

Метод чтения Ильи Франка

The Star-Child

1 ONCE upon a time (однажды) two poor Woodcutters were making their way home (два бедных дровосека добирались, шли домой; "делали их путь") through a great pine-forest (через, сквозь большой сосновый бор). It was winter, and a night of bitter cold (была зима, ночь и лютый мороз; bitter – горький). The snow lay thick upon the ground (снег лежал толстым слоем на земле), and upon the branches of the trees (и на ветвях деревьев): the frost kept snapping (мороз щелкал, трещал) the little twigs (маленькими веточками) on either side of them (с обеих сторон от них), as they passed (пока, когда они проходили): and when they came to the Mountain-Torrent (и когда они подошли к Горному Потoku) she was hanging motionless in air (он: «она» висел неподвижно в воздухе), for the Ice-King had kissed her (потому что Ледяной Король поцеловал его: «ее»).

2 So cold was it that even the animals and the birds did not know what to make of it (мороз стоял такой, что даже звери и птицы не знали как быть, "что с этим делать").

3 'Ugh!' snarled the Wolf, (прорычал) as he limped (limp – хромать, идти прихрамывая) through the brushwood (сквозь заросли) with his tail between his legs (с поджатым хвостом, "с хвостом между ног"), 'this is perfectly monstrous weather (чудовищная; необычная, аномальная – устар.). Why doesn't the Government look to it (почему Правительство не следит за этим?)?'

4 'Weet! weet! weet!' twittered the green Linnets (прошебетали зеленые конплянки), 'the old Earth is dead (старая Земля умерла) and they have laid her out in her white shroud (и ее одели в белый саван).'

5 'The Earth is going to be married (Земля собирается замуж), and this is her bridal dress (и это ее подвенечный наряд),' whispered the Turtle-doves to each other (перешептывались горлицы). Their little pink feet were quite frost-bitten (их маленькие розовые лапки были обморожены), but they felt that it was their duty (но они чувствовали, что они обязаны; "их обязанность") to take ("брать"; принимать, испытывать, чувствовать) a romantic view of the situation (романтическую сторону ситуации).

6 'Nonsense (бессмыслица, вздор, ерунда, чепуха)!' growled the Wolf (прорычал). 'I tell you that it is all the fault of the Government (я говорю вам, что это все – вина Правительства), and if you don't believe me I shall eat you (и если вы не верите мне, я вас съем).'

a thoroughly practical mind (Волк обладал совершенно практическим умом, мышлением), and was never at a loss for a good argument (и никогда не упускал "терял" хороший аргумент).

7 'Well, for my own part (Хорошо, по-моему, "для моей собственной стороны"),' said the Woodpecker (дятел), who was a born philosopher (прирожденный философ), 'I don't care an atomic theory for explanations (меня не интересует «атомная» = детальная теория для объяснений). If a thing is so, it is so (Если вещь такова как есть, то она такова), and at present it is terribly cold (и сейчас ужасно холодно).'

8 Terribly cold it certainly was (Было на самом деле ужасно холодно). The little Squirrels, who lived inside the tall fir-tree (маленькие белки, жившие в высокой елке), kept rubbing each other's noses to keep themselves warm (терли друг другу носы, чтобы согреться, "сохранить себя, друг друга теплыми"), and the Rabbits curled themselves up in their holes (кролики свились в клубки в своих норках), and did not venture even to look out of doors (и не рисковали даже выглянуть наружу). The only people who seemed to enjoy (единственные существа, которые, казалось, получают удовольствие) it were the great horned Owls (были огромные рогатые совы). Their feathers were quite stiff with rime (их перья были совершенно остекленевшие от инея, изморози), but they did not mind (но они не обращали внимания), and they rolled their large yellow eyes (они вращали своими огромными желтыми глазами), and called out to each other across the forest (и переключивались друг с другом через весь лес), 'Tu-whit! Tu-whoo! Tu-whit! Tu-whoo! what delightful weather we are having (что за восхитительная погода у нас)!'.

9 On and on (вперед и вперед) went the two Woodcutters (шли два дровосека), blowing lustily upon their fingers (энергично дую (дыша) на свои пальцы), and stamping with their huge iron-shod boots upon the caked snow (отпечатывая своими огромными подкованными ботинками на затвердевшем снегу). Once they sank (sink-sank-sank – тонуть, погружаться) into a deep drift (в глубоком сугробе), and came out as white as millers are (и вылезли белые, как мельники), when the stones are grinding (когда жернова перемалывают); and once they slipped on the hard smooth ice (и один раз они поскользнулись на очень скользком льду) where the marsh-water was frozen (где замерзла болотная вода), and their faggots fell out of their bundles (их вязанки с хворостом рассыпались, "хворост выпал из связок"), and they had to pick them up and bind them together again (и им пришлось собирать его и связывать заново); and once they thought that they had lost their way (а однажды им показалось, что они заблудились; "подумали, что потеряли свой путь"), and a great terror seized on them (и великий ужас охватил, завладел ими), for they knew that the Snow is cruel to those who sleep in her arms (потому что они знали, что Снег (Мороз) беспощаден к тем, кто засыпает у него: «у нее» в объятьях). But they put their trust in the good Saint Martin (но они положились на

свою веру в доброго Святого Мартина), who watches over all travellers (который присматривает за всеми путешественниками /охраняет их/), and retraced their steps (вернулись по своим следам), and went warily (и пошли осторожно), and at last they reached the outskirts of the forest (и, наконец, достигли опушки леса), and saw, far down in the valley beneath them (и увидели далеко (внизу) в долине перед (под) ними), the lights of the village in which they dwelt (огоньки деревни, в которой они жили).

10 So overjoyed were they at their deliverance (Так, они были настолько счастливы своим спасением) that they laughed aloud (что засмеялись вслух, во весь голос), and the Earth seemed to them like a flower of silver (и Земля показалась им цветком из серебра), and the Moon like a flower of gold (а Луна – цветком из золота).

11 Yet, after that they had laughed they became sad (и вот, посмеявшись они стали грустными), for they remembered their poverty (потому что вспомнили свою бедность, нищету), and one of them said to the other (и один сказал другому), 'Why did we make merry (как мы можем веселиться, "делать веселье"), seeing that life is for the rich (видя, что эта жизнь для богачей), and not for such as we are (а не для таких как мы)? Better that we had died of cold in the forest (лучше бы мы умерли в лесу от холода), or that some wild beast had fallen upon us and slain us (или дикие животные напали бы на нас и убили; slay – убивать поэт.).'

12 'Truly (верно),' answered his companion (ответил его спутник), 'much is given to some, and little is given to others (одним дается много, а другим – мало). Injustice has parcelled out the world (несправедливость разделила на участки, раздробила мир), nor is there equal division of aught save of sorrow (и нет справедливого деления чего-либо кроме мук (страдания, скорби)).'

13 But as they were bewailing their misery to each other (но пока они плакались на свои невзгоды друг другу) this strange thing happened ("эта" странная вещь произошла). There fell from heaven a very bright and beautiful star (с неба упала, слетела очень яркая и прекрасная звезда). It slipped down the side of the sky (она скользнула по краю неба), passing by the other stars in its course (пролетая мимо других звезд на своем пути), and, as they watched it wondering (они смотрели удивленно), it seemed to them to sink behind a clump of willow-trees (и им показалось, что она упала за зарослями ивняка) that stood hard by a little sheepfold (который подступал вплотную к маленькой овчарне) no more than a stone's-throw away (на расстоянии не большем, чем бросок камня).

14 'Why! there is a crock of gold for whoever finds it,' they cried (Да ведь горшок золота тому, кто найдет это = знатный, видать, кусочек золота – закричали они; crock – глиняный кувшин, горшок), and they set to and ran (они устремились и побежали), so eager were they for the gold (так страстно они желали золота).

15 And one of them ran faster than his mate (один из них бежал быстрее, чем его товарищ), and outstripped him (и обогнал его), and forced his way through the willows (и с трудом пробрался, «форсировал свой путь» через ивняк), and came out on the other side (и выбежал на другую сторону), and lo! there was indeed a thing of gold lying on the white snow (и вот, смотри-ка, чу! Там действительно лежала какая-то штука из золота на снегу). So he hastened towards it (он поспешил к ней), and stooping down placed his hands upon it (и наклонился вниз, положив руки на нее), and it was a cloak of golden tissue (это был плащ из золотой ткани), curiously wrought with stars (необычно отделанный звездами), and wrapped in many folds (обернутый во множество складок). And he cried out to his comrade (он закричал своему другу) that he had found the treasure that had fallen from the sky (что они нашли сокровище, упавшее с неба), and when his comrade had come up (и когда его товарищ подоспел), they sat them down in the snow (они уселись на снег), and loosened the folds of the cloak (и равязали складки плаща) that they might divide the pieces of gold (чтобы они могли поделить куски золота). But, alas! (Но, увы!) no gold was in it, nor silver, nor, indeed, treasure of any kind (не было там ни золота, ни серебра, ни, в самом деле, никаких "любых" сокровищ), but only a little child who was asleep (а только маленький спящий ребенок).

16 And one of them said to the other (один из них сказал другому): 'This is a bitter ending to our hope (это горький конец нашим надеждам), nor have we any good fortune (нет у нас хорошего состояния, богатства), for what doth (3-е л., ед. наст. вр. от do) a child profit to a man (какая польза от ребенка человеку)? Let us leave it here (давай оставим его здесь), and go our way (и пойдём своей дорогой), seeing that we are poor men (поскольку мы бедные люди), and have children of our own whose bread we may not give to another (и у нас есть свои дети, чей хлеб мы не можем отдать другому).'

17 But his companion answered him (но его спутник ответил ему): 'Nay (нет – устар.), but it were an evil thing to leave the child to perish here in the snow (это был бы грех оставить ребенка погибать здесь в снегу), and though I am as poor as thou art (и хотя я так же беден, как ты), and have many mouths to feed (и у меня много голодных ртов; "ртом чтоб накормить"), and but little in the pot (и "мало в горшке" – не много еды), yet will I bring it home with me (я возьму его с собой домой), and my wife shall have care of it (и моя жена будет заботиться о нем).'

18 So very tenderly he took up the child (Вот, очень нежно подняв ребенка), and wrapped the cloak around it to shield it from the harsh cold (и замотав плащ вокруг него чтобы защитить его от жестокого мороза), and made his way down the hill to the village (и пошел вниз с холма в деревню), his comrade marvelling much at his foolishness and softness of heart (а его товарищ очень /у/дивился при этом его безрассудству и сердечной мягкости).

19 And when they came to the village, his comrade said to him (когда они пришли в деревню его товарищ сказал ему), 'Thou hast the child, therefore give me the cloak (ты взял ребенка поэтому дай мне плащ), for it is meet that we should share (мы должны поделиться).'

20 But he answered him (но он ответил): 'Nay, for the cloak is neither mine nor thine, but the child's only (нет, этот плащ не мой и не твой, а только этого ребенка),' and he bade him Godspeed (пожелал ему удачи), and went to his own house and knocked (пошел к своему дому и постучался).

