

# The Princess Ilsée: A Fairy Tale

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Anonymous

Illustrated by Eugene Froment



The Princess Ilsée.  
A FAIRY TALE.





This Little Fairy Tale

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED  
TO  
EDITH HELEN AND EMILY EDITH,  
BY  
THEIR LOVING GODMOTHER.



## PREFACE.

THE origin of the following legend is itself somewhat of a legend. The author of this little story, or, as it may more correctly be termed, this sweet poem, was a young maiden. You will easily discover this, for, in truth, so simple and natural a tale could only have emanated from the fresh and pure imagination of a youthful mind. I tried in vain to discover the name of the author when I was visiting Germany, her native country. I was told by some that the story was written by a princess, who closed her short but brilliant career some years ago, after giving utterance to this plaintive song. Others denied this fact, and assured me that the author was a peasant girl, who died in poverty and obscurity.

But whether princess or peasant, so charming a tale must have been written by one who possessed a noble spirit and a gentle heart, and I would ask my young friends, as well as their mothers and grandmothers, to read the story with attention.

I feel its style unique, yet I forbear to praise it, lest by doing so I should tarnish its beauty. Although a fairy tale, it is replete with wisdom; real yet transparent, vague but not indistinct, healthy and invigorating in tone without being heavy. Nothing could be more unlike, more raised above the common sounds of earth. It resembles music, in which each note is so clear and distinct that even the deaf can hardly fail to hear how plainly the dangers which every fair maiden must encounter are depicted in this allegory of the streamlet, as well as the perils which must be avoided, the faults guarded against, and the duties imposed on old and young throughout the battle of life, from its very beginning to its close.

I have made no attempt to embellish the tale; I choose rather to retain its long sentences, its tautology, its charming originality of expressions,—in short, all that renders its style attractive and piquant.

I requested the help of M. Froment's clever pencil, to assist my labour as a translator. He has produced the exact amount of life and

form necessary to the fiction of this story. He felt, with perfect taste, that to define each scene accurately would be to spoil it; thus his charming drawings delineate only what is requisite, leaving the imagination to fill up the picture. His was a more difficult task than mine, and I rejoice to feel that his is the greater success.





## ADDRESS TO THE READER.

DEAR READER,—The following tale is not the original legend of the “Princess Ilsée,” but only an especial favourite of that old and much-respected story. The sources whence my information is derived are no traditions of the past, I only relate a simple tale of yesterday,—nevertheless, I aspire to afford you pleasure. My knowledge has been acquired by carefully observing whatever happened around me as I rambled through the country; when I met with any object that particularly pleased me, no matter whether it were a flower or an old wall, a rock, mountain, valley, stream, or river, I said to each one as I passed, “Give me a full history of your life,” When night came on I always retired to rest, and if I prayed fervently before I went to sleep, I found that all the objects I had questioned during the previous day answered me in my dreams, and thus it happens that some tiny grains of truth are interwoven in my tale.



I think much of your good opinion, my dear reader. I have written the following tale for the young and amiable; it is intended solely for the amusement of such, and of course I conclude you belong to this

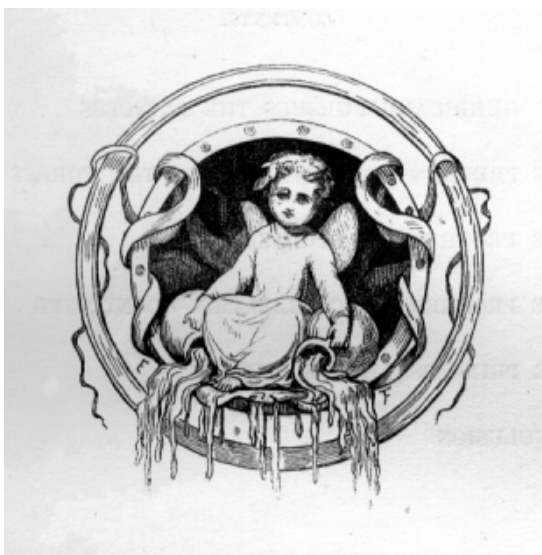
class. I feel sure you will not fail to understand my meaning as you peruse my pages; try in return to feel some little regard for me, for should I succeed in pleasing you, nothing will be left for me to desire.



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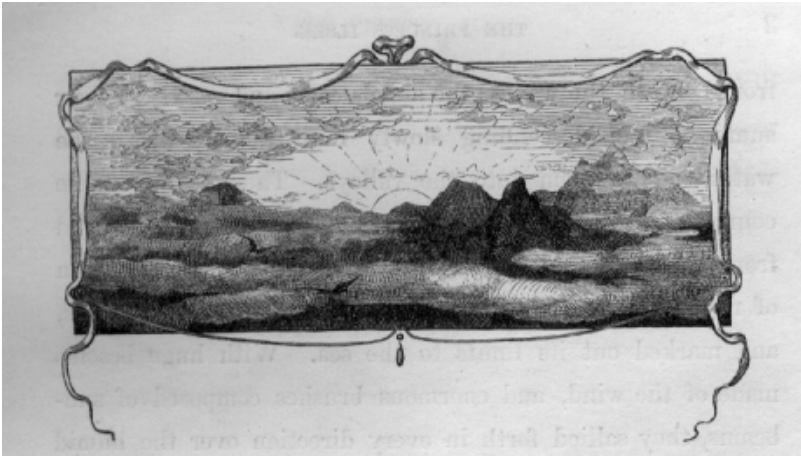




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## CHAPTER I. THE ANGEL FINDS THE PRINCESS.

AT the time of the Universal Deluge, when all the waters of the earth, intermingled and united, rose higher than the mountains, and covered their loftiest crests with foaming waves, confusion reigned over the face of the deep. And when at last the Almighty, taking pity on this miserable world, commanded the glorious rays of the sun to shine once more through the grey and watery clouds, and the waters to separate and to resume their accustomed course through the lowlands of the earth, not a streamlet, not a river could have again found its ancient bed, if troops of good angels had not gathered around to put them on their way.



As the long chains of mountains by degrees reappeared from beneath the waves, the angels came and rested on their summits, and descending slowly from thence, drove the waters before them into the valleys. They regulated the course of the rivers and streamlets as fast as they retreated from the hilltops; enclosed the lakes, either by a solid chain of rugged rocks or a green girdle of woods and meadows, and marked out its limits to the sea. With huge besoms made of the wind, and enormous brushes composed of sunbeams, they sallied forth in every direction over the humid earth, brushing away the mud and slime that covered the grass, and drying the heavy foliage

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of the trees. So great was the ardour with which they worked, that they raised a quantity of spray, which hung suspended among the gorges of the mountains, where it formed veils of transparent vapour.

Their labour had already lasted several days, and was almost concluded, when one of the angels, somewhat tired, sat down to rest on one of the highest of the alpine peaks.

From thence he had an immense extent of view, and east and west, north and south, he contemplated with a pensive air the verdant earth beneath his feet, springing forth so graceful, so young and fresh, from the great bath in which all its impurities had been washed away.

“How charming it looks!” exclaimed he; “how dazzling it is in all its purity! But will it preserve this purity? Will Sin, which has disappeared beneath this mass of water, never reappear? Will it never again leave the mark of its dark fingers on the bright face of this renewed world?”

A melancholy sigh, full of sad presentiments, escaped from the angel’s breast, and he turned away his eyes, dazzled by the brilliancy of the sun just rising on the horizon.

He gazed around for a long time on the side by which the German Waters had descended, and saw them gliding away in the distance. The largest and most important rivers went first, followed by the secondary streams, behind which an innumerable and brilliant mass of rivulets advanced, like an army of body-guards. He rejoiced to see them all so well directed, free from all confusion or disorder, and he remarked with pleasure that there was not even one little streamlet, however insignificant, however faintly imperceptible it might almost be, that was not escorted by a good angel, to show it the right way, whenever it was in doubt which road to follow, and to guard it tenderly when precipitating itself too heedlessly over the points of the rocks.

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He saw the joyous Rhine, his head crowned with grapes and vine-leaves, gaily following out his rapid course, and he seemed to hear afar off the cries of joy with which he saluted his dear Moselle, as she came blushing towards him, her head also encircled with the green clusters of the vine, intermingling with the locks of her beautiful hair.

