



CATHERINE AND FREDERICK.

Once upon a time there was a youth named Frederick, and a girl called Catherine, who had married and lived together as a young couple. One day Fred said, "I am now going into the fields, dear Catherine, and by the time I return let there be something hot upon the table, for I shall be hungry, and something to drink too, for I shall be thirsty."

"Very well, dear Fred," said she, "go at once, and I will make all right for you."

As soon, then, as dinner-time approached, she took down a sausage out of the chimney, and putting it in a frying-pan with batter set it over the fire. Soon the sausage began to frizzle and spit while Catherine stood by holding the handle of the pan and thinking; and among other things she thought that while the sausage was getting ready she might go into the cellar and draw some beer. So she took a can and went down into the cellar to draw the beer, and while it ran into the can, she bethought herself that perhaps the dog might steal the sausage out of the pan, and so up the cellar stairs she ran, but too late, for the regus

had already got the meat in his mouth and was sneaking off. Catherine, however, pursued the dog for a long way over the fields, but the beast was quicker than she, and would not let the sausage go, but bolted off at a great rate. "Off is off!" said Catherine, and turned round, and being very tired and hot, she went home slowly to cool herself. All this while the beer was running out of the cask, for Catherine had forgotten to turn the tap off, and so as soon as the can was full the liquor ran over the floor of the cellar until it was all out. Catherine saw the misfortune at the top of the steps. "My gracious!" she exclaimed, "what shall I do that Fred may not find this out!" She considered for some time till she remembered that a sack of fine malt yet remained from the last brewing, in one corner, which she would fetch down and strew about in the beer. "Yes," said she, "it was spared at the right time to be useful to me now in my necessity;" and down she pulled the sack so hastily that she overturned the can of beer for Fred, and away it mixed with the rest on the floor. "It is all right," said she: "where one is, the other should be;" and she strewed the malt over the whole cellar. When it was done she was quite overjoyed at her work, and said, "How clean and neat it does look to be sure!"

At noontime Fred returned. "Now, wife, what have you ready for me?" said he. "Ah, my dear Fred," she replied, "I would have fried you a sausage, but while I drew the beer the dog stole it out of the pan, and while I hunted the dog the beer all ran out, and as I was about to dry up the beer with the malt, I overturned your can; but be contented, the cellar is quite dry again now."

"Oh, Catherine, Catherine!" said Fred, "you should not have done so! to let the sausage be stolen! and the beer run out! and over all to shoot our best sack of malt!!!"

"Well, Fred," said she, "I did not know that; you should have told me."

But the husband thought to himself, if one's wife acts so, one must look after things one's self. Now, he had collected a tolerable sum of silver dollars, which he changed into gold, and then he told his wife, "Do you see, these are yellow counters, which I will put in a pot and bury in the stable under the cow's stall; but mind that you do not meddle with it, or you will come to some harm."

Catherine promised to mind what he said, but, as soon as Fred was gone, some hawkers came into the village with earthenware for sale, and amongst others they asked her if she would purchase anything. "Ah, good people," said Catherine, "I have no money, and cannot buy anything, but if you can make use of yellow counters I will buy them."

"Yellow counters! ah! why not? let us look at them," said they.

"Go into the stable," she replied, "and dig under the cow's stall, and there you will find the yellow counters. I dare not go myself."

The rogues went at once, and soon dug up the shining gold, which they quickly pocketed, and then they ran off, leaving behind them their pots and dishes in the house. Catherine thought she might as well make use of the new pottery, and since she had no need of anything in the

kitchen, she set out each pot on the ground, and then put others on the top of the palings round the house for ornament. When Fred returned, and saw the fresh decorations, he asked Catherine what she had done. "I have bought them, Fred," said she, "with the yellow counters which lay under the cow's stall; but I did not dig them up myself; the pedlars did that."

"Ah, wife, what have you done!" replied Fred, "they were not counters, but bright gold, which was all the property we possessed: you should not have done so."

"Well, dear Fred," replied his wife, "you should have told me so before. I did not know that."

Catherine stood considering for a while, and presently she began, "Come, Fred, we will soon get the gold back again; let us pursue the thieves."

"Well, come along," said Fred; "we will try at all events; but take butter and cheese with you, that we may have something to eat on our journey."

"Yes, Fred," said she, and soon made herself ready; but, her husband being a good walker, she lagged behind. "Ah!" said she, "this is my luck, for when we turn back I shall be a good bit forward." Presently she came to a hill, on both sides of which there were very deep ruts. "Oh, see!" said she, "how the poor earth is torn, flayed, and wounded: it will never be well again all its life!" And out of compassion she took out her butter, and greased the ruts over right and left, so that the wheels might run more easily through them, and, while she stooped in doing this, a cheese rolled out of her pocket down the mountain. Catherine said when she saw it, "I have already once made the journey up, and I am not coming down after you: another shall run and fetch you." So saying, she took another cheese out of her pocket, and rolled it down; but, as it did not return, she thought, "Perhaps they are waiting for a companion, and don't like to come alone;" and down she bowled a third cheese. Still all three stayed, and she said, "I cannot think what was this means; perhaps it is that the third cheese has missed his way: I will send a fourth, that he may call him as he goes by." But this one acted no better than the others, and Catherine became so anxious that she threw down a fifth and a sixth cheese also, and they were the last. For a long time after this she waited, expecting they would come, but when she found they did not she cried out, "You are nice fellows to send after a dead man! you stop a fine time! but do you think I shall wait for you! Oh, no! I shall go on; you can follow me; you have younger legs than I."

