

PRAIRIE ROSES.

A hedge of roses, pink and sweet, That plant in lawn their slender feet, That send a breath of spring to greet Across a great expanse; They lean soft cheeks together there, They smile at love, with faces fair— What keeps the sunshine glinting near? Young love, perchance.

THE SHOES OF BREAD.

Listen to this story that the grandmothers of Germany tell to their grandchildren; Germany, a beautiful country of legends and of reveries, where the moonlight, playing on the mists of old Rhine, creates a thousand fantastic visions. A poor woman lived alone at the far end of the village in a humble little house; the dwelling was miserable enough and contained only the most necessary furniture. An old bed with wretched columns, from which hung curtains of yellowed serge, a kneading trough to put the bread in, a walnut chest shining with cleanness, but whose numberless worm holes, filled up with wax, showed long service; a stuffed arm chair, faded and worn by the shaking head of the granmam, a wheel polished smooth by much using; that was all. We were going to forget a child's cradle, quite new, of so softly lined, and folded down with a pretty flowered coverlet worked by a loving needle—that of a mother decorating the manger of her little Jesus.

thread for the shroud of her little Hanz. She did not wish to wrap his precious body in linen that had been used, and she had no money; and it was for this reason that she made her wheel rumble with such funeral activity; but she did not moisten the thread with her lips, as was her custom; enough tears fell from her eyes to wet it. At the close of the sixth day Hanz died. Whether it was from chance, or whether from sympathy, the wraith of the brier wood vine that carressed his cradle languished, faded, dried and let fall its last crisped blossom on his bed. When the mother was convinced that breath had flown forever from the lips where death violets had replaced the roses of life, she covered the beloved dead, took her package of thread under her arm, and directed her steps to the weaver's. "Weaver," said she, "there is some very even thread, very fine and without knots. The spider does not spin thinner between the rafters of the ceiling. Let your shuttle come and go; with this thread must you make for me a yard of linen, as soft as the linen from Frise and from Holland." The weaver took the skein, adjusted the warp, and the busy shuttle, drawing the thread after it, began to fly back and forth. The hatched tightened the wool and the linen grew on the frame without unevenness, without break, as fine as the cloth of an archbishop, or the linen with which a priest dries the chalice at the altar. When the thread was all used the weaver gave back the linen to the poor mother and said to her, for he had understood all from the unhappy creature's look of fixed despair: "The infant son of the emperor, who died last year, in his little ebony coffin with its silver nails, was not wrapped in linen that was softer or finer." Having folded the linen the poor mother pulled from her wasted finger a thin ring of gold, quite worn. "Good weaver," she said, "take this ring—my marriage ring—the only gold I have ever possessed." The worthy weaver did not wish to take it, but she said to him: "I have no need of a ring there where I am going, for I feel it, my little boy's arms drag me underground." Then she went to the carpenter's. "Master, in kindness take some oak, that will not rot and that the worms cannot destroy; cut from it five large planks and two that are smaller and make with them a coffin of this measure." The carpenter took his saw and his plane, arranged the planks, struck as softly as he could with his mallet, so as not to force the iron points into the poor woman's heart before they entered the wood. When the work was completed one would have thought it, so carefully and well made it was, a box to put jewels and lace in. "Carpenter, who have made such a beautiful coffin for my little Hanz, I give you my house at the end of the village and the little garden which is behind and the well with its vine. You will not have to wait long." With the shroud and the coffin, which she held under her arm, it was so small, she went her way through the village streets, and the children, who do not know what death is, cried out: "See what a beautiful box of toys from Nuremberg Hanz's mother carries to him; without doubt it is a city with its houses in painted and varnished wood, its steeples surrounded with lead, its battlements and belfry and the trees, for the promenades, all frizzed and green; or else it is a pretty fiddle, carved, with a bow like a horse's mane. Oh! if we only had such a box!" And the mothers, growing pale, kissed them and made them still. "Impudent ones that you are, do not say so; do not envy her her jewel box, the violin case which one carries under the arm weeping. You will have it soon enough, poor children!" When the mother of Hanz reached home she took the tiny and still lovely body of her son and began to dress him for the last time, a toilet which must be a very careful one, as it will last through eternity. She dressed him in his Sunday clothing, in his silken dress and his pelisse, trimmed with fur, so that he would not be cold in the damp place where he was going. She placed beside him his doll with the enamelled eyes that he had loved so much that it had always slept beside him in his cradle. How she lingered over the task! How many thousand times she gave him his last kiss! At the moment of smoothing down the shroud, she perceived that she had forgotten to put on the dead child his pretty little red shoes. She sought for them in the room, for it hurt her to see bare those feet that, before so moist and so rosy, were now dry and pale; but during her absence the rats, having found the shoes under the bed, for want of better food, had nibbled and gnawed them, and had torn the kid. It was a great grief for the poor mother that her Hanz was forced to go into the other world with bare feet, for when the heart is one great wound it is sufficient to touch it to make it bleed. She wept before these shoes; from those dry, inflamed eyes a tear could still gush forth. How could she get some shoes for Hanz, she had given away her ring and her house! Such was the thought that tormented her. By dint of dwelling on it, there came to her an idea. In the hut there remained still an entire loaf of bread, for the unhappy one, nourished by her grief, had eaten nothing. She broke this loaf, remembering that formerly, out of the soft part, she had made pigeons, ducks, hens, rabbits, and other childish things to amuse Hanz with. Placing the soft bread in the hollow of her hand and kneading it with her thumb, and moistening it with her tears, she made a pair of shoes with which she shod the cold and blue feet of the dead child, and her heart comforted, she smoothed down the shroud and closed the coffin. While she was kneading the dough a beggar had come to her threshold, timid, asking for bread; but with her hand she had motioned to him, to be gone. The grave digger came to take the box, and buried it in a corner of the cemetery under a clump of white rose bushes, the air was sweet, it did not rain, and the earth was not wet; this was a source of