21 And when his wife opened the door and saw that her husband had returned safe to her (когда его жена открыла дверь и увидела, что ее муж вернулся целым и невредимым к ней), she put her arms round his neck and kissed him (она обвила его шею руками и поцеловала его), and took from his back the bundle of faggots (сняла с его спины вязанку дров), and brushed the snow off his boots (смахнула снега с его ботинок), and bade him come in (и позвала его войти).

22 But he said to her (но он сказал ей), 'I have found something in the forest (я нашел кое-что в лесу), and I have brought it to thee to have care of it (и я принес это тебе, чтобы ты позаботилась о нем),' and he stirred not from the threshold (он не двинулся с порога).

23 'What is it?' she cried (Что это – она вскрикнула). 'Show it to me, for the house is bare, and we have need of many things (покажи это мне, потому что наш дом пустой и нам нужно много вещей).' And he drew the cloak back, and showed her the sleeping child (он стянул плащ и показала ей спящего ребенка).

24 'Alack, goodman!' she murmured (Увы, хозяин, – заворчала она), 'have we not children of our own (неужели у нас нет своих собственных детей), that thou must needs bring a changeling to sit by the hearth (что тебе нужно приносить подкидыша, чтоб сидел у печи; changeling – какая-л. вещь или ребенок, оставляемые эльфами взамен похищенного (в сказках))? And who knows if it will not bring us bad fortune (и кто знает, может он принесет нам несчастье)? And how shall we tend it (Как мы можем заботиться об этом, уделять внимание)?' And she was wroth against him (она разгневалась на него).

25 'Nay, but it is a Star-Child,' he answered (Нет, но это Звездный Ребенок – ответил он); and he told her the strange manner of the finding of it (и рассказал ей каким странным способом он был найден).

26 But she would not be appeased, but mocked at him (но она все не успокаивалась, а высмеивала его), and spoke angrily, and cried (говорила сердито, кричала): 'Our children lack bread (нашим детям не хватает хлеба), and shall we feed the child of another (а мы будем кормить чужого ребенка)? Who is there who careth for us (кто позаботится о нас)? And who giveth us food (кто даст нам еду)?'

27 'Nay, but God careth for the sparrows even, and feedeth them,' he answered (но Бог заботится даже о воробьях и кормит их – ответил он).

28 'Do not the sparrows die of hunger in the winter?' she asked (а разве воробьи не умирают от голода зимой – спросила она). 'And is it not winter now (и не зима ли сейчас)?'

29 And the man answered nothing, but stirred not from the threshold (Мужчина не ответил ничего, он так и стоял на пороге).

30 And a bitter wind from the forest came in through the open door (Резкий ветер из леса задул в открытую дверь), and made her tremble, and she shivered, and said to him (заставил ее дрожать, она затряслась от холода и сказала ему): 'Wilt thou not close the door? There cometh a bitter wind into the house, and I am cold (Ты не можешь закрыть дверь. Дует ужасный ветер в дом и я замерзла).'

31 'Into a house where a heart is hard cometh there not always a bitter wind (в доме, где черствое сердце, разве не всегда задувает жестокий ветер)?' he asked. And the woman answered him nothing, but crept closer to the fire (Женщина не ответила ему ничего, только пододвинулась ближе к огню, сгреб – ползать, красться, медленно передвигать ноги).

32 And after a time she turned round and looked at him (через некоторое время она повернулась и посмотрела на него), and her eyes were full of tears (и ее глаза были полны слез). And he came in swiftly, and placed the child in her arms (он без промедления зашел и положил ребенка ей на руки; swift – быстрый, скорый, стремительный), and she kissed it, and laid it in a little bed where the youngest of their own children was lying (она поцеловала его и положила на маленькую кроватку, где лежал младший их ребенок). And on the morrow the Woodcutter took the curious cloak of gold and placed it in a great chest (назавтра дровосек взял необычайный плащ из золота и положил его в большой сундук), and a chain of amber that was round the child's neck (и ниточку янтаря, которая была завязана на шее ребенка) his wife took and set it in the chest also (его жена взяла и положила его в сундук также).

33 So the Star-Child was brought up with the children of the Woodcutter (так, Звездный Мальчик стал воспитываться с детьми дровосека; bring up – воспитывать, вскармливать), and sat at the same board with them (сидел на одной скамье с ними), and was their playmate (и был им товарищем по играм). And every year he became more beautiful to look at (с каждым годом он становился все более прекрасным на вид), so that all those who dwelt in the village (так, настолько, что все жители деревни) were filled with wonder (удивлялись, "наполнялись удивлением"), for, while they were swarthy and black-haired (в то время, как они были смуглые и темно-волосые), he was white and delicate as sawn ivory (он был светлым (белым) и изящным, словно выточенным из слоновой кости), and his curls were like the rings of the daffodil (и его локоны были как ободок нарцисса). His lips, also, were like the petals of a red flower (его губы также были как лепестки красного цветка), and his eyes were like violets

by a river of pure water (его глаза были фиалкового цвета, как воды чистойшей реки), and his body like the narcissus of a field where the mower comes not (его тело было как нарцисс на поле, где не ступала нога косаря).

34 Yet did his beauty work him evil (однако его красота приносила ему несчастье, вред). For he grew proud, and cruel, and selfish (он рос высокомерным, жестоким и эгоистичным). The children of the Woodcutter, and the other children of the village (детей дровосека, да и другие деревенских детей), he despised, saying that they were of mean parentage (он презирал, говоря, что они низкого происхождения), while he was noble, being sprang from a Star (тогда как он благородный, произошедший: «будучи возникшим» от Звезды; spring-sprang-sprung – отскочить; возникать, брать начало), and he made himself master over them, and called them his servants (и он сделал себя их господином, а их называл своими слугами). No pity had he for the poor (он не испытывал никакой жалости к бедным), or for those who were blind or maimed or in any way afflicted (к слепым, изувеченным или страдающим от каких-либо болезней), but would cast stones at them and drive them forth on to the highway (но бросал в них камни и гнал их на "большую дорогу"), and bid them beg their bread elsewhere (велел им просить милостыню где-нибудь в другом месте), so that none save the outlaws came twice to that village to ask for alms (так, что никто из изгнанных: «объявленных вне закона» не приходил дважды в ту деревню просить милостыню). Indeed, he was as one enamoured of beauty (В самом деле, он был словно некто, влюбленный в красоту), and would mock at the weakly and ill-favoured (и насмехался над болезненными и некрасивыми), and make jest of them (и подтрунивал над ними); and himself he loved (а себя он любил), and in summer, when the winds were still (и летом в безветренную погоду), he would lie by the well in the priest's orchard (он лежал возле родника во фруктовом саду священника) and look down at the marvel of his own face (и смотрел вниз на свое дивное лицо: «на чудо своего собственного лица»), and laugh for the pleasure he had in his fairness (и смеялся от удовольствия, которое он получал от своей красоты).

35 Often did the Woodcutter and his wife chide him, and say (часто дровосек и его жена бранили его, говорили): 'We did not deal with thee as thou dealest with those who are left desolate (мы не поступили с тобой так, как ты поступаешь с теми, кто заброшен, оставлен в одиночестве), and have none to succour them (и у не имеющими никого, кто бы поддержал их). Wherefore art thou so cruel to all who need pity (почему ты позволяешь себе так жестоко обходиться с теми, кто нуждается в жалости)?'

36 Often did the old priest send for him (часто старый священник посылал за ним), and seek to teach him the love of living things, saying to him (и пытался обучить его любви ко всему живому, говоря): 'The fly is thy brother (даже букашка – твой собрат). Do it no harm (не причиняй ей вреда). The wild birds that roam through the forest have their freedom (дикие

птицы, странствующие по лесам свободны, "имеют свою свободу"). Snare them not for thy pleasure (не лови их для своего удовольствия). God made the blind-worm and the mole (Бог создал слепого червяка и крота), and each has its place (и у каждого свое место). Who art thou to bring pain into God's world (Кто позволил тебе приносить страдание в мир Божий)? Even the cattle of the field praise Him (даже скотина на лугах восхваляет Его)."

37 But the Star-Child heeded not their words (но Звездный Мальчик не обращал внимания на их слова), but would frown and flout (только хмурился и не подчинялся; flout – презирать, попираť, не подчиняться), and go back to his companions, and lead them (шел обратно к своим товарищам и возглавлял их). And his companions followed him (его товарищи шли за ним), for he was fair (потому что он был прекрасен), and fleet of foot (проворный, шустрый), and could dance (и мог танцевать), and pipe (и играть на свирели), and make music (и музицировать). And wherever the Star-Child led them they followed (они следовали за ним, куда бы он их не вел), and whatever the Star-Child bade them do, that did they (и что бы он не приказывал им сделать, они делали). And when he pierced with a sharp reed the dim eyes of the mole (и когда он проткнул острой тростинкой незрячие глаза крота), they laughed (они смеялись), and when he cast stones at the leper they laughed also (и когда он бросал камни в прокаженного они тоже смеялись). And in all things he ruled them (во всем он управлял, господствовал над ними), and they became hard of heart even as he was (и они становились такими же жестокосердными, как и он).

38 Now there passed one day through the village a poor beggar-woman (однажды через их деревню проходила бедная нищенка). Her garments were torn and ragged (ее одежда была изношенной и потрепанной), and her feet were bleeding (ее ноги кровоточили) from the rough road on which she had travelled (от ухабистых дорог, которые она прошла), and she was in very evil plight (она была в бедственном состоянии). And being weary she sat her down under a chestnut-tree to rest (Будучи изнуренной, она присела отдохнуть под каштаном).

39 But when the Star-Child saw her (Но когда Звездный Мальчик увидел ее), he said to his companions (он сказал своим товарищам), 'See! There sitteth a foul beggar-woman (посмотрите! Эта омерзительная нищенка сидит) under that fair and green-leaved tree (под этим прекрасным зеленым деревом). Come, let us drive her hence, for she is ugly and ill-favoured (Пошлите, выгоним ее прочь, потому что она уродлива и отвратительна).'

40 So he came near and threw stones at her (он подошел и кидал в нее камни), and mocked her (и насмехался над ней), and she looked at him with terror in her eyes (она смотрела на него с ужасом в глазах), nor did she move her gaze from him (не отводя от него пристального взгляда). And when the Woodcutter, who was cleaving logs in a haggard hard by (и когда дровосек, который колол дрова в изнурительных усилиях недалеко), saw what the Star-Child was doing (увидел, что делал Звездный Мальчик), he ran up and rebuked him, and

said to him (он подбежал и стал укорять его, и сказал ему): 'Surely thou art hard of heart and knowest not mercy (несомненно, ты жестокосердный и не знающий милосердия), for what evil has this poor woman done to thee (какое такое зло сделала тебе эта бедная женщина) that thou shouldst treat her in this wise (что ты должен обращаться с ней подобным образом)?'

41 And the Star-Child grew red with anger (а Звездный Мальчик побагровел от злости), and stamped his foot upon the ground, and said (и топнул ногой об землю и сказал), 'Who art thou to question me what I do (Кто тебе позволил спрашивать меня, что я делаю)? I am no son of thine to do thy bidding (я не сын тебе, чтобы делать, что ты требуешь).'

