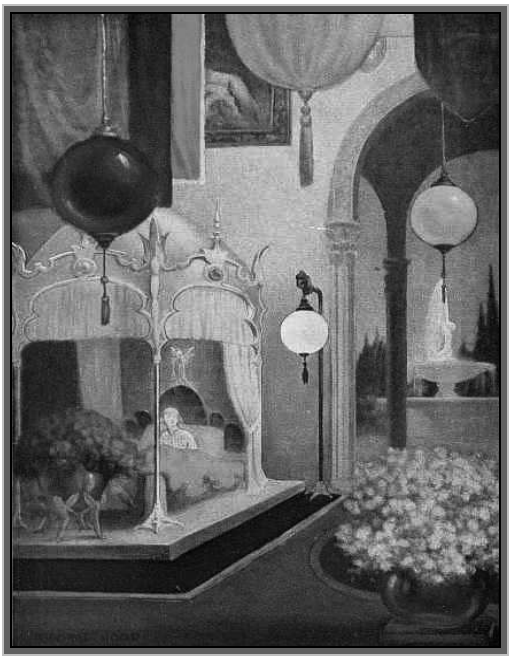
The Swedish Fairy Book

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VARIOUS

Editor: Clara Stroebe

Illustrator: George W. Hood

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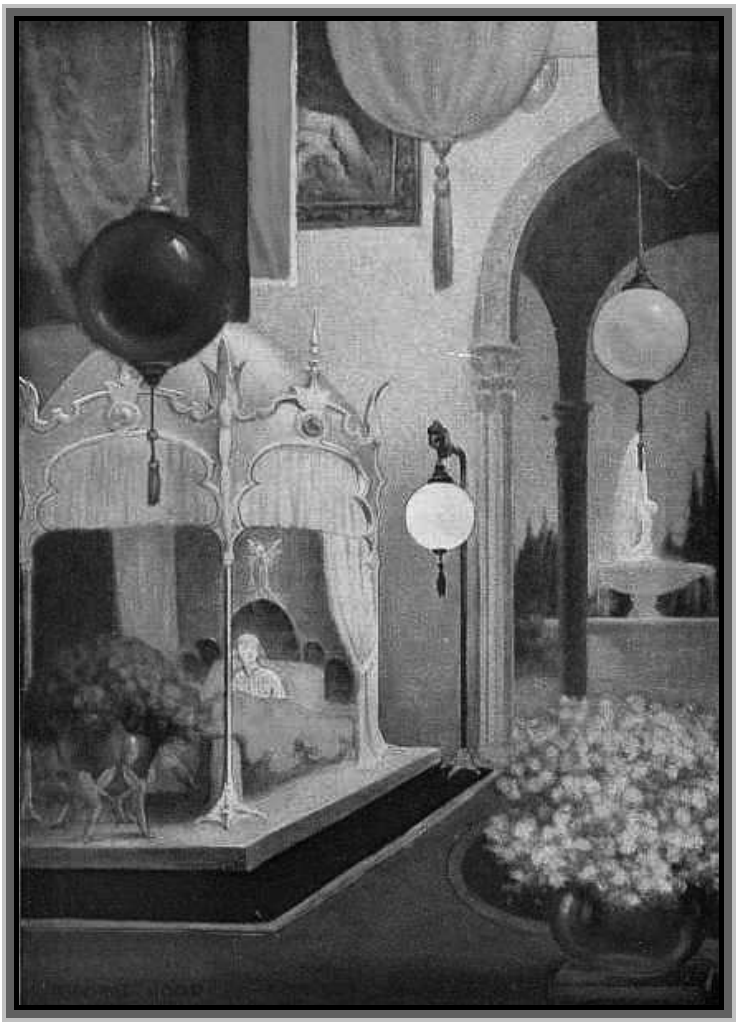
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"NO SOONER HAD HE SPOKEN THE WORDS THAN

HE WAS LYING IN THE MOST MAGNIFICENT ROOM HE HAD EVER SEEN.