So saying, Catherine walked on and came up with Fred, who was waiting for her, because he needed something to eat. "Now," said he, "give me quickly what you brought." She handed him the dry bread. "Where are the butter and cheese!" cried her husband. "Oh, Fred, dear," she replied, "with the butter I have smeared the ruts, and the cheeses will soon come, but one run away, and I sent the others after it to call it back!"

"It was silly of you to do so," said Fred, "to grease the roads with butter, and to roll cheeses down the hill!"

"If you had but told me so," said Catherine, vexatiously.

So they ate the dry bread together, and presently Fred said, "Catherine, did you make things fast at home before you came out?"

"No, Fred," said she, "you did not tell me."

"Then go back and lock up the house before we go further; bring something to eat with you, and I will stop here for you."

Back went Catherine, thinking, "Ah! Fred will like something else to eat. Butter and cheese will not please; I will bring with me a bag of dried apples and a mug of vinegar to drink." When she had put these things together she bolted the upper half of the door, but the under door she raised up and carried away on her shoulder, thinking that certainly the house was well protected if she took such good care of the door! Catherine walked along now very leisurely, for said she to herself, "Fred will have all the longer rest!" and as soon as she reached him she gave him the door, saying, "There, Fred, now you have the house door, you can take care of the house yourself."

"Oh! my goodness," exclaimed the husband, "what a clever wife I have! she has bolted the top door, but brought away the bottom part, where any one can creep through! Now it is too late to go back to the house, but since you brought the door here you may carry it onwards."

"The door I will willingly carry," replied Catherine, "but the apples and the vinegar will be too heavy, so I shall hang them on the door, and make that carry them!"

Soon after they came into a wood, and looked about for the thieves, but they could not find them, and when it became dark they climbed up into a tree to pass the night. But scarcely had they done this when up came the fellows who carried away what should not go with them, and find things before they are lost. They laid themselves down right under the tree upon which Fred and Catherine were, and making a fire, prepared to share their booty. Then Fred slipped down on the other side, and collected stones, with which he climbed the tree again to beat the thieves with. The stones, however, did them no harm, for the fellows called out, "Ah! it will soon be morning, for the wind is shaking down the chestnuts." All this while Catherine still had the door upon her shoulder, and, as it pressed very heavily, she thought the dried apples were in fault, and said to Fred, "I must throw down these apples." "No, Catherine," said he, "not now, they might discover us." "Ah, I must though, they are so heavy."

"Well, then, do it in the hangman's name!" cried Fred.

As they fell down the rogues said, "Ah! the birds are pulling off the leaves."

A little while after Catherine said again, "Oh! Fred, I must pour out the vinegar, it is so heavy."

"No, no!" said he, "it will discover us."

"Ah! but I must, Fred, it is very heavy," said Catherine.

"Well, then, do it in the hangman's name!" cried Fred.

So she poured out the vinegar, and as it dropped on them the thieves said, "Ah! the dew is beginning to fall."

Not many minutes after Catherine found the door was still quite as heavy, and said again to Fred, "Now I must throw down this door."

"No, Catherine," said he, "that would certainly discover us."

"Ah! Fred, but I must; it presses me so terribly."

"No, Catherine dear! do hold it fast," said Fred.

"There—it is gone!" said she.

"Then let it go in the hangman's name!" cried Fred, while it fell crashing through the branches. The rogues below thought the Evil One was descending the tree, and ran off, leaving everything behind them. And early in the morning Fred and his wife descended, and found all their gold under the tree.

As soon as they got home again, Fred said, "Now, Catherine, you must be very industrious and work hard."

"Yes, my dear husband," said she; "I will go into the fields to cut corn." When she was come into the field she said to herself, "Shall I eat before I cut, or sleep first before I cut!" She determined to eat, and soon became so sleepy over her meal, that when she began to cut she knew not what she was doing, and cut off half her clothes, gown, petticoat, and all. When after a long sleep Catherine awoke, she got up half stripped, and said to herself, "Am I myself! or am I not! Ah! I am not myself." By-and-by night came on, and Catherine ran into the village and, knocking at her husband's window, called, "Fred!"

"What is the matter!" cried he.

"I want to know if Catherine is in-doors!" said she.

"Yes, yes!" answered Fred, "she is certainly within, fast asleep."

"Then I am at home," said she, and ran away.

Standing outside Catherine found some thieves, wanting to steal, and going up to them she said, "I will help you."

At this the thieves were very glad, not doubting but that she knew where to light on what they sought. But Catherine, stepping in front of the houses, called out, "Good people, what have you that we can steal?" At this the thieves said, "You will do for us with a vengeance!" and they wished they had never come near her; but in order to rid themselves of her they said, "Just before the village the parson has some roots lying in his field; go and fetch some."

Catherine went as she was bid, and began to grab for them, and soon made herself very dirty with the earth. Presently a man came by and saw her, and stood still, for he thought it was the Evil One who was grovelling so among the roots. Away he ran into the village to the parson, and told him the Evil One was in his field, rooting up the turnips. "Ah! heavens!" said the parson, "I have a lame foot, and I cannot go out to exorcise him."

"Then I will carry you a pick-a-back," said the man, and took him up.

Just as they arrived in the field, Catharine got up and drew herself up to her full height.

"Oh! it is the Evil One!" cried the parson, and both he and the man hurried away; and, behold! the parson ran faster with his lame legs, through fear and terror, than the countryman could with his sound legs!