As the waters retreated further and further, the murmuring of their waves was lost in the distance, and suddenly other sounds struck on the ear of the solitary Angel, who was seated on the summit of the Alp.

By his side a feeble moan arose, somewhat like the groans of a person in deep affliction. The Angel arose, and went behind the rock from whence this sound proceeded, and there, enveloped in her white veil, he found a tender little stream extended on the ground, and shedding bitter tears. He pitied her distress, and, bending forward, raised her up, and, on removing her veil, he recognized the lovely little Ilsée, for whom a verdant bed had been prepared far away down below, in the valleys of the Hartz.

“My poor child,” said the good Angel, “you ought not to be here alone on these lofty and rugged mountains; your companions are all gone! Did none of them think of taking you with them?”

Little Ilsée, proudly raising her head, replied in a most disdainful tone, “I was not forgotten by my friends. Old Weser waited for me long enough; he made signs, and called to me to accompany him. The Ecker and the Ocker also wanted much to take me with them, but I would not go, I refused absolutely, even at the risk of drying up here from sadness and solitude. Must *I* descend into the valleys, and wander through their plains, just like any common stream, there to be used for such vulgar purposes as supplying oxen and sheep with water, and washing their great ugly dirty feet! *I*, the Princess Ilsée? Only look at me; tell me if I do not spring from a noble race: the transparent ether is my father, the light is my mother, the diamond is my brother, and the pearly dewdrop that dwells in the calyx of the rose is my dear little sister. The waves of the Deluge raised me very

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high, and I could kiss the snowy peaks of the grand old mountains with my waters, and the first ray of the sun that pierced the morning clouds, scattered spangles on my garments. I am a princess of the first water, and I really cannot descend to the valley; I preferred hiding here, and pretended to be asleep when the others departed, so that old Weser was obliged to go grumbling away at last, with those silly streamlets, who had nothing better to do than to rush into his arms."

At the conclusion of this long speech from little Ilsée, the Angel shook his head sadly, and gave a severe and searching look at her pale little face.

When he had for some time earnestly examined the large blue eyes of the child, eyes that, on this day, were sparkling with anger, he saw a something in their transparent depths which at once told him that an evil genius had taken possession of her. Alas! the Demon of Pride had got into poor little Ilsée's head, and driven out all good thoughts, and he looked out at the good Angel, through her eyes, with a bold mocking air. Now the Demon of Pride had already more than once turned the head of a foolish child, even without her being a princess of the first water; so the compassionate Angel, seeing the danger that threatened to overwhelm the poor little stream, determined to save her at all hazards.





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### CHAPTER II. THE ANGEL AND THE PRINCESS.

IN the eyes of the Angel, whose look was so searching and penetrating, the Princess Ilsée was nothing more than a badly trained child, so he did not address her as "Your Highness," but simply as dear Ilsée.



"Dear Ilsée," said the Angel, "if it is quite by your own wish that you remain upon these heights, and if you considered it beneath your dignity to accompany the other waters to the plain, you ought to feel contented here, and I really cannot understand why you should weep so much and lament your fate."

"Alas! dear Angel," replied Ilsée, "when all the waters were gone, the Hurricane came to sweep down these mountains, and when he found me here, he went into a fury, insulted me, made a frightful tumult, shook me with rage, and wanted to throw me from the top of this rock, into a dark and deep abyss, where the smallest ray of light would never penetrate. I prayed, I wept, I clung tightly to the points of the rocks, and at last, I succeeded in tearing myself away from his powerful arms, and hid myself in this cleft."

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“And since you will not always succeed in escaping him thus,” said the Angel (for the Hurricane maintains strict order here, and has a capital besom), “you must see, dear Ilsée, that you were very foolish to wish to remain all alone on these heights, and you will now make haste, and let me lead you to rejoin good old Weser and your young companions.”

“Certainly not,” cried Ilsée; “I intend to remain here amongst these mountains; am I not a princess? “

“Ilsée,” said the Angel, in his sweetest and most caressing voice, “I love you dearly, and therefore you should love me a little in return, and try to be a good child. Look down below at that white morning cloud, which sails so calmly through the blue sky; if I call, it will come at once and rest here. We will both enter it, and you shall repose on its luxurious cushions, whilst I remain at your side, and the cloud will bear us rapidly down to the peaceful valleys, where you will find your sister rivulets; there, I will place you in your own little green bed, and remain near enough to whisper sweet dreams or relate some interesting stories.”

But Ilsée’s obstinacy was unconquerable. “No! no!” she cried. “I cannot, I will not go down ;” and when the Angel approached her, and wanted to take her, by gentle violence, in his arms, she spurted drops of water in his face.

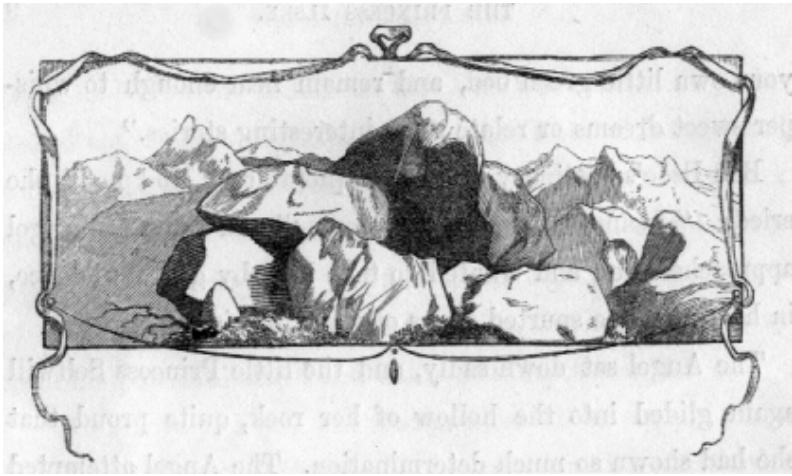
The Angel sat down sadly, and the little Princess Selfwill again glided into the hollow of her rock, quite proud that she had shown so much determination. The Angel attempted several times to induce her to follow him, but she always answered by a most disdainful refusal. When at length the good Angel saw, that notwithstanding all his tenderness, he had no influence over poor little Ilsée, but that she was entirely under the dominion of the Demon of Pride, he turned away from this lost child with a sad heart, and rejoined his companions, who were still busily attending to their duties.

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CHAPTER III.  
THE ARRIVAL OF THE DEMON.

NO sooner did Ilsée find herself left alone on the summit of the Alp, than she wished to enjoy some of the honours due to her rank. She therefore quitted her grotto, placed herself upon a projection of rock, and allowing the wide folds of her silvery robe to float in the breeze, waited thus, expecting that other mountain-peaks would bow down before her, and the clouds hasten to kiss her little feet. But nothing of the kind occurred, in spite of all the airs her little Highness gave herself. At last, tired out with sitting still so long, she began to feel terribly sad, and said softly to herself, with a heavily drawn sigh, "I could willingly endure a moderate share of weariness, since such is one of the penalties attendant upon my rank, but really *too much* even for a princess has fallen to my lot."



The sun had set and night had come on, when the Hurricane once more announced his approach, by a dull and distant moaning, which filled the heart of the poor little stream with bitter anguish, and drew scalding tears from her eyes. Whatever satisfaction her previous firmness in refusing to follow the Angel might have afforded her, it was not sufficient to enable her to overcome her dread of the Hurricane. The sky gradually grew blacker, heavy vapours arose

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from the depths of the abyss, a dull sound closely resembling distant peals of thunder re-echoed among the deep gorges of the mountains, and poor little Ilsée was ready to die from fright. She could scarcely breathe in the heavy and sulphurous air which suddenly blew in her face. All at once, behold! a ray of light, though a very pale one, pierced through the dark night; the poor little frightened stream raised her eyes and perceived a large gloomy-looking man standing before her; he was wrapped in a great red mantle, and made a low bow to the little princess, whom he accosted as "Most gracious Princess." Such a salutation was like sweet music to the ears of Ilsée; so, conquering the fear which this strange and sinister-looking figure aroused within her, she eagerly listened to the seductive words in which he further addressed her.

