

Puss in Boots



Verlag
von Kallberg

Receive, good children, from the writer's hand
A Fairy-Tale from your dear Fatherland,
In which, and in a manner quite it's own,
The soul of German Fairy-Tale is shown.
Hidden within dwells serious intent,
A teasing, quizzical, and flippant bent;
Inside, both rose and thorn have been concealed,
With other drolleries to be revealed.
The sceptre is now allied with the switch,
Well that the man on whom the lash fall twitch.
Ask not: This story happened in which days?
The years of Fairy-Tale are called: Always.
Today, still villainy is exercised,
Today, still rabbit-hunts are highly prized;
Today, still cunning slinks through wood and Court,
Ingratiating, in a feline sort.
Today, still many Kings must bear the curse
Of Ministers who keep a tight-drawn purse;
And many Toms and Dicks rise high in grace,
Though others tried to oust them from their place;
And many Gottliebs, sitting hands in lap,
Embraced by Fortune, draw the greatest hap.
But you and I, dear child and dear reader,
We laugh at it, and stay just as we were.

In German lands there once lived a poor miller, whose mill lay in a quite secluded spot not far from a village, and was not a little dilapidated. This mill often lacked the best things, to be precise, water on the one hand, and grain on the other; and this grieved the miller so sorely that he lay down ill in bed and did not rise up again – because he died. He left behind him three sons, of whom the youngest was called Gottlieb, and, in the way of domestic animals, a horse, an ox, and a tomcat. Many people say that the ox was a cow, or even a donkey, but this cannot be ascertained with any certainty. Apart from this, the miller left nothing.

Now when the dead man had been buried, the sons directed their attention to the division of the inheritance. The eldest brother spoke to his two younger brothers: “Listen, we can’t live here, the machinery is rotting and falling apart, and I don’t know what we can do with a mill that can’t mill any more. Nor can we stay together, so we’ll divide and each of us can seek his fortune with his share, and we’ll divide, moreover, according to size and age. As I am the oldest and biggest, so the horse is mine by rights, the ox is due to the younger, middle son, and the smallest animal, the tomcat, falls to the youngest, little son. That is only fair.” – The middle brother was satisfied with the division, and the youngest *had* to be satisfied with it, for he was never asked for his opinion.

The two elder brothers moved away from that place with their animals, while poor Gottlieb remained in the mill and felt very sad, for he was strongly sensible of the unbrotherly way in which he had been given the short straw. He mused on how useful the two larger animals could be to his brothers; the eldest brother could become a horseman, a soldier, a

colonel, a field-marshal, he could conquer lands and declare half the world under siege. The second brother could become a cattle-dealer, which is a very lucrative business, or a highly-respectable burgher and master-butcher – as he already had the ox at hand – and be sitting pretty. But Gottlieb with the tomcat! “What can I do with a tomcat? Skin him? That’s hardly worth the effort, it pays only when done wholesale. Sell him? – But then there would have to be someone who wanted to buy him – alas, poor Gottlieb! You will shortly die of starvation!”

The tomcat, while Gottlieb was conducting this woeful conversation with himself, had been peacefully lying, sleeping, and devising in the sunshine – or rather, devising and not sleeping, for he had heard everything – and now began to stretch himself, sneezed twice, got up onto his paws, arched his back, beat out around him with his tail a few times, and then walked with soft steps towards his master, looking fixedly at him with his gleaming green eyes the while.

“Now what is it you want, my poor Tom?” Gottlieb asked him.

“I want to help you!” said the tomcat.

Gottlieb was silently astonished that the tomcat could speak, for Gottlieb had not yet read any books of fairy tales, and did not know that, in fairy tales, all animals can speak, as can also boot-jacks, brooms, ovenforks, coffee-mills, and everything – and he answered: “How will you help me, you little three-coloured fellow?”

“You will find that out very soon!” replied Tom. “You see, I like you. You never gave me a beating, never threw stones at me, never yanked my ears, and all the less did you grab me by the tail and lift me up into the air,

which I inherently detest; your brothers did all of these things. And more – they shook pepper into my milk, poured water over me, and made me leap down into the yard from the dormer window, all of which I resented most deeply. Now they have gone, and we two are alone together, and I have determined to make your fortune for your kindness to me, for you fed me often, let me sleep beside you in winter, and liked to stroke me, which does us cats the world of good. You should know, Gottlieb, that animals are *grateful*; ingratitude is something only humans know. – I have determined to make a great lord out of you, it has happened many times that poor, sometimes even stupid, youths have become great and wealthy lords.”

Gottlieb listened in utter amazement to the tomcat talking so well and so much, and said not a word, but let him continue.

“Before all else,” the tomcat went on, “be so good as to have a pair of boots made for me, for I shall have to make many journeys through the thorny forest and over stony fields for your sake, and my little paws, as you know, are soft and tender. Then give me a sack, and the rest will take care of itself.”

Gottlieb could not, admittedly, see where all this was to lead, or how he could become a great lord if the tomcat wore boots while he, Gottlieb, walked barefoot. But he did Tom’s will and pleasure, immediately using the last flour in the mill to order a pair of boots for the tomcat from Master Awl, the village shoemaker, and he restored an old flour-sack, which had been markedly damaged by mice, into a new sack for Tom, in which he crocheted holes and laced them with a double cord. The shoemaker measured for



Tom's boots with great precision and promised to effect the most superior workmanship.

Hereupon the two friends sat down to lunch, during which Tom taught Gottlieb how one must dine when one is a gentleman. He tied a napkin round his neck, placed a holder full of toothpicks on the table for him, carved a cheese with extraordinary dexterity, and, when the meal was over, offered him a cup full of water to rinse out his mouth with all the elegance of a valet. Once his master had finished his meal, he fastened the napkin on the tomcat, and now Tom dined as well, namely on the smaller half of the cheese, which he had put aside for himself before dinner was served, and recommended that Gottlieb now have that midday nap so necessary to gentlefolks.

While the two friends were having their midday meal, Master Awl had assiduously begun and completed his work, and he brought a pair of spanking-new, splendid, sturdy boots, which shone so brilliantly that Tom gave a high cat's leap for joy and looked at his reflection in them with great satisfaction, whereupon Master Awl pulled them on him. The boots were a perfect fit, and Tom now looked as far as his hind legs were concerned, like a great lord, for Clothes Make the Man and boots are an item of apparel.

