

PREFATORY NOTE BY THE ARTIST

Some years ago a selection of *Grimm's Fairy Tales* with one hundred illustrations of mine in black and white was published—in 1900, by Messrs. Freemantle and Co., and afterwards by Messrs. Archibald Constable & Co., Ltd.

At intervals since then I have been at work on the original drawings, partially or entirely re-drawing some of them in colour, adding new ones in colour and in black and white, and generally overhauling them as a set, supplementing and omitting, with a view to the present edition.

Of the forty coloured illustrations, many are elaborations of the earlier black and white drawings or are founded on them. The frontispiece, and those facing pp. 34, 70, 94, 104, 116, 118, and 190 are entirely new, and several of the text illustrations also have not been published before. The remaining illustrations in the text have been reconsidered and worked on again to a greater or less degree.

HAMPSTEAD, September 1909.

ARTHUR RACKHAM.



THERE was once a King who had twelve daughters, each more beautiful than the other. They slept together in a hall where their beds stood close to one another; and at night, when they had gone to bed, the King locked the door and bolted it. But when he unlocked it in the morning, he noticed that their shoes had been danced to pieces, and nobody could explain how it happened. So the King sent out a proclamation saying that any one who could discover where the Princesses did their night's dancing should choose one of them to be his wife and should reign after his death; but whoever presented himself, and failed to make the discovery after three days and nights, was to forfeit his life.

A Prince soon presented himself and offered to take the risk. He was well received, and at night was taken into a room adjoining the hall where the Princesses slept. His bed was made up there, and he was to watch and see where they went to dance; so that they could not do anything, or go anywhere else, the door of his room was left open too. But the eyes of the King's son grew heavy, and he fell asleep. When he woke up in the morning all the twelve had been dancing, for the soles of their shoes were full of holes. The second and third evenings passed with the same results, and then the Prince found no mercy, and his head was cut off.

GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES

Many others came after him and offered to take the risk, but they all had to lose their lives.

Now it happened that a poor Soldier, who had been wounded and could no longer serve, found himself on the road to the town where the King lived. There he fell in with an old woman who asked him where he intended to go.

'I really don't know, myself,' he said; and added, in fun, 'I should like to discover where the King's daughters dance their shoes into holes, and after that to become King.'

'That is not so difficult,' said the old woman. 'You must not drink the wine which will be brought to you in the evening, but must pretend to be fast asleep.' Whereupon she gave him a short cloak, saying: 'When you wear this you will be invisible, and then you can slip out after the Twelve Princesses.'

As soon as the Soldier heard this good advice he took it up seriously, plucked up courage, appeared before the King, and offered himself as suitor. He was as well received as the others, and was dressed in royal garments.

In the evening, when bed-time came, he was conducted to the ante-room. As he was about to go to bed the eldest Princess appeared, bringing him a cup of wine; but he had fastened a sponge under his chin and let the wine run down into it, so that he did not drink one drop. Then he lay down, and when he had been quiet a little while he began to snore as though in the deepest sleep.

The Twelve Princesses heard him, and laughed. The eldest said: 'He, too, must forfeit his life.'

Then they got up, opened cupboards, chests, and cases, and brought out their beautiful dresses. They decked themselves before the glass, skipping about and revelling in the prospect of the dance. Only the youngest sister said: 'I don't know what it is. You may rejoice, but I feel so strange; a misfortune is certainly hanging over us.'

'You are a little goose,' answered the eldest; 'you are always frightened. Have you forgotten how many Princes

THE TWELVE DANCING PRINCESSES

have come here in vain? Why, I need not have given the Soldier a sleeping draught at all; the blockhead would never have awakened.'

When they were all ready they looked at the Soldier; but his eyes were shut and he did not stir. So they thought they would soon be quite safe. Then the eldest went up to one of the beds and knocked on it; it sank into the earth, and they descended through the opening, one after another, the eldest first.

The Soldier, who had noticed everything, did not hesitate long, but threw on his cloak and went down behind the youngest. Half-way down he trod on her dress. She was frightened, and said: 'What was that? who is holding on to my dress?'

