

## **NOSE, THE DWARF**

*By W. Hauff*

[This story is from the collection called "The Sheik of Alexandria and his Slaves," and is supposed to be told by a slave to the Sheik.]

Sir, those people are much mistaken who fancy that there were no fairies and enchanters, except in the time of Haroun Al Raschid, Lord of Bagdad, or even pronounce untrue those accounts of the deeds of genii and their princes, which one hears the story-tellers relate in the market-places of the town. There are fairies now-a-days, and it is but a short time since that I myself was witness of an occurrence in which genii were evidently playing a part, as you will see from my narrative. In a considerable town of my dear fatherland, Germany, there lived many years ago a cobbler, with his wife, in an humble but honest way. In the daytime he used to sit at the corner of a street mending shoes and slippers; he did not refuse making new ones if any body would trust him, but then he was obliged to buy the leather first, as his poverty did not enable him to keep a stock. His wife sold vegetables and fruit, which she cultivated in a small garden outside the town-gates, and many people were glad to buy of her, because she was dressed cleanly and neatly, and knew well how to arrange and lay out her things to the best advantage.

Now this worthy couple had a beautiful boy, of a sweet countenance, well made, and rather tall for his age, which was eight years. He was in the habit of sitting in the market with his mother, and often carried home part of the fruit and vegetables for the women and cooks who had made large purchases; he seldom, however, returned from one of these journeys without bringing either a beautiful flower, a piece of money, or a cake, which the mistresses of such cooks gave him as a present, because they were always pleased to see the handsome boy come to the house.

One day the cobbler's wife was sitting as usual in the marketplace, having before her some baskets with cabbages and other vegetables, various herbs and seeds, besides some early pears, apples, and apricots, in a small basket. Little James (this was the boy's name) sat by her, crying the things for sale in a loud voice: "This way, gentlemen, see what beautiful cabbages, what fragrant herbs; early pears, ladies, early apples and apricots; who will buy? My mother sells cheap."

While the boy was thus crying, an old woman was coming across the market; her dress was rather tattered and in rags, she had a small, sharp face, quite furrowed with age, red eyes, and a pointed, crooked nose, which reached down to her chin; in her walk she supported herself by a long stick, and yet it was difficult to say exactly how she walked, for she hobbled and shuffled along, and waddled as if she were on casters, and it was as if she must fall down every instant and break her pointed nose on the pavement.

The cobbler's wife looked attentively at this old woman. For sixteen years she had been sitting daily in the market, yet she had never observed this strange figure, and therefore involuntarily shuddered when she saw the old hag hobbling towards her and stopping before her baskets.

"Are you Jane, the greengrocer?" she asked in a disagreeable, croaking voice, shaking her head to and fro.

"Yes, I am," replied the cobbler's wife; "what is your pleasure?"

"We'll see, we'll see, we'll look at your herbs--look at your herbs, to see whether you have what I want," answered the old woman; and stooping down she thrust her dark brown, unsightly hands into the herb-basket, and took up some that were beautifully spread out, with her long spider-legged fingers, bringing them one by one up to her long nose, and smelling them all over. The poor woman almost felt

her heart break when she saw the old hag handle her herbs in this manner, but she dared not say any thing to her, the purchasers having a right to examine the things as they pleased; besides which, she felt a singular awe in the presence of this old woman. After having searched the whole basket, she muttered, "wretched stuff, wretched herbs, nothing that I want--were much better fifty years ago--wretched stuff! wretched stuff!"

Little James was vexed at these words. "Hark ye," he cried, boldly, "you are an impudent old woman; first you thrust your nasty brown fingers into these beautiful herbs and squeeze them together, then you hold them up to your long nose, so that no one seeing this will buy them after you, and you abuse our goods, calling them wretched stuff, though nevertheless the duke's cook himself buys all his herbs of us."

The old woman leered at the bold boy, laughed disgustingly, and said in a hoarse voice, "Little son, little son, you like my nose then, my beautiful long nose? You shall have one too in the middle of your face that shall reach down to your chin."

While she thus spoke she shuffled up to another basket containing cabbages. She took the most beautiful white heads up in her hand, squeezed them together till they squeaked, and then throwing them into the basket again without regard to order, said as before, "Wretched things! wretched cabbages!"

"Don't wriggle your head about in that ugly fashion," cried the little boy, somewhat frightened; "why your neck is as thin as a cabbage-stalk and might easily break, then your head would fall into the basket, and who would buy of us?"

"You don't like such thin necks then, eh?" muttered the old woman with a laugh. "You shall have none at all, your head shall be fixed between your shoulders, that it may not fall down from the little body."

"Don't talk such nonsense to the little boy," at length said the cobbler's wife, indignant at the long-looking, examining, and smelling of the things; "if you wish to buy any thing be quick, for you scare away all my other customers."

"Well, be it as you say," cried the old woman, with a furious look, "I will buy these six heads of cabbages; but you see I must support myself by my stick, and cannot carry any thing, therefore, allow your little son to carry them home for me, I will reward him for it."

The little boy would not go with her, and began to cry, for he was terrified at the ugly old woman, but his mother commanded him earnestly to go, as she thought it a sin to load the feeble old soul with this burden. Still sobbing, he did as he was ordered, and followed the old woman over the market.

She proceeded but slowly, and was almost three-quarters of an hour before she arrived at a very remote part of the town, where she at length stopped in front of a small dilapidated house. She now pulled out of her pocket an old rusty hook, and thrust it dexterously into a small hole in the door, which immediately opened with a crash. But what was the astonishment of little James as he entered! The interior of the house was magnificently adorned, the ceiling and walls were of marble, the furniture of the most beautiful ebony, inlaid with gold and polished stones, the floor was of glass, and so smooth, that little James several times slipped and fell down. The old woman now took a small silver whistle from her pocket, and blew a tune on it which sounded shrilly through the house. Immediately some guinea-pigs came down the stairs, and little James was much amazed at their walking upright on their hind legs, wearing on their paws nut-shells instead of shoes, men's clothes on their bodies, and even hats in the newest fashion on their heads.