Now once Tom was wearing the magnificent, shining boots, he slung the sack over his back, took, for want of a usual gun, an old, so-called "popper", expressed the hope that Gottlieb had enjoyed his meal and the wish that he would have a salutary midday-rest, and wandered out into the fields and forest, singing as he walked the lovely song:

"Rise up! for some merry hunting,

The hour is at the door.”¹

Over the land in which lay the village and the mill mentioned above, there ruled a mighty King who had a very beautiful and amiable, in every way *singular*, Princess-Daughter, and a large royal household. The main personages of this household consisted of two ministers, called Nitpicker and Changepenny; a cook by the name of Panhandle; a Court Minstrel, Heinrich; a Fool, Claus; several chamberlains, grooms of the bedchamber, valets, an Equerry, a Superintendent of the Cellar, a Master of the Kitchen, a Cupbearer, a writer for the Court newspaper, and also a Court Poet, who did not have a name.

The King loved, and was loved in return: to be precise, the King loved, beside himself and his daughter, his land as well, his loyal subjects, and his court- and household servants. He did not love the ministers so very much, but he loved rabbits all the more – and because he loved these *too* much, and he had given his loyal subjects, from ancestral benignity and at the pressing exhortations of his people-minded ministers, the right to hunt, there were no rabbits left in his realm, and the cook was in a state of despair and would happily have given away *two* ministers for *one* rabbit. Now Puss in Boots was very precisely informed about this love of rabbit on the part of the King, and it was on this that he built his philanthropical plans for his protégé Gottlieb.

When Tom, having left the latter to himself and his midday-rest, began his travels, he struck out for a border forest, which was not so very far away, and where he knew there to be a hill in which many rabbits

¹ “Frisch auf zum fröhlichen Jagen!” A song by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, written at the time of the uprising against Napoleon in 1813.

resided; and directly below this hill was a wheatfield where partridges and quails were to be found. Tom, true to his inborn cat-nature, regarded his handsome hunting-area as his own, and his right thereto was all the greater because the lord of this district was but a so-called *Bugbear*, and although his subjects were extraordinarily afraid of him, all those who were not subject to him did not fear him in the slightest.

The Bugbear was decried as a terribly severe sovereign and tyrant, but he was really not as bad as all that; he even had many good points, but he did love it when people were afraid of him and when nursemaids threatened naughty children with him. He did not, it was true, have a handsome exterior, looking like St. Nicholas or rather Servant Rupert², or like an old cossack, but he was essentially good at heart. He stood upon order in his house and kingdom and would absolutely not tolerate any bad management or any spirit of contradiction. His children had to obey his words, as it behoves children to do, or he was certain to become frightfully indignant. Lord Bugbear had not given the right to hunt to commoners, and he was none the worse off for it. Also, the Bugbear had the gift of being able to change himself into any animal, and of assuming whatever form he might wish, one of those being that of a very handsome and well-mannered man; and so it often happened that people who had business with the Bugbear were at first very nervous about being taken into his presence, but then found a very smart man, of a courteous and modest character, who did not place the slightest obstruction in their way or do them the least harm – on the contrary, he even gave them splendid presents from time to time. All of

² Knecht Ruprecht: St. Nicholas's bushy-bearded helper, who punishes children who have been naughty by giving them a lump of coal, or beating them, or stuffing them into his sack.

this was known to clever Tom, so he began by heading, in confident mood, towards the Bugbear's estates.

Tom had brought some cabbage leaves and bran along in his sack, which he scattered over the hill in which the rabbits lived, as they love to crunch and eat cabbage and bran; but he left the best part in the sack, which he laid down open at the end, while keeping hold of its cords in his paws. He then lay down under a bush and pretended to sleep, but under this bush he gave way to reverie. He reflected a great deal on Gottlieb and his faithless brothers, on the King, his Court, and his ministers, who greatly hampered this Court by not suffering the King to keep a proper huntsman and so have a sure supply of rabbits for his plate, for there was no one else at Court who knew the art of hunting rabbits. The cook had his work cut out chivvying the kitchen-maids and kitchen-boys, and the Court Minstrel, who went by the name of Gentle Heinrich, was far too kind and sensitive to be able to kill an animal; one of his eyes constantly wept, and when he sang, he was so moved by his melting melodies that both eyes wept. The Fool already filled the office of a personal huntsman at Court – that is, he caught all the rats and mice, and this gave him plenty to do, because the beautiful Princess gave a shriek every time she caught sight of a mouse. The chamberlains and courtiers were, to a man, chasing after rank, higher positions, and distinctions, and were all bitterly incensed at the two ministers Nitpicker and Change penny – who were, on top of everything, a pair of cockroaches – who invariably advised the King against giving his servants any kind of increase or granting them a mark of distinction that would incur any kind of cost. The Court Poet hunted only after beautiful

ideas for his poems – and so, with regard to hunting, and to several other matters, the King and his household were not at all in a good way.

Tom also reflected on the Bugbear, and whether it were not, in the final analysis, better if there were no more Bugbears? – “What are Bugbears for?” thought Tom. “If they must be feared, then they are pernicious, and if they are feared no longer, then they cease to be Bugbears. If I could bring the Bugbear to change himself into a rabbit, which I could then catch and take to the King, then the King would have the rabbit roasted and eat up the Bugbear. That would indeed be good, but we must just wonder what a Bugbear tastes like and whether it would be good for the country and commons if the King had the Bugbear in his stomach? Eventually, he might himself assume something of the nature of a Bugbear, and that is not to be desired. So we shall attempt other means first.”

While Tom lay there so pensive – as if sunk in profound sleep – some rabbits had slipped out of their holes, and they frolicked together, startled one another, thumped their hind legs on the ground – a sigh for rapid flight –, then approached each other again, pricked up their long ears and sat squat upon their tails. With great pleasure did they eat the bran and the cabbage leaves which Tom had scattered around, and when these had been devoured, then a forward, young, but already nicely plump rabbit scented the cabbage in the open sack and crept in.

This was the moment Tom had been waiting for; in spite of his grave reflections, he had neither forgotten nor lost sight of his main business and the purpose of his existence for an instant, notwithstanding he had blinked several times. As soon as a gentle twitching of the cords signalled to Tom

that a rabbit had touched the sack, he was alert, and once it had slipped into the sack he pulled the cords rightly towards him; this suddenly closed the neck of the sack, and the poor rabbit was trapped. All of his comrades fled in fear, like a shot, when they saw him struggling pitifully inside the sack, deep, deep into their holes, into the hill, and Tom sprang out of the bushes, gave the struggling rabbit a crunching bite in the neck through the sack, which snuffed out its lights, and loaded himself with this catch.

Hereupon Tom straightaway left the Bugbear's domain and returned to the King's country, where he took the road towards the royal city and the royal palace without any further stops.

Although the road that led out of the Bugbear's domain through the King's country was not of so great a length that Tom could make his boots very dusty, he nevertheless thought it better to make a halt under a bush a short distance before the city, to catch a mouse for his breakfast; and, once this had been consumed, to make himself as clean as possible, for he was far too well-bred a tomcat not to have known that one must not appear before a King unclean. So he licked his boots until they were shining once more, brushed, combed, and stroked his fur and beard, rubbed his eyes bright, and assumed a very humble and obsequious expression, such a one as befits a man who is nought towards an exalted lord who can eat aught (but preferably rabbits).

