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Ririro

IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

The Raven

Once upon a time there was a Queen and she had a little baby daughter and once the child was so restless that the mother could get no peace. She tried everything! And then she lost her patience, and seeing a flight of ravens passing over the castle, she opened the window and said to her child: "Oh, I wish you were a raven and could fly away, then I'd have some peace." As soon as she had uttered the words, the child was indeed changed into a raven, and fluttered from her arms out of the window. And she flew into a dark wood and stayed there for a long time, and her parents knew nothing about her.

Once a man was passing through the wood, and he heard the raven cry, and he followed the voice; and when he came near it said: "I was born a King's daughter, and have been bewitched, but you can set me free."

"What do I have to do?" asked the man.

"Go deeper into the wood," said she, "and you will find a house and an old woman sitting in it: she will offer you meat and a drink, but you shouldn't take it; if you eat or drink anything you will fall into a deep sleep, and



will never be able to set me free. In the garden behind the house is a big heap of grass, stand on that and wait for me. Three days, at about the middle of the day, I will come to you in a cart drawn by four white horses the first time, by four red ones the second time, and lastly by four black ones, but remember if you are not awake but sleeping, you will fail in setting me free."

The man promised to do all she said. "But ah!" cried she, "I know quite well that you will not set me free; you will surely eat or drink something the old woman offers you."

But the man promised again that he would not touch the meat or the drink. But when he came to the house the old woman came up to him.

"My poor man," said she to him, "you are quite tired out, come and be refreshed, and eat and drink."

"No," said the man, "I will eat and drink nothing."

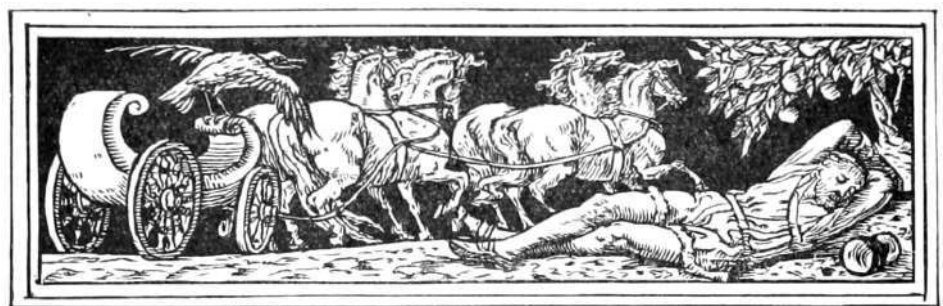
But she left him no peace, saying: "If you don't want to eat, fine. Just take a drink then."

So he was persuaded, and he drank.

In the afternoon, about two o'clock, he went out into the garden to stand on the grass and wait for the raven. As he

stood there he suddenly felt very tired and laid himself down for a little;

but not to sleep. But of course, he fell asleep and slept so sound that nothing in the world could awaken him.



At two o'clock the raven came in the cart drawn by four white horses, she was sad, knowing already that the man would be asleep, and so, when she came into the garden and saw him asleep she was not surprised. She got out of the cart and shook him and called to him, but he did not wake. The next day at noon the old woman came and brought him meat and drink, but he would take none. But she left him no peace, and persuaded him until he took a sip from the cup. About two o'clock he went into the garden to stand on the grass, waiting for the raven, but he was overcome with so great weariness that his limbs would no longer hold him up; and whether he wanted to or not he had to lie down, and he fell into a deep sleep. And when the raven came up with her four red horses, she was sad, knowing already that the man would be asleep. And she went up to him, and there he lay, and nothing would wake him.

The next day the old woman came and asked again if he wanted something to eat or drink, but he answered: "I will not!"

But she brought amazing smelling dishes of food and a cup of wine and when the smell came in his nostrils he could not refrain and he started eating and drinking. Around two, he went into the garden and stood on the grass to wait for the king's daughter; as time went on he grew more and more weary, and at last he laid himself down and slept like a stone. At two o'clock came the raven with four black horses, and the cart and all was black; and she was sad, knowing already that he

was sleeping, and would not be able to set her free; and when she came up to him, there he lay and slept. She shook him and called to him, but she could not wake him.