"Where are my slippers, ye rascally crew?" cried the old woman, striking at them with her stick, so that they jumped squeaking into the air; "how long am I to stand here waiting?"

They quickly scampered up the stairs and returned with a pair of cocoa-nut shells lined with leather, which they placed dexterously upon the old woman's feet.

Now all her limping and shuffling was at an end. She threw away her stick, and glided with great rapidity over the glass floor, pulling little James after her with her hand. At length she stopped in a room which was adorned with a great variety of utensils, and which almost resembled a kitchen, although the tables were of mahogany, and the sofas covered with rich cloth, more fit for a drawing-room.

"Sit down," said the old woman, very kindly, pressing him into a corner of a sofa, and placing a table before him in such a manner that he could not get out again; "sit down, you have had a heavy load to carry, human heads are not so light--not so light."

"But, woman," replied the little boy, "you talk very strangely; I am, indeed, tired, but they were cabbage heads I was carrying, and you bought them of my mother."

"Why, you know but little about that," said the old woman, laughing, as she took the lid from the basket and brought out a human head, which she held by the hair. The little boy was frightened out of his senses at this; he could not comprehend how it all came to pass; and thinking of his mother, he said to himself, "If any one were to hear of these human heads, my mother would certainly be prosecuted."

"I must give you some reward now, as you are so good," muttered the old woman; "have patience for a minute, and I will prepare you a soup which you will remember all your life." Having said this, she whistled again, and immediately there came first some guinea-pigs dressed like

human beings; they had tied round them kitchen aprons, fastened by a belt, in which were stuck ladles and carving-knives; after them came skipping in a number of squirrels, that wore large, wide Turkish trousers, walked upright, and had small caps of green velvet on their heads. These seemed to be the scullions, for they climbed very nimbly up the walls and brought down pans and dishes, eggs and butter, herbs and flour, and carried it to the hearth. The old woman slid continually to and fro upon her cocoa-nut slippers, and little James observed that she was very anxious to cook something good for him. Now the fire crackled and blazed up higher, there was a smoking and bubbling in the saucepan, and a pleasant odour spread over the room, but the old woman kept running up and down, the squirrels and guinea-pigs after her, and as often as she passed the hearth she poked her long nose into the pot. At length it began to boil and hiss, the steam rose from the pot, and the scum flowed down into the fire. She then took off the saucepan, and pouring some into a silver basin, gave it to James.

"Now, my dear little son, now," said she, "eat this soup and you will have in your own person all that you admired so much in me. You shall moreover become a clever cook, that you may be something at least, but as for the herb, that you shall never find, because your mother did not have it in her basket."

The little boy did not exactly understand what she was saying, but was the more attentive to eating his soup, which he relished uncommonly. His mother had cooked various savoury soups, but never any like this. The flavour of the fine herbs and spice ascended from it, and it was at the same time very sweet, and very sharp and strong. While he was sipping the last drops of the delicious soup, the guinea-pigs lighted some Arabian incense which floated through the room in blue clouds, which became thicker and thicker, and then descended. The smell of the incense had a stupifying effect upon the boy; in vain did he repeatedly say to himself that he must return to his mother, for as often as he endeavoured to rouse himself, as often did he relapse into

slumber and, at length, actually fell into a profound sleep upon the old woman's sofa.

Strange dreams came over him, while he thus slept. It seemed as if the old woman was taking off his clothes, and putting on him the skin of a squirrel. Now he could make bounds and climb like a squirrel; he associated with the other squirrels and guinea-pigs, who were all very polite, decent people, and he did his duty of waiting upon the old woman in his turn with the rest. At first he had to perform the service of a shoeblick, that is, he had to oil and polish the cocoa-nut shells which his mistress wore instead of slippers. Having often blacked and polished shoes at home, he performed his duty well and quickly. After the lapse of about one year, he dreamt again, (according to the sequel of his dream) that he was employed for more delicate work, that is, in company with some other squirrels, he was obliged to catch the atoms in the sun, and, when they had caught enough, to sift them through the finest hair-sieve, as the old woman considered them the nicest thing, and not being able to masticate well for want of teeth, had her bread prepared of such atoms.

At the end of another year, he was raised to the rank of one of the servants who had to collect the water the old woman drank. But you must not suppose that she had a cistern dug for that purpose, or a tub placed in the yard to catch the rain-water; she had a much finer plan. The squirrels, and James with them, had to collect in their hazel-nut shells the dew from roses, and this was the beverage of the old woman. The labour of these water-carriers was not a very light one, as she used to drink a prodigious quantity. After another year, he was employed in in-door service, his duty being to clean the floors, and as they were of glass and showed the least speck, it was not a very easy task. He and his fellow-servants were obliged to brush the floors, and with pieces of old cloth tied to their feet dexterously skated about the rooms. In the fourth year, he received an appointment in the kitchen, which was so honourable an office, that one could succeed to it only after a long probation. James here served from scullion upwards to the

post of first pastrycook, and acquired such an extraordinary skill and experience in every thing relating to the culinary art, that often he could not help wondering at himself; the most difficult things, pies composed of two hundred different ingredients, soups prepared with all the herbs of the globe,--all these, and many other things, he learned to make quickly and efficiently.

Seven years had thus passed away in the service of the old woman, when one day, pulling off her shoes of cocoa-nut, and taking her basket and crutch in hand in order to go out, she told him to pluck a chicken, stuff it with herbs, and roast it nice and brown, during her absence. He did this according to the rules of his art; twisted the chicken's neck, scalded it in hot water, pulled out the feathers cleverly, scraped its skin smooth and fine, and then drew it. Next he began gathering the herbs with which he was to stuff the chicken. Now when he came to the chamber where these herbs were kept, he perceived a small cupboard in the wall that he had never before noticed, and finding the door of it half open, he had the curiosity to go near, in order to see what it contained, when behold! there stood a great many little baskets in it, from which proceeded a strong pleasant smell. He opened one of these little baskets, and found in it a herb of a most singular form and colour; its stalks and leaves were of a bluish green, and it had a flower of burning red fringed with yellow at the top. He looked thoughtfully at this flower, and smelled it, when it emitted the same powerful odour as the soup which the old woman had cooked for him when he first came there. But the smell was so strong that he began to sneeze, was obliged to keep sneezing, and at last awoke, sneezing still.