42 'Thou speakest truly,' answered the Woodcutter (ты говоришь правду – отвечал дровосек), 'yet did I show thee pity when I found thee in the forest (но я проявил сострадание к тебе, когда нашел тебя в лесу).'

43 And when the woman heard these words she gave a loud cry (когда женщина услышала эти слова она издала громкий вопль), and fell into a swoon (и упала в обморок). And the Woodcutter carried her to his own house (дровосек принес ее в свой дом), and his wife had care of her (и его жена позаботилась, ухаживала за ней), and when she rose up from the swoon into which she had fallen (и когда она очнулась от обморока, в который упала), they set meat and drink before her, and bade her have comfort (они поставили перед ней мясо (еду) и питье и пригласили чувствовать себя удобно).

44 But she would neither eat nor drink (но она не стала ни есть ни пить), but said to the Woodcutter (только сказала дровосеку), 'Didst thou not say that the child was found in the forest (не сказал ли ты, что ребенок был найден в лесу)? And was it not ten years from this day (и не случилось ли это десять лет назад)?'

45 And the Woodcutter answered (и дровосек ответил), 'Yea, it was in the forest that I found him, and it is ten years from this day (Да, это было в лесу, я нашел его и это было десять лет назад).'

46 'And what signs didst thou find with him?' she cried (Что-то было особенное (какие-то знаки), что ты нашел у него – вскрикнула она). 'Bare he not upon his neck a chain of amber (не было ли на его голой шее нитки янтаря)? Was not round him a cloak of gold tissue broidered with stars (не был ли он завернут в плащ, причудливо расписанный звездами)?'

47 'Truly,' answered the Woodcutter (Верно – ответил дровосек), 'it was even as thou sayest (все было так как ты сказала).' And he took the cloak and the amber chain from the chest where they lay (он вытащил плащ и нить из сундука, где они лежали), and showed them to her (и показал их ей).

48 And when she saw them she wept for joy, and said (когда она увидела их она заплакала от радости и сказала), 'He is my little son whom I lost in the forest (Он – мой

маленький сын, которого я потеряла в лесу). I pray thee send for him quickly (я молю тебя послать за ним побыстрее), for in search of him have I wandered over the whole world (чтобы найти его: «в поисках его» я странствовала по всему миру).'

49 So the Woodcutter and his wife went out and called to the Star-Child, and said to him (Тогда дровосек и его жена вышли и позвали звездного ребенка и сказали ему), 'Go into the house, and there shalt thou find thy mother, who is waiting for thee (Войди в дом и ты найдешь там свою мать, которая ждет тебя).'

50 So he ran in, filled with wonder and great gladness (Вот он вбежал, наполненный удивлением и великим счастьем). But when he saw her who was waiting there (но когда он увидел ту, что ожидала его), he laughed scornfully and said (он засмеялся пренебрежительно, с издевкой), 'Why, where is my mother (Ну и, где же моя мать)? For I see none here but this vile beggar-woman (Я не вижу никого кроме этой мерзкой нищенки).'

51 And the woman answered him, 'I am thy mother (Женщина ответила ему – Я твоя мать).'

52 'Thou art mad to say so (ты, должно быть сумасшедшая, если говоришь так),' cried the Star-Child angrily (вскричал Звездный Мальчик рассерженно). 'I am no son of thine (я не твой сын), for thou art a beggar, and ugly, and in rags (потому что ты нищенка, и уродлива и в обносках). Therefore get thee hence (поэтому уходи вон отсюда), and let me see thy foul face no more (и позволь мне никогда больше не видеть твое омерзительное лицо).'

53 'Nay, but thou art indeed my little son, whom I bare in the forest (Но ты должно быть в самом деле мой сын),' she cried, and she fell on her knees, and held out her arms to him (она плакала, упала на колени и протягивала свои руки к нему). 'The robbers stole thee from me (разбойники украли тебя у меня), and left thee to die (и оставили тебя умирать),' she murmured (она шептала), 'but I recognised thee when I saw thee (но я узнала тебя, когда увидала), and the signs also have I recognised (и узнала приметы), the cloak of golden tissue and the amber chain (плащ с золотой росписью и нитку янтаря). Therefore I pray thee come with me (поэтому я молю тебя пойти со мной), for over the whole world have I wandered in search of thee (потому что я странствовала по всему миру в поисках тебя). Come with me, my son, for I have need of thy love (Пошли со мной, мой сынок, ибо мне нужна твоя любовь).'

54 But the Star-Child stirred not from his place (но звездный ребенок не сдвинулся с места), but shut the doors of his heart against her (но "закрыл двери своего сердца от нее"), nor was there any sound heard save the sound of the woman weeping for pain (не было ни звука в ответ на рыдания женщины от душевной боли).

55 And at last he spoke to her, and his voice was hard and bitter (в конце концов он заговорил с ней, и его голос был жестким и резким). 'If in very truth thou art my mother,' he said (если ты и вправду моя мать – сказал он), 'it had been better hadst thou stayed away

(было бы лучше, если бы ты держалась подальше), and not come here to bring me to shame (и никогда не приходила сюда, чтобы опозорить меня), seeing that I thought I was the child of some Star (видишь, я думал, что я ребенок какой-то Звезды), and not a beggar's child (а не нищенки), as thou tellest me that I am (как ты говоришь я есть). Therefore get thee hence, and let me see thee no more (поэтому уходи отсюда и позволь мне больше никогда не видеть тебя).'

56 'Alas! my son,' she cried (О! Сын мой! – вскричала она), 'wilt thou not kiss me before I go (и ты даже не поцелуешь меня до того, как я уйду)? For I have suffered much to find thee (Ибо я испытала много чего, чтобы найти тебя).'

57 'Nay,' said the Star-Child (Нет, – сказал Звездный Мальчик), 'but thou art too foul to look at (ведь ты выглядишь такой грязной), and rather would I kiss the adder or the toad than thee (что лучше я поцелую гадюку или жабу, чем тебя).'

58 So the woman rose up, and went away into the forest weeping bitterly (И вот женщина поднялась и направилась прочь в лес горько рыдая), and when the Star-Child saw that she had gone, he was glad (Звездный Мальчик стал доволен, когда увидел, что она ушла), and ran back to his playmates that he might play with them (и убежал к своим товарищам чтобы играть с ними).

59 But when they beheld him coming (Но когда они разглядели его приближающимся), they mocked him and said (они высмеяли его и сказали), 'Why, thou art as foul as the toad (Ого, да ты такой же гадкий как жаба), and as loathsome as the adder (и такой же мерзкий как гадюка). Get thee hence (уйди отсюда), for we will not suffer thee to play with us (мы не позволим тебе играть с нами).'

60 And the Star-Child frowned and said to himself (тогда Звездный Мальчик насупился и сказал сам себе), 'What is this that they say to me (что это такое они говорят мне)? I will go to the well of water and look into it (пойду-ка я к роднику и загляну в воду), and it shall tell me of my beauty (и он скажет мне о моей красоте).'

61 So he went to the well of water (и он пошел к роднику с водой) and looked into it (и заглянул в него), and lo! his face was as the face of a toad (И вот! Его лицо было как жабя морда), and his body was sealed like an adder (и его тело было как у гадюки; seal – скреплять печатью, запечатывать). And he flung himself down on the grass and wept (он бросился на траву и зарыдал; fling-flung-flung; weep-wept-wept), and said to himself (и сказал сам себе), 'Surely this has come upon me by reason of my sin (Это далось мне за мой грех: «по причине моего греха»). For I have denied my mother (за то, что я отрекся от своей матери), and driven her away (и выгнал ее прочь; drive-drove-driven), and been proud, and cruel to her (и был горделив и безжалостен по отношению к ней). Wherefore I will go and seek her through the

whole world (Поэтому я пойду искать ее по миру), nor will I rest till I have found her (и не буду знать отдыха, пока не найду ее).'

62 And there came to him the little daughter of the Woodcutter (Тут к нему подошла маленька дочка дровосека), and she put her hand upon his shoulder and said (положила свою руку ему на плечо и сказала), 'What doth it matter if thou hast lost thy comeliness (что с того, что ты потерял свою привлекательность)? Stay with us, and I will not mock at thee (оставайся с нами, я никогда не буду насмехаться над тобой).'

63 And he said to her (и он сказал ей), 'Nay, but I have been cruel to my mother (нет, ведь я был жесток по отношению к моей матери), and as a punishment has this evil been sent to me (и это несчастье было послано мне как наказание). Wherefore I must go hence (поэтому я должен уйти отсюда, прочь), and wander through the world till I find her (и странствовать по миру, пока /не/ найду ее), and she give me her forgiveness (и пока она /не/ простит меня: «дать мне свое прощение»).'

64 So he ran away into the forest and called out to his mother to come to him (Итак, он убежал в лес и звал свою мать прийти к нему), but there was no answer (но ответа не было). All day long he called to her (он звал ее целый день), and, when the sun set he lay down to sleep on a bed of leaves (и, когда солнце село, он улегся спать на постель из листьев), and the birds and the animals fled from him (а птицы и животные спасались бегством от него; flee-fled-fled), for they remembered his cruelty (потому что они помнили его жестокость), and he was alone save for the toad that watched him (он был одинок, за исключением жабы, смотревшей на него), and the slow adder that crawled past (и гадюки, медленно проползавшей мимо).

65 And in the morning he rose up (утром он поднялся), and plucked some bitter berries from the trees and ate them (сорвал несколько горьких ягод с деревьев и съел их), and took his way through the great wood, weeping sorely (и пошел своим путем через огромный лес, тягостно, мучительно рыдая). And of everything that he met he made inquiry if perchance they had seen his mother (У всех, кто встречался ему на пути, он расспрашивал, не видали ли они случайно его мать).

66 He said to the Mole (он сказал кроту), 'Thou canst go beneath the earth (ты можешь передвигаться под землей). Tell me, is my mother there (скажи мне, моя мать там)?'

67 And the Mole answered, 'Thou hast blinded mine eyes. How should I know (Крот ответил – Ты ослепил мне глаза. Откуда мне знать)?'

68 He said to the Linnet (он сказал коноплянке), 'Thou canst fly over the tops of the tall trees, and canst see the whole world (ты можешь летать над вершинами высоких деревьев и можешь видеть весь мир). Tell me, canst thou see my mother (скажи мне, ты видишь мою мать)?'

69 And the Linnet answered (и коноплянка ответила), 'Thou hast clipt my wings for thy pleasure. How should I fly (ты обрезал мне крылья для своего развлечения. Как я могу летать)?'

70 And to the little Squirrel who lived in the fir-tree, and was lonely (и у маленькой белки, жившей на елке в полном одиночестве), he said, 'Where is my mother (он спросил – где моя мать)?'

71 And the Squirrel answered (белка ответила), 'Thou hast slain mine. Dost thou seek to slay thine also (ты убил мою. Хочешь: «ищешь, собираешься» убить и свою)?'