The dark man continued, "I live in this neighbourhood, hidden from sight behind these rocks, I overheard your conversation with the Angel, and I witnessed with pleasure the manner in which you dismissed him. I really cannot understand how any one could wish so adorable a princess to descend into the plain, and thus bury so many exquisite charms and graces in the obscurity of a valley."



He afterwards described in the most glowing terms, the brilliant future that awaited her, if she would but commit herself to his care. "I have," said he, "a delightful summer palace, situated on one of the highest and most beautiful of the German mountains, and it is there that I wish to conduct you. In that charming abode you will be surrounded by a brilliant court, and all the splendour and *éclat*

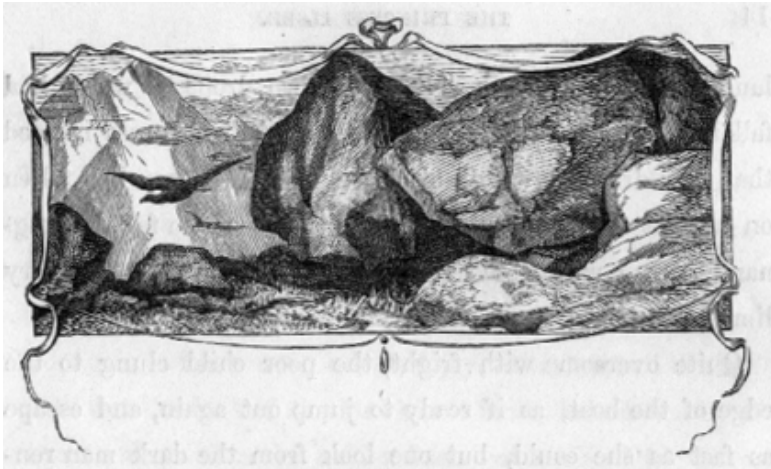
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suited to your high rank. You will there be enthroned in the midst of joy and pleasures far above all those assigned to the large and small waters of the earth."



CHAPTER IV.  
THE GOLDEN BOAT.

LITTLE Ilsée's heart beat fast as she heard all these fine promises. But when the dark man, half opening his mantle, drew forth a large golden basin, in the form of a little boat, with the outside beautifully carved, and adorned with precious stones, and when presenting this basin to the "gracious Princess," he invited her to seat herself within it, that he might bear her away to his beautiful Brockenberg, where countless servants were already preparing splendid *fêtes* for her reception,—all the doubts and scruples of her little Highness vanished. In her joy, she jumped so eagerly into the golden basin, with both feet at once, that the water spurted up to a great height. Ilsée was ready to laugh, but the laugh died away on her lips, for two drops of water had fallen on the dark man's hand, and the little Princess noticed that they dried up with a hissing sound, as if they had fallen on red-hot iron; and at the same moment, she felt so poignant a dread within the depths of her heart, that her very limbs trembled.



Quite overcome with fright, the poor child clung to the edge of the boat, as if ready to jump out again, and escape as fast as she could, but one look from the dark man rendered her motionless, and



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seizing the basin in his powerful grasp, he ordered the Hurricane to blow before them, in order that Ilsée might not fear being carried away by it. Rapidly as an arrow he then darted forth, cleaving his way through the air.

Her grief was of short duration, and the little stream soon became calm, and allowed herself to be carried away quite quietly. She never for a moment suspected that in entering the golden boat she had yielded herself up to the power of the Demon who had presented it. She was, however, uneasy when she heard the strange whistling sound produced by their irregular passage through the dark night air, and when the violence of their movements made the basin oscillate, she lay down tremblingly at the bottom of her golden basin, and then carefully gathered her garments around her, lest they should come in contact with the dark man.

The darkness began to diminish, and the moon had already risen when they at last arrived at the mountain of the Brocken. They were received by dense crowds of singular-looking beings, who, to do them honour, made the air resound again, with frantic cries of joy, hurrahs, and whistlings. But the lord of the Brocken commanded silence by a gesture, and placing the golden basin containing little Ilsée on a large block of stone somewhat resembling a throne, he invited his joyous vassals to form a circle around, and present their homage to her as "Princess of the Waters."



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This was a delightful moment for little Ilsée, who felt herself at last in her proper sphere. She drew herself up proudly, rose with grace and dignity from the golden basin, and politely saluted on every side, bending her little head in a bewitching manner. On seeing her, a loud cry of surprise and admiration burst forth: "How lovely she is!" cried all the spectators; "Long live Ilsée our Queen!" This certainly was not a situation conducive to humility, for a little

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princess, who had moreover the Demon of Pride in her head. Sweet notes of enchanting music were now heard, and Ilsée, quite beside herself, began dancing gracefully, making her sparkling form rise and fall with infinite taste in the brilliant basin; sometimes raising, sometimes lowering her little curly head, she shook the limpid drops from her hair, which fell back into the basin like a shower of pearls. The gentle moon, never inclined to examine too rigorously what passes here below (and shining indifferently on the bad as well as the good), could not resist placing a sparkling little crown of silver stars round the head of this boastful child; and when the charming little Ilsée raised her eyes towards her with a grateful smile, the moon was so pleased that she bespangled her whole garments with her silvery sheen.

CHAPTER V.  
THE COURT ON THE BROCKENBERG.

MEANWHILE, Ilsée's graceful dance had not been witnessed with equal pleasure, by every eye in the Demon's court. There was among the assemblage, more than one youthful and vain sorceress, who beheld the fêtes given in honour of the new-corner, with feelings of spite. Two of the most indiscreet of these young witches approached the golden basin, in order to make fun of little Ilsée. "Look here," said one, "what a dancer! she certainly moves elegantly and looks pretty, but she is so small and fragile that a breath of wind would blow her away. I should like to see how the pale beauty would look, if she were led into the ring by the Hurricane, to dance with him as we do." "I am sorry for her," said the other, shrugging her shoulders with an air of contempt; "she'll never be able to ride through the air on a broomstick. But hark! I already hear the sound of drums and cymbals below; let us go and join the merry circle, and we will crumble the earth beneath our feet, and hollow out a deep pit, in which the brilliant Ilsée shall disappear; then adieu to all her grandeur. We will make a slave of this beautiful boastful Princess."



Little Ilsée, who had overheard the wicked words of the two young witches, had no longer any desire to dance. Greatly mortified, she

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hid herself within the boat; but shortly after, on peeping out, she saw the fearful group pass over to the other side of the mountain, and take their places for dancing. She then began to reflect on what the wicked sorceresses had meant by the conversation she had overheard. What they had said respecting the Hurricane had deeply wounded her, but what troubled her most, was about the pit they had threatened to prepare for her. Was it possible that *she* could ever become the slave of such vile creatures? She already thought of demanding an explanation from the Lord of the Brocken, who was just then coming to her side; but before she had time to prepare her little speech, the dark man stood before her, and dipped the end of his finger in the middle of the golden basin. Ilsée started for it seemed to her that the water boiled at his touch; but the Demon laughingly withdrew his finger, and said, "The night is fresh, gracious Princess; you are already very cold, and if I had not warmed the water, you would have frozen in this basin. I have prepared a comfortable bed for you down there, close to the fire, where you may repose at your ease. If you will look in the direction to which I point, you will see the old head cook belonging to my court, busy stirring the fire, and putting pretty toys into your bed, to help beguile the time for you. Come, let me carry you to her."

Little Ilsée looked in the direction indicated by the dark man, and she saw a huge brass cauldron hanging over a brisk and sparkling fire; but the old woman standing over it was so ugly, so hideous, and the playthings which she threw into the cauldron had so strange an appearance, that little Ilsée, who had become very suspicious, would not allow herself to be led away, and said, "I prefer watching the dance on the mountain-top. I am not cold, and when I stand up in my golden basin, I can see it all, and it amuses me very much." "We will wait then," said the Demon; "it will be time enough to fetch you in another hour;" and he rejoined the dancers. But Ilsée's pleasure was over, when she found herself quite alone, with no other amusement than that of watching, by turns, the groups of disorderly dancers, the fire, and the cauldron, into which the old woman was throwing, as she could now distinctly see, all kinds of unclean animals, such as spiders, toads, serpents, lizards (of all which she had an ample store), and bats, which she caught as they flew around the fire, attracted by the light.