Tom entered Court with an extraordinarily genteel and obsequious bearing, so very, entirely, purringly friendly, that his appearance won over the lower servants first, and then the higher ones. He announced himself as the huntsman in ordinary of the wealthy Count *Carabas*, whom his lord has

sent with a message to the King. A valet thereupon immediately announced the tricoloured stranger to the on-duty groom of the bechamber, and then latter than announced him to the on-duty chamberlain. This last would readily have announced Tom to the King himself, but the two ministers had, quite recently, persuaded the King to ordain that every stranger must be brought before *them* first, and for the particular reasons that, firstly, they must know everything, and about everything, that was going on, and secondly, because they were responsible ministers who could not be answerable for anything unpardonable³ happening to the King. The good, weak King tended, as a rule, to consent to everything that the ministers requested of him and was not in the least minded to become an autocrat.

And so Tom, before he was announced to the King, had to be presented first to the ministers, both of whom were deeply shocked at first sight of him, precisely because of his tricoloration. They themselves being cockroaches, they had no mind nor predilection for any other colours than for white and red, which are the colours of cockroaches as well as of innocence and love; every other colour was detestable to them, and they had also brought the King to elevate these colours to his national ones, and to proscribe in his realm, under heavy penalty, all that was tricolored. And now this huntsman came, walking in as boldly as your please, wearing a livery of black, red and white – it was really most shocking. Tom had to stand a rigorous examination. Minister Nitpicker asked first:

“Whence, bold stranger, do you come?” and Changepenny asked:

“What do you seek here, in this holy realm?”

³ Here there is play on the word “verantwortlich” which can mean “responsible,” “answerable,” “accountable” and is applied throughout to the austerity-minded ministers.

For Changepenny had invariably thought that whosoever came to Court wanted *money*, and he was no so very wrong in this thought; and he had the principle of not, wherever possible, granting anyone anything.

Tom told the two ministers what he had already told the valet, the groom of the bedchamber, and the chamberlain: that he brought a message from his gracious lord, Count Carabas, to His Majesty.

The ministers asked where was Tom's passport, his identity card, his letter of credence, and his despatches, for they had to know *everything*, and that before the King did; why, there could be a treacherous trick behind this, which they would have to answer for, particularly as the messenger's tricoloration justified the strongest suspicion! Why, there could, when all was said and done, even be pocket-pistols in the sack!

Tom, giving a low bow, pointed to his sack, which bulged with the rabbit inside; from which the ministers concluded that there must be matters of great importance contained therein, and this only made them all the more curious.

There was no help for it – Tom had to open the sack, which he did not do without some grumbling to himself; then the ministers espied the white rabbit with red eyes, and because it was very bright and cockroaches see very poorly during the day, they believed there to be white letters with red seals in the sack; and as they consequently descried their own and, at the same time, the national colours, so their cautious and responsible minds were conciliated, and they promised Tom very graciously to personally announce him to the King. Tom went down at their feet in supple pantomimes of thanksgiving for this, which flattered them exceedingly, for it

was long since anyone had shown them such reverence as amiable Tom, the reason being that no one could stand them, and their mixture of domineeringness with miserliness was insupportable for the entire Court and country.

Tom was allocated a royal apartment to sojourn in for the time being, wherein the time hung heavy upon him.

When the King heard that a rich Count, of whom he had never heard, had sent an envoy to him, he decided to receive this ambassador with the requisite dignity; he placed his golden crown with many large pearls and jewels on his head, had himself draped in his purple robe trimmed with ermine, and took the heavy golden sceptre in one hand, and the (also) heavy orb in the other, which orb was as large as a small bowling-ball; he also had the cook set the table in splendid style and lay on it all available showcase dishes, besides many nosegays, vases, candelabras, and tasty sugar and biscuit treats, which it would have been a shame about if anyone had eaten them.

The Princess also had to be very finely dressed and arrayed, and all the gentlemen of the Court were ordered to table, even the Court Fool and the Court Poet. The Count Minstrel, however, was not invited, because of the tears that flowed down his cheeks, or rather the wine that flowed down his throat – and the ministers did not think they could possibly be responsible for such a quantity of wine for the King's table.

A large audience was now held before the table. When all those invited had assembled, the Lord Great Chamberlain appeared with his staff, then the chargés, then the ministers; and hard on their heels, there followed

– as he habitually followed – the King, with the singular, charming Princess on his arm.

Everyone gave a low bow, and now Tom was led in by the chamberlain.

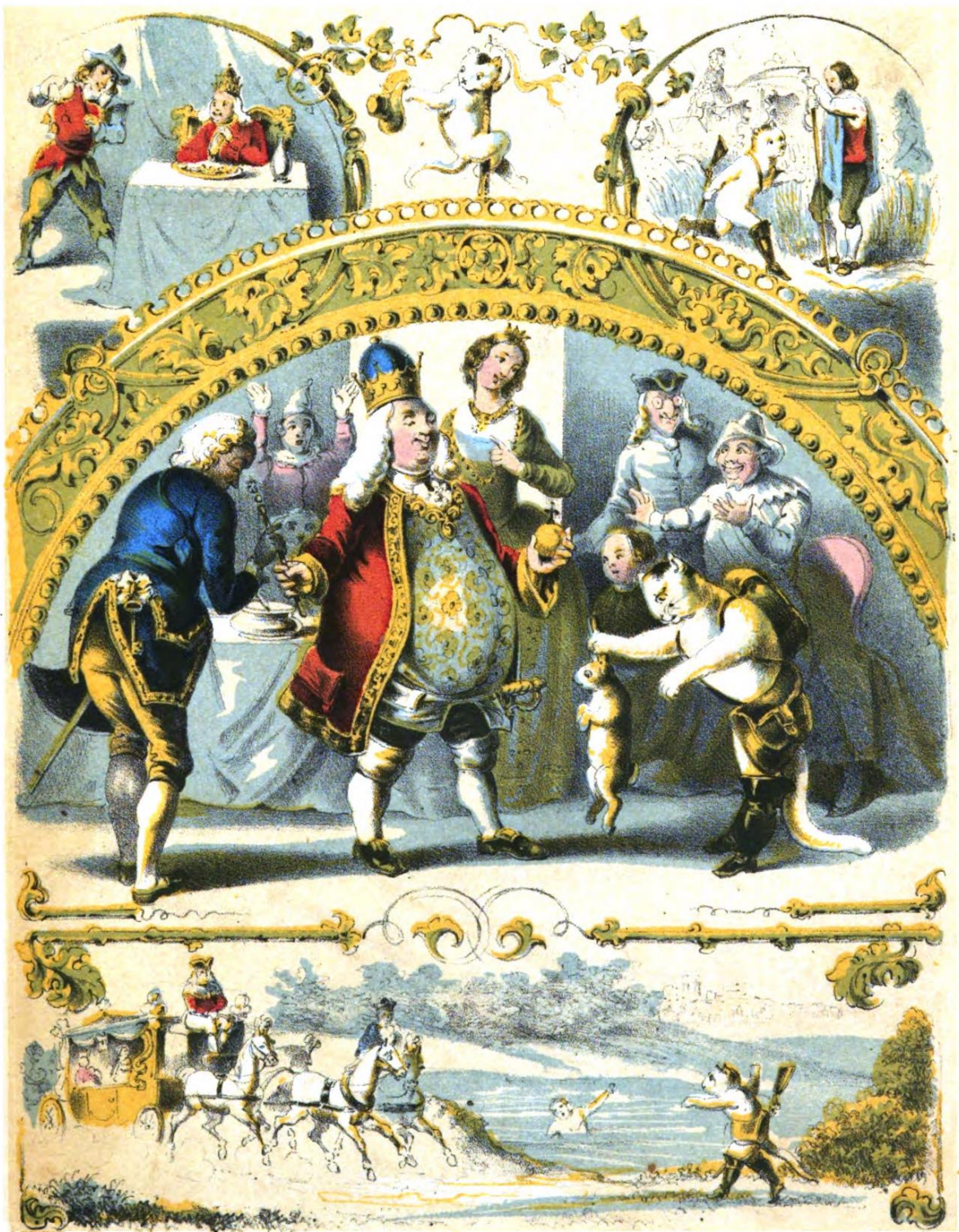
Behind the King, to one side, stood the Princess; ministers, gentlemen of the Court, Court Fool and Poet (the latter at an appropriate distance) surrounded the royal pair in graceful groups, the agreeable arrangement of which corresponded to the table visible in the background and its showcase dishes.