72 And the Star-Child wept and bowed his head (Звездный Мальчик плакал и склонил свою голову), and prayed forgiveness of God's things (и просил прощения у Божьих тварей), and went on through the forest, seeking for the beggar-woman (и продолжал идти через лес в поисках женщины-нищенки). And on the third day he came to the other side of the forest and went down into the plain (На третий день он вышел на другую сторону леса и спустился на равнину).

73 And when he passed through the villages the children mocked him (когда он проходил через деревни, дети насмеялись над ним), and threw stones at him (бросали в него камни), and the carlots would not suffer him even to sleep in the byres (крестьяне не позволяли ему даже переночевать в коровнике) lest he might bring mildew on the stored corn (потому что боялись как бы он не принес плесень на хранящееся сено), so foul was he to look at (так отвратительно он выглядел), and their hired men drave him away (и их наемные работники прогоняли его прочь), and there was none who had pity on him (и не было никого, кто бы пожалел его). Nor could he hear anywhere of the beggar-woman who was his mother (И нигде он не слышал ничего о нищенке, которая была его матерью), though for the space of three years he wandered over the world (хотя в течение трех лет странствовал по миру), and often seemed to see her on the road in front of him (часто ему казалось, что он видит ее на дороге впереди себя), and would call to her (он звал ее), and run after her till the sharp flints made his feet to bleed (и бежал за ней пока твердые острые камни не разбивали его ноги в кровь; flint – кремьень). But overtake her he could not (Но он не мог догнать ее), and those who dwelt by the way (и те, кто жил у дороги; dwell-dwelt-dwelt – проживать) did ever deny that they had seen her (отрицали даже, что видели ее), or any like to her (или кого-либо похожего на нее), and they made sport of his sorrow (и забавлялись над его скорбью).

74 For the space of three years he wandered over the world (Три года он бродил по миру), and in the world there was neither love nor loving-kindness nor charity for him (и в мире не было ни любви, ни доброты, ни милосердия для него), but it was even such a world (но это была такая жизнь) as he had made for himself in the days of his great pride (какую он сотворил сам в дни своей великой гордыни).

75 And one evening he came to the gate of a strong-walled city (в один из вечеров он вошел в ворота города, окруженного высокой крепостной стеной) that stood by a river (стоявшего на берегу реки), and, weary and footsore though he was (и, хотя он был изнурен и ноги его были стерты), he made to enter in (он направился, чтобы войти). But the soldiers who stood on guard (но солдаты, стоявшие на страже) dropped their halberds across the entrance (перекрестили свои алебарды на входе), and said roughly to him (и грубо сказали ему), 'What is thy business in the city (Что за дела у тебя в городе)?'

76 'I am seeking for my mother,' he answered (я ищу свою мать – он ответил), 'and I pray ye to suffer me to pass (и я умоляю вас пропустить меня), for it may be that she is in this city (ибо, может быть, она в этом городе).'

77 But they mocked at him (Но они высмеяли его), and one of them wagged a black beard (и один из них взмахнул, покачал черной бородой), and set down his shield and cried (опустил свой щит и воскликнул), 'Of a truth (по правде говоря), thy mother will not be merry when she sees thee (твоя мать не будет рада тебя видеть), for thou art more ill-favoured than the toad of the marsh (поскольку ты более некрасивый, чем болотная жаба), or the adder that crawls in the fen (или гадюка, ползающая в болоте). Get thee gone. Get thee gone (Убирайся вон). Thy mother dwells not in this city (Твоя мать не живет в этом городе).'

78 And another, who held a yellow banner in his hand, said to him (А другой, который держал желтый флаг в руках, сказал ему), 'Who is thy mother, and wherefore art thou seeking for her (А кто твоя мать, и почему ты ищешь ее)?'

79 And he answered, 'My mother is a beggar even as I am (он ответил – моя мать нищенка, как и я), and I have treated her evilly (я обошелся с ней зло), and I pray ye to suffer me to pass that she may give me her forgiveness (я я молю вас разрешить мне пройти, потому что она может даровать мне свое прощение), if it be that she tarrieth in this city (если так случилось, что она остановилась в этом городе; tarry – медлить, мешкать; пребывать, проживать).'

But they would not, and pricked him with their spears (но они не разрешили и стали колоть его своими копьями).

80 And, as he turned away weeping (Но когда он повернулся уходить, плача), one whose armour was inlaid with gilt flowers (некто, чьи доспехи были украшены позолоченным орнаментом), and on whose helmet crouched a lion that had wings (а на шлеме выгибался крылатый лев; crouch – припадать к земле, согнуться), came up and made inquiry of the soldiers (подошел и стал расспрашивать солдат) who it was who had sought entrance (кто это просил разрешения войти). And they said to him (они ответили ему), 'It is a beggar and the child of a beggar, and we have driven him away (Это попрошайка, и сын попрошайки и мы отправили его отсюда).'

81 'Nay,' he cried, laughing (нет! – вскрикнул он смеясь), 'but we will sell the foul thing for a slave (а мы продадим его как грязного раба), and his price shall be the price of a bowl of sweet wine (и его ценой будет цена кубка сладкого вина).'

82 And an old and evil-visaged man who was passing by called out, and said (И старый человек со злым лицом, который вышел на крик, сказал), 'I will buy him for that price (я покупаю его по этой цене),' and, when he had paid the price, he took the Star-Child by the hand and led him into the city (и, заплатив деньги, он взял звездного ребенка за руку и повел его в город).

83 And after that they had gone through many streets (после того, как они прошли много улиц) they came to a little door (они подошли к маленькой двери) that was set in a wall that was covered with a pomegranate tree (находившейся в стене, заросшей гранатовым деревом; cover – покрывать). And the old man touched the door with a ring of graven jasper and it opened (Пожилой мужчина коснулся двери кольцом из яшмы с гравировкой, и она открылась), and they went down five steps of brass into a garden (они спустились по пяти ступеням из желтой меди во двор) filled with black poppies and green jars of burnt clay (заполненный черными маками и зелеными сосудами из обожженной глины). And the old man took then from his turban a scarf of figured silk (пожилой мужчина снял со своего тюрбана шарф из узорного шелка), and bound with it the eyes of the Star-Child (и завязал им глаза звездного мальчика), and drove him in front of him (и повел его перед собой). And when the scarf was taken off his eyes (когда шарф был снят с его глаз), the Star-Child found himself in a dungeon (Звездный Мальчик обнаружил "себя", что он в темнице), that was lit by a lantern of horn (которая освещалась газовым рожком).

84 And the old man set before him some mouldy bread on a trencher and said, 'Eat,' (Пожилой человек поставил перед ним заплесневелый хлеб на подносе и сказал – Ешь) and some brackish water in a cup and said, 'Drink,' (и немного соленой воды и сказал – пей; brackish – соленый, солоноватый; противный /на вкус/) and when he had eaten and drunk (когда он поел и попил), the old man went out, locking the door behind him and fastening it with an iron chain (пожилой мужчина вышел, закрыл за собой дверь и скрепил ее железной цепью).

85 And on the morrow the old man (наутро этот пожилой мужчина), who was indeed the subtlest of the magicians of Libya (который на самом деле был искуснейшим волшебником Ливии) and had learned his art from one who dwelt in the tombs of the Nile (и научился своему искусству у того, кто обитал в могилах Нила), came in to him and frowned at him, and said (пришел к нему, хмуро посмотрел и сказал), 'In a wood that is nigh to the gate of this city of Giaours (В лесу, сразу за воротами этого города Гяуров) there are three pieces of gold (есть три куска золота). One is of white gold, and another is of yellow gold, and the gold of the third

one is red (Один из них белого золота, другой желтого и третий – красного). To-day thou shalt bring me the piece of white gold (сегодня ты должен принести мне кусок белого золота), and if thou bringest it not back (и если ты не принесешь его), I will beat thee with a hundred stripes (я побью тебя сотней плетей). Get thee away quickly (иди туда немедленно), and at sunset I will be waiting for thee at the door of the garden (а на закате я буду ждать тебя у калитки в сад). See that thou bringest the white gold (смотри, принеси белое золото), or it shall go ill with thee (а то тебе будет худо), for thou art my slave (ведь ты мой раб), and I have bought thee for the price of a bowl of sweet wine (я купил тебя по цене кубка сладкого вина). And he bound the eyes of the Star-Child with the scarf of figured silk (он завязал глаза звездного мальчика шарфом из узорного шелка), and led him through the house (провел его через дом), and through the garden of poppies (и через двор с маками), and up the five steps of brass (и пять ступенек из желтой меди вверх). And having opened the little door with his ring he set him in the street (и открыв калитку с помощью своего кольца, он вывел его на улицу).

86 And the Star-Child went out of the gate of the city (Звездный Мальчик вышел из ворот города), and came to the wood of which the Magician had spoken to him (и подошел к лесу, о котором говорил ему волшебник).

87 Now this wood was very fair to look at from without (этот лес выглядел очень красиво снаружи), and seemed full of singing birds and of sweet-scented flowers (и казался наполненным поющими птицами и душистыми цветами; scent – /приятный/ запах, аромат), and the Star-Child entered it gladly (Звездный Мальчик с удовольствием вошел в него). Yet did its beauty profit him little (но эта красота принесла ему (мальчику) мало пользы), for wherever he went harsh briars and thorns shot up from the ground and encompassed him (где бы он не шел, колючие кустарники вставали из земли и окружали его; shoot-shot-shot – стрелять; внезапно появляться), and evil nettles stung him (злая крапива жгла его; sting – колоть; жечь), and the thistle pierced him with her daggers (чертополох колол его своими колючками), so that he was in sore distress (что причиняло ему мучительный страдания; sore – больной, болезненный; distress – физическая боль, недомогание). Nor could he anywhere find the piece of white gold of which the Magician had spoken (и не мог он при этом нигде найти кусок белого золота, о котором говорил волшебник), though he sought for it from morn to noon (несмотря на то, что они искал его с утра до обеда; seek-sought-sought), and from noon to sunset (и с обеда до вечера). And at sunset he set his face towards home (и после заката он пошел, "направил свое лицо" домой), weeping bitterly (горько рыдая), for he knew what fate was in store for him (потому что он знал, какая доля ему уготована, "припасена").

88 But when he had reached the outskirts of the wood (но когда он достиг опушки леса), he heard from a thicket a cry as of some one in pain (он слышал доносившиеся из чащи рыдания, словно кому-то было очень больно). And forgetting his own sorrow he ran back to

the place (и, забыв свои собственные страдания, он побежал обратно к тому месту), and saw there a little Hare caught in a trap that some hunter had set for it (и увидел маленького зайца в силке, который поставил на него какой-то охотник).

89 And the Star-Child had pity on it (Звездный Мальчик пожалел его), and released it, and said to it (освободил его и сказал), 'I am myself but a slave, yet may I give thee thy freedom (Я сам лишь раб, но я могу дать тебе свободу).'

90 And the Hare answered him, and said (заяц ответил ему): 'Surely thou hast given me freedom, and what shall I give thee in return (верно, ты дал мне свободу а что я могу дать тебе взамен)?'