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By degrees, little Ilsée was seized with a perfect horror when she saw into what society she had fallen; and thinking of the menace uttered by the witches, of making her their slave, it flashed across her all at once, that one of them had even dared to call her "Princess Cooking-water." Alas! cried she, where am I?

Clasping her delicate little hands in mortal agony, she pressed her veil against her pale face, to stifle the cry that was escaping from her oppressed heart. "Oh!" said she, weeping and sighing heavily, "why did I not go with the Angel? He wished to do me good." And as she looked around her, in despair, a good thought came into her mind. "I am alone," she murmured; "all the witches are dancing on the other side of the mountain; I will escape, I will escape, no matter where." In a moment she was seated on the edge of the basin, with her little feet hanging outside, and holding on by her hands; she glanced hurriedly around to see whether she was observed, but happily, no one was paying attention to the little Princess. No one, save the good old moon, who looked down at her, from the calm sky overhead, with a bright smile. The poor child raised her eyes bedewed with tears towards her, with a supplicating air, whilst her tiny finger, placed before her mouth, implored secrecy, and the moon, too good-natured to betray her, kindly hid herself behind a dark cloud. "Thanks," cried Ilsée, "thanks, gentle moon;" and letting go her hold, she glided noiselessly to the ground. But the basin was high, and the block of granite on which it was placed was higher still, so that, notwithstanding all her care, the little streamlet reached the ground in a very perturbed condition; so, fearing to be heard, she hid herself in haste, beneath the large stones within reach. We ought to notice that, having already become more humble-minded, she had wisely left the starry crown behind her in the basin. The court and its grandeur had bestowed little pleasure upon her; she no longer thought of being a princess, but only of how she could best steal away, without attracting the attention of those who wished to do her harm. The little stream clung fast to the rocks, trembling from fright, and asked them kindly to protect her, in so sweet a voice, that the old stones, which had never felt anything so fresh or tremulous on their rude breast, were quite affected. They bent so completely over the little Princess, that no eye, not even that of her friend the moon, could discover her. Afterwards, they showed her a

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small hole in the soil through which she could pass, provided she made herself very tiny; and in the bosom of the earth she found a narrow passage like a canal (probably formerly hollowed out by some field-mice) which led to the other side of the rugged mountain. Little Ilsée continued her journey in the dark, gliding downwards silently by a gentle declivity. She had already happily accomplished a considerable part of the journey, when the canal became wider and rougher; she passed amongst the *débris* of crumbling old rocks, some pieces of which gave way under her, and, to her great alarm, rolled before her into the abyss. She continued to advance in, perfect darkness, but from time to time she felt a cold wind blow round her, which seemed to come from above, through the fissures of the rocks. All at once the path, which was gradually growing more steep, became less dark, for the rock above her was cleft, and she could see the clear bright sky above, and the pale light of some little stars enabled her to distinguish a great quantity of large and small stones, massed together in such confusion, that it was impossible to make out her route. To add to her discomfort, she again heard the sharp and discordant sound of the music of the witches who were dancing on the Brocken. Little Ilsée, who had hesitated a moment, not knowing which way to direct her course, was so frightened at hearing this noise, that she began to bound along the stones, leaping with a fearful rapidity, without minding the blocks of roots, which at every moment impeded her progress, knocking her poor little head against their hard corners and tearing her delicate robe. She ran, and ran, and ran. "Let me escape," she cried; "let me fly far, far away, so that the Prince of the Brocken and his dreadful band may never be able to find me."



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CHAPTER VI.  
THE FLIGHT OF THE PRINCESS.

THE first dawn of day caused our fugitive great uneasiness. "The night is silent and never betrays, but the day is a chatter-box," she said, to herself, "that will hasten to reveal the road I have taken;" and she stooped as low as possible, gliding on, hunting out the declivities, hollows, and hiding-places, and only holding up her head, from time to time, to breathe a little of the fresh morning air. Amongst the high crests of the wooded mountains, a deep gorge, covered with dark verdure, led to the valley below, and little Ilsée was going to throw herself into it head-foremost. Countless boulders of rock, detached by storms from the mountains, had rolled over one another to the bottom of this gorge, where the pines had firmly entwined their moss-covered roots around them; they had a sombre and venerable appearance, and did not seem at all disposed to allow a free passage to the little stream who was so rashly precipitating herself amongst them. But kind Providence, taking pity on poor Ilsée at the moment when, pursued by fear, she would have dashed herself to pieces against these enormous rocks, had permitted the forest to open her green gates and to take her under her protection. The forest is an asylum sacred to lost children who have misbehaved, or allowed bad thoughts to take possession of them. No demon who had seized a child is allowed to accompany it into the peaceful solitude of the forest. The Demon of Pride is the one above all others who is excluded.



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Little Ilsée knew nothing of all this, but she thought that the roots of the pines made frightful grimaces at her, and she ran on quite terrified at the thousand fantastic forms they seemed to take, seeking the shade, and always advancing further and further into the depths of the forest.

Little Ilsée no more suspected that the Demon of Pride had quietly left her when, flying from the witches, she had made her escape from the Brocken, and that he had been driven away by her tears of agony and repentance, than formerly, in her giddiness, she had perceived that the Demon had taken possession of her. But she felt more free and less exposed beneath the large trees; and when she saw the golden bars formed by the sun's rays falling obliquely here and there on the thick moss, her little heart felt more secure in its shelter. The further she was removed from the Brocken, the stronger became her feeling of confidence and safety. She even fancied that the pines looked less gravely and sternly upon her; and then the venerable oaks spread their powerful arms over her, as if to protect her, and the bright and joyous beech-trees bent smilingly before her, endeavouring, by lengthening their branches, to retain the sun's rays amongst them, and then to dart them back one after another like so many golden arrows. Little Ilsée, who, like all other children, soon forgot her sorrow, ran warbling through the wood; and when, whilst thus amusing herself, a sunbeam fell upon her, she seized it, raised it in the air, uttering cries of joy, or used it as a pin to fasten her veil; then, in her rapid course, she threw it, with a sprite-like air, to the flowers and plants waiting by the path, curious to see her pass. The little fugitive, once more transformed into a happy playful child, became the joy of the forest which had sheltered her. As for the large and small stones that were sleeping on the ground, rolled up in their mossy cases, their slumbers ended when little Ilsée came dancing and jumping over them. But this was no cause of regret, they were soon the best of friends. When the largest and heaviest declined to let her pass, she patted their rough cheeks with her delicate hands, and murmured gentle entreaties in their ear. If all this proved useless, she feigned to go into a passion, gaily struck the obstacle with her little wet feet, and pushed the old rocks so violently as to make them shake; and as soon as she succeeded in clearing a passage for herself,

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on she rushed again, laughing, and separating the lazy stones, and dashing forward like a mad thing.



The gorge now and again became very steep and precipitous, and it was a pleasure to see the little Princess leap gracefully from rock to rock. She then adorned her pretty head with a little cap of very fine white foam; and when she tore it against some sharp rock, ere reaching the next, she replaced it with one all new, white and fresh as the Alpine snow. Upon several slopes of the mountains open to the sun, where the grass grew soft and tufted, the large trees were scattered far apart to make room for the little ones, which, assembled in large groups, grew up beneath their eyes and thus learned from their parents to become trees in their turn. The young pines, firmly fixed in the ground, displayed their little stiff green robes on the grass, and, nodding their pointed heads in every direction, expressed much astonishment that Ilsée's feet were never weary of running and jumping. But the very young streams, less resigned than the little pines, crept out drop by drop from the fissures of the mountain when they heard Ilsée murmuring her sweet songs, and stealthily approached her through the moss. The little Princess, warned by the little purling sound of their approach, made signs to them to hasten; and when the young adventurers, in their fright, halted on the edge of the ravine, she encouraged them by her silvery voice, and pushed pieces of rock towards them to serve as stepping stones. The rivulets then took courage, and descending, jumped by degrees from one stone to another. Where at last they fell rather heavily on her bosom, Ilsée took them by the hand, saying, "Come, you are going to run along with me now; watch what I do, and always jump when I jump.