Tom pulled a corner of the royal purple robe to his kissing lips, on which occasion he could not help biting off a little hare's tail that was sewn onto it, which embellished said robe in place of ermine; and after spluttering somewhat, he began his ceremonial address as follows:

“Ubiquitously renowned, mighty King!

Glorious, most gracious King and Master!

I am sent to Your Majesty by a loyal admirer and reverer, indeed, if it were allowed to say so, an adorer of Your Most High Majesty's excellences, with the task of bringing you – as he heard that Your Majesty, for reasons rooted in contemporary events, is presently suffering a lack of rabbits for Your Augustnesses's table – a rabbit; and he requests your most gracious permission to be able to continue sending such consignments, for my master Count Carabas can still enjoy the compete, sole, and unrestricted possession of hunting rights on his extensive estates, and does not face that restriction of having to cede his hunting rights to every Tom, Dick and Harry which has been imposed on other landowners by certain buffoons.”



The King was very pleased with this speech; he gave the sceptre to the Lord Great Chamberlain to hold and received the rabbit; threw, at Tom's final words, a look heavy with meaning at his ministers – who would have turned pale at this had it been possible, but being cockroaches, they were unable to change their colour, and they considered this to be a great merit – and beckoned the cook over to receive the lovey plump rabbit and roast it at once, that it might adorn this day's banquet table. The cook had already manifested his joy at this splendid contribution to the kitchen in fitting fashion.

The King, and also the lovely Princess, now very compliantly made nearer enquiries of Tom concerning Count Carabas, and Tom spoke untiringly in his master's favour, and all the more so because there is a strictly preserved custom at Courts to relate and impart only what is good, what is praiseworthy, and what is commendable of absent parties.

In very little time the Lord Great Chamberlain signalled to proceed to the table, where Tom was shown to his place between the Court Poet and the Court Fool, whom he found to be worthy men and modest neighbours.

There were many delicacies, but Tom principally kept to the milk dishes and the fish, while passing over all that was sour or salty; the poet assiduously poured for him from his bottle of water, and the Fool, with equal assiduity, poured for himself and the Poet from Tom's bottle of wine, so that all three drank quite contentedly.

This all pleased Tom very much indeed – there was only one thing that caused him to lament in silence: everyone ate as quickly as if they had to travel a good hundred miles that same day. Whenever Tom, thinking he

had received an appetising morsel, seized the opportunity to wipe his handsome beard with his serviette, the servant at once snatched away from him the plate with everything on it and plumped down an empty one in its place. He could not eat his fill at his leisure, could not chew slowly as was his custom, and even less could he hold a meaningful conversation with his worthy neighbours.

This habitual, dreadful, and really completely unnecessary haste with which one ate at Court gave rise to an incomparably greater misfortune on this same day at that same table, for in order to bring the rabbit to the table in time for the roast course, the cook had been too hasty and thrown too large a lump of butter into the fire to augment the fire, and had markedly *burnt* the rabbit-roast.

The King cast looks of pleasure on this favourite dish and revelled somewhat in the anticipated taste of the rabbit, but Heavens! Who could describe the King's rage when he found that the rabbit was *burnt*!

He got into a terrible fluster, immediately threw up the table, to the consternation of everyone; the King even threatened to fling his crown at the cook's head, but he then thought better of it, particularly because he descried the figure of weeping, gentle Heinrich in an adjoining room, who, with a euphonious instrument, took the place of a Court Orchestra, and was singing, in melting strains, the song: "I sported a crown and a sceptre."⁴ Then the King bethought him that playthings are fragile objects, and crowns are not actually things that one throws at people's heads, whether one acts in anger or from love, and he moderated his exceedingly righteous wrath.

⁴ "Einst spielt' ich mit Scepter und Krone!" From Albert Lortzing's (1801-51) comic opera *Zar und Zimmermann* (1837).

But before this pacification of the royal wrath through the magic of melody and song was effected, the royal dining-hall was not a good place to be. The courtiers drew their dress swords as though it were a matter of defending the King against an enemy bent on assassination.

Tom thought that this hostile threat was aimed at *him*, and so he scampered as fast as he could up a slender pillar which stood near one of the hall windows; the ministers approached the Princess, who was near fainting, and sought to help her up; the Poet was shocked to the core, and trembled like an aspen-leaf; and the Court Fool cracked bad jokes about the whole incident, at the same time shoving many of the comfits into his rather wide pockets, as no one was keeping a close eye on him.