91 And the Star-Child said to it (Звездный Мальчик сказал ему), 'I am seeking for a piece of white gold, nor can I anywhere find it (я ищу кусок белого золота, но нигде не смог найти его), and if I bring it not to my master he will beat me (если я не принесу его моему хозяину, он побьет меня).'

92 'Come thou with me,' said the Hare (пошли со мной – сказал Заяц), 'and I will lead thee to it (я отведу тебя туда), for I know where it is hidden, and for what purpose (потому что я знаю, где оно спрятано и зачем: «для какой цели»).'

93 So the Star-Child went with the Hare (Итак, Звездный Мальчик пошел с зайцем), and lo! in the cleft of a great oak-tree he saw the piece of white gold that he was seeking (и ах! в расщелине огромного дуба он увидел кусок белого золота, который он искал). And he was filled with joy (он наполнился радостью), and seized it, and said to the Hare (схватил его и сказал Заяцу), 'The service that I did to thee thou hast rendered back again many times over (услугу, которую я оказал тебе ты возместил во много раз больше), and the kindness that I showed thee thou hast repaid a hundred-fold (и за доброту, которую я выказал тебе, ты переплатил в сто раз, сторицей).'

94 'Nay,' answered the Hare (нет, – ответил Заяц), 'but as thou dealt with me, so I did deal with thee (так же, как ты поступил со мной, так и я поступил с тобой),' and it ran away swiftly (и проворно убежал), and the Star-Child went towards the city (а Звездный Мальчик пошел к городу).

95 Now at the gate of the city there was seated one who was a leper (около ворот в этот раз сидел один прокаженный). Over his face hung a cowl of grey linen (над его лицом свисал капюшон из серого льна), and through the eyelets his eyes gleamed like red coals (и через отверстия его глаза светились, как красные угли). And when he saw the Star-Child coming (когда он увидел подходящего Звездного мальчика), he struck upon a wooden bowl (он стукнул по деревянной миске; strike-struck-struck/stricken), and clattered his bell (зазвонил своим колокольчиком; clatter – сильно греметь, грохотать), and called out to him, and said (позвал его и сказал), 'Give me a piece of money, or I must die of hunger (дай мне немного

денег, или я умру от голода). For they have thrust me out of the city, and there is no one who has pity on me (потому что меня выгнали из города, и никто не пожалел меня).'

96 'Alas!' cried the Star-Child (Увы! Заплакал Звездный Мальчик), 'I have but one piece of money in my wallet (у меня есть только одна монета в кошельке), and if I bring it not to my master he will beat me, for I am his slave (и если я не принесу ее своему хозяину, он избьет меня, потому что я его раб).'

97 But the leper entreated him, and prayed of him (но прокаженный умолял и упрашивал его), till the Star-Child had pity, and gave him the piece of white gold (до тех пор пока Звездный Мальчик не сжалился и не отдал ему кусок белого золота).

98 And when he came to the Magician's house, the Magician opened to him (Когда он подошел к дому Волшебника, тот открыл его), and brought him in, and said to him, 'Hast thou the piece of white gold (и впустил его и спросил – Нашел ли ты кусок белого золота)?' And the Star-Child answered, 'I have it not (Звездный Мальчик ответил – У меня его нет).'

So the Magician fell upon him, and beat him (тут Волшебник напал на него и стал его бить), and set before him an empty trencher, and said, 'Eat (поставил перед ним пустой поднос и сказал – Ешь!),' and an empty cup, and said, 'Drink (и пустую чашку и сказал – Пей),' and flung him again into the dungeon (и бросил его обратно в темницу).

99 And on the morrow the Magician came to him, and said (А утром волшебник пришел к нему и сказал), 'If to-day thou bringest me not the piece of yellow gold (если сегодня ты не принесешь мне кусок желтого золота), I will surely keep thee as my slave, and give thee three hundred stripes (я оставлю тебя своим рабом и ты получишь триста плетей).'

100 So the Star-Child went to the wood, and all day long he searched for the piece of yellow gold (Итак, Звездный мальчик пошел в лес, и целый день искал кусок желтого золота), but nowhere could he find it (но нигде не мог его найти). And at sunset he sat him down and began to weep (а на закате он сел и начал рыдать), and as he was weeping there came to him the little Hare that he had rescued from the trap (и, когда он плакал, к нему прибежал маленький Заяц, которого он спас из силка),

101 And the Hare said to him (Заяц сказал ему), 'Why art thou weeping? And what dost thou seek in the wood (Почему ты плачешь? И что ты ищешь в лесу)?'

102 And the Star-Child answered (ответил Звездный Мальчик), 'I am seeking for a piece of yellow gold that is hidden here (я ищу кусок желтого золота, спрятанный здесь), and if I find it not my master will beat me, and keep me as a slave (и если я не найду его, мой хозяин побьет меня и оставит меня рабом).'

103 'Follow me,' cried the Hare, and it ran through the wood till it came to a pool of water (следуй за мной – воскликнул Заяц и поскакал через лес, пока не добрался до водоема).

And at the bottom of the pool the piece of yellow gold was lying (на дне этого водоема лежал кусок желтого золота).

104 'How shall I thank thee?' said the Star-Child (как я могу отблагодарить тебя? – сказал Звездный Мальчик), 'for lo! this is the second time that you have succoured me (ведь ты уже второй раз пришел мне на помощь).'

105 'Nay, but thou hadst pity on me first (Нет, ведь ты первым сжалился надо мной),' said the Hare, and it ran away swiftly (сказал Заяц и быстро убежал).

106 And the Star-Child took the piece of yellow gold (Звездный Мальчик взял кусок желтого золота), and put it in his wallet (положил его в свою сумку), and hurried to the city (и поспешил к городу). But the leper saw him coming (но прокаженный увидал его), and ran to meet him, and knelt down and cried (побежал к нему навстречу, упал на колени и вскричал; kneel-knelt-knelt), 'Give me a piece of money or I shall die of hunger (дай мне немного денег, или я умру от голода).'

107 And the Star-Child said to him (и Звездный Мальчик ответил ему), 'I have in my wallet but one piece of yellow gold (у меня в сумке только один кусок золота), and if I bring it not to my master he will beat me and keep me as his slave (и если я не принесу его моему хозяину, он побьет меня и оставит своим рабом).'

108 But the leper entreated him sore, so that the Star-Child had pity on him, and gave him the piece of yellow gold (но прокаженный умолял его так горько, что Звездный Мальчик сжалился над ним и отдал ему кусок желтого золота).

109 And when he came to the Magician's house, the Magician opened to him, and brought him in, and said to him (когда он пришел к дому Волшебника, Волшебник открыл ему, впустил его и сказал), 'Hast thou the piece of yellow gold (есть ли у тебя кусок желтого золота)?' And the Star-Child said to him, 'I have it not (Звездный Мальчик ответил – нет).'

So the Magician fell upon him, and beat him (Тогда Волшебник напал на него и побил), and loaded him with chains, and cast him again into the dungeon (сковал его цепями и бросил его опять в темницу).

110 And on the morrow the Magician came to him, and said (наутро Волшебник пришел к нему и сказал), 'If to-day thou bringest me the piece of red gold I will set thee free, but if thou bringest it not I will surely slay thee (Если сегодня ты принесешь мне кусок красного золота, я освобожу тебя, если нет – я непременно убью тебя).'

111 So the Star-Child went to the wood, and all day long he searched for the piece of red gold, but nowhere could he find it (и Звездный Мальчик пошел в лес и весь день искал кусок красного золота, но нигде не мог найти его). And at evening he sat him down and wept, and as he was weeping there came to him the little Hare (А вечером он сел и заплакал и в это время к нему прибежал маленький Заяц).

112 And the Hare said to him (Заяц сказал ему), 'The piece of red gold that thou seekest is in the cavern that is behind thee (кусок красного золота, который ты ищешь находится в пещере, которая за тобой). Therefore weep no more but be glad (поэтому перестань плакать, а радуйся).'

113 'How shall I reward thee (как я могу вознаградить тебя)?' cried the Star-Child, 'for lo! this is the third time thou hast succoured me (потому что ты уже в третий раз помогаешь мне).'

114 'Nay, but thou hadst pity on me first (ничего, ведь ты пожалел меня первым),' said the Hare, and it ran away swiftly (сказал Заяц и быстро убежал).

115 And the Star-Child entered the cavern (Звездный Мальчик вошел в пещеру), and in its farthest corner he found the piece of red gold (и в самом дальнем ее углу он нашел кусок красного золота). So he put it in his wallet, and hurried to the city (он положил его в свою суму и заспешил обратно к городу). And the leper seeing him coming (И прокаженный увидел его), stood in the centre of the road (встал посреди дороги), and cried out, and said to him (и стал кричать ему), 'Give me the piece of red money, or I must die (Дай мне кусок красного золота или я умру),' and the Star-Child had pity on him again (Звездный Мальчик опять сжалился над ним), and gave him the piece of red gold, saying (и отдал ему кусок красного золота, говоря), 'Thy need is greater than mine (Ты нуждаешься в нем больше, чем я).' Yet was his heart heavy (у него было тяжело на сердце), for he knew what evil fate awaited him (потому что он знал, какая злая судьба его ожидает).

116 But lo! as he passed through the gate of the city (но вот /удивительно! Когда он проходил через ворота города), the guards bowed down and made obeisance to him (охранники поклонились и оказывали почтение ему; obeisance – подчинение, знаки почтения), saying, 'How beautiful is our lord (говоря – Как прекрасен наш господин)!' and a crowd of citizens followed him (и толпы жителей шли за ним и кричали), and cried out, 'Surely there is none so beautiful in the whole world (в самом деле, нет никого прекрасней в целом мире)!' so that the Star-Child wept, and said to himself (так, что он расплакался и сказал себе), 'They are mocking me (они насмеются надо мной), and making light of my misery (и забавляются над моим убожеством, над моей бедой).'

And so large was the concourse of the people (так велико было скопление народа), that he lost the threads of his way (что он потерял дорогу, "нити пути"), and found himself at last in a great square (и очутился в конце концов на огромной площади), in which there was a palace of a King (на которой находился дворец Короля).

117 And the gate of the palace opened (ворота дворца открылись), and the priests and the high officers (и священник и высшие чины города) of the city ran forth to meet him (выбежали ему навстречу), and they abased themselves before him (они преклонились перед ним; abase – выражать смирение, покорность), and said, 'Thou art our lord for whom we have

been waiting, and the son of our King (ты наш господин, которого мы ждали, и сын нашего Короля).'

118 And the Star-Child answered them and said, 'I am no king's son, but the child of a poor beggar-woman (я не королевский сын, я ребенок бедной попрошайки). And how say ye that I am beautiful, for I know that I am evil to look at (Как вы можете говорить, что я прекрасен, если я знаю, что я ужасен на вид)?'

119 Then he, whose armour was inlaid with gilt flowers (тогда тот, чьи доспехи были украшены позолоченными узорами), and on whose helmet crouched a lion that had wings (на чьем шлеме был припавший к земле крылатый лев; crouch – припадать к земле, согнуться), held up a shield, and cried (воздел щит и вскричал), 'How saith my lord that he is not beautiful (как может говорить мой господин, что он не прекрасен)?'