consolation to the mother, who thought that her little Hanz would not be too uneasy his first night in the tomb. Back in her solitary house, she placed the child's cradle next to her bed, lay down and fell asleep. Exhausted nature had succumbed. Sleeping, she had a dream, or at least she thought it was a dream. Hanz appeared to her, dressed, as in his coffin, in his Sunday clothing, his pelisse trimmed with swansdown, holding in his arms the doll with the enamelled eyes, and wearing on his feet the shoes made of bread. He seemed sad. Around his head was not that aureole with which death should rightly crown little innocents; for when a baby is put in the earth there comes out an angel. The roses of paradise did not bloom on his pale cheeks that death had painted so white; tears fell from his blonde lashes, and big sighs rent his little breast. The vision disappeared and the mother awoke, cold and shivering, overjoyed to have seen her son again, and dressed because he was so sad; but she reassured herself, saying: "Poor Hanz! even in Paradise he cannot forget me." The following night the apparition came once more. Hanz was still more sad, still more pale. His mother, stretching out her arms to him, said: "Dear child, console thyself, and do not become weary in heaven, I am going there to join thee." The third night Hanz came again; he groaned and cried more than on the two preceding nights, and he disappeared clasping his little hands as if in supplication; he did not carry his doll, but he wore, as always, the tiny shoes made of bread. The anxious mother went to consult a venerable priest, who said to her: "I will watch with you to-night and I will question the little ghost. He will answer me; I know the words that one must use to innocent as well as to wicked spirits." Hanz appeared at the usual hour and the priest challenged him, using the consecrated words, to tell him what it was that tormented him in the other world. "It is the shoes of bread that cause my torment and prevent me from ascending the diamond stairs of paradise; they are heavier to my feet than a postilion's boots, and I cannot get beyond the first two or three steps, and that gives me so much grief, for I see up there a cloud of beautiful cherubs with rosy wings who call to me to come and play, and who show me their silver toys and their 'bon toys.'" Having said these words, he vanished. The holy father, to whom the mother of Hanz had confessed, now said to her: "You have committed a grievous fault. You have profaned the 'shaly bread,' the bread that is sacred, the bread of the good God; the bread that Jesus Christ, at his last supper, chose to represent his body, and after having refused a piece of it to the beggar who came to your doorsill you made shoes out of it for your Hanz. You must open his coffin, take off the shoes made of bread from this child's feet and burn them in fire, which purifies all." Accompanied by the grave digger and by the mother, the priest went to the cemetery. With four blows of the spade the coffin was uncovered. They opened it. Hanz was lying within just as his mother had placed him, but his face bore an expression of grief. The holy priest tenderly took off the shoes made of bread from the feet of the dead baby and himself burned them in the flame of a wax taper while he recited a prayer. When the night came on Hanz appeared before his mother for the last time, but joyous, rosy, contented, with tiny little cherubs with whom he had already made friends; he wore a wreath of diamonds and his wings were made of light. "Oh, my mother! what happiness, what felicity, and how beautiful. They are the gardens of paradise! There we play forever, and the good God never scolds us." The next day the mother saw her boy again, but in heaven, for she died before evening, with her head bent over the empty cradle.—Translated by Anne C. Milford Barton from the French of Theophile Gautier for Home Journal.