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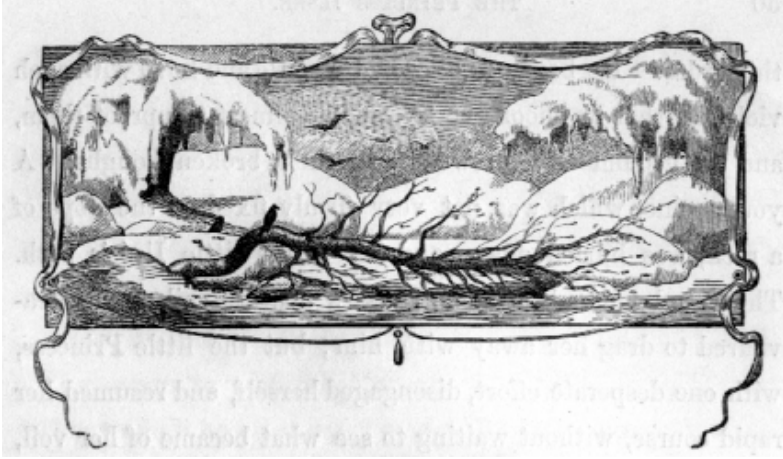
Moreover, do not be frightened; I will hold you up." And the rivulets obeyed her; they leaped with Ilsée over the largest stones; and soon, when they also obtained their little caps of white foam, they could no longer be distinguished from little Ilsée.



CHAPTER VII.  
THE HURRICAN PURSUES THE PRINCESS.

MEANTIME the disappearance of the charming Princess from the Brocken had put the dark man into a fury. He knew quite well that so pure a stream was no fitting prey for him, especially since the Demon of Pride (who of all others gave him the greatest influence over her) had left her. What measures could he take to recover the graceful child? It occurred to him that the little Princess was terribly afraid of the Hurricane; therefore he immediately called to the North Wind, and commanded it to blow up the valley, in exactly the contrary direction to the one Ilsée had chosen. "Ah," said he, "that will oblige her to retrace her steps and bring her back to the Brocken." The North Wind did his best to carry out this order. He began to blow and whistle and howl with such violence, that he shook the trees so as almost to uproot them, and the ground was strewn with their broken boughs. A young pine, which was not very firmly fixed on the slope of a rock, was hurled down, and lay across little Ilsée's path. The Wind suddenly snatched Ilsée's floating veil, and endeavoured to drag her away with him; but the little Princess, with one desperate effort, disengaged herself, and resumed her rapid course, without waiting to see what became of her veil, which she left in the Wind's grasp. At this moment *self* was forgotten, and it is only right to mention that on her own account she had no fear, the danger to her beloved trees was what tormented her; and if she had possessed the power, she would with all her heart have assisted her unfortunate protectors to struggle against the storm. She approached the uprooted pine, threw herself upon him weeping bitterly, bedewed him with her tears, and bathed his wounds with tender compassion. She gently rocked, in her delicate arms, the little green branches of the oak and beech, which the North Wind tossed into her bosom; she refreshed their injured leaves with kisses, and led them tenderly on their way, until at last she placed them softly on some cosy little mossy bed at the side of the ravine.

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All this time the dark man was standing on the Brocken, gnashing his teeth with rage. When he saw the Hurricane exhausting itself in useless efforts to recover the fugitive, he murmured in a sinister tone, "I will send old Winter after her, grey, desolate Winter, accompanied by hunger and cold, with his long dark nights, during which Temptation is on the alert, and Sin glides through his mysterious paths. He has already brought me more than one poor soul, so doubtless he will manage to add this Princess of the Waters to his list. "Hurricane!" he cried out, "continue to rage down below, and do not cease your efforts; strip the trees of their foliage, and prepare the way for Winter. He only comes, as you know, when he can pass over the withered leaves with heavy step."

The North Wind, like a faithful servant, blew through the valley with redoubled violence and keenness; the beech-trees quaked and trembled, and in their fright let all their yellow leaves fall to the earth; the frost reddened the tops of the oaks, and they, too, despoiling themselves of their vesture, and contemplating with sorrow their naked branches, uneasily awaited the arrival of Winter. The Pine alone remained calm and motionless, and continued to wear his velvet mantle of beautiful dark green. Little Ilsée, who flowed at his feet, could not make this out, and in a pettish tone reproached the other trees in the following words:—"Indeed you are very foolish. What makes you, in that strange and impolite manner, throw all your dried leaves in my face? Do you no longer love little

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Ilsée, and do you wish to blind her with your acorns and beech-nuts?" And the child bounded on in a rage, shaking off the yellow leaves which had settled on her hair, or were encumbering the folds of her brilliant dress.

And now Winter had set in on the Brocken. His Majesty the Demon, with his own hands, clothed him in the very thickest mantle of fog, and then, after slowly crossing the high mountains, the old man rolled heavily down into the valley. He did not fully reveal himself at first, but began his work gently, and tried to insinuate himself by flattery. He covered the trees and bushes with little white robes of sparkling hoar-frost, so sparkling, that Ilsée, dazzled by the brightness, did not know where to rest her eyes. Afterwards came the snow-flakes, whirling down from the sky above. The little Princess thought at first that they must be the clouds themselves, come to visit her in the valley, and renew the acquaintance formed on the summit of the Alps. But as Winter continued to spread his cold winding-sheet more and more heavily over the mountain gorge, beneath which all lay buried, stones, roots, plants, mosses, even the little pale and frozen blades of grass, Ilsée began to feel alarmed, for she thought that probably her turn might soon come. She was very lonely at no longer seeing her dear verdure, and she worked eagerly, washing all the stones she met with, removing the snow, and liberating the tender little mosses. All at once, to her terror, she felt herself pierced with sharp icy pricks, and she observed that Winter had spread hard shining links of chains round the stones and tree-roots, and that these chains, increasing and lengthening more and more, must eventually paralyse her young and delicate limbs. Furious Winter next seized the fragile breast of the poor child in his cold piercing grasp. An icy shudder ran through her frame, as she tremblingly entwined herself round the knotted roots of the Pine. She raised her eyes imploringly towards this giant king of the forest, and observed that he too was clothed in the white robe of Winter, but that he still wore his dark mantle of green, beneath the cold snow. This pleasant sight recalled the spring-time to her, and cheered her, pouring comfort and hope into her little heart. New life and strength now began to circulate through her whole being. "O Pine," cried Ilsée, "how do you manage to hold up your head against

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cold Winter, and to preserve your life and vigour from his icy embrace? Cannot I learn to resist him, as you do?"—"It is because I am planted upon a rock," said the Pine; "and because I live with my head turned towards heaven, the Creator has given me strength to remain ever green. You also, little Ilsée, derive your source from the rock, and in your limpid wave you reflect the light of heaven, as pure and unchanged as when you receive it. If you have the true real life within you, you have sufficient strength to overcome the winter. Therefore, trust in God, little Ilsée; speed on your way, and do not weary." "Dear Pine," she replied, "I wish to become strong and courageous like you, that I also may resist Winter;" and as she spoke, she freed herself, by a violent shake, from the stiff grasp which held her garments fast amongst the stones, and precipitated herself into the valley, bounding over and crushing all the obstacles and sharp icicles which tried to stop her in her career. Old Winter, being unable to follow her gambols through the fields, sat grumbling in the snow, obliged to acknowledge his helplessness and inability to overtake the active Princess.

The following day, as little Ilsée, joyous with her victory, was gaily leaping and chasing before her with indefatigable ardour the crystals of ice she had broken off the stones, the Mosses on the bank cried out, "Oh, Ilsée, dear Ilsée, do come to our help! The snow weighs so heavily on our poor little heads, that we can scarcely hold up our feeble stalks; do help us, Winter injures us so sadly." The kind-hearted little Princess ran towards them, carefully raised a tiny corner of the heavy winding-sheet of snow, and gliding her sweet face in at the opening, repeated to the little Mosses the lessons of wisdom she had learned from the Pine. "You, too, are planted on the rock," she said, "and the great Creator permits you to retain your green covering under the cold snow. Do not forget, then, little Mosses, the divine life that is within you; strive to grow strong, brave, and enduring, beneath Winter's white shroud. The Almighty will assist you, if you seek his help." This advice roused the Mosses to immediate exertion, work warmed them, and in a few minutes they exclaimed joyfully, "Ilsée! Ilsée! you are right; we can stand upright already, and are really pushing on our way, for the snow dissolves and disappears wherever we place our little green hands."