EDITED BY
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TRANSLATED BY
FREDERICK H. MARTENS



WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOR BY
GEORGE W. HOOD

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PREFACE

The following volume of Swedish fairy-tales represents a careful choice, after the best original sources, of those examples of their kind which not only appeared most colorful and entertaining, but also most racially Swedish in their flavor. For the fairy-tales of each of the three Scandinavian countries, Sweden, Denmark and Norway, have a distinct local color of their own. The wealth of material available has made it possible to give due representation to most types of fairy-tales, from the stories of older origin, the tales of giant, troll, and werewolf, to such delightful tales as "Lasse, My Thrall", and "The Princess and the Glass Mountain," colored with the rich and ornate stylistic garb of medieval chivalric poesy. There has been no attempt to "rewrite" these charming folk-and fairy-tales in the translation. They have been faithfully narrated in the simple, naive manner which their traditional rendering demands. And this is one reason, perhaps, why they should appeal to young American readers—for young America by instinct takes kindly to that which is straightforward and sincere, in the realm of fairy-tale as in life itself.

Frederick H. Martens

THE SWEDISH FAIRY BOOK

I. KNÖS

Once upon a time there was a poor widow, who found an egg under a pile of brush as she was gathering kindlings in the forest. She took it and placed it under a goose, and when the goose had hatched it, a little boy slipped out of the shell. The widow had him baptized Knös, and such a lad was a rarity; for when no more than five years old he was grown, and taller than the tallest man. And he ate in proportion, for he would swallow a whole batch of bread at a single sitting, and at last the poor widow had to go to the commissioners for the relief of the poor in order to get food for him. But the town authorities said she must apprentice the boy at a trade, for he was big enough and strong enough to earn his own keep.

So Knös was apprenticed to a smith for three years. For his pay he asked a suit of clothes and a sword each year: a sword of five hundredweights the first year, one of ten hundredweights the second year, and one of

fifteen hundredweights the third year. But after he had been in the smithy only a few days, the smith was glad to give him all three suits and all three swords at once; for he smashed all his iron and steel to bits.

Knös received his suits and swords, went to a knight's estate, and hired himself out as a serving-man. Once he was told to go to the forest to gather firewood with the rest of the men, but sat at the table eating long after the others had driven off and when he had at last satisfied his hunger and was ready to start, he saw the two young oxen he was to drive waiting for him. But he let them stand and went into the forest, seized the two largest trees growing there, tore them out by the roots, took one tree under each arm, and carried them back to the estate. And he got there long before the rest, for they had to chop down the trees, saw them up and load them on the carts.

On the following day Knös had to thresh. First he hunted up the largest stone he could find, and rolled it around on the grain, so that all the corn was loosened from the ears. Then he had to separate the grain from the chaff. So he made a hole in each side of the roof of the barn, and stood outside the barn and blew, and the chaff and straw flew out into the yard, and the corn remained lying in a heap on the floor. His master happened to come along, laid a ladder against the barn, climbed up and looked down into one of the holes. But Knös was still blowing, and the wind caught his master, and he fell down and was nearly killed on the stone pavement of the court.

"He's a dangerous fellow," thought his master. It would be a good thing to be rid of him, otherwise he might do away with all of them; and besides, he ate so that it was all one could do to keep him fed. So he called Knös in, and paid him his wages for the full year, on condition that he leave. Knös agreed, but said he must first be decently provisioned for his journey.

So he was allowed to go into the store-house himself, and there he hoisted a flitch of bacon on each shoulder, slid a batch of bread under each arm, and took leave. But his master loosed the vicious bull on him. Knös, however, grasped him by the horns, and flung him over his shoulder, and thus he went off. Then he came to a thicket where he slaughtered the bull, roasted him and ate him together with a batch of bread. And when he had done this he had about taken the edge off his hunger.