120 And the Star-Child looked, and lo! his face was even as it had been (Звездный Мальчик глянул и ах! его лицо было таким же как и раньше), and his comeliness had come back to him (его привлекательность вернулась к нему), and he saw that in his eyes which he had not seen there before (и он увидел что-то в своих глазах, чего не было до этого).

121 And the priests and the high officers knelt down and said to him (священник и высшие чины преклонились перед ним), 'It was prophesied of old that on this day (было предсказано давно, что в этот день) should come he who was to rule over us (должен прийти ты, чтобы управлять нами). Therefore, let our lord take this crown and this sceptre (поэтому, изволь взять эту корону и этот скипетр), and be in his justice and mercy our King over us (и будь в своей справедливости и милосердии нашем Королем).'

122 But he said to them, 'I am not worthy, for I have denied the mother who bare me (Я не достоин, потому что я отверг мать, которая родила меня; bare = borne – устар.; bear-borne – нести; родить), nor may I rest till I have found her (не могу я /ус/покоиться, пока не найду ее), and known her forgiveness (и не познаю ее прощение, не буду прощен). Therefore, let me go, for I must wander again over the world (поэтому разрешите мне уйти, так как я должен отправиться опять странствовать по всему миру), and may not tarry here (и не могу оставаться здесь), though ye bring me the crown and the sceptre (несмотря на то, что вы вручили мне корону и скипетр).'

And as he spake he turned his face from them towards the street that led to the gate of the city (и, когда он сказал это, он отвернулся от них и повернул свое лицо к дороге, ведущей к воротам города), and lo! amongst the crowd that pressed round the soldiers (и вот! Среди толпы, сгрудившейся вокруг солдат), he saw the beggar-woman who was his mother (он увидел нищенку, которая была его матерью), and at her side stood the leper, who had sat by the road (и рядом с ней стоял прокаженный, который /раньше/ сидел у дороги; stand-stood-stood).

123 And a cry of joy broke from his lips (крик радости сорвался с его уст: break-broke-broken), and he ran over (и он побежал туда), and kneeling down he kissed the wounds on his mother's feet (упав на колени он целовал раны на ногах своей матери), and wet them with his tears (смачивая их своими слезами). He bowed his head in the dust (он склонил свою голову в дорожную пыль), and sobbing, as one whose heart might break (и рыдая, как человек, у которого вот-вот может разбиться сердце), he said to her: 'Mother, I denied thee in the hour of my pride (Мама, я отверг тебя в час моей гордости). Accept me in the hour of my humility (прими меня в час моего смирения). Mother, I gave thee hatred (я дал тебе ненависть). Do thou give me love (дай мне любовь). Mother, I rejected thee (я отверг тебя /как недостойную/). Receive thy child now (теперь получи своего ребенка).' But the beggar-woman answered him not a word (Но нищенка не ответила ему ни слова).

124 And he reached out his hands, and clasped the white feet of the leper (он протянул свои руки и ухватился за бледные ноги прокаженного), and said to him: 'Thrice did I give thee of my mercy (я трижды выказал тебе мое милосердие). Bid my mother speak to me once (попроси мою мать поговорить со мной один раз).' But the leper answered him not a word (но прокаженный не ответил ему ни слова).

125 And he sobbed again and said (он зарыдал опять и сказал): 'Mother, my suffering is greater than I can bear (Мама, мое страдание больше, чем я могу вынести). Give me thy forgiveness, and let me go back to the forest (дай мне свое прощение и позволь уйти обратно в лес).' And the beggar-woman put her hand on his head, and said to him, 'Rise,' (Нищенка положила свою руку ему на голову и сказала — Встань) and the leper put his hand on his head, and said to him, 'Rise,' also (и прокаженный также положил свою руку ему на голову и сказал ему — Встань!).

126 And he rose up from his feet, and looked at them, and lo! they were a King and a Queen (Он поднялся на ноги и взглянул на них и смотри! Они оказались Королем и Королевой).

127 And the Queen said to him, 'This is thy father whom thou hast succoured (Это твой отец, которому ты помог).'

128 And the King said, 'This is thy mother whose feet thou hast washed with thy tears (Это твоя мать, чьи ноги ты омыл своими слезами).' And they fell on his neck and kissed him (они упали в его объятия и целовали его), and brought him into the palace and clothed him in fair raiment (доставили его во дворец и одели его в прекрасные одеяния), and set the crown upon his head (возложили корону ему на голову), and the sceptre in his hand (и вложили скипетр ему в руку), and over the city that stood by the river he ruled (и он управлял городом, стоящим на реке), and was its lord (и был его господином). Much justice and mercy did he show to all (много справедливости и милосердия выказывал он всем), and the evil Magician

he banished (злого Волшебника он изгнал), and to the Woodcutter and his wife he sent many rich gifts (Дровосеку и его жене он послал много богатых подарков; send-sent-sent), and to their children he gave high honour (и их детей он удостоил высокой чести, дал почет). Nor would he suffer any to be cruel to bird or beast (никому он не позволял быть жестоким к птицам и зверям), but taught love and loving-kindness and charity (но учил любви, душевной доброте и милосердию), and to the poor he gave bread, and to the naked he gave raiment (он давал беднякам и обездоленным хлеб и одежду; naked – нагой), and there was peace and plenty in the land (и был мир и изобилие были в /его/ стране).

129 Yet ruled he not long, so great had been his suffering (но правил он недолго, так велики были его страдания), and so bitter the fire of his testing (и такими тяжелыми, горькими его испытания), for after the space of three years he died (что он умер через три года). And he who came after him ruled evilly (А пришедший после него правил дурно).

The Star-Child

1 ONCE upon a time two poor Woodcutters were making their way home through a great pine-forest. It was winter, and a night of bitter cold. The snow lay thick upon the ground, and upon the branches of the trees: the frost kept snapping the little twigs on either side of them, as they passed: and when they came to the Mountain-Torrent she was hanging motionless in air, for the Ice-King had kissed her.

2 So cold was it that even the animals and the birds did not know what to make of it.

3 'Ugh!' snarled the Wolf, as he limped through the brushwood with his tail between his legs, 'this is perfectly monstrous weather. Why doesn't the Government look to it?'

4 'Weet! weet! weet!' twittered the green Linnets, 'the old Earth is dead and they have laid her out in her white shroud.'

5 'The Earth is going to be married, and this is her bridal dress,' whispered the Turtle-doves to each other. Their little pink feet were quite frost-bitten, but they felt that it was their duty to take a romantic view of the situation.

6 'Nonsense!' growled the Wolf. 'I tell you that it is all the fault of the Government, and if you don't believe me I shall eat you.' The Wolf had a thoroughly practical mind, and was never at a loss for a good argument.

7 'Well, for my own part,' said the Woodpecker, who was a born philosopher, 'I don't care an atomic theory for explanations. If a thing is so, it is so, and at present it is terribly cold.'

8 Terribly cold it certainly was. The little Squirrels, who lived inside the tall fir-tree, kept rubbing each other's noses to keep themselves warm, and the Rabbits curled themselves up in their holes, and did not venture even to look out of doors. The only people who seemed to enjoy it were the great horned Owls. Their feathers were quite stiff with rime, but they did not mind, and they rolled their large yellow eyes, and called out to each other across the forest, 'Tu-whit! Tu-whoo! Tu-whit! Tu-whoo! what delightful weather we are having!'

9 On and on went the two Woodcutters, blowing lustily upon their fingers, and stamping with their huge iron-shod boots upon the caked snow. Once they sank into a deep drift, and came out as white as millers are, when the stones are grinding; and once they slipped on the hard smooth ice where the marsh-water was frozen, and their faggots fell out of their bundles, and they had to pick them up and bind them together again; and once they thought that they had lost their way, and a great terror seized on them, for they knew that the Snow is cruel to those who sleep in her arms. But they put their trust in the good Saint Martin, who watches over all travellers, and retraced their steps, and went warily, and at last they reached the outskirts of the forest, and saw, far down in the valley beneath them, the lights of the village in which they dwelt.

10 So overjoyed were they at their deliverance that they laughed aloud, and the Earth seemed to them like a flower of silver, and the Moon like a flower of gold.

11 Yet, after that they had laughed they became sad, for they remembered their poverty, and one of them said to the other, 'Why did we make merry, seeing that life is for the rich, and not for such as we are? Better that we had died of cold in the forest, or that some wild beast had fallen upon us and slain us.'

12 'Truly,' answered his companion, 'much is given to some, and little is given to others. Injustice has parcelled out the world, nor is there equal division of aught save of sorrow.'

13 But as they were bewailing their misery to each other this strange thing happened. There fell from heaven a very bright and beautiful star. It slipped down the side of the sky, passing by the other stars in its course, and, as they watched it wondering, it seemed to them to sink behind a clump of willow-trees that stood hard by a little sheepfold no more than a stone's-throw away.

14 'Why! there is a cove of gold for whoever finds it,' they cried, and they set to and ran, so eager were they for the gold.

15 And one of them ran faster than his mate, and outstripped him, and forced his way through the willows, and came out on the other side, and lo! there was indeed a thing of gold lying on the white snow. So he hastened towards it, and stooping down placed his hands upon it, and it was a cloak of golden tissue, curiously wrought with stars, and wrapped in many folds. And he cried out to his comrade that he had found the treasure that had fallen from the sky, and when his comrade had come up, they sat them down in the snow, and loosened the folds of the cloak that

they might divide the pieces of gold. But, alas! no gold was in it, nor silver, nor, indeed, treasure of any kind, but only a little child who was asleep.

16 And one of them said to the other: 'This is a bitter ending to our hope, nor have we any good fortune, for what doth a child profit to a man? Let us leave it here, and go our way, seeing that we are poor men, and have children of our own whose bread we may not give to another.'

17 But his companion answered him: 'Nay, but it were an evil thing to leave the child to perish here in the snow, and though I am as poor as thou art, and have many mouths to feed, and but little in the pot, yet will I bring it home with me, and my wife shall have care of it.'

18 So very tenderly he took up the child, and wrapped the cloak around it to shield it from the harsh cold, and made his way down the hill to the village, his comrade marvelling much at his foolishness and softness of heart.

19 And when they came to the village, his comrade said to him, 'Thou hast the child, therefore give me the cloak, for it is meet that we should share.'

20 But he answered him: 'Nay, for the cloak is neither mine nor thine, but the child's only,' and he bade him Godspeed, and went to his own house and knocked.

21 And when his wife opened the door and saw that her husband had returned safe to her, she put her arms round his neck and kissed him, and took from his back the bundle of faggots, and brushed the snow off his boots, and bade him come in.

22 But he said to her, 'I have found something in the forest, and I have brought it to thee to have care of it,' and he stirred not from the threshold.

23 'What is it?' she cried. 'Show it to me, for the house is bare, and we have need of many things.' And he drew the cloak back, and showed her the sleeping child.

24 'Alack, goodman!' she murmured, 'have we not children of our own, that thou must needs bring a changeling to sit by the hearth? And who knows if it will not bring us bad fortune? And how shall we tend it?' And she was wroth against him.