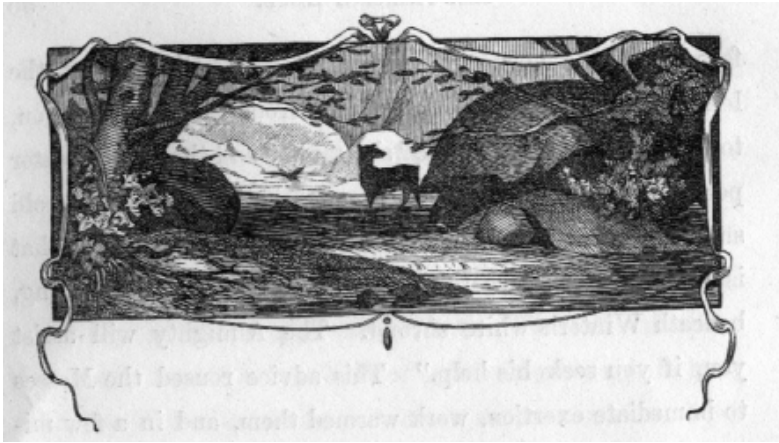


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CHAPTER VIII.  
THE PRINCESS FINDS SHELTER IN THE FOREST.

IN this manner little Ilsée taught her playfellows, the mosses and plants, to exert their strength in resisting old Winter. She bedewed the tiny blades of grass with her fresh vivifying waters, urged them to grow long and strong, in order to be amongst the first to salute Spring, who would soon return to the valley, to remove the snowy bed from off the soil, and drive away vanquished Winter to the Brocken, from whence he would again soon be chased by the hot rays of the sun.



Then the Pine laid aside his white covering, and placed small light bright-green points on all his dark branches, to celebrate the return of Spring. The oaks and beeches resumed their green dresses, and the joyful Ilsée flowed happily on through the beautiful and peaceful forest, for many and many a century.

Winter returned every year, it is true, and every year he busied himself with the same cruel amusement of torturing the trees and plants, and endeavouring to stop the sparkling stream of our little Ilsée. But the active and vigorous child never allowed him to overtake her; lithe and agile as a lizard, she always eluded his icy fetters. The trees, also, were each year reclothed with leaves, and

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never looked more fresh and beautiful than in spring, renewed and strengthened, after the rude combat they had maintained with Winter. In like manner, little Ilsée never appeared more radiant or lovely than when, the snow having melted upon the mountains, she flowed, dancing and foaming through the forest, with an allowable degree of pride. The snow is an elixir of life to streamlets; the more they drink, the stronger and more beautiful they become.

The green forest was proud of her adopted daughter Ilsée, and the latter had ceased to be occupied with *self*, and thought only of her good friends the trees and plants, and how she could make herself most agreeable to them. *She* had also forgotten that she was a Princess, so everybody else remembered it. The trees and flowers, the mosses and tender grasses, held her in great esteem, and in their own peculiar way, paid her every homage.

Whenever little Ilsée crossed the valley, the plants and flowers followed in her steps, kissed the edge of her garments and her floating veil; whilst the light and elegant blades of grass, on their part, murmured joyously as she passed, and saluted her, bowing their pretty little plumed heads. The pensive blue-bells, the most charming of all the forest flowers, had a most extraordinary love for little Ilsée; they always delighted in her presence, crept as close to her as they could, bent over her brow, and gazed at her with a reflective air, as if full of grave thought; they even advanced to the rich and shining stones which the Princess held in her bosom. The little streamlet embraced these flowers tenderly, and placed a soft mossy carpet beneath them, as being more adapted to their little fibrous limbs, than the smooth pebbles were. The blue-bells lived in peace and harmony with the reeds and ferns, and all the summer long, they lived a charming life, a real fairy-like existence, in an enchanted isle. Wherever a spare corner could be found, there the ferns also climbed on to the damp stones; they waved their magnificent green fans to refresh their friend, and tormented the Sunbeams, by trying to prevent their kissing their dear Ilsée. The Sunbeams also loved this child, and, whenever the clouds allowed them, would descend to the forest, and play with her under the trees.

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The grey clouds have, for many ages, been the appointed guardians of the Sunbeams, but being themselves so massive, they would scarcely ever move from their place, if the Hurricane did not, from time to time, pass through them with his broom, to stir them up; therefore, they did not like to see the Sunbeams dancing joyously beneath them, with little Ilsée, and sparkling in the grass. They would often remain, whole days, fixed like a wall on the mountain, and not allowing the smallest ray, however tiny it might be, to penetrate. Indeed, they would even send rain into the valley, and, with a malicious pleasure, watch little Ilsée wandering on, sad and solitary, with her waters somewhat disturbed. These proceedings of their morose governors sadly irritated the Sunbeams, and put them quite into a rage. To avenge themselves, they would crowd together behind their old guardians, and would tease and annoy them, making them so hot with their cutting sarcasm, that, unable to bear it any longer, the unfortunate victims would at last move away, completely overcome by their tormentors. Then the way being clear, the Sunbeams would dart down to the forest, balancing themselves on the drops that hung amongst the trees, and often passing the whole day, playing on the grass with little Ilsée.

One day, whilst the Sunbeams were thus playing with her, a little white blossom from a strawberry plant (a fruit plentifully scattered through all the Hartz valleys) slyly approached, in order to gaze at her round little face in the transparent robe of the Princess. But Ilsée, who had seen her coming, reprovingly held up her tiny finger, and said, "Strawberry blossom! strawberry blossom! you are vain, because you wear a golden button on your brow, and you wish to admire your own reflection here."



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The strawberry blossom let all her white petals fall, and turned quickly away to hide beneath her green leaves; but the Sunbeams pursued her laughingly, and found her out in her place of concealment, to the chagrin of the little flower; every time that a Sunbeam looked at her, she blushed more and more, until at last she lay quite covered with crimson, beneath the green shelter of her leaves, and, in her confusion, let her little head hang to the ground. To this day, she has never recovered the shame she experienced, at having her vanity so publicly exposed, and she always blushes in the presence of the Sunbeams.



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The kind moon, that good old friend of little Ilsée, often came to pay her a visit, never feeling alarmed at the tiresome journey she had to take over the mountain. She used to rest on the Ilsenstein, the most beautiful of all that rocky chain, named by the people of the valley after little Ilsée, and from thence would peep down with a benevolent air, and watch her little favourite flowing on with a gentle murmur, beneath the shades of the mountains, and gracefully playing with the silver stars which she had sent her.

CHAPTER IX.  
THE PROGRESS OF CIVILIZATION.

THE valley in which Ilsée dwelt had, for a long period, also been the abode of men. At first the little Princess conducted herself haughtily towards them, and the Pine had taken immense pains in reproving and remonstrating with her on the subject, until at last he had rendered her more tractable, and she had grown accustomed to the society of these poor people. The first who arrived in the forest were charcoal-burners; they cut down the trees, erected a cabin, and prepared and lighted their furnace. Little Ilsée had shed many tears over her dear trees, when felled by the sharp axe, they lay dying upon the ground. The grasses and flowers had also uttered plaintive moans, when the men, whilst marking out a road through the wilderness, had crushed their little heads beneath their feet. This also added to poor Ilsée's grief. The flames and smoke, rising from the furnace, reminded her of the dreadful night she had spent on the Brocken, and filled her with dread. But the Pine informed her, that Man was lord of the creation, made after God's own image, and that all nature was destined to be subject to him, and that every tree could only live as long as God had decreed, and that then it fell, either by the hand of man, by lightning from heaven, or from old age. He also taught her not to be afraid of fire, that it was a blessed power, that did much good on earth, provided it was judiciously employed, and that Ilsée was destined, one day, to satisfy herself about this, and would in time become reconciled to the fire, and at last work hand-in-hand with it, most willingly.