When everything had settled back down to normal, everyone looked around for the foreign huntsman, who had disappeared; no one had noticed him saving himself from supposed pursuit by leaping from the pillar through the window onto the nearby roof; at the same time, he had also saved the burnt rabbit and taken it with him. The Court Poet thereupon composed an elegiac poem in three cantos, entitled: *The Rabbit that was Sent, then Brent, and Privily Went.*

While all this was taking place in the King's castle, Gottlieb remained in the semi-derelict mill, doing absolutely nothing; and in this he did very well, for there are people who never fare worse than when they begin to do something, because they either do not do the right thing or do not do the thing right. It is also exceedingly convenient to let others be active and work for your benefit while sitting back and taking it easy. Tom returned to

Gottlieb, bringing him the rabbit than had been rapidly removed from the King's table, and was somewhat charred; and Gottlieb and Tom, neither of whom had an overnice palate, ate it with tremendous relish.

Soon afterwards, and with ever increasing frequency, Tom returned to Court, always bringing the humblest respects from Count Carabas, and always bringing rabbits, as well as many partridges and quails, through which means the King was moved to form an extremely favourable opinion of said Count.

The cook now took better care and roasted the rabbits, partridges, and quails so that they could not be juicier or tastier – all the more so because this had been enjoined upon him on pain of instant dismissal from service without superannuation or a widower's pension; and the charmign Princess, who ate the quails with a very particular relish, conceived in her mind a secret predilection for the munificent Count. The King made more and more inquiries of Tom about the latter, and Tom descanted on the extensive estates of his Count, his excellent temperament, and his forests, fishponds and crayfish waters, thereby arousing in the King the desire to make the acquaintance of this man of such excellent qualities, for the good King was very partial to crabs as well.

As the King had a good, benevolent, and fundamentally generous disposition, and the Princess was of the opinion that the messenger and bearer of such acceptable, agreeable and tasteful presents was deserving of an appreciatory reward – for which other cat in the world would actually have brought rabbits, partridges and quails to or into a Court instead of eating them himself? – so the King determined to confer a decoration on

Tom, partly to thank him for his faithful services, and partly to encourage him to continue in the same vein.

Only the two ministers were opposed to this. They said that medals had recently been abolished in all places, and it would be a backwards step to confer one in future; it also seemed to be hazardous to encroach upon the rights of Tom's lord and master. Furthermore, Tom was, after all, just a huntsman – one could not even know for certain that Tom did not occupy merely the position of the lord's personal gamekeeper – whom a medal would adorn as little as a hunting knife – it would be another matter were Tom a *chamberlain*: he would without question be worthy of a medal, even if he had not brought any rabbits, quails or partridges, simply for his efforts in having made the journey to the Royal Court.

The King realised how prudent and wise his two ministers were, and followed their advice, as was his wont; yet he expressed the opinion that one should perhaps make Tom a present of, for example, a golden snuffbox or watch, or a roulette of ducats.

To this, Minister Nitpicker said: "Majesty, tomcats do not take snuff," and Minister Change penny: "Majesty, huntsmen need no watch, they go by the sun"; and Minister Nitpicker: "Majesty, there are at present no ducats in the Treasury"; and Minister Change penny: "Majesty, we could not possibly be *accountable* for such a squandering of state funds."

And so the good King had to play second fiddle again, as always happened when he cast his vote with his ministers, and, decidedly out of tune, he dismissed the ministerial meeting.

The Princess was not in accord with the resolution to leave faithful

Tom unrewarded; she engaged under the rose in a feminine pursuit for his sake – which one? She kept this a close secret.

As a diversion from the constant vexation that his responsible ministers caused him through their tight-fistedness, their contradictory dispositions, and their uncomplying tempers, which annoyed him in an inexcusable fashion, the King decided to take a pleasure tour through the land with his Princess and a large retinue, and he had this announced to the Court. This was joyful tidings for everyone; the King had not had such a fine, elevated idea for a long time, and the Princess looked forward to the journey with all the eagerness of a child.

Now the packing was done and the preparations were made, everyone had their hands full, and the state-coach, the chamberlain's coach, the luggage-coach, the wardrobe-coach, and the kitchen-coach were rapidly made ready.

Tom had shown the King the direction in which the lands of Count Carabas lay, and this was none other than the direction to the estates of the Bugbear, which were in fact large and extensive, and larger than all the neighbouring Kingdoms, big and small, which surrounded it, as any child could learn from the map. Tom had also painted a prospect of his master considering himself exceedingly fortunate were he permitted to be presented to the King and the Princess, and when clever Tom had set everything in motion along the desired lines, and the day had been determined on which the Royal Court's pleasure tour was to take place, then Tom deferentially took his leave and started on his return journey.

The ministers, on hearing of the approaching journey, shook their

heads at the King not having asked *them* first, when they would, in any case, have said *No* and deliberated with each other whether or not they could be accountable for such a journey? They could not entirely reach clarity on this point, yet they were of the opinion that they would best be able to be accountable for this journey if they *themselves* travelled along, for it was known that His Royal Majesty was goodness, benevolence and mirth itself on journeys, insofar as it becomes a King to be merry; indeed, we hear and read very little of merry Kings. Everyone ate well and drank handsomely, and joked and laughed, and the Clown was allowed to turn somersaults, which the solemnity of the Court strictly forbade him to do in the Royal Castle.

The ministers therefore humbly asked if his Majesty would deign to order that they also travel on the pleasure tour? But the King said to them: "*Gentlemen!* I do not deign to order anything at all. You know that you have not yet drawn up the new draft bill on the utilisation of molehills. I wish this to contain precisely one hundred paragraphs, and I wish to find this draft completed and have it presented to me on my return. *Gentlemen!* I wish you health and every happiness!"

The ministers found it to be very irresponsible of the King to exclude them from the pleasure tour, the cost of which he was defraying entirely from his personal means, and they saw in this an unfavourable sign which they laid to Tom's account. Worried in spirit, they sat down to the task of the new draft bill on the utilisation of molehills to which they themselves had given the initial impulse. They had advanced the principle that the majority of moles dwelt in the richest meadows; that it was right and proper, and

indispensable for the weal of the people, that rich plots of land be taxed higher than lean ones; and therefore the larger or smaller number of molehills on a meadow should determine the degree of taxation for that plot. This was roughly the substance of the first paragraph of the new draft bill. To give the remaining ninety-nine would take us too far from our subject.

Tom hurried back to his Gottlieb, who saw, with growing impatience, him always coming and going without himself taking a step towards the promised fortune of becoming a great lord. He pictured this fortune in his mind in the liveliest colours, but becoming a great lord without money, without decent clothes, and without education, seemed to him to be wholly impossible. That it nevertheless does come to pass with the lack of the last-named advantage – Gottfried did not think of this, for he was utterly lacking in experience and knowledge of the world.

Now Tom came back to Gottfried quite exhausted, having run very fast, quickly pulled off his boots, hurled them into a corner, rubbed his paws, and cried: “Friend! Rejoice! In future, we shall walk in soft shoes and silken hose stockings, and the boots shall serve us only as drinking-cups. Then people will say of you and your faithful Tom, in all truth: “When it comes to drinking, they really fill their boots!”⁵

“Up, my friend, and follow me, and do everything exactly as I tell you, then your fortune will be made!”