Then she laid a loaf by his side and some meat, and a flask of wine, for now, however much he ate and drank, it wouldn't matter. She took a ring of gold from her finger, and put it on his finger, and her name was engraved on it. And lastly she laid by him a letter, which said: "I see that that you can't save me, but if you decide you can, come to the golden castle of Stromberg: I know that if you want to, you will" And when all this was done, she got again into her cart, and went to the golden castle of Stromberg.

When the man woke up and realized he fell asleep, he was sad because he knew she had been there and left and that he had not set her free. Then he read the letter. And he got up and set off at once to go to the golden castle of Stromberg, but he didn't know where it was. And when he had wandered the world for a long time, he came to a dark wood, and there spent a fortnight trying to find the way out, and was not able. At the end of this time, it being towards evening, he was so tired that he laid himself down under a clump of bushes and went to sleep. The next day he went on again, and in the evening, when he was going to lie down again to rest, he heard howls, so that he could not sleep. And around the time when the lights would go on, he looked up and saw a light glimmer in the forest; and he got up and followed it, and he found that it came from a house that looked very small, because

there stood a giant before it. And the man thought to himself that if he were to try to enter and the giant were to see him, he would lose his life. But he made up his mind, and walked in. And the giant saw him.

"I am glad you are here," he said; "it's been a long time since I have had anything to eat; I will make a good dinner out of you."

"Is that so?" said the man, "I don't taste good at all and besides if you want something to eat, I have something that might satisfy you."

"If that is true," answered the giant, "then you don't have to worry. I just want something to eat."

Then they went in and sat down at the table, and the man brought out bread, meat, and wine in plenty.

"This pleases me well," said the giant, and he ate to his heart's content. After a while the man asked him if he could tell him where the golden castle of Stromberg was.

"I will look on my land-chart," said the giant, "on it all towns and villages and houses are marked."

So he fetched the land-chart which was in his room, and sought for the castle, but it was not to be found.

"Never mind," he said, "I have more and better maps; we will have a look at them." And so they did, but in vain. And now the man wanted to pursue his journey, but the giant begged him to stay a few days longer, until his brother, who had gone to the store, would return. When the brother came, they asked him about the golden castle of Stromberg.

"When I have had time to eat a meal and be satisfied, I will look at the map."

He fetched some other old maps, and they searched until they found the golden castle of Stromberg, but it was many thousand miles away.

"How shall I ever get there?" said the man.

"I have a couple of hours to spare," said the giant, "and I will help you on your way." Then the giant carried the man until within about a hundred hours' journey from the castle, and said: "You can manage the rest of the way yourself."

The man walked day and night, until at last he came to the golden castle of Stromberg. It stood on a mountain of glass, and he could see the enchanted Princess driving round it, and then passing inside the gates. He was rejoiced when he saw her, and began at once to climb the mountain to get to her; but it was so slippery, as fast as he went he fell back again. And when he saw this he felt like he would never reach her and resolved at least to stay at the foot of the mountain and wait for her. So he built himself a hut, and sat there and waited a whole year; and every day he saw the Princess drive round and pass in, and was never able to reach her.

One day he looked out of his hut and saw three robbers fighting, and he called out: Stop it!" He went out and asked them what they were fighting about. One of them told him he had found a stick which would open any door only by knocking at it; the second said he had found a cloak which, if he put it on, made him invisible; the third said he was possessed of a horse that would ride over everything, even the glass mountain. Now they fought because they could not



agree whether they should enjoy these things in common or separately.

"I have something more valuable that I can give you, but first I want to know if you are telling the truth about the tree items." So they let him mount the horse, and put the cloak round him, and they gave

him the stick into his hand, and as soon as he had all this he was no longer to be seen. He had tricked them.

Then he rode up the glass mountain, and when he reached the castle gates he found them locked; but he beat with his stick upon the door and it opened at once. And he walked in, and up the stairs to the great room where sat the Princess with a golden cup and wine before her: she could not see him so long as the cloak was on him, but drawing near to her he pulled off the ring she had given him, and threw it into the cup with a clang.

"This is my ring," she cried, "and the man who is to set me free must be here too!"

But though she searched the whole castle she couldn't find him; he had gone outside, seated himself on his horse, and thrown off the cloak. And when she came to look out the door, she saw him and shrieked with joy; and he dismounted and took her in his arms, and she kissed him, saying: "Now you have set me free from my enchantment, and tomorrow we will be married!"