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The Princess did not, we must own, look forward with pleasure to the time when she was to co-operate with the flame; nevertheless, having a great regard for the wisdom and experience of the Pine, she put implicit trust in what he said.

After a time, other men arrived in the forest, in greater numbers, armed with axes and spades. They brought oxen and goats with them, which they drove into the green pasture-land among the mountains. A little below Ilstein, at the spot where the valley widens, they came straight on towards little Ilsée, cut down a number of trees in her neighbourhood, sawed them into planks and rafters, and hollowed out a large hall for the little Princess, by the side of the stream. They covered the walls of this hall with stones and clods of earth, and on the opposite side, near the valley, they left a large entrance, which was lined with wood, and fitted very closely. They had also manufactured some houses from the planks, and in these they lived with their wives and children. When all this was completed, they came to request the little Princess to step into her hall, and make herself quite at home there. Little Ilsée thanked them, and expressed a wish to pass on without stopping (this was the plan she adopted when not quite sure what course to pursue). But the men barred up her bed with stones and earth; they also tore up a huge boulder of rock, which had formerly blocked her in at the side.

As she was rushing on at too great a speed to stop herself, she was precipitated through this opening into the hall the men had prepared for her, and which they called a reservoir; she soon covered its surface, and dashed her little foaming waves against its wall, with fury. It required some time for her to calm down in this strange prison; but at last, her waters and her thoughts having recovered from their agitation, and being at rest, she raised her eyes inquiringly towards the Pine, who still stood uninjured, beside the gable of the new house.

The Pine smiled sadly, and said, "Behold the arrival of Civilization, little Ilsée; it will no longer leave us the liberty and repose we have hitherto enjoyed in our beautiful forest."



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"Civilization!" said Ilsée with a sigh; "may Providence then take pity on us, for it is certainly the Demon who sends it. People who hew down so many poor trees, bark them and cut them in pieces, cannot have any good intentions in so doing."

"Poor child," replied the Pine with a smile, "what would you say, then, if you saw Industry, the daughter of Civilization, at work? This treasure-seeker undermines the earth, to find gold, and remorselessly cuts down every tree that comes in her way. She roots up whole forests, to plant corn, builds large store-houses called factories, with horrible chimneys that almost touch the sky. Wherever she plants her foot, the beautiful disappears."

Poor Ilsée clasped her little hands, and looked so frightened, that the Pine added kindly, "Do not be uneasy, my child; it will be long ere Industry reaches us. In general, she does not venture among the mountains, preferring the plain; and we will pray that she may be kept from our peaceful valley. But Civilization is a faithful servant of the Most High, and peace, prosperity, and blessing follow in her train. Do you not now hear the tinkling of the little chapel bell, each morn and eve, resounding through the valley?"



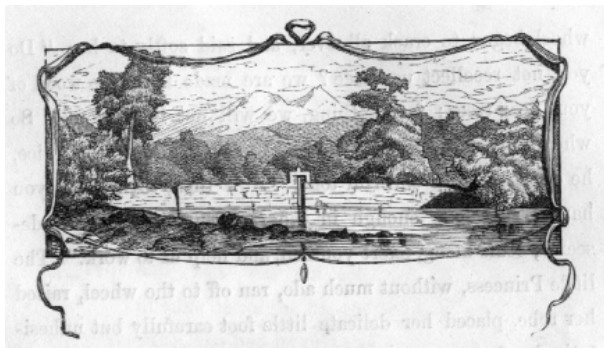
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### CHAPTER X. THE PROGRESS OF CIVILIZATION—*continued*.

LITTLE Ilsée understood what had been said, and seemed to have already more confidence in man. She pressed against the outer door, and letting a few drops trickle through the planks, she stealthily glanced at the house situated beneath her. She saw a newly-made mill-wheel just at her feet. The miller's son, a beautiful child with curly hair, was standing on the little bridge, and cried out gaily, "Yes, only look below, Princess Ilsée; they will open the door for you in a moment, and then the dance will begin, and you can rush merrily round the wheel."—"Am I to be put on the wheel?" asked Ilsée; and her little heart beat violently, as she gazed on the huge machine. But lo! all at once the planks of the wheel began to crack all over, and said softly to her, "Do you not recollect us, Ilsée? we are made from the wood of your dear trees; fear nothing, we will not harm you." So when the miller came forward and prepared to open the sluice, he cried out in a cheerful tone, "Now then, little Ilsée, you have rested long enough in the reservoir, it is time to descend; come along, exert yourself, and help us to work." The little Princess, without much ado, ran off to the wheel, raised her robe, placed her delicate little foot carefully but unhesitatingly, first on one spoke, then on another, and when the wheel began to move under the pressure of her light weight, she leaped more boldly from step to step, letting her veil float in the breeze, and keeping her little cap of foam upon her head. The wheel continued to turn, the mill beat time, and little strings of silvery pearls, escaping from the dripping locks of the Princess, were showered on all around her.



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Little Ilsée had now become a labourer in the service of man. A streamlet bearing life and prosperity to the valley and its inhabitants, she laboured with the workmen in the flour-mills, and also in the forge, where she made the acquaintance of the much-dreaded element "fire." She was not long in discovering that their antipathy was mutual; that is to say, the fire was quite as much afraid of her as she was of it. They therefore never met, save when at work, and even then, they each withdrew to their own side as soon as possible, liking one another best at a distance. The Princess Ilsée visited the women and children at their houses, carried thither in pretty pails; she even helped them in their housework, in the kitchen, the wash-house, the dairy. She bathed the children, watered the flowers and vegetables in the garden, and was not ashamed of doing anything, however humble it might be, that was of service to others. And in truth, she had no occasion to be ashamed, for the Princess, in her acts of kindness and charity to the children of men, did nothing derogatory to her dignity.



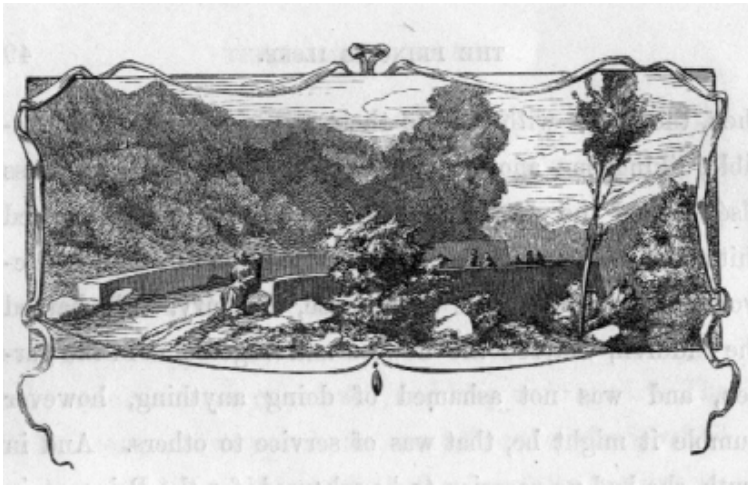
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## The Princess Ilsée: A Fairy Tale

### CHAPTER XI. THE PRINCESS LEARNS HUMILITY.

MANY centuries had already passed away, since Ilsée first set foot on the mill-wheel, when a noble family took possession of the valley. For years they prospered and bore rule over the Ilsenberg, and little Ilsée served them and their dependants, as faithfully as she had formerly served the millers and smiths. But when the castle began to fall into ruin, and the Counts of Stolberg chose another place for their residence, they took care that the Princess and her beloved valley should not suffer from this change. They constantly sent fresh work-people to dwell by the reservoir, and, with Ilsée's assistance, to extract the solid iron (that noble marrow of the mountains), and to temper and mould it into the various forms in which it is of such essential service to man.