“Do? I’m to do something?” Gottfried asked, quite astonished, and he stretched himself, lifting both his arms high towards the heavens while exclaiming: “My father had an ox, its horns were *this* long! *this* long!” –

⁵ “Die können einen guten Stiefel vertragen” literally, “they can take a good boot” means “they can hold their drink.”

Tom laughed and said, “Man, you have a great aptitude for being a great lord, there’s no doubt about it, however, follow me, we must set out on our journey straightaway so we’re on the spot in good time tomorrow morning. Today we’ll spend the night in the Bugbear’s realm.”

“The Bugbear! Ugh, ugh!” cried Gottlieb. “No, I’m not going with you, I’m afraid – I’m very afraid of the Bugbear!”

“What stupid beasts humans are!” Tom mocked. “Being afraid of Bugbears! This is too ridiculous; the thought would never occur to a rational animal, unless it were a stupid sparrow or birdbrained bullfinch who does not venture to eat cherries or peas for fear there is a Bugbear inside them. The proverb says only too truly: “You have to drag a man to his happiness”; just so do the ministers Nitpicker and Change penny over yonder drag the good King to his happiness, specifically, to make his people happy, which is universally recognised to be the greatest happiness a King can have, and is attained only by means of the most extreme austerity. They have already drawn up another new draft bill, to the effect that, in future, everyone shall serve the King *unpaid* as a loyal subject, and only the ministerial salaries shall continue to exist, so it not be said of the Kingdom that there is no man worth his salt to be found there, but rather two, which is *plenty*.”

Gottlieb, during this soliloquy of faithful Tom, made himself ready for the journey – that is to say, he stood up from the block of wood on which he had been sitting – and Tom rubbed his paws with a piece of tallow that the cook Panhandle had given him and pulled his boots on again. Gottlieb was a handsome young man; he had thick and curl hair, blue eyes, rosy cheeks, a little beard that was beginning to sprout, and no boots. His wardrobe

consisted of so few items of clothing that it would be indecorous to name them. Were a thief to steal these clothes from Gottlieb during the night, he would undoubtedly bring them back on the following morning, for they were devoid of all attraction. That is no hindrance, thought Tom, clothes would be sure to turn up; and so they set off and said farewell for ever to the old, useless mill.

Tom brought his Gottlieb, who was still very afraid of the Bugbear, to that quiet hill where he caught the rabbits, and where he had built himself a little hut; they both passed the night in this, in order to arrive in the lands of the good King betimes the following morning and pursue their fortune. Tom plotted while purring a pleasant lullaby, which soon sent Gottlieb to sleep; then Tom gave way to his thoughts. It was a very fine, bright, moonlit night, which promised fair weather for the following day.

Now when morning dawned, the two wanderers set out on their way. Neither the Bugbear nor anyone else in his realm and dominion had done them the slightest injury; the Bugbear was far too mighty a lord to have cared what any Tom, Dick or Gottlieb did or said in his realm, which is how it should be, for when someone is a real and regular Bugbear, and people are suitably afraid of him, then he does not need to concern himself with every trifle, but just let everything run smoothly and conformably to order.

Tom led Gottlieb to a river which flowed through a pretty, picturesque landscape, and told him that he might remove his clothes here and hide them under a bush, and the moment that a travelling coach came down the nearby hill, and Tom, who would still be in the vicinity, gave him a sign, he

should leap into the river and start splashing violently, and the rest would follow of itself.

In the meantime, the royal procession of coaches had begun to move away from the Royal Residence. At its head travelled the coach in which sat the King, the Princess, and the Lord Chamberlain; on the boxseat were the Hussar-in-Waiting and Coachman-in-Ordinary, and at the back, two valet-de-chambre; there then followed the Travelling Coach with the Equerry, the Lady-in-Waiting, a chamberlain, and two Grooms of the Bedchamber. Then came the Wardrobe Coach with several lady's maids, chambermaids, and valets-de-chambre; then came the Luggage Coach with the Court Minstrel, the Court Fool, and the Court Poet, the Court Newspaper-Writer, the Court Trumpeter and the Court Factor and Travel-Chancellor, this last-named being one of the most important people in the train, or actually, after the King and Princess, *the* most important, for he kept the money and was the paymaster. Finally, the Kitchen Coach followed with the cook, kitchen-maid, kitchen-boy, Cupbearer, Keeper of the Plate, and Superintendent of the Cellar – it was a very fine procession, and they were handsome people who travelled in it, and the weather was bright as could be.

Now when the Royal Coach appeared on the crown of the hill, Tom gave Gottlieb the preconcerted signal, and the young man fell flop into the water like a frog – hereupon Tom ran into the middle of the road that the coach was coming down and yelled: "Stop! Stop! Help! Help!"

The King, seeing the figure of the hunter he knew well, shouted to the coachman to stop; the coach stopped, and the Travelling Coach, and

the Wardrobe Coach and the Luggage Coach, and the Kitchen Coach also stopped.

“Whatever is the matter, my dear fellow?” asked the King through the opened coach-window.

“Oh, most gracious King! My master, Count Carabas, is bathing down there in the river, and he is close to drowning, and I, poor cat that I am, may be good at fishing, but I cannot swim! Help! Help!”

“Save the nobleman! Save him *at once!*” commanded the good King, and the Hussar-in-Waiting and a valet-de-chambre immediately leapt down from the coach and plunged into the river; while the Coachman-in-Ordinary remained sitting on the boxseat and kept the horses in check. The beautiful Princess was deeply shocked; both the alarming news and the noble disposition of her most gracious father made the deepest impression on her heart. Tom presented her with a little bottle of eau-de-cologne with the utmost reverence, and hurried to the river after the Count’s saviours, where he arrived just as Gottlieb was being borne out of the water by the Hussar-in-Waiting and valet-de-chambre, and was hawking vigorously.

“Oh, my most gracious Count!” cried Tom. “Into your clothes, quickly – but Heavens! Where *are* your clothes? They were right here! Isn’t that simply dreadful! Conceal yourself behind this bush, Count, until I have procured other clothes for you!”

With a few bounds, Tom was back at the good King’s coach. “Oh, most gracious King! To add to our misfortune, while my dear master was bathing a villain stole his clothes!”

“Give the nobleman some of Our clothes! At once!” commanded the

King. "Wardrobe Coach – drive up!" he cried, and heaved a sigh of relief from a truly joyful heart. Ah, it did him so much good, he felt so cheerful, so cheery, so chipper and so chirpy from being able to follow the impulse of his heart to be a real King and once again to *command*, without the objections of his responsible ministers. He had not felt so good for a long time. He was doubly happy that he had left them at home.