'Don't be so foolish. You must have caught on a nail,' said the eldest. Then they went right down, and when they got quite underground, they stood in a marvellously beautiful avenue of trees; all the leaves were silver, and glittered and shone.

The Soldier thought, 'I must take away some token with me.' And as he broke off a twig, a sharp crack came from the tree.

The youngest cried out, 'All is not well; did you hear that sound?'

'Those are triumphal salutes, because we shall soon have released our Princes,' said the eldest.

Next they came to an avenue where all the leaves were of gold, and, at last, into a third, where they were of shining diamonds. From both these he broke off a twig, and there was a crack each time which made the youngest Princess start with terror; but the eldest maintained that the sounds were only triumphal salutes. They went on faster, and came to a great lake. Close to the bank lay twelve little boats, and in every boat sat a handsome Prince. They had expected the Twelve Princesses, and each took one with him; but the Soldier seated himself by the youngest.

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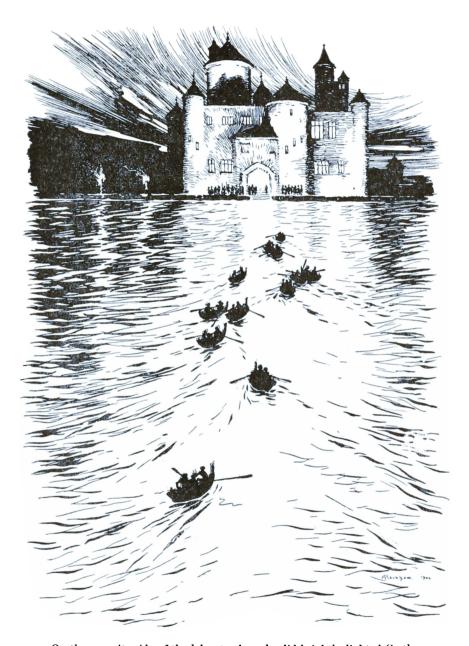
Then said the Prince, 'I don't know why, but the boat is much heavier to-day, and I am obliged to row with all my strength to get it along.'

'I wonder why it is,' said the youngest, 'unless, perhaps, it is the hot weather; it is strangely hot.'

On the opposite side of the lake stood a splendid brightlylighted castle, from which came the sound of the joyous music of trumpets and drums. They rowed across, and every Prince danced with his love; and the Soldier danced too, unseen. If one of the Princesses held a cup of wine he drank out of it, so that it was empty when she lifted it to her lips. frightened the youngest one, but the eldest always silenced her. They danced till three next morning, when their shoes were danced into holes, and they were obliged to stop. Princes took them back across the lake, and this time the Soldier took his seat beside the eldest. On the bank they said farewell to their Princes, and promised to come again the next night. When they got to the steps, the Soldier ran on ahead, lay down in bed, and when the twelve came lagging by, slowly and wearily, he began to snore again, very loud, so that they said, 'We are quite safe as far as he is concerned.' Then they took off their beautiful dresses, put them away, placed the worn-out shoes under their beds, and lay down.

The next morning the Soldier determined to say nothing, but to see the wonderful doings again. So he went with them the second and third nights. Everything was just the same as the first time, and they danced each time till their shoes were in holes; but the third time the Soldier took away a wine-cup as a token.

When the appointed hour came for his answer, he took the three twigs and the cup with him and went before the King. The Twelve Princesses stood behind the door listening to hear what he would say. When the King put the question, 'Where did my daughters dance their shoes to pieces in the night?' he answered: 'With twelve Princes in an underground castle.' Then he produced the tokens.



On the opposite side of the lake stood a splendid brightly-lighted Castle.

GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES

The King sent for his daughters and asked them whether the Soldier had spoken the truth. As they saw that they were betrayed, and would gain nothing by lies, they were obliged to admit all. Thereupon the King asked the Soldier which one he would choose as his wife. He answered: 'I am no longer young, give me the eldest.'

So the wedding was celebrated that very day, and the kingdom was promised to him on the King's death. But for every night which the Princes had spent in dancing with the Princesses a day was added to their time of enchantment.