He now found himself upon the old woman's sofa, and looked around him with astonishment. "Heavens!" he said to himself, "how vividly one may dream; I would almost have sworn that I was a wanton squirrel,--a companion of guinea-pigs and other vermin, but at the same time had become a great cook. How my mother will laugh when I tell her all this! But will she not also scold me for falling asleep in a



strange house instead of helping her in the market?" While engaged in these thoughts, he started up to run away; but his limbs were still quite stiff with sleep, and particularly his neck, for he was unable to move his head well to and fro. He could not help smiling at himself and his drowsiness, for every moment, before he was aware, he ran his nose against a cupboard or the wall, or turning suddenly round, struck it against a door-post. The squirrels and guinea-pigs crowded whining around him, as if anxious to accompany him, and he actually invited them to do so when he was on the threshold, for they were nice little creatures, but they glided quickly back into the house on their nutshells, and he only heard them howling at a distance.

As it was a very remote part of the town to which the old woman had brought him, he could hardly find his way through the narrow streets, and as, moreover, there was a great crowd of people, wherever he went, he could only account for this by supposing there must be a dwarf somewhere in the neighbourhood for show, for he heard everywhere cries of, "Only look at the ugly dwarf! Where does the dwarf come from? O! what a long nose he has, and how his head sits between his shoulders, and look at his brown ugly hands!" At any other time, he would probably have followed the cry, for he was very fond of seeing giants and dwarfs, and any sort of curious, foreign costume, but now he was obliged to hurry and get to his mother.

He felt quite weary when he arrived at the market. He found his mother still sitting there, and she had a tolerable quantity of fruit in the basket; he could not therefore have been sleeping long, but still it appeared to him, even at a distance, as if she were very melancholy, for she did not call to those coming past to buy, but supported her head by one hand, and on coming closer he likewise thought she looked paler than usual. He hesitated as to what he should do; and at length mustering up courage, crept gently behind her, and putting his hand familiarly upon her arm, asked, "Dear mother, what's the matter with you? are you angry with me?"

The woman turned round, but started back with a shriek of terror, saying, "What do you want with me, you ugly dwarf? Begone, begone! I do not like such jokes."

"But mother, what is the matter with you?" asked James, quite terrified; "surely you must be unwell, why will you turn your son away from you?"

"I have told you already to be gone," replied Jane, angrily; "you will not get any money from me by your juggleries, you ill-favoured monster."

"Surely God has deprived her of the light of her intellect," said the dwarf, deeply grieved within himself; "what shall I do to get her home? Dear mother, pray do listen to reason; only look well at me, I am indeed your son--your own James."

"Why this is carrying the joke too far," she said to her neighbour; "only look at that ugly dwarf; there he stands, and will no doubt drive away all my customers; nay, he even dares to ridicule my misfortune, telling me that he is my son, my own James, the impudent fellow."

At this her neighbours rose, and began as much abuse as possible, (every one knows that market women understand this well,) and reproaching him with making light of poor Jane's misfortune, who seven years ago had had her beautiful boy kidnapped, with one accord they threatened to fall upon him and tear him to pieces, unless he took himself off immediately.

Poor James did not know what to make of all this. Indeed it seemed to him that he had that very morning, as usual, gone to market with his mother, had helped her to lay out her fruit, and had afterwards gone with the old woman to her house, eaten some soup, slept a little while, and had now come back; and yet his mother and her neighbours talked of seven years, calling him at the same time an ugly dwarf. What then

was the change that had come over him? Seeing, at length, that his mother would no longer listen to any thing he said, he felt the tears come in his eyes, and went sorrowfully down the street towards the stall where his father sat in the daytime mending shoes.

"I am curious to see," he thought to himself, "whether he, too, will disown me? I will place myself in the doorway and talk to him." And having come there he did so and looked in.

The cobbler was so busily engaged at work that he did not see him; but happening to cast a look towards the door, he dropped shoe, twine, and awl on the ground, and cried, with astonishment, "For Heaven's sake what is that?"

"Good evening, master," said the little dwarf, stepping inside the booth. "How fare you?"

"Badly, badly, my little gentleman," replied James's father, to his utter amazement; for he, too, did not seem to recognise him. "I have to do all the work myself, for I am alone and now getting old, and yet I cannot afford to keep a journeyman."

"But have you no son to assist you in your work?" inquired the dwarf further.

"Indeed I had one, whose name was James, and he now must be a handsome, quick lad, twenty years old, who might effectually assist me. Ah! what a pleasant life I should lead! Even when he was twelve years old he showed himself quite handy and clever, and understood a great deal of the business. He was a fine engaging little fellow; he would soon have brought me plenty of custom, so that I should no longer have been mending shoes and boots but making new ones. But so goes the world."

"Where is your son, then?" asked James, in a tremulous voice.

"That God only knows," replied his father. "Seven years ago, yes! it is just that now, he was stolen from us in the market-place."

"Seven years ago, you say?" cried James, with astonishment.

"Yes, little gentleman, seven years ago; the circumstance is as fresh in my memory as if it had happened to-day, how my poor wife came home weeping and crying, saying that the child had not come back all day, and that she had inquired and searched everywhere without finding him. But I always said it would come to that; for James was a pretty child, no one could help saying so, therefore my poor wife was proud of him and fond of hearing people praise him, and often sent him with vegetables and such like things to the houses of the gentlefolks. All this was very well; he always received some present. But said I, mark me, the town is large, and there are many bad people in it, so take care of James. But it happened as I always said. Once there comes an ugly old woman to the market, bargains for some fruits and vegetables, and at length buys so much that she cannot carry it home herself. My wife, kind soul, sends the lad with her, and--has never seen him again since that hour."