The Wardrobe Coach drove up and the King soon selected for the dear Count a complete suit from his own sumptuous clothes, had the coaches drive slowly down the hill, and gave the order that a luncheon be taken on the green meadow by the river so that he and his Princess-Daughter might on the one hand, recover from the shock they had suffered, and, on the other hand, make the so eagerly desired acquaintance of Count Carabas.

The Lord Chamberlain and Travel-Marshal chose a group of shady elms and oaks on the meadow as a place for breakfast, ordered, as the King's seconds, all that was necessary, and had the Travel Throne set up for the King and the Princess; and Tom filled the post of an industrious valet-de-chambre for his Count, and arrayed and accoutred him in the King's clothes and linen most stylishly, which was very much to Gottlieb's liking; and he did, in fact, look really smart and noble. The only problem was the fine kid gloves, which Gottlieb's hands, never yet having worn gloves in their life, would not so easily slip into and fit. The gloves were bursting with vexation at being pulled over such rough and clumsy hands.

The luncheon was served, everyone took their place according to their rank and standing, which included an especially large number of

standing-places; Tom led his Gottlieb up close as Count Carabas, announced him to the valets, who announced him to the on-duty Groom of the Bedchamber, who announced him to the Chamberlain; and he would actually have had to announce him either to the King's aide-de-camp or the ministers, but the latter were absent and the former was also, inasmuch as the good King had neither an aide nor a camp, having abolished the military to accommodate a contemporary need. He did not maintain even a militia, for his two ministers found this too to be highly superfluous, as militias always asserted claims; and this Ministry had firmly vowed to itself and to the loyal Territorial Diets that it would resolutely oppose each and every *claim*.

The King and the Princess received Gottlieb, under the name of Count Carabas, with extraordinary grace, thanked him in most handsome wise for his numerous attentions, and invited him to be seated forthwith beside the Travel Throne. Tom had recommended Gottlieb to guard against talking too much, for he who does not talk too much does not run the danger of uttering too many inanities – this is one circumstance in which people are quite contented to have less. Gottlieb's behaviour was natural and casual, and this pleased the King and the Princess, for a certain independent casualness that remains within the bounds of civility very nicely befits a young gentleman who rules over so much land.

The Court Poet glided into the nearby forest and wrote down the draft of a heroic poem, entitled: *The Bathed, Unscathed, Highly Praised Count Carabas*, which was to consist of twelve cantos.

When Tom saw the King and the Princess conversing so pleasantly with his young master, and had also partaken somewhat of the royal luncheon, he quietly slipped away and hurried on ahead down the road in great bounds. Then he reached an extensive area of meadowland which lay in the Bugbear's domain and whose tall grass was being mowed. He checked his rapid pace and affably said to a mower who was standing close by the road: "Good morning, my worthy man! Hard at it? A hot day today – yes, yes. Now – You will soon see a very fine spectacle pass by here!"

"Aye? What's that, then?" asked the mower.

"The good King of the neighbouring country," Tom reported. "It is possible that he will even call a halt here and speak with you, and that would be a great honour for you."

"Yes, yes, that would be," the mower confirmed.

"Now if the King asks," Tom continued, "To whom do all these meadows belong? then answer: To the Lord Count Carabas."

"But they belong to the Bugbear!" the mower objected.

"Come now," Tom rebutted, "Bugbears own no property, it all belongs to the nation, and this is called Carabas. Bugbear, Carabas, Nation, it is all one and the same thing; the name Bugbear is, however, forbidden, there *must not* be any more of them, the people will not have it. So mark this will, for if you say *Bugbear* you will be clapped in chains and fetters on the instant, then hanged or pardoned to powder and lead. Just tell this to your helpers and neighbours all over the meadow, to make sure no one breathes a word about Bugbears!"

The mower shuddered; as warm as he had been, so icy-cold was the

sweat that came over him now. He believed all the claptrap that Tom told him; as for Tom, he shot off like an arrow and continued on his way.

It was not long before the royal procession of coaches arrived. Gottlieb had been obliged to take a place on the backseat in the King's coach, where there was still room beside the Lord Chamberlain, opposite the Princess; he sat there and looked into her beautiful eyes. The King had plied his fork to great effect at the luncheon and was exceedingly affable. He therefore called a halt at the large meadows, beckoned the mower over, asked the question Tom had said he would, and the mower replied as Tom had told him, and the King was well pleased, and the mowers cried, "Long live the King!" because the King laughed and was so good. Then the journey was resumed.

In the meantime, Tom had come to a vast harvest-field where reapers were busy, and he had a conversation with the Chief Reaper that was very similar to the one he had conducted shortly before with the mower, and everything went off exactly as it had on that occasion.

While they travelled on, the King said to Gottlieb: "Lord Count, I am surprised that you have in your possession so many, so extensive, and so fertile estates."

Gottlieb reddened a little, made a slight bow, and replied: "Most gracious King! I possess *nothing*, on my oath, if I do not possess Your Majesty's grace and favour."

This reply pleased the King and the Princess beyond all measure, and the Lord Chamberlain was quietly astonished that his young man had so much refinement and so much of the talent to be a courtier. Must have

enjoyed a good education, he thought.

Meanwhile, the tomcat had been legging it ever onwards and said what he had said to the mower to the hunters in the forests, to the pond-keepers at the ponds to the fishermen at the crayfish-waters, to the herdsmen by their herds, and they all believed his tomfoolery; and the King always heard the same tale, and the respect he felt for Gottlieb grew more and more, and the Princess regarded him with very friendly eyes; she liked him *very* much.

With the procession of coaches halting so many times, Tom, who was not dawdling to begin with, managed to forge ahead a considerable distance, and he now reached the castle where the Bugbear lived. He licked his boots until they shone again, cleaned his beard, and combed and stroked his fur, for he knew, as a well-brought-up tomcat, and due respect must be shown even to Bugbears, particularly when they are rich and powerful.

Tom had himself announced and was admitted at once, for the Bugbear loved it when strangers came and paid their respects to him; he then invariably sought, by exhibiting himself as some kind of awful monster, to instil them with a sense of awful and monstrous respect. Today he was expecting guests again, and a table had been sumptuously set out on his orders, for people ate well in his castle. Tom said he was a travelling travel-writer on his travels who was taking sketches of all kinds of curiosities, for which purpose he kept with him a large slate that the Court Poet had presented him with as a memento. The Bugbear sought to frighten Tom with a terrifying, truly bugbearish figure, but Tom laughed and

asked him to be so good as to hold still a little while so that he could take a sketch of him for his album and then publish it later in lithograph with other pictures of Bugbears.

The Bugbear was pleased that the stranger was not afraid of him, for he was beginning to grow tired of this perpetual fear of him; he had even come to think that people should love him, a thought which, indeed, enters the mind of many a Bugbear.