25 'Nay, but it is a Star-Child,' he answered; and he told her the strange manner of the finding of it.

26 But she would not be appeased, but mocked at him, and spoke angrily, and cried: 'Our children lack bread, and shall we feed the child of another? Who is there who careth for us? And who giveth us food?'

27 'Nay, but God careth for the sparrows even, and feedeth them,' he answered.

28 'Do not the sparrows die of hunger in the winter?' she asked. 'And is it not winter now?'

29 And the man answered nothing, but stirred not from the threshold.

30 And a bitter wind from the forest came in through the open door, and made her tremble, and she shivered, and said to him: 'Wilt thou not close the door? There cometh a bitter wind into the house, and I am cold.'

31 'Into a house where a heart is hard cometh there not always a bitter wind?' he asked. And the woman answered him nothing, but crept closer to the fire.

32 And after a time she turned round and looked at him, and her eyes were full of tears. And he came in swiftly, and placed the child in her arms, and she kissed it, and laid it in a little bed where the youngest of their own children was lying. And on the morrow the Woodcutter took the curious cloak of gold and placed it in a great chest, and a chain of amber that was round the child's neck his wife took and set it in the chest also.

33 So the Star-Child was brought up with the children of the Woodcutter, and sat at the same board with them, and was their playmate. And every year he became more beautiful to look at, so that all those who dwelt in the village were filled with wonder, for, while they were swarthy and black-haired, he was white and delicate as sawn ivory, and his curls were like the rings of the daffodil. His lips, also, were like the petals of a red flower, and his eyes were like violets by a river of pure water, and his body like the narcissus of a field where the mower comes not.

34 Yet did his beauty work him evil. For he grew proud, and cruel, and selfish. The children of the Woodcutter, and the other children of the village, he despised, saying that they were of mean parentage, while he was noble, being sprang from a Star, and he made himself master over them, and called them his servants. No pity had he for the poor, or for those who were blind or maimed or in any way afflicted, but would cast stones at them and drive them forth on to the highway, and bid them beg their bread elsewhere, so that none save the outlaws came twice to that village to ask for alms. Indeed, he was as one enamoured of beauty, and would mock at the weakly and ill-favoured, and make jest of them; and himself he loved, and in summer, when the winds were still, he would lie by the well in the priest's orchard and look down at the marvel of his own face, and laugh for the pleasure he had in his fairness.

35 Often did the Woodcutter and his wife chide him, and say: 'We did not deal with thee as thou dealest with those who are left desolate, and have none to succour them. Wherefore art thou so cruel to all who need pity?'

36 Often did the old priest send for him, and seek to teach him the love of living things, saying to him: 'The fly is thy brother. Do it no harm. The wild birds that roam through the forest have their freedom. Snare them not for thy pleasure. God made the blind-worm and the mole, and each has its place. Who art thou to bring pain into God's world? Even the cattle of the field praise Him.'

37 But the Star-Child heeded not their words, but would frown and flout, and go back to his companions, and lead them. And his companions followed him, for he was fair, and fleet of foot, and could dance, and pipe, and make music. And wherever the Star-Child led them they followed, and whatever the Star-Child bade them do, that did they. And when he pierced with a sharp reed

the dim eyes of the mole, they laughed, and when he cast stones at the leper they laughed also. And in all things he ruled them, and they became hard of heart even as he was.

38 Now there passed one day through the village a poor beggar-woman. Her garments were torn and ragged, and her feet were bleeding from the rough road on which she had travelled, and she was in very evil plight. And being weary she sat her down under a chestnut-tree to rest.

39 But when the Star-Child saw her, he said to his companions, 'See! There sitteth a foul beggar-woman under that fair and green-leaved tree. Come, let us drive her hence, for she is ugly and ill-favoured.'

40 So he came near and threw stones at her, and mocked her, and she looked at him with terror in her eyes, nor did she move her gaze from him. And when the Woodcutter, who was cleaving logs in a haggard hard by, saw what the Star-Child was doing, he ran up and rebuked him, and said to him: 'Surely thou art hard of heart and knowest not mercy, for what evil has this poor woman done to thee that thou shouldst treat her in this wise?'

41 And the Star-Child grew red with anger, and stamped his foot upon the ground, and said, 'Who art thou to question me what I do? I am no son of thine to do thy bidding.'

42 'Thou speakest truly,' answered the Wood-cutter, 'yet did I show thee pity when I found thee in the forest.'

43 And when the woman heard these words she gave a loud cry, and fell into a swoon. And the Woodcutter carried her to his own house, and his wife had care of her, and when she rose up from the swoon into which she had fallen, they set meat and drink before her, and bade her have comfort.

44 But she would neither eat nor drink, but said to the Woodcutter, 'Didst thou not say that the child was found in the forest? And was it not ten years from this day?'

45 And the Woodcutter answered, 'Yea, it was in the forest that I found him, and it is ten years from this day.'

46 'And what signs didst thou find with him?' she cried. 'Bare he not upon his neck a chain of amber? Was not round him a cloak of gold tissue broidered with stars?'

47 'Truly,' answered the Woodcutter, 'it was even as thou sayest.' And he took the cloak and the amber chain from the chest where they lay, and showed them to her.

48 And when she saw them she wept for joy, and said, 'He is my little son whom I lost in the forest. I pray thee send for him quickly, for in search of him have I wandered over the whole world.'

49 So the Woodcutter and his wife went out and called to the Star-Child, and said to him, 'Go into the house, and there shalt thou find thy mother, who is waiting for thee.'

50 So he ran in, filled with wonder and great gladness. But when he saw her who was waiting there, he laughed scornfully and said, 'Why, where is my mother? For I see none here but this vile beggar-woman.'

51 And the woman answered him, 'I am thy mother.'

52 'Thou art mad to say so,' cried the Star-Child angrily. 'I am no son of thine, for thou art a beggar, and ugly, and in rags. Therefore get thee hence, and let me see thy foul face no more.'

53 'Nay, but thou art indeed my little son, whom I bare in the forest,' she cried, and she fell on her knees, and held out her arms to him. 'The robbers stole thee from me, and left thee to die,' she murmured, 'but I recognised thee when I saw thee, and the signs also have I recognised, the cloak of golden tissue and the amber chain. Therefore I pray thee come with me, for over the whole world have I wandered in search of thee. Come with me, my son, for I have need of thy love.'

54 But the Star-Child stirred not from his place, but shut the doors of his heart against her, nor was there any sound heard save the sound of the woman weeping for pain.

55 And at last he spoke to her, and his voice was hard and bitter. 'If in very truth thou art my mother,' he said, 'it had been better hadst thou stayed away, and not come here to bring me to shame, seeing that I thought I was the child of some Star, and not a beggar's child, as thou tellest me that I am. Therefore get thee hence, and let me see thee no more.'

56 'Alas! my son,' she cried, 'wilt thou not kiss me before I go? For I have suffered much to find thee.'

57 'Nay,' said the Star-Child, 'but thou art too foul to look at, and rather would I kiss the adder or the toad than thee.'

58 So the woman rose up, and went away into the forest weeping bitterly, and when the Star-Child saw that she had gone, he was glad, and ran back to his playmates that he might play with them.

59 But when they beheld him coming, they mocked him and said, 'Why, thou art as foul as the toad, and as loathsome as the adder. Get thee hence, for we will not suffer thee to play with us,' and they drove him out of the garden.

60 And the Star-Child frowned and said to himself, 'What is this that they say to me? I will go to the well of water and look into it, and it shall tell me of my beauty.'

61 So he went to the well of water and looked into it, and lo! his face was as the face of a toad, and his body was sealed like an adder. And he flung himself down on the grass and wept, and said to himself, 'Surely this has come upon me by reason of my sin. For I have denied my mother, and driven her away, and been proud, and cruel to her. Wherefore I will go and seek her through the whole world, nor will I rest till I have found her.'

62 And there came to him the little daughter of the Woodcutter, and she put her hand upon his shoulder and said, 'What doth it matter if thou hast lost thy comeliness? Stay with us, and I will not mock at thee.'

63 And he said to her, 'Nay, but I have been cruel to my mother, and as a punishment has this evil been sent to me. Wherefore I must go hence, and wander through the world till I find her, and she give me her forgiveness.'

64 So he ran away into the forest and called out to his mother to come to him, but there was no answer. All day long he called to her, and, when the sun set he lay down to sleep on a bed of leaves, and the birds and the animals fled from him, for they remembered his cruelty, and he was alone save for the toad that watched him, and the slow adder that crawled past.

65 And in the morning he rose up, and plucked some bitter berries from the trees and ate them, and took his way through the great wood, weeping sorely. And of everything that he met he made inquiry if perchance they had seen his mother.

66 He said to the Mole, 'Thou canst go beneath the earth. Tell me, is my mother there?'

67 And the Mole answered, 'Thou hast blinded mine eyes. How should I know?'

68 He said to the Linnet, 'Thou canst fly over the tops of the tall trees, and canst see the whole world. Tell me, canst thou see my mother?'

69 And the Linnet answered, 'Thou hast clipt my wings for thy pleasure. How should I fly?'

70 And to the little Squirrel who lived in the fir-tree, and was lonely, he said, 'Where is my mother?'

71 And the Squirrel answered, 'Thou hast slain mine. Dost thou seek to slay thine also?'

72 And the Star-Child wept and bowed his head, and prayed forgiveness of God's things, and went on through the forest, seeking for the beggar-woman. And on the third day he came to the other side of the forest and went down into the plain.

73 And when he passed through the villages the children mocked him, and threw stones at him, and the carlots would not suffer him even to sleep in the byres lest he might bring mildew on the stored corn, so foul was he to look at, and their hired men drave him away, and there was none who had pity on him. Nor could he hear anywhere of the beggar-woman who was his mother, though for the space of three years he wandered over the world, and often seemed to see her on the road in front of him, and would call to her, and run after her till the sharp flints made his feet to bleed. But overtake her he could not, and those who dwelt by the way did ever deny that they had seen her, or any like to her, and they made sport of his sorrow.

74 For the space of three years he wandered over the world, and in the world there was neither love nor loving-kindness nor charity for him, but it was even such a world as he had made for himself in the days of his great pride.

75 And one evening he came to the gate of a strong-walled city that stood by a river, and, weary and footsore though he was, he made to enter in. But the soldiers who stood on guard dropped their halberts across the entrance, and said roughly to him, 'What is thy business in the city?'

76 'I am seeking for my mother,' he answered, 'and I pray ye to suffer me to pass, for it may be that she is in this city.'

77 But they mocked at him, and one of them wagged a black beard, and set down his shield and cried, 'Of a truth, thy mother will not be merry when she sees thee, for thou art more ill-favoured than the toad of the marsh, or the adder that crawls in the fen. Get thee gone. Get thee gone. Thy mother dwells not in this city.'

78 And another, who held a yellow banner in his hand, said to him, 'Who is thy mother, and wherefore art thou seeking for her?'

79 And he answered, 'My mother is a beggar even as I am, and I have treated her evilly, and I pray ye to suffer me to pass that she may give me her forgiveness, if it be that she tarrieth in this city.' But they would not, and pricked him with their spears.