"And that is now seven years, say you?"

"Seven years this spring. We had him cried in the town, we went from house to house inquiring; many had known and liked the pretty lad, and searched with us, but all in vain. Neither did any one know the woman who bought the vegetables; a very aged woman, however, ninety years old, said, 'it might possibly have been the wicked fairy, Krauterweis, who once in fifty years comes to the town to buy various articles.'"

Thus spoke James's father hastily, hammering his shoes at the same time, and drawing out at great length the twine with both hands. Now by degrees light broke on the little dwarf's mind, and he saw what had

happened to him, viz., that he had not been dreaming, but had served as a squirrel seven years with the evil fairy. Rage and sorrow now filled his heart almost to bursting.

The old witch had robbed him of seven years of his youth, and what had he in exchange? What was it that he could polish slippers of cocoa-nut shell? that he could clean rooms with glass floors? that he had learned all the mysteries of cooking, from the guinea pigs? Thus he stood for some time meditating on his fate, when at length his father asked him--

"Do you want to purchase any thing, young gentleman? Perhaps a pair of new slippers or, peradventure, a case for your nose?" he added, smiling.

"What do you mean about my nose?" asked James; "why should I want a case for it?"

"Why," replied the cobbler, "every one according to his taste; but I must tell you, that if I had such a terrible nose, I should have a case made for it of rose-coloured morocco. Look here, I have a beautiful piece that is just the thing; indeed we should at least want a yard for it. It would then be well guarded, my little gentleman; whereas now I am sure you will knock it against every door-post and carriage you would wish to avoid."

The dwarf was struck dumb with terror; he felt his nose, it was full two hands long and thick in proportion. So then the old hag had likewise changed his person; and hence it was his mother did not know him, and people called him an ill-favoured dwarf.

"Master," said he, half crying to the cobbler, "have you no looking-glass at hand in which I might behold myself?"

"Young gentleman," replied his father, gravely, "you have not exactly been favoured as to appearance so as to make you vain, and you have no cause to look often in the glass. You had better leave it off altogether. It is with you a particularly ridiculous habit."

"Oh! pray let me look in the glass," cried the dwarf. "I assure you it is not from vanity."

"Leave me in peace, I have none in my possession; my wife has a little looking-glass, but I do not know where she has hid it. If you really must look into one,--why then, over the way lives Urban, the barber, who has a glass twice as big as your head; look in there, and now, good morning."

With these words his father pushed him gently out of the stall, locked the door after him, and sat down again to his work. The little dwarf, much cast down, went over the way to the barber, whom he well remembered in former times.

"Good morning, Urban," said he to him, "I come to beg a favour of you, be so kind as to let me look a moment in your looking-glass."

"With pleasure," cried the barber, laughing, "there it is;" and his customers who were about to be shaved laughed heartily with him. "You are rather a pretty fellow, slim and genteel; you have a neck like a swan, hands like a queen, and a turn-up nose, such as one seldom sees excelled. A little vain you are of it, no doubt; but no matter, look at yourself, people shall not say that envy prevented me from allowing you to see yourself in my glass."

Thus spoke the barber, and a yell of laughter resounded through the room. In the meantime the dwarf had stepped to the glass and looked at himself. The tears came in his eyes, while saying to himself; "Yes, dear mother, thus you could not indeed recognise your James, he did not look like this in the days of your happiness, when you delighted to

show him off before the people?" His eyes had become little, like those of pigs; his nose was immense, hanging over his mouth down to his chin; his neck seemed to have been taken away altogether, for his head sat low between his shoulders, and it was only with the greatest pain that he could move it to the right or left; his body was still the same size as it had been seven years ago, when he was twelve years old, so that he had grown in width what others do in height, between the ages of twelve and twenty. His back and chest stood out like two short, well-filled bags; and this thick-set body was supported by small thin legs, which seemed hardly sufficient to support their burden; but so much the larger were his arms, which hung down from his body, being of the size of those of a full-grown man; his hands were coarse, and of a brownish hue, his fingers long, like spiders' legs, and when he stretched them to their full extent, he could touch the ground without stooping. Such was little James's appearance, now that he had become an ugly dwarf. He now remembered the morning on which the old woman had stopped before his mother's baskets. All that he then had found fault with in her--viz., her long nose, and ugly fingers--all these she had given him, only omitting her long, palsied neck.

"Well, my prince, have you looked enough at yourself now?" said the barber, stepping up to him, and surveying him with a laugh. "Truly, if we wished to dream of such a figure, we could hardly see one so comical. Nevertheless, I will make you a proposition, my little man. My shaving-room is tolerably well frequented, but yet not so much so as I could wish. That arises from my neighbour, the barber Schaum, having discovered a giant, who attracts much custom to his house. Now, to become a giant is no great thing, after all, but to be such a little man as you, is indeed a different thing. Enter my service, little man, you shall have board and lodging, clothes and every thing; for this you shall stand in my door-way in the morning, and invite people to come in; you shall beat up the lather, hand the towel to the customers, and you may be sure that we shall both make it answer; I shall get more customers through you than my neighbour by his giant; and you will get many presents."

The little man felt quite indignant at the proposal of serving as a decoy to a barber. But was he not obliged to submit patiently to this insulting offer? He, therefore, quietly told the barber he had no time for such services, and went away.

Although the evil hag had thus stunted his growth, yet she had had no power to affect his mind, as he felt full well; for he no longer thought and felt as he did seven years since, and believed that he had become wiser and more sensible in the interval. He did not mourn for the loss of his beauty, nor for his ugly appearance, but only that he was driven from his father's door like a dog. However, he resolved to make another trial with his mother.

He went again to her in the market, and entreated her to listen to him patiently. He reminded her of the day on which he had gone with the old woman; he called to her mind all the particular incidents of his childhood, told her then how he had served seven years as a squirrel with the fairy, and how she had changed him because he had then ridiculed her person.