Then he came to the king's court, where great sorrow reigned because, once upon a time, when the king was sailing out at sea, a sea troll had called up a terrible tempest, so that the ship was about to sink. In order to escape with his life, the king had to promise the sea troll to give him whatever first came his way when he reached shore. The king thought his hunting dog would be the first to come running to meet him, as usual; but instead his three young daughters came rowing out to meet him in a boat. This filled the king with grief, and he vowed that whoever delivered his daughters should have one of them for a bride, whichever one he might choose. But the only man who

seemed to want to earn the reward was a tailor, named Red Peter.

Knös was given a place at the king's court, and his duty was to help the cook. But he asked to be let off on the day the troll was to come and carry away the oldest princess, and they were glad to let him go; for when he had to rinse the dishes he broke the king's vessels of gold and silver; and when he was told to bring firewood, he brought in a whole wagon-load at once, so that the doors flew from their hinges.

The princess stood on the sea-shore and wept and wrung her hands; for she could see what she had to expect. Nor did she have much confidence in Red Peter, who sat on a willow-stump, with a rusty old sabre in his hand. Then Knös came and tried to comfort the princess as well as he knew how, and asked her whether she would comb his hair. Yes, he might lay his head in her lap, and she combed his hair. Suddenly there was a dreadful roaring out at sea. It was the troll who was coming along, and he had five heads. Red Peter was so frightened that he rolled off his willow-stump. "Knös, is that you?" cried the troll. "Yes," said Knös. "Haul me up on the shore!" said the troll. "Pay out the cable!" said Knös. Then he hauled the troll ashore; but he had his sword of five hundredweights at his side, and with it he chopped off all five of the troll's heads, and the princess was free. But when Knös had gone off, Red Peter put his sabre to the breast of the princess, and told her he would kill her unless she said he was her deliverer.

Then came the turn of the second princess. Once more Red Peter sat on the willow-stump with his rusty sabre, and Knös asking to be let off for the day, went to the sea-shore and begged the princess to comb his hair, which she did. Then along came the troll, and this time he had ten heads. "Knös, is that you?" asked the troll. "Yes," said Knös. "Haul me ashore!" said the troll. "Pay out the cable!" said Knös. And this time Knös had his sword of ten hundredweights at his side, and he cut off all ten of the troll's heads. And so the second princess was freed. But Red Peter held his sabre at the princess' breast, and forced her to say that he had delivered her.

Now it was the turn of the youngest princess. When it was time for the troll to come, Red Peter was sitting on his willow-stump, and Knös came and begged the princess to comb his hair, and she did so. This time the troll had fifteen heads.

"Knös, is that you?" asked the troll. "Yes," said Knös. "Haul me ashore!" said the troll. "Pay out the cable," said Knös. Knös had his sword of fifteen hundredweights at his side, and with it he cut off all the troll's heads. But the fifteen hundredweights were half-an-ounce short, and the heads grew on again, and the troll took the princess, and carried her off with him.

One day as Knös was going along, he met a man carrying a church on his back. "You are a strong man, you are!" said Knös. "No, I am not strong," said he, "but Knös at the king's court, he is strong; for he can take steel and iron, and weld them together with his hands as though they were clay." "Well, I'm the man of whom

you are speaking," said Knös, "come, let us travel together." And so they wandered on.

Then they met a man who carried a mountain of stone on his back. "You are strong, you are!" said Knös. "No, I'm not strong," said the man with the mountain of stone, "but Knös at the king's court, he is strong; for he can weld together steel and iron with his hands as though they were clay."

"Well, I am that Knös, come let us travel together," said Knös. So all three of them traveled along together. Knös took them for a sea-trip; but I think they had to leave the church and the hill of stone ashore. While they were sailing they grew thirsty, and lay alongside an island, and there on the island stood a castle, to which they decided to go and ask for a drink. Now this was the very castle in which the troll lived.