So the Bugbear and Tom fell into familiar converse, and Tom steered the conversation towards the Bugbear's talent for changing into all kinds of forms. Now everyone – and a Bugbear most of all – likes to hear his or their talents mentioned with commendation and praise, and they readily give proofs of the feats they can perform, as did, among others, that bear “who long was made to get his bread by dancing,” and that crow who dropped the cheese because the fox asked him to let his so very sweet voice be heard.⁶

The Bugbear therefore suddenly turned himself into a lion, and it was really no laughing matter for the good tomcat to see so large and ferocious a Cousin before him; and thinking, Ugh, that is one abominable he-cat, that is, he made a vigorous cat's leap to escape the domain of the lion's paws. The Bugbear, however, was delighted at having given the young tourist such a fright, and he now turned himself into the agreeable man he could be, and whom he often was, particularly at table.

The tomcat, recovering from his shock, said: “I am not at all

⁶ The bear is from ‘Der Tanzbär,’ one of the fables in the First Book of Christian Fürchtegott Gellert's *Fabeln und Erzählungen* (1746). He arouses the envy of the others and is chased away. The cheese-dropping crow is from Aesop's ‘The Fox and the Crow.’



surprised that Your Eminence is able to change himself into so mighty a lion, for magnitude is the birthright of the Great, and spirit and greatness walk ever hand-in-hand as faithful spouses, whose child is Lady Magnanimity – but I have also heard praise of how extraordinarily humble Your Eminence can be, and I would simply love to proclaim this gracious humility to admiring contemporaries and posterity.”

These words of Tom flattered the Bugbear exceedingly, and he was quite carried away by them; so carried away, that Tom could not see him any more – when he heard a rustling on the floor, where a little mouse was crawling – into which the Bugbear had just turned himself. With *one* bound Tom flew at the mouse, caught it, bit its life out, and ate it all up, skin and bone. That was the end of the Bugbear. –

Now dust swirled up in the distance – the Procession of Royal Coaches was approaching – Tom hung a red-and-white flag out a window, gave a signal for all bells to be rung and a cannon salute to be fired off, and receiving the King and the Princess down in the courtyard, he opened the door of the King’s Coach with the words, “May Your Eminent Majesties be most welcome to Count Carabas his castle! Our joy unrolls as a foot-carpet beneath your Eminent steps, and we shout our jubilation through brazen mouth, resounding up to the heavens. Good speed to this house! Logn live Your Majesties, Long Live! Three times, Long Live!”

For sure, no Gentleman of the Court or Court Poet could have spoken more eloquently than this simple Prince’s Huntsman. A tear trembled in the King’s eye, the Princess pressed her handkerchief to her eyes, and now the Majesties alighted. The Lord Chamberlain offered the

King his hand, and Gottlieb offered the Princess his, before they stepped down. Oh, how blissfully happy he was!

The Bugbear's servants did not doubt that these were the guests their master was expecting, and Count Carabas was he himself, who had on this occasion turned himself into this handsome young gentleman to please the beautiful Princess. And how were they to think otherwise, especially when they saw no sign of the Bugbear?

Tom, as Steward, hereupon strode ahead of the King and his retinue, opened all the apartments in the castle, left the ladies and gentlemen to rid themselves of the dust of their journey, had another table laid for the menial servants, and led Gottlieb into the Bugbear's wardrobe, where he decked him out in superb Court dress, and with all the medals the Bugbear had worn (or not, as the case may be). At the same time he taught him many more good precepts.

Gottlieb then led the Princess to the table and Tom took his place behind his chair with great propriety. As many of the King's retinue as room allowed were seated at the royal table, among them the Court Fool and the Court Poet once again, and, this time, even the Court Minstrel, who was today permitted to weep to his heart's content and drink as much wine as he wanted. He therefore began to sing the charming song, "I live a life of love and pleasure,"⁷ which he delivered to the accompaniment of many tears, consisting entirely of the Tears-of-Christ wine he had poured into his goblet, to universal applause. At last, the company moved on to drinking

⁷ "Mein Lebenslauf ist Lieb' und Lust" – the first line of the poem, "Das Reich der Freude" by Siegfried August Mahlmann (1771-1826). It was later used for a waltz by Josef Strauss: his Op. 263 (1869).

champagne, and the King became exceedingly merry, while the Princess and Gottlieb cast tender looks at one another.

When the meal had officially ended, it pleased the Royal Majesty to have one's midday nap, and Gottlieb walked with the Princess into the garden, Tom following him and whispering in his ear, "Give her a rose, but break off all the thorns before that." "Oh, my dear Count!" she exclaimed, when she caught sight of the blooming roses in the garden. "How many beautiful roses you have!" Gottlieb picked a rose, removed the thorns, and had the following memorable conversation with the Princess: He: "Princess, do you love me?" She: "Yes, my Count, I love you." Gottlieb was overjoyed. He fell down at the Princess's feet and kissed her gown and then her hands.

In the meantime, the good King and the rest of the Royal Household had slept their fill, and he betook himself to the garden; and as he was still in a very merry mood, and Gottlieb asked him for the Princess's hand in the proper manner, so he betrothed the young couple with great satisfaction, whereby Champagne was drunk anew and the Court Poet composed a poem entitled: *Sun Rose, Heart's Kiss. Thornless Rose-Bliss.*

Puss-in-Boots saw himself at the satisfying goal of his labours, yet he felt unwell. He did not know whether he should attribute this indisposition to his strenuous activity for Gottlieb and the rapid journey he had made, so to speak, as running-footman and courier on foot, or to the Bugbear he had swallowed; for it is a weighty question whether it does you good to have a Bugbear in your stomach – at least, a Bugbear does not agree with everyone. He therefore secretly ate, in the garden, some cat-mint and

some setwell⁸ or valerian, which are splendid healing herbs and good against stomach cramps, and he found himself completely restored in a short time; yet he had a strange sensation, as if a great change could or would come over him – he just could not surmise what kind of change.

The Ministers of the good King left at the Royal Residence, Nitpicker and Changepenny, exhibited extraordinary industry. They brought the draft bill on the utilisation of molehills to completion, the new servants' bill being no less complete, and deliberated a great deal over further savings in the Royal Household and the national budget. In their opinion, the *Court Minstrel*, the *Court Fool*, and the *Court Poet* were quite supernumerary serving-positions: at most, *one* person could fill these three posts very well, for after all, *poets* always called themselves *minstrels*, and minstrels and poets were as a rule *foolish* people: thus two salaries would fall away, which could be added to the Ministerial salaries. The industry of these two uncommonly industrious cockroaches was also directed towards Tom. For his frequent visits to Court, and for his equivocal tricoloration, he was to be suspected of being a spy