The cobbler's wife did not know what to think of all this. All that he related of his childhood agreed with her own recollections, but when he talked of serving seven years as a squirrel, she said, "It is impossible; there are no fairies;" and when she looked at him she felt a horror at the ugly dwarf, and would not believe that he could be her son. At length she thought it would be best to talk the matter over with her husband; therefore she took up her baskets and bade him go with her.

On arriving at the cobbler's stall she said: "Look, this fellow pretends to be our lost James. He has told me all the circumstances, how he was stolen from us seven years since, and how he was enchanted by a fairy."



"Indeed," interrupted the cobbler in a rage, "has he told you this? wait, you rogue!--I have told him all this an hour ago, and then he goes to make a fool of you. Enchanted you have been, my little chap, have you? Wait a bit, I will soon disenchant you!" So saying, he took a bundle of straps that he had just cut, jumped up towards the dwarf, and beat him on his humped back and his long arms, making the little fellow scream with pain and run crying away.

Now in that town, as in others, there were but few of those compassionate souls who will support a poor unfortunate with a ridiculous appearance. Hence it was that the unlucky dwarf remained all day without food, and was obliged in the evening to choose for his night's quarters the steps of a church, though they were hard and cold.

When on the following morning the first rays of the sun awoke him, he began seriously to think how he should prolong his existence, now that his father and mother had rejected him; he was too proud to serve as a sign-board to a barber; he would not hire himself as a merry-andrew to be exhibited; what then should he do? It now occurred to him that as a squirrel he had made considerable progress in the culinary art, and thought he might justly expect to prove a match for any cook; he therefore resolved to turn his art to advantage.

As soon, therefore, as the morning had dawned, and the streets became animated, he entered a church and performed his devotions; thence he proceeded on his way. The duke (the sovereign of the country) was a notorious gourmand, who kept a good table, and sought cooks in all parts of the world. To his palace the dwarf went. When he arrived at the outer gate the porter asked his errand, and began to crack his jokes on him; when he asked for the chief cook they laughed and led him through the inner courts, and wherever he went the servants stood still, looked at him, laughed heartily, and followed him, so that in a short time a great posse of menials of all descriptions crowded up the steps of the palace. The grooms threw away their curry-combs, the running footmen ran with all their might,

the carpet-spreaders ceased beating their carpets, all crowded and thronged around him, as if the enemy was at the gates, and the shouts of "A dwarf, a dwarf! have you seen the dwarf?" filled the air.

At this moment the steward of the palace, with a furious countenance and a large whip in his hand, made his appearance at the door, crying, "For Heaven's sake, ye hounds, what is all this uproar for? Do you not know that our gracious master is still asleep?" At the same time he flourished his whip, laying it rather roughly about the backs of some grooms and porters.

"Why sir," they all cried, "don't you see that we are bringing a dwarf, such a dwarf as you never saw?" The steward suppressed, though with difficulty, a loud laugh, when he got sight of the little man, for he was afraid that laughter would derogate from his dignity. He therefore drove them all away with his whip except the dwarf, whom he led into the house and asked what he wanted. Hearing that the little man wished to see the master of the kitchen, he replied, "You make a mistake, my little son; I suppose you want to see me, the steward of the palace, do you not? You wish to become dwarf to the duke, is it not so?"

"No, sir," replied the dwarf, "I am a clever cook and skilled in the preparation of all sorts of choice meats; be so kind as to bring me to the master of the kitchen, perhaps he may be in want of my skill."

"Every one according to his wish, my little man; but you are an inconsiderate youth. To the kitchen! why, as the duke's dwarf you would have nothing to do and plenty to eat and drink to your heart's desire, and fine clothes into the bargain. But we shall see; your skill in the culinary art will hardly be such as a cook to the duke is required to possess, and you are too good for a scullion." As he said the last words he took the dwarf by the hand and conducted him to the apartments of the master of the kitchen.

On arriving there the dwarf said, with so deep a bow that his nose touched the floor, "Gracious, sir, are you in want of a skilful cook?"

The master of the kitchen, surveying him from top to toe, burst into a loud fit of laughter, and said, "What, you a cook? Do you think that our hearths are so low that you could even look on one, though you should stand on tiptoe, and stretch your head ever so much out of your shoulders? My good little fellow, whoever sent you here to hire yourself as a cook, has been making a fool of you." Thus saying, the master cook laughed heartily, and was joined by the steward of the palace and all the servants in the room.

But the dwarf was not to be discomposed by this. "Of what consequence is it to waste a few eggs, a little syrup and wine, some flour and spice, upon trial, in a house where there are plenty? Give me some dainty dish to prepare," said he, "procure all that is necessary for it, and it shall be immediately prepared before your eyes, so that you shall be constrained to avow that I am a first-rate cook."

While the dwarf was saying all this, and many other things, it was strange to see how his little eyes sparkled, how his long nose moved to and fro, and his fingers, which were like spider's legs, suited their movements to his words.

"Well!" exclaimed the master cook, taking the steward by the arm, "Well! be it so for the sake of the joke, let us go to the kitchen."

They walked through several large rooms and corridors till they came to the kitchen. This was a large spacious building magnificently fitted up; on twenty hearths fires were constantly burning, clear water was flowing through the midst, serving also as a fishpond; in cupboards of marble and choice wood, the stores were piled, which it was necessary to have at hand for use, and on either side were ten rooms, in which were kept all the delicious dainties for the palate which can be obtained in all the countries of Europe or even the East. Servants of all

descriptions were running to and fro, handling and rattling kettles and pans, with forks and ladles; but when the master cook entered, all stood motionless, and the crackling of the fire, and the rippling of the brook were alone to be heard.

"What has the duke ordered for breakfast this morning?" he asked an old cook, who always prepared the breakfast.

"Sir, his highness has pleased to order the Danish soup, with the small red Hamburg dumplings."

"Well," continued the master cook, "did you hear what the duke wishes to eat? Are you bold enough to attempt this difficult dish? At all events the dumplings you will not be able to make, that is quite a secret."