80 And, as he turned away weeping, one whose armour was inlaid with gilt flowers, and on whose helmet couched a lion that had wings, came up and made inquiry of the soldiers who it was who had sought entrance. And they said to him, 'It is a beggar and the child of a beggar, and we have driven him away.'

81 'Nay,' he cried, laughing, 'but we will sell the foul thing for a slave, and his price shall be the price of a bowl of sweet wine.'

82 And an old and evil-visaged man who was passing by called out, and said, 'I will buy him for that price,' and, when he had paid the price, he took the Star-Child by the hand and led him into the city.

83 And after that they had gone through many streets they came to a little door that was set in a wall that was covered with a pomegranate tree. And the old man touched the door with a ring of graven jasper and it opened, and they went down five steps of brass into a garden filled with black poppies and green jars of burnt clay. And the old man took then from his turban a scarf of figured silk, and bound with it the eyes of the Star-Child, and drove him in front of him. And when the scarf was taken off his eyes, the Star-Child found himself in a dungeon, that was lit by a lantern of horn.

84 And the old man set before him some mouldy bread on a trencher and said, 'Eat,' and some brackish water in a cup and said, 'Drink,' and when he had eaten and drunk, the old man went out, locking the door behind him and fastening it with an iron chain.

85 And on the morrow the old man, who was indeed the subtlest of the magicians of Libya and had learned his art from one who dwelt in the tombs of the Nile, came in to him and frowned

at him, and said, 'In a wood that is nigh to the gate of this city of Giaours there are three pieces of gold. One is of white gold, and another is of yellow gold, and the gold of the third one is red. To-day thou shalt bring me the piece of white gold, and if thou bringest it not back, I will beat thee with a hundred stripes. Get thee away quickly, and at sunset I will be waiting for thee at the door of the garden. See that thou bringest the white gold, or it shall go ill with thee, for thou art my slave, and I have bought thee for the price of a bowl of sweet wine.' And he bound the eyes of the Star-Child with the scarf of figured silk, and led him through the house, and through the garden of poppies, and up the five steps of brass. And having opened the little door with his ring he set him in the street.

86 And the Star-Child went out of the gate of the city, and came to the wood of which the Magician had spoken to him.

87 Now this wood was very fair to look at from without, and seemed full of singing birds and of sweet-scented flowers, and the Star-Child entered it gladly. Yet did its beauty profit him little, for wherever he went harsh briars and thorns shot up from the ground and encompassed him, and evil nettles stung him, and the thistle pierced him with her daggers, so that he was in sore distress. Nor could he anywhere find the piece of white gold of which the Magician had spoken, though he sought for it from morn to noon, and from noon to sunset. And at sunset he set his face towards home, weeping bitterly, for he knew what fate was in store for him.

88 But when he had reached the outskirts of the wood, he heard from a thicket a cry as of some one in pain. And forgetting his own sorrow he ran back to the place, and saw there a little Hare caught in a trap that some hunter had set for it.

89 And the Star-Child had pity on it, and released it, and said to it, 'I am myself but a slave, yet may I give thee thy freedom.'

90 And the Hare answered him, and said: 'Surely thou hast given me freedom, and what shall I give thee in return?'

91 And the Star-Child said to it, 'I am seeking for a piece of white gold, nor can I anywhere find it, and if I bring it not to my master he will beat me.'

92 'Come thou with me,' said the Hare, 'and I will lead thee to it, for I know where it is hidden, and for what purpose.'

93 So the Star-Child went with the Hare, and lo! in the cleft of a great oak-tree he saw the piece of white gold that he was seeking. And he was filled with joy, and seized it, and said to the Hare, 'The service that I did to thee thou hast rendered back again many times over, and the kindness that I showed thee thou hast repaid a hundred-fold.'

94 'Nay,' answered the Hare, 'but as thou dealt with me, so I did deal with thee,' and it ran away swiftly, and the Star-Child went towards the city.

95 Now at the gate of the city there was seated one who was a leper. Over his face hung a cowl of grey linen, and through the eyelets his eyes gleamed like red coals. And when he saw the Star-Child coming, he struck upon a wooden bowl, and clattered his bell, and called out to him, and said, 'Give me a piece of money, or I must die of hunger. For they have thrust me out of the city, and there is no one who has pity on me.'

96 'Alas!' cried the Star-Child, 'I have but one piece of money in my wallet, and if I bring it not to my master he will beat me, for I am his slave.'

97 But the leper entreated him, and prayed of him, till the Star-Child had pity, and gave him the piece of white gold.

98 And when he came to the Magician's house, the Magician opened to him, and brought him in, and said to him, 'Hast thou the piece of white gold?' And the Star-Child answered, 'I have it not.' So the Magician fell upon him, and beat him, and set before him an empty trencher, and said, 'Eat,' and an empty cup, and said, 'Drink,' and flung him again into the dungeon.

99 And on the morrow the Magician came to him, and said, 'If to-day thou bringest me not the piece of yellow gold, I will surely keep thee as my slave, and give thee three hundred stripes.'

100 So the Star-Child went to the wood, and all day long he searched for the piece of yellow gold, but nowhere could he find it. And at sunset he sat him down and began to weep, and as he was weeping there came to him the little Hare that he had rescued from the trap,

101 And the Hare said to him, 'Why art thou weeping? And what dost thou seek in the wood?'

102 And the Star-Child answered, 'I am seeking for a piece of yellow gold that is hidden here, and if I find it not my master will beat me, and keep me as a slave.'

103 'Follow me,' cried the Hare, and it ran through the wood till it came to a pool of water. And at the bottom of the pool the piece of yellow gold was lying.

104 'How shall I thank thee?' said the Star-Child, 'for lo! this is the second time that you have succoured me.'

105 'Nay, but thou hadst pity on me first,' said the Hare, and it ran away swiftly.

106 And the Star-Child took the piece of yellow gold, and put it in his wallet, and hurried to the city. But the leper saw him coming, and ran to meet him, and knelt down and cried, 'Give me a piece of money or I shall die of hunger.'

107 And the Star-Child said to him, 'I have in my wallet but one piece of yellow gold, and if I bring it not to my master he will beat me and keep me as his slave.'

108 But the leper entreated him sore, so that the Star-Child had pity on him, and gave him the piece of yellow gold.

109 And when he came to the Magician's house, the Magician opened to him, and brought him in, and said to him, 'Hast thou the piece of yellow gold?' And the Star-Child said to him, 'I

have it not.' So the Magician fell upon him, and beat him, and loaded him with chains, and cast him again into the dungeon.

110 And on the morrow the Magician came to him, and said, 'If to-day thou bringest me the piece of red gold I will set thee free, but if thou bringest it not I will surely slay thee.'

111 So the Star-Child went to the wood, and all day long he searched for the piece of red gold, but nowhere could he find it. And at evening he sat him down and wept, and as he was weeping there came to him the little Hare.

112 And the Hare said to him, 'The piece of red gold that thou seekest is in the cavern that is behind thee. Therefore weep no more but be glad.'

113 'How shall I reward thee?' cried the Star-Child, 'for lo! this is the third time thou hast succoured me.'

114 'Nay, but thou hadst pity on me first,' said the Hare, and it ran away swiftly.

115 And the Star-Child entered the cavern, and in its farthest corner he found the piece of red gold. So he put it in his wallet, and hurried to the city. And the leper seeing him coming, stood in the centre of the road, and cried out, and said to him, 'Give me the piece of red money, or I must die,' and the Star-Child had pity on him again, and gave him the piece of red gold, saying, 'Thy need is greater than mine.' Yet was his heart heavy, for he knew what evil fate awaited him.

116 But lo! as he passed through the gate of the city, the guards bowed down and made obeisance to him, saying, 'How beautiful is our lord!' and a crowd of citizens followed him, and cried out, 'Surely there is none so beautiful in the whole world!' so that the Star-Child wept, and said to himself, 'They are mocking me, and making light of my misery.' And so large was the concourse of the people, that he lost the threads of his way, and found himself at last in a great square, in which there was a palace of a King.

117 And the gate of the palace opened, and the priests and the high officers of the city ran forth to meet him, and they abased themselves before him, and said, 'Thou art our lord for whom we have been waiting, and the son of our King.'

118 And the Star-Child answered them and said, 'I am no king's son, but the child of a poor beggar-woman. And how say ye that I am beautiful, for I know that I am evil to look at?'

119 Then he, whose armour was inlaid with gilt flowers, and on whose helmet crouched a lion that had wings, held up a shield, and cried, 'How saith my lord that he is not beautiful?'

120 And the Star-Child looked, and lo! his face was even as it had been, and his comeliness had come back to him, and he saw that in his eyes which he had not seen there before.

121 And the priests and the high officers knelt down and said to him, 'It was prophesied of old that on this day should come he who was to rule over us. Therefore, let our lord take this crown and this sceptre, and be in his justice and mercy our King over us.'

122 But he said to them, 'I am not worthy, for I have denied the mother who bare me, nor may I rest till I have found her, and known her forgiveness. Therefore, let me go, for I must wander again over the world, and may not tarry here, though ye bring me the crown and the sceptre.' And as he spake he turned his face from them towards the street that led to the gate of the city, and lo! amongst the crowd that pressed round the soldiers, he saw the beggar-woman who was his mother, and at her side stood the leper, who had sat by the road.

123 And a cry of joy broke from his lips, and he ran over, and kneeling down he kissed the wounds on his mother's feet, and wet them with his tears. He bowed his head in the dust, and sobbing, as one whose heart might break, he said to her: 'Mother, I denied thee in the hour of my pride. Accept me in the hour of my humility. Mother, I gave thee hatred. Do thou give me love. Mother, I rejected thee. Receive thy child now.' But the beggar-woman answered him not a word.

124 And he reached out his hands, and clasped the white feet of the leper, and said to him: 'Thrice did I give thee of my mercy. Bid my mother speak to me once.' But the leper answered him not a word.

125 And he sobbed again and said: 'Mother, my suffering is greater than I can bear. Give me thy forgiveness, and let me go back to the forest.' And the beggar-woman put her hand on his head, and said to him, 'Rise,' and the leper put his hand on his head, and said to him, 'Rise,' also.

126 And he rose up from his feet, and looked at them, and lo! they were a King and a Queen.

127 And the Queen said to him, 'This is thy father whom thou hast succoured.'

128 And the King said, 'This is thy mother whose feet thou hast washed with thy tears.' And they fell on his neck and kissed him, and brought him into the palace and clothed him in fair raiment, and set the crown upon his head, and the sceptre in his hand, and over the city that stood by the river he ruled, and was its lord. Much justice and mercy did he show to all, and the evil Magician he banished, and to the Woodcutter and his wife he sent many rich gifts, and to their children he gave high honour. Nor would he suffer any to be cruel to bird or beast, but taught love and loving-kindness and charity, and to the poor he gave bread, and to the naked he gave raiment, and there was peace and plenty in the land.

129 Yet ruled he not long, so great had been his suffering, and so bitter the fire of his testing, for after the space of three years he died. And he who came after him ruled evilly.