First the man with the church went, and when he entered the castle, there sat the troll with the princess on his lap, and she was very sad. He asked for something to drink. "Help yourself, the goblet is on the table!" said the troll. But he got nothing to drink, for though he could move the goblet from its place, he could not raise it.

Then the man with the hill of stone went into the castle and asked for a drink. "Help yourself, the goblet is on the table!" said the troll. And he got nothing to drink either, for though he could move the goblet from its place, he could not raise it.

Then Knös himself went into the castle, and the princess was full of joy and leaped down from the troll's lap when she saw it was he. Knös asked for a drink. "Help yourself," said the troll, "the goblet is on the table!" And Knös took the goblet and emptied it at a single draught. Then he hit the troll across the head with the goblet, so that he rolled from the chair and died.

Knös took the princess back to the royal palace, and O, how happy every one was! The other princesses recognized Knös again, for they had woven silk ribbons into his hair when they had combed it; but he could only marry one of the princesses, whichever one he preferred, so he chose the youngest. And when the king died, Knös inherited the kingdom.

As for Red Peter, he had to go into the nail-barrel.

And now you know all that I know.

NOTE

The leading personage of our first story, Knös (*Tecknigar og Toner ur skanska allmogenslif*, Lund, 1889, p. 14. From Gudmundstorp, Froste Harad) is one of those heroes of gigantic build, beloved of the North, who even when he eats, accomplishes deeds such as the old Norsemen told of their god Thor: the motive of the goblet with which the hero slays the giant, has been used in the *Hymiskvida*. (Comp. with v. d. Leyen, *Märchen in den Göttsagen der Edda*, p. 40.)

II. LASSE, MY THRALL!

Once upon a time there was a prince or a duke or whatever you choose to call him, but at any rate a noble tremendously high-born, who did not want to stay at home. And so he traveled about the world, and wherever he went he was well received, and hobnobbed with the very finest people; for he had an unheard of amount of money. He at once found friends and acquaintances, no matter where he came; for whoever has a full trough can always find pigs to thrust their snouts into it. But since he handled his money as he did, it grew less and less, and at last he was left high and dry, without a red cent. And there was an end to all his many friends; for they did just as the pigs do. When he had been well fleeced, they began to snivel and grunt, and soon scattered, each about his own business. And there he stood, after having been led about by the nose, abandoned by all. All had been glad to help him get rid of his money; but none were willing to help him regain it, so there was nothing left for him to do but to wander back home again like a journeyman apprentice, and beg his way as he went.

Late one evening he found himself in a big forest, without any idea as to where he might spend the night. And as he was looking around, his glance happened to fall on an old hut, peeping out from among the bushes. Of course an old hut was no lodging for such a fine

gentleman; but when we cannot have what we want, we must take what we can get, and since there was no help for it, he went into the hut. There was not even a cat in it, not even a stool to sit on. But against one wall there was a great chest. What might there be in the chest? Suppose there were a few moldy crusts of bread in it? They would taste good to him, for he had not been given a single thing all day long, and he was so hungry that his inwards stuck to his ribs. He opened the chest. But within the chest was another chest, and in that chest still another chest, and so it went, one always smaller than the other, until they were nothing but little boxes. And the more there were of them the more trouble he took to open them; for whatever was hidden away so carefully must be something exceptionally beautiful, thought he.

At last he came to a tiny box, and in the tiny box was a slip of paper—and that was all he had for his pains! At first he was much depressed. But all at once, he saw that something was written on the piece of paper, and on closer examination he was even able to spell out the words, though they had a strange appearance. And he read:

"Lasse, my thrall!"

No sooner had he spoken these words than something answered, close to his ear:

"What does my master command?"

He looked around, but saw no one. That's strange, thought he, and once more read aloud:

"Lasse, my thrall!"

And just as before came the answer:

"What does my master command?"