"Nothing easier than that," replied the dwarf, to their astonishment; for he had often made this dish when he was a squirrel. "Nothing easier, only give me the herbs, the spices, fat of a wild boar, roots and eggs for the soup; but for the dumplings," said he, in a low voice, so that only the master cook and the breakfast-maker could hear, "for the dumplings I want various meats, wine, duck's fat, ginger, and the herb called the stomach comforter."

"Ah, by St. Benedict, to what enchanter have you been apprenticed?" cried the cook in astonishment. "You have hit all to a hair, and as to the noted herb, we did not know of that ourselves; yes! that must make the dish still more delicious. Oh! you miracle of a cook!"

"I should never have thought this," said the master cook, "but let us make the trial, give him all he asks and let him prepare the breakfast."

His orders were obeyed, and the necessary preparations were made on the hearth; but they now found that the dwarf could not reach it. They therefore put two chairs together, laid a slab of marble on them, and

asked the little wonder to step up and begin his skill. In a large circle stood the cooks, scullions, servants, and others, looking at him in amazement, to see how readily and quickly he proceeded, and how cleanly and neatly he prepared every thing. When he had finished, he ordered both dishes to be put to the fire, and to be boiled until he should call out; then he began to count one, two, three, and so on up to five hundred, when he cried out, "Stop, take them off," and then invited the head cook to taste them.

The taster ordered the scullion to bring him a gold spoon, which he first rinsed in the brook, and then gave it to the head cook. The latter, stepping up to the hearth with a grave mien, took a spoonful, tasted it, and shutting his eyes, smacked his lips with delight, saying, "Delicious! by the duke's life, delicious! Would you not like to taste a spoonful, Mr. Steward?" The latter, bowing, took the spoon, tasted it, and was beside himself with delight.

"With all due respect to your skill, dear breakfast-maker, you aged and experienced cook, you have never been able to make the soup or dumplings so delicious."

The cook also tasted it, shook the dwarf reverentially by the hand, saying, "My little man, you are a master of your art, yes, that herb 'stomach comforter' imparts a peculiar charm to the whole."

At this moment the duke's valet entered the kitchen, and informed them that the duke wished his breakfast. The preparations were now dished up in silver, and sent up to the duke; but the head cook took the dwarf to his own room to converse with him. They had scarcely sat down long enough to say half a paternoster, when a messenger came and called the head cook to the duke. He quickly put on his best clothes, and followed the messenger.

The duke looked well pleased, He had eaten all they had served, and was just wiping his beard as the master-cook entered. "Master," said

he, "I have hitherto always been well satisfied with your cooks; but tell me who prepared the breakfast this morning? It never was so delicious since I sat on the throne of my fathers; tell me the name of the cook, that I may send him a ducat as a present."

"My lord, this is a strange story," replied the master; and he told the duke that a dwarf had been brought to him that morning, who earnestly solicited the place of a cook, and how all had happened. The duke was greatly astonished, ordered the dwarf to appear, and asked him who he was, and whence he came. Now poor James did not exactly wish to say that he had been enchanted, and had served as a squirrel. But yet he adhered to truth, telling him that he now had neither father nor mother, and had learned cooking of an old woman. Much amused by the strange appearance of his new cook, the duke asked no more questions, but said, "If you wish to remain here, I will give you fifty ducats a-year, a suit of livery, and two pair of breeches beside. Your duty shall be to prepare my breakfast; yourself every day to give directions how the dinner shall be prepared, and to take the general superintendence of the cooking. As each in my palace has his proper name, you shall be called 'Nose,' and hold the office of sub-master-cook."

The dwarf prostrated himself before the mighty duke, kissed his feet, and promised to serve him faithfully.

Thus the dwarf was for the present provided for, and did honour to his office. And it must be remarked that the duke had become quite an altered man since Nose the dwarf had been in the palace. Formerly, he had often been pleased to throw the dishes and plates that were served up at the heads of the cooks; indeed, he even once, in a fit of rage, threw a fried calf's foot that was not sufficiently tender, with such violence at the head of the master-cook, that the latter fell to the ground, and was compelled for three days to keep his bed. 'Tis true, the duke made him amends for what he had done by some handfuls of

ducats, but still no cook ever came before him with his dishes, without trembling and terror.

Ever since the dwarf had been in the palace, all seemed to be changed, as if by magic. The duke, instead of three, had now five meals a day, in order to relish properly the skill of his little servant, and yet never showed the least sign of discontent. Indeed, he found all new and excellent, was kind and pleasant, and became fatter daily.

He would often in the midst of a meal send for the master-cook and the dwarf, set one on his right, and the other on the left hand, and put with his own gracious fingers some morsels of the delicious viands into their mouths; a favour which both knew how to appreciate fully. The dwarf was the wonder of the whole town, and people requested the permission of the master-cook to see him cook, while some of the principal folks prevailed upon the duke to permit their servants to profit by the instructions of the dwarf in his kitchen, by which he obtained much money, for those who came to learn paid daily half a ducat. In order, however, to keep the other cooks in good humour, and prevent jealousy, Nose let them have the money that was paid by the masters for instruction.

Thus Nose lived almost two years in great comfort and honour, the thought of his parents alone saddening him, and nothing remarkable occurring until the following circumstance happened. The dwarf being particularly clever, and fortunate in his purchases, went himself, as often as time permitted, to the market, to buy poultry and fruit. One morning he went to the poultry-market, and walking up and down inquired for fat geese such as his master liked. His appearance, far from creating laughter and ridicule, commanded respect, since he was known as the duke's celebrated cook, and each poultry-woman felt herself happy if he but turned his nose to her. At length coming to the end of a row of stalls, he perceived in a corner, a woman with geese for sale, who did not, like the others, praise her goods, nor call to the customers.

He stepped up to her, examined the geese, weighed them in his hand, and finding them to his liking, bought three, with the cage they were in, put them on his shoulders and trotted home. It appeared singular to him that only two of the geese cackled and cried like others, the third being quite quiet and thoughtful, and occasionally groaning and moaning like a human being.