Little Ilsée might be seen incessantly working the livelong day, without ever evincing weariness or fatigue from her irksome task. But whoever chanced to meet her in the valley, at the moment when she emerged from the forest, pure and radiant, instinctively recognised in her a princess of the first water, a true daughter of the light, and paid her the deepest homage of his heart. Nevertheless, for all this, little Ilsée had not become a saint ; and when Providence

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allowed a severe storm to burst over her, which stirred up her waters to their very depths, and brought to light all the little failings, all the secret faults, from which no inhabitant of earth is free, however highly born, poor Ilsée was deeply shocked to perceive how sullied her little waves were; but she profited from the storm, as every one should profit from the storms of life; that is to say, she learned to know *herself* and to seek to purify herself; and when she had examined and cleansed all that was foul, she flowed on, more beautiful, more vigorous than ever, and reflected the light of heaven with new strength and clearness.

Little Ilsée met with another great trial, when, in more modern days, in consequence of the ever-increasing progress of Civilization, a public road was made through the valley, turning up the green sods of the forest with pickaxe and spades, knocking down numbers of magnificent trees, and, by means of these sharp instruments, taking possession of the path it could only win by violence. "I cannot endure this," cried Ilsée, "it is too much to bear! Is this stupid thing to be allowed to drag along by my side, with her tortoise-like step, from one year's end to another, and attempt to govern me?" I fancy I can already hear her say, in a pedantic tone, "Softly, Ilsée, softly! do not run so fast; do not jump so high; just look at me; see in how much more dignified a way I move. Ah! the good old forest pathway is a very different companion, when, turning the corner of the rocks, he signals to me to join him under the shady green of the oaks." The little Princess, in her rage and petulance, threw herself, all covered with foam, against the blocks of rock that protected the road. She even tried to loosen them and throw them down on her enemy. "Ilsée, Ilsée," cried the Pine from the summit of his rock, "what can you mean by such childishness? Have you yet to learn that we must put up with whatever is useful and profitable to man? If we trees do not complain of the high-road, you have still less right to do so. In fact, it rather amuses me to see this lady ascending the valley, with her trailing dress of dust-colour. You ought to feel ashamed of yourself, little Ilsée; look how the witches at the other side of the mountain are laughing at you."

## The Princess Ilsée: A Fairy Tale

I must tell you that the Demon had ceased to ramble over the Brockenberg, since man had dwelt there; and the little imps and witches, being scattered abroad, wandered through the country under various disguises, taking the most charming and seductive forms, to deceive poor people, and draw them under their dominion. A troop of these young witches, who had preserved a feeling of spite against Ilsée for having eclipsed them all on the Brockenberg by her rank and charms, used to visit the valley every summer, to watch poor Ilsée, and strive to alienate her friends, if they could play her no other bad turn. Dressed in magnificent crimson robes, adorned with flowers of the nightshade, they coquettishly grouped themselves on the sunny sides of the mountain, and signalled to the ferns to join them, and called out to the blue-bells to explain to them the near relationship existing between the blue-bells and the deadly nightshade. But the blue-bells, seeing the poisonous drops secreted in the depths of their brilliant cup, gently shook their heads, and gathered round Ilsée, imploring the ferns to raise their faces high enough to obstruct all view of these wicked beings. The Princess Ilsée raised her eyes towards the witches with a timid air, and murmuring her prayers to herself, pursued her way tranquilly. She praised and caressed the faithful ferns and blue-bells; and when she thought the wet pebbles that she met on the road cast too eager a look towards the deadly flowers on the mountain, she threw her silvery veil briskly over their heads, and blinded them by showering in their faces the dazzling rays of light she had caught for her own amusement.

As to the high-road, if the Princess Ilsée was unable to prevent it passing through the valley, she wished to have as little to do with it as possible. She endeavoured to conceal herself from its view, by winding through tortuous paths into the most shady depths of the forest; but when, at last, she impetuously threw herself over the rocks, thinking she would thus quite escape her dusty companion, she found herself face to face with her enemy. The high-road then threw a bridge over her, and the poor little Princess, concealing her vexation, and burdened with this yoke, rushed on as fast as she could, to reach the fresh air and open sky. But Ilsée's ill-humour was of short duration; she calmly flows lower down in the valley by the



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side of the high-road, and humbly kisses the foot of the Ilsenstein, on whose summit a cross is erected.

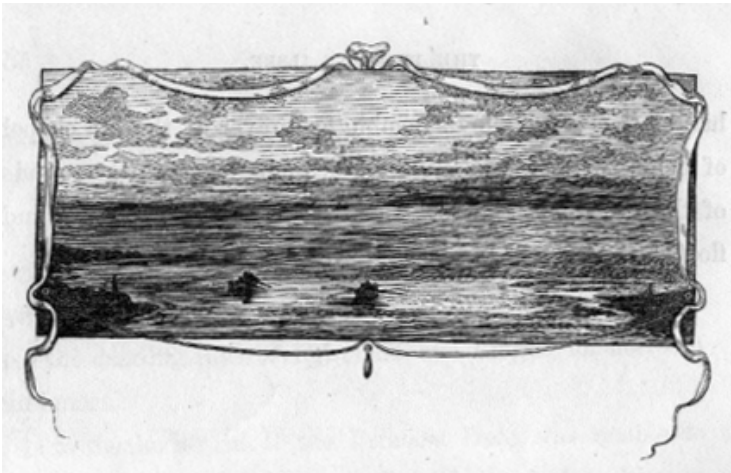


Little Ilsée is not dead; she still lives, and daily follows her modest task amongst the mills and factories in the village. On Sunday, when labour ceases, and the active inhabitants of the valley assemble for prayer in the old chapel of Schlossberg, Ilsée's silvery voice mingles with the sounds of the bells and organ, which escape through the walls and float down the valley.



CHAPTER XII.  
CONCLUSION.

ALTHOUGH for so many ages her waters have brought prosperity and fertility into this valley, Ilsée still preserves her freshness and natural grace. She has drunk at the inexhaustible fountain of eternal youth, the stream which emanates from assiduous and useful labour, and preserves itself pure and limpid, by rejecting all evil contamination, and constantly absorbing the light of heaven. The Princess Ilsée is an example of what a foolish, headstrong child may become, when once she obtains the mastery over the demon Pride. When men descend to Ilsée's valley from the arid heights of everyday life, in search of pure air, she whispers sweet remembrances of the country where their childhood was passed; and all the time they remain in the sweet shades of her forest, she makes them once more become careless, happy children, enjoying the fresh air, which is here purer and more invigorating than in any other spot in the whole world.



Little Ilsée has ceased to be afraid of the witches, she will even at times venture laughingly to play the part of "Princess Cooking-water;" and when, in summer, visitors to the valley wish to take their coffee upon a mossy bank at the foot of the Ilsenstein, she

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presents herself to them, boiling gracefully in the little swing kettle, and leaves all the credit to the housewife who prepares the coffee, reserving for herself neither praise nor profit, only demanding in recompense that all who have had the pleasure of drinking the delicious coffee prepared from Ilsée's stream, should leave a morsel of sugar for the little field-mouse. This mouse lives in one of the cracks of the moss-covered stone which forms a seat for visitors.

It is lineally descended from the mousie that hollowed out the little canal through the Brocken, by which Ilsée fled into the valley, at a period now lost in antiquity. All the visitors who breakfast at the Ilsenthal will probably not be honoured with a sight of the pointed nose and bright eyes of this little animal, for the mouse chooses its own society, and, moreover, it possesses the usual timidity of its race. But *whoever* chances to be fortunate enough to obtain a sight of it, is *bound*, under pain of incurring Ilsée's high displeasure, to give it some sugar, or some other thing that men like to take with their coffee, and mice to nibble at in the crevices of the rocks. This agreement was concluded on the first day in August, in the year of grace 1851. The treaty, adorned with an authentic seal, was deposited under the Ilsenstein, a circumstance fresh in the memory of the visitors to the Hartz, who began on this day to feed the little field-mouse.

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And here the historian ceases. He has made his abode amongst the rocks of the green valley, and has no desire to follow little Ilsée in her career to the plain, where she first met the Ocker and Ecker, and afterwards the Aller, who led her forward till she rejoined old Weser. Let it suffice to say, that the Ocker and the Ecker, and all the larger and smaller streams which flow into old Weser, are carried by him to the sea.

Nevertheless, the historian would like to know, if possible, what were the sensations of a tiny stream like Ilsée, when finding herself lost in the midst of the vast ocean; but this, at least, no mortal can tell.

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