"If there be some one about who hears what I say, he might be kind enough to get me a little something to eat," said he; and at that very moment a table, covered with all the good things to eat that one could imagine, was standing in the hut. He at once began to eat and drink and did well by himself. I have never had a better meal in my life, thought he. And when his hunger was completely satisfied, he grew sleepy and took up his scrap of paper again.

"Lasse, my thrall!"

"What does my master command?"

"Now that you have brought me food and drink, you must also bring me a bed in which to sleep. But it must be a very fine bed," said he; for as you may well imagine, his ideas were more top-lofty now that he had eaten well. His command was at once obeyed; and a bed so fine and handsome stood in the hut, that a king might have been glad to have found such sleeping accommodations. Now this was all very well and good; but the good can always be bettered, and when he had lain down, he decided that, after all, the hut was far too wretched for such a fine bed. He took up the scrap of paper:

"Lasse, my thrall!"

"What does my master command?"

"If you can produce such a meal, and such a bed here in the wild wood, you must surely be able to give me a better room; for you know I am one of those who are used to sleeping in a castle, with golden mirrors and rugs of gold brocade and luxuries and conveniences of every kind," said he. And no sooner had he spoken the words, than he was lying in the most magnificent room he had ever seen.

Now matters were arranged to suit him, and he was quite content as he turned his face to the wall and closed his eyes.

But the room he had slept in was not the end of his magnificence. When he woke the following morning and looked around, he saw that he had been sleeping in a great castle. There was one room after another, and wherever he went walls and ceilings were covered with ornaments and decorations of every kind, all glittering so splendidly when the rays of the sun fell on them that he had to put his hand to his eyes; for wherever he looked everything sparkled with gold and silver. Then he glanced out of the window and first began to realize how really beautiful everything was. Gone were the fir-trees and juniper bushes, and in their place showed the loveliest garden one might wish to see, filled with beautiful trees and roses of every variety, in bush and tree form. But there was not a human being in sight, not even a cat. Yet he found it quite natural that everything should be so fine, and that he should once more have become a great lord.

He took up the scrap of paper:

"Lasse, my thrall!"

"What does my master command?"

"Now that you have provided me with food and a castle in which to dwell, I am going to stay here, because it suits me," said he, "but I cannot live here all alone in this fashion. I must have serving-men and serving-maids, at my command." And so it was. Servants and lackeys and maids and serving-women of every description arrived, and some of them bowed and others courtseyed, and now the duke really began to feel content.

Now it happened that another great castle lay on the opposite side of the forest, in which dwelt a king who owned the forest, and many broad acres of field and meadow round about. And when the king came and happened to look out of his window, he saw the new castle, on whose roof the golden weathercocks were swinging to and fro, from time to time, shining in his eyes.

"This is very strange," thought he, and sent for his courtiers. They came without delay, bowing and scraping.

"Do you see the castle yonder?" said the king.

Their eyes grew as large as saucers and they looked.

Yes, indeed, they saw the castle.

"Who has dared to build such a castle on my ground?"

The courtiers bowed and scraped, but did not know. So the king sent for his soldiers. They came tramping in and presented arms.

"Send out all my soldiers and horsemen," said the king, "tear down the castle instantly, hang whoever built it, and see to this at once."

The soldiers assembled in the greatest haste and set forth. The drummers beat their drums and the trumpeters blew their trumpets, and the other musicians practiced their art, each in his own way; so that the duke heard them long before they came in sight. But this was not the first time he had heard music of this sort, and he knew what it meant, so once more he took up the scrap of paper:

"Lasse, my thrall!"

"What does my master command?"

"There are soldiers coming," said he, "and now you must provide me with soldiers and horsemen until I have twice as many as the folk on the other side of the forest. And sabers and pistols and muskets and cannon, and all that goes with them—but you must be quick about it!"

Quick it was, and when the duke looked out there was a countless host of soldiers drawn up around the castle.

When the king's people arrived, they stopped and did not dare advance. But the duke was by no means