"She is not well," said he to himself, "I must hasten to get home and dress her." But the goose replied, distinctly,

"If thou stick'st me, Why I'll bite thee, And if my neck thou twistest round. Thou soon wilt lie below the ground."

Quite startled, the dwarf put down the basket, and the goose, looking at him with her fine intelligent eyes, sighed. "Why what have we here?" cried Nose. "You can talk, Miss Goose. I never expected that. Well, make yourself easy; I know the world and will not harm so rare a bird. But I would wager something that you have not always been covered with feathers. Indeed I was once a poor squirrel myself."

"You are right," replied the goose, "in saying I was not born with this disgraceful disguise. Alas! it was never sung at my cradle that Mimi, the great Wetterbock's daughter, would be killed in the kitchen of a duke."

"Pray be easy, dear Miss Mimi," said the dwarf, comforting her, "for as sure as I am an honest fellow, and sub-master cook to his highness, no one shall touch your throat. I will give you a stall in my own apartments, you shall have enough food, and I will devote my leisure time to converse with you. I'll tell the others in the kitchen that I am fattening a goose with various herbs for the duke, and at the first opportunity you shall be set at liberty."



The goose thanked him, with tears in her eyes, and the dwarf, as he had promised, killed the other two geese, but built a stall for Mimi, under the pretence of preserving her for some special occasion. Instead of feeding her on grain he gave her pastry and sweetmeats. As often as he had time he went to converse with her and comfort her. They related their histories to each other, and Nose learnt that she was the daughter of the enchanter, Wetterbock, who lived in the island of Gothland. Being involved in a quarrel with an old fairy, her father had been conquered by stratagems and cunning, and out of revenge the fairy had changed her into a goose, and brought her to the town.

When the dwarf told his history, she said, "I am not inexperienced in these matters, my father having given me and my sisters what instruction he was allowed to impart. The story of the dispute at your mother's fruit stall, your sudden metamorphosis, when you smelled the herb, as well as the words the old woman used, show me that you are enchanted through herbs; that is to say, if you can find out the herb of which the fairy thought when she bewitched you, you may be disenchanting." This was but poor consolation for the dwarf, for how should he find the herb? Yet he thanked her and felt some hope.

About this time the duke had a visit from a neighbouring prince, his friend. He, therefore, ordered the dwarf to appear, and said, "Now is the time for you to show whether you serve me faithfully and are master of your art. The prince, who is now visiting me, keeps, as is well known, the best table after me. He is a great connoisseur in good living, and a wise man. Let it now be your care to supply my table every day so that his astonishment shall daily become greater. But you must not, under pain of my displeasure, repeat the same dish during his visits. You may ask of my treasurer all you want, and should it be needful to fry gold and diamonds you must do it. I would rather become poor than forfeit his good opinion of my taste."

When the duke had concluded, the dwarf bowed most respectfully, saying, "be it as you say, my lord; please God I shall do all to gratify the palate of this prince of gourmands."

The little cook now mustered all his skill. He did not spare his master's treasures, and still less did he spare himself. He was seen all day at the fire, enveloped by clouds of smoke, and his voice constantly resounded through the vaults of the kitchen, for he governed the scullions and under cooks.

During a fortnight the foreign prince lived happily, and feasted sumptuously with the duke. They ate not less than five times a day, and the duke was delighted with his dwarf, seeing satisfaction expressed on the countenance of his guest. But on the fifteenth day it happened, that the duke, while at table, sent for the dwarf, presented him to his guest, and asked how he was satisfied with his cooking?

"You are a wonderful cook," replied the prince, "and know what good living is. All the time I have been here you have not repeated a single dish, and have prepared every thing exquisitely. But pray tell me, why have you not all this time prepared that queen of dishes, the pie called 'souzeraine?'"

The dwarf was startled at this question, for he had never heard of this queen of pies; however he recovered himself and replied, "My lord, I was in hopes that your serene countenance would shine some time yet on this court, therefore I deferred this dish; for with what dish but the queen of pies should the cook honour the day of your departure?"

"Indeed!" said the duke, laughing; "I suppose then you wish to wait for the day of my death to honour me, for you have never yet sent it up to me. But think of another dish to celebrate the departure, for tomorrow that pie must be on the table."

"Your pleasure shall be done, my lord," replied the dwarf, and retired. But he went away uneasy, for the day of his disgrace and misfortune had come. He did not know how to prepare this pie. He went therefore to his chamber, and wept over his fate, when the goose Mimi, who was allowed to walk about, came up and inquired the cause of his grief. When she heard of the pie, "Dry your tears," said she, "this dish came often to my father's table, and I know pretty well what is necessary for it; you have only to take such and such things in certain quantities, and should these not be all that are really necessary, I trust that the taste of these gentlemen is not sufficiently refined to discover the deficiency."

At these words the dwarf danced with joy, blessed the day on which he had purchased the goose, and set about making this queen of pies. He first made a trial in miniature, and lo! the flavour was exquisite, and the master-cook, to whom he gave the small pie to taste, praised once more his great skill.

The following day he prepared the pie on a larger scale, and, after having garnished it with flowers, sent it hot as it came from the oven to table. After which he dressed in his best and went to the dining-hall. On entering, he found the steward engaged in carving the pie, and presenting it on silver dishes to the duke and his guest. The duke swallowed a large piece, turned his eyes upward, saying "ha! ha! ha! justly is this called the queen of pies; but my dwarf is also a king of cooks. Is it not so, my friend?"

His guest took a small morsel, tasted it carefully, and smiled somewhat scornfully and mysteriously.

"The thing is made pretty well," replied he, pushing his plate away, "but it is not quite the Souzeraine, as I well imagined."

At this the duke frowned with indignation, and turned red, saying, "You hound of a dwarf, how dare you do this to your lord? I will have your big head cut off as a punishment for your bad cooking."

