

am putting on my stockings." And she kept constantly looking out of window to see if her brothers were coming. "Are you ready?" "Stop one moment; I am putting on my shoes." "Are you ready?" "I am brushing my hair." "Are you ready?" "Let me put on my wreath." And she sees her brothers coming on horseback in the forest, but a very long way off. She hears again, "Are you ready?" "I am coming in an instant." "You are coming? I'll come, if you do not come down." "Don't come; I will come down myself, without you." He seizes her on the stairs to kill her; but the brothers rush in just in time to prevent her death, and they put him in prison.

We heard, also, another version, which, unfortunately, we did not take down. It had something about a horse in it, and was like "The Widow and her Daughters," in Campbell, Vol. II., Tale xli., p. 265.

THE SINGING TREE, THE BIRD WHICH TELLS THE TRUTH, AND THE WATER THAT MAKES YOUNG.

LIKE many others in the world, there were three young girls. They were spinning together, and as girls must always talk about something while they are spinning, the eldest said:

"You will not guess what I am thinking about?"

"Tell it us, tell it us," (said the other two).

"That I should like to be married to the king's valet."

"And I with his son-in-law," said the second.

And the third said: "And I with the king himself."

Now, the king lived not far from these girls, and just at that moment he was passing before the door of their house, and heard what they said. The next day the king asked the eldest:-

"What were you saying yesterday at such a time?"

And she was ashamed to tell him, but the king pressed her so much that at last she told it :

“ I said that I wished to be married to your servant.”

He made the second come, and asked her the same question : “ What were you talking about yesterday ? ”

She would not tell ; but the king pressed her so much that she said :

“ I—I was saying that I wished to marry your son-in-law.”

He sends them back home, and sends for the third, and asks her what she said the evening before. She never dared to tell it, because that would have been too great an impudence, but at the last she told it him ; and the king told her that they must really be married together, because she was so very pretty. This young girl goes running off home. She told her sisters that she is to marry the king, and all three go to live in the king's house. The two sisters were very jealous. The princess became in the family-way ; and the king was obliged to go to another kingdom. His poor wife was confined of a fine girl. But her sisters made the queen believe that she had given birth to a cat, and they wrote this too to the king. The king wrote back to them :

“ If it be a cat, take all possible care of it.”*

When the king returned he did not mention the cat at all. She became pregnant a second time, and the king was obliged to go to another kingdom, and when the princess was confined her sisters made her believe that she had given birth to a dog. Think what grief and pain this poor queen suffered. Her sisters wrote to the king that his wife had given birth to a dog, and that without doubt she had something to do with animals. He wrote again : “ If it be a dog, take all possible care of it.” But they said that they had already thrown it into the water, as they had done with the cat.

Fortunately a gardener was there, the same that had been there the first time. He caught hold of the basket, and

* Here the narrator evidently forgot to tell about the child's being exposed, and the gardener finding it, as appears by the sequel.

finds a beautiful child inside. He is very glad, and carries the child to his wife, who puts the infant out to nurse.

The princess became pregnant the third time. The king had intended to stop at home; but at the moment of the confinement he was obliged to go away somewhere, and the sisters wrote to the king that she had been confined of a bear. The king flew into a great rage, and ordered her to be put into a dungeon underground. They gave her a little food through a hole, so that she might not die of starvation; and nevertheless she had given birth to a handsome boy. The same gardener found this basket too, which they had thrown into the water. He carries it to his wife, and she gave it to the same nurse. They were very happy with it, and said that Heaven had sent them these three children, and they loved their father and mother very much; but when they were very old they both died.

The two brothers and their sister got on very well together. They loved each other very much. The boys used to go out hunting and shooting, and they were so well off that they had something to give to the poor. One day there came an old woman begging, and she said to them:

“You cannot be happy.”

“Yes, yes, we certainly are,” they answered.

And the woman said to them: “No, no, you want three things before you can be happy—the tree which sings, the bird which tells the truth, and the water which makes young again.”

The young girl grows sad at that. Her brothers remarked it immediately, and they asked her what was the matter with her. But she would not tell them. At last they forced her to tell it to them. She told them what this woman had told her.

The elder of the brothers sets out immediately, taking with him a horse and a little money. He gives an apple to his sister, saying to her :*

* Cf. the well that boils in “The Fisherman and his Three Sons,” and the ring in “Beauty and the Beast.”

"If this apple changes I shall be in some trouble, and if it turns rotten I shall be dead."

And he starts off, and travels on, and on, and on. He finds a monk who tells him to retrace his steps, that there are great dangers before him; but he will go on notwithstanding. He meets again another monk, who tells him that he will never return. He confesses himself and prepares for death, such great dangers will he have to pass through. He said to him:

"You will hear terrible cries. It will seem to you as if they will pull you by your clothes, but never turn your head round."*

But our lad grew frightened and turned his head round, and was changed into stone.