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM. Its History in Brief—A Popular Fancy. A Welcome Celestial Event. "Where can the Star of Bethlehem be found?" is the oft repeated question that comes from many quarters. The fact is, no such star is visible in any part of the heavens. An observer with a vivid imagination fancied he had discovered this long looked for star, and announced its return in some journal of the day. The paragraph was widely copied throughout the country. The idea pleased the popular fancy, was received with almost unquestioning faith, and the sky was eagerly scanned for a glimpse of the star that once shone over the humble dwelling that enshrined the Redeemer of mankind. Even the peerless Venus was impressed into service, and was firmly believed to be the sacred star once more shining upon the earth after wandering for ages in the star depths. The history of the so called Star of Bethlehem is briefly this: Tycho Brahe, a Danish astronomer, discovered, in the year 1572, an apparently new star near Caph in Cassiopea. When first seen, in November, it had attained the first magnitude. It increased rapidly in brilliancy, until it rivaled Venus, and was visible at noon. It began to diminish in brightness in December, and continued to fade away until the following May, when it disappeared from view. Forty years later, when the telescope was invented, a small telescopic star was found close to the spot where the wonderful star was seen. It is still there, and is probably the same. It is now classed among variable stars, and is, therefore, liable to blaze forth at any time in the same extraordinary manner. After classifying the star as a variable, the next thing to be done was to find out its period of variability. Astronomical records were searched, and it was ascertained that about the years 1263 and 956 bright stars suddenly appeared near the same quarter of the heavens. It was, therefore, classified as a variable, with a period of about 309 years. Counting back three periods from 956, the exact period being uncertain, the star may have appeared near the time of the Christian era. Some imaginative observer, for this reason, christened it the Star of Bethlehem, and with scarce the shadow of a foundation the name has adhered to it ever since. It is also known as the Pilgrin Star, and among astronomers as the star of 1572. If the star be a variable, with a period approximating to 309 years, it is now due and liable to burst forth into sudden brilliancy at any time. No celestial event would be more welcome to astronomers. The scientific world would be wild with excitement over the substantiation of an ingenious theory and the confirmation of its hopes. Its first appearance, its exact position in the heavens, its changes from day to day, would be telegraphed all over the country and minutely described in the journals of the day. The advent of a comet, spanning the sky from the zenith to the horizon, would be of no account in comparison with the blazing star! Meantime the telescopic star near Caph in Cassiopea shows no signs of any coming disturbance, and observers must wait patiently for developments, remembering that the outburst will be sudden, if it come. It is generally considered that the extraordinary changes of light in stars, like that of 1572, are caused by sudden outbursts of glowing hydrogen gas, which by its own light and by heating up the whole surface of the star causes the immense increase in brilliancy. The spots, faculae and rosy protuberances on the sun give some idea, on a small scale, of what may be going on in other suns on a much larger scale. Fortunately, the new or temporary stars observed by terrestrial astronomers number only about twenty-four, an infinitesimal number when compared with the boundless millions of stars that shine with nearly unchanging brilliancy. The probability is, therefore, small that our sun will be added to the list of blazing stars. He will probably shine for millions of years to come, as he has shone for millions of years in the past, and if observed from other suns and systems will be classed as a variable, with a period of about eleven years, corresponding to the cycle of sun spots.—Scientific American.

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Three TO Five DO LARS A DAY. Ignored by German Papers. In four pages of news from all parts of the world in The Gazette there is a single line from America, telling of the emperor of Brazil's departure for Europe. The case cited is not the exception, but the rule, not only with The Gazette, but with all German papers which reflect the government's policy. The United States are referred to as seldom and as briefly as possible, and this in spite of the fact that there is scarcely a family in Germany which has not a relative, a friend, or an acquaintance here. If the German chancellor could arrange a map of the world to his liking, there would not be a republic left on it. St. Louis Republican.

What she was spinning thus was the