

THE WOODMAN AND THE TREES

A WOODMAN came into a forest, and made a petition to the Trees to provide him a handle for his ax.

The Trees, honored by his civility, acceded to his request, and held a consultation to decide which of them should be given him.

Without a dissenting voice, they chose the Ash, who, it seems, is not a favorite among the Trees. Some of them were bold enough to say that bad luck went with the Ash, and that at heart they were not bound to be in sympathy with woodcutters.

The Woodman cut down the Tree, and fitted the handle to his ax; then to the dismay of the Trees, set to work and, with strong strokes, quickly felled all the noblest giants of the forest.

Lamenting too late the fate of his companions, an old Oak remarked to a neighboring Cedar:

“The first step has lost us all. If we had not so willingly given up the rights of the Ash, we might have stood for ages.”