After some days the apple begins to get bad, and they fall into great sorrow because something must have happened to their brother, and the second brother said that he must go off too; and off he goes with a horse and a little money. Like the other brother he meets a monk, who wishes to stop him; but he said to him that it was all the same to him. He goes on till he meets another monk. This one also said to him:

"Return on your steps. You will not be able to pass; you will hear cries and see horrors and terrible things—you will never be able to pass through."

But he prepares himself to go forward. He warned him well not to look round. He leaves his horse and sets out. When he has gone a short distance he hears frightful cries, and (sees) terrible things; and after having gone some distance further he looks on one side, and is changed into stone.

The apple which he had left with his sister first changes, then goes quite rotten. You may judge of the sorrow and the grief of this poor girl. She says to herself that she

* Can Bunyan have taken his description of the "Valley of the Shadow of Death," in the "Pilgrim's Progress," partly from such tales as this?

must dress herself like a man. She locks the door (of their house), and sets out on horseback. The same monk wishes to prevent her going on. But she has a still greater desire to do so, and, notwithstanding all she hears, she will go on. She arrives at the last monk, who was a great saint. He did not recognise that it was a young girl. For a hundred years past he had been on the same spot, until someone should get to the end of the mountain, and he hoped that this young girl might pass. He gives her a bottle into which she might put the water that makes young again, and says to her :

“ You will sprinkle one drop on each stone, and they will live.”

She sets off. The horrible cries did not frighten her. All kinds of things were said to her. She goes on and on, constantly running, and gets to the top of the mountain, and she is saved.

At the same instant she hears a thrilling song from a tree, which was warbling like a bird. A bird, too, flies on to her shoulder, and tells her so many things that she is quite astounded. But she does not lose her time—she takes out her bottle and fills it with water. She pours a drop on each stone, and finds her brothers at last. Think, think how they all three rejoiced together ! They take their horses (they too had been changed into stones) and go home with their tree, and the bird, and the water.

They lived very happily. The brothers went out hunting every day, and sometimes they met the king. One day the king invited them to dine with him, but they said that they must first ask permission of their sister. When they came home they asked her, and the bird answered immediately :

“ On condition that the king will come here to-morrow.”

They go with this answer to the king, and he says, “ Yes.”

They dine very well with the king, but their sister was not at all pleased ; she did not know how to receive the king. The bird says to her :

“ Lay the table with a fine cloth, and three dishes ; put

lentils into one, parched peas into the other, and haricot beans into the other."

Next day the king comes with his two brothers. The king is astonished to hear this beautiful tree and this fine singing. He had never heard anything so wonderful. He was surprised to see these three dishes, and he said to them :

"Is it not strange to receive a king like this?"

And the bird, hopping out of its cage, begins, "It is not more strange than to see this young woman pass for a cat. *Is she a cat?*"

In the same way it points to the elder brother, "*Is this a dog, this young man? Is not this a thing more astonishing?*"

The king is confounded. And the same thing for the third time, pointing to the second son, "*Is this a bear, this one? Is this not an astonishing thing?*"

The king, in his amazement, does not know what to answer to the bird; but it continues :

"Is it not a shame to leave one's wife, and make her live eighteen years in a dungeon underground?"

The king is terribly frightened, and off he goes with his sons and his daughter, intending to free their mother; but they did not forget the precious water, and they wash this princess in it, and she becomes as young as at eighteen years old. Judge of the joy of the king, of the queen, and of their children! The king fell into a great rage, and condemns the queen's sisters to be burnt alive in the midst of the market-place, with shirts of sulphur on them.

CATHERINE ELIZONDO.

We have also the more common version of this story—of an aged king with three sons. He reads of this water, and the three sons successively set out to fetch it. The two first fail, and stop, drinking, &c., in a certain city. The youngest meets an old woman, who tells him how to charm all the beasts in a forest he has to pass through, and how

to get the water, but he is not to take anything else. But he steals the bird, and the magic horse as well, and when he gets to the forest finds all the animals awake. The old woman appears again, and gives him a magic stick, with the aid of which he passes. He finds his brothers against the advice of the old lady, and they throw him into a pit and take away the water, the horse, and the bird; but the water has no effect in their hands. The old woman appears, and sends a fox to help him out of the pit. He comes home, the horse neighs, the bird sings, he gives the water to his father, and from one hundred years old he becomes twenty.

E. HIRIGARAY.

THE WHITE BLACKBIRD.

LIKE many others in the world, there was a king who had three sons. This king was blind, and he had heard one day that there was a king who had a white blackbird, which gave sight to the blind. When his eldest son heard that, he said to his father that he would go and fetch this white blackbird as quickly as possible.

The father said to him, "I prefer to remain blind rather than to separate myself from you, my child."

The son says to him, "Have no fear for me; with a horse laden with money I will find it and bring it to you."

He goes off then, far, far, far away. When night came he stopped. One evening he stopped at an inn where there were three very beautiful young ladies. They said to him that they must have a game of cards together. He refuses; but after many prayers and much pressing they begin. He loses all his money, his horse, and also has a large debt against his word of honour. In this country it was the custom for persons who did not pay their debts to be put in prison, and if they did not pay after a given time they were put to death, and then afterwards they were left