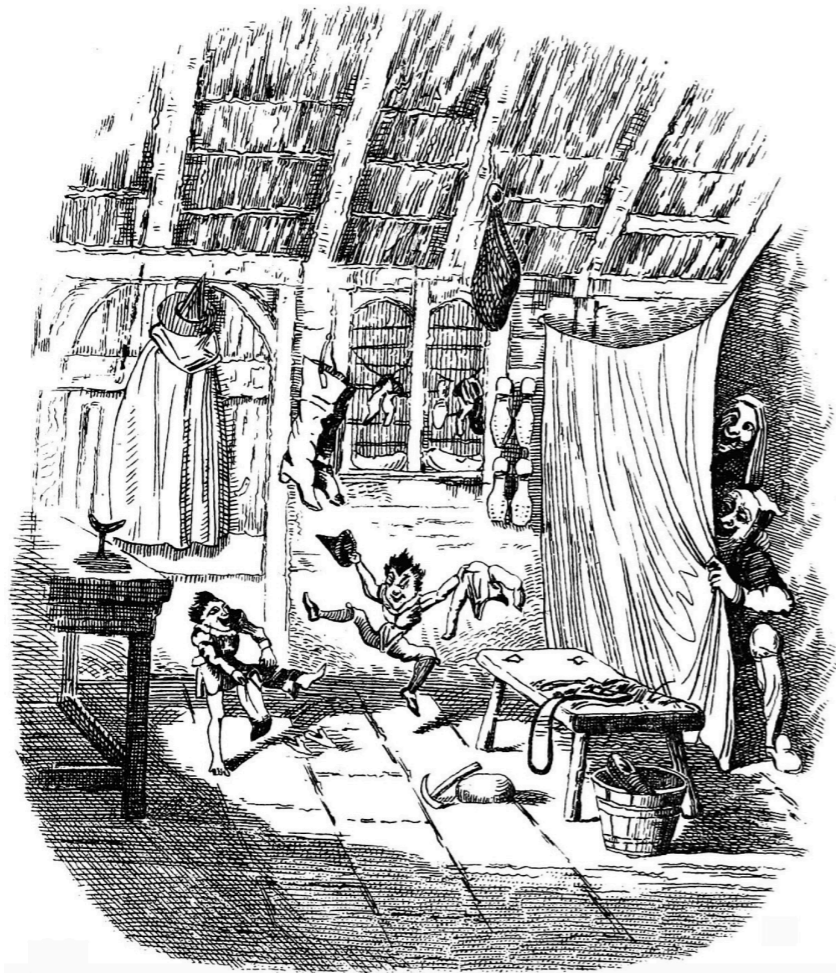


Ririro

The Elves and the Shoemaker



One day a poor shoemaker, without his wrongdoing, just barely had enough leather to make one more pair of shoes. In the evening he cut the leather, so he could make the shoes in the morning, and went to bed. But to his amazement he found two finished shoes on his working table the next morning. Confused, he stared at the shoes and saw that they were made with great precision and care.

A little while later a customer came to his store and wanted to try the shoes. He walked around for a bit and was very satisfied, he was so satisfied that he paid much more for the shoes than was custom. With that money the shoemaker could buy enough leather for two pairs of shoes. That evening he cut the leather, so he could make the shoes in the morning, but when he woke up the shoes were already done. A couple of hours later he had sold the shoes and had enough money to buy leather for four pairs of shoes.

And again the next morning, he found four pairs of perfect shoes. This went on for a while: all the leather he cut in the evening, by morning magically was a perfect pair of shoes. And soon the shoemaker was not poor anymore and lived a prosperous life.

One night, just before Christmas, when the man had cut the leather, he said to his wife: 'Shall we stay up and see who helps us?' His wife thought it was a good idea and they hid in the corner of the room. At midnight, two, beautiful, little naked men appeared. They sat down on the working table and made the shoes. When the work was done they quickly ran away.



The next morning his wife said: 'Those little men have brought us much prosperity, let's show them how grateful we are. They must be cold without clothes. I shall make them some shirts, sweaters, jackets, pants and socks. And you can make them a pair of tiny shoes. They will be nice and warm on Christmas.'

No sooner said than done. They laid the presents on the table and hid in the corner again so they could see their reaction. At midnight the men entered the room. They wanted to start working but instead of leather they only saw presents. At first they were surprised, but soon they were overjoyed. They quickly put on the clothes and sang:

"Now we are boys so fine to see,
Why should we longer cobblers be?"

They danced and jumped over the chairs and sofas. When they were done dancing, they disappeared out the door. Nobody had ever heard from them again. What we do know is that the shoemaker and his wife lived happily ever after.