"Ah, my lord," said the dwarf trembling, "for Heaven's sake have compassion on me; I have made that dish, indeed, according to the proper receipt, and am sure that nothing is wanting."

"'Tis a lie, you knave," replied the duke, giving him a kick, "'tis a lie; else my guest would not say there was something wanting. I will have you yourself cut up and baked in a pie."

"Have compassion on me!" exclaimed the dwarf, shuffling on his knees up to the prince, and clasping his feet; "tell me what is wanting to this pie and why it does not suit your palate: let me not die for a handful of meat or flour."

"This will not avail you, my good Nose," replied the prince, laughing; "even yesterday I thought you would not be able to make this dish as well as my cook. Know there is wanting a herb called Sneeze-with-pleasure, which is not even known in this country. Without it this pie is insipid, and your master will never eat it in such perfection as I do."

At this the duke flew into a rage, and cried with flashing eyes:

"I will eat it in perfection yet, for I swear by my princely honour, that by to-morrow I will either have the pie set before you, such as you desire it, or the head of this fellow shall be spiked on the gate of my palace. Go, you hound, I give you once more twenty-four hours!" cried the duke.

The dwarf again went to his chamber and mourned over his fate with the goose that he must die, as he had never heard of this herb. "If it is nothing more," said she, "I can help you out of the difficulty, as my father has taught me to know all herbs. At any other time your death,

no doubt would have been certain, and it is fortunate for you that we have a new moon, as the herb is only then in flower. Now tell me, are there any old chesnut trees in the neighbourhood of the palace?"

"Oh yes," replied Nose, with a lighter heart, "near the lake, about two hundred yards from the palace, there is a clump of them; but what of them?"

"Why," said Mimi, "the herb only flowers at the foot of them. Now let us lose no time but go to fetch what you want; take me on your arm, and put me down when we get out, that I may search for you."

He did as she requested, and went towards the gate of the palace, but here the porter levelled his gun and said: "My good Nose, it is all over with you, you must not pass; I have strict orders respecting you."

"But I suppose I may go into the garden," replied the dwarf. "Be so good as to send one of your fellow servants to the master of the palace, and ask whether I may not go into the garden to fetch herbs." The porter did so and permission was given, since, the garden having high walls, escape was impossible. But when Nose and Mimi had got out he put her carefully down, and she ran quickly before him towards the lake, where the chesnuts were. He followed with a heavy heart, since this was his last and only hope. If she did not find the herb he was resolved rather to plunge into the lake than to have his head cut off. The goose searched in vain under all the chesnut trees; she turned every herb with her beak, but no trace of the one wanted was to be found, and she now began to cry out of compassion and fear for the dwarf, as the evening was already growing dusk, and the objects around were difficult to distinguish.

At this moment the dwarf cast a glance across the lake, and cried suddenly: "Look, look, yonder across the lake there stands a large old tree; let us go there and search; perhaps my luck may bloom there." The goose hopped and flew before him, and he ran after her as quickly

as his short legs would permit him; the chesnut tree cast a large shade, and it was so dark around that scarcely anything could be distinguished; but suddenly the goose stopped, flapped her wings for joy, put her head quickly into the high grass, and plucked something which she reached gracefully with her bill to the astonished Nose, saying; "There is the herb, and plenty is growing here, so that you will never want for it."

The dwarf looked thoughtfully at the herb, and a sweet odour arose from it, which immediately reminded him of the scene of his metamorphosis; the stalk and leaves were of a blueish green, bearing a glowing red flower, with a yellow edge.

"God be praised!" he now exclaimed, "What a miracle! I believe this is the very herb that transformed me from a squirrel into this hideous form; shall I make a trial, to see what effect it will have on me!"

"Not yet," entreated the goose. "Take a handful of this herb with you, let us go to your room and put up all the money and whatever you have, and then we will try the virtue of the herb."

They did so, and went again to his room, the dwarf's heart beating audibly with anticipation. After having put up about fifty or sixty ducats which he had saved, he tied up his clothes in a bundle, and said: "If it please God, I shall get rid of my burthensome deformity." He then put his nose deep into the herb and inhaled its odour.

Now his limbs began to stretch and crack, he felt how his head started from his shoulders, he squinted down on his nose and saw it became smaller and smaller, his back and chest became straight, and his legs longer.

The goose viewed all this with great astonishment, exclaiming, "Ah, what a tall handsome fellow you have now become. God be praised, there is no trace left in you of what you were before." Now James was

highly rejoiced, he folded his hands and prayed. But his joy did not make him forget what he owed to Mimi the goose; his heart indeed urged him to go to his parents, yet from gratitude he overcame his wish and said, "To whom but to you am I indebted that I am again restored to my former self? Without you I should never have found this herb, but should have continued for ever in that form, or else have died under the axe of the executioner. Well, I will repay you. I will bring you back to your father; he being so experienced in magic will be able easily to disenchant you."

The goose shed tears of joy and accepted his offer. James fortunately escaped unknown from the palace with his goose, and started on his way for the sea-coast towards Mimi's home.

It is needless to add that their journey was successful, that Wetterbock disenchanting his daughter, and dismissed James laden with presents; that the latter returned to his native town, that his parents with delight recognized in the handsome young man their lost son, that he, with the presents that he had received, purchased a shop and became wealthy and happy.

Only this much may be added, that after his departure from the duke's palace, there was a great sensation, for when, on the next morning, the duke was about to fulfil his oath, and to have the dwarf beheaded in case he had not discovered the herbs, he was nowhere to be found; and the prince maintained that the duke had let him escape secretly rather than lose his best cook, and accused him of breaking his word of honour. This circumstance gave rise to a great war between the two princes, which is well known in history by the name of the "Herb War." Many battles were fought, but at length a peace was concluded, which is now called the "Pie Peace," because at the festival of reconciliation the Souzeraine, queen of pies, was prepared by the prince's cook, and relished by the duke in the highest degree.

Thus the most trifling causes often lead to the greatest result; and this, reader, is the story of "Nose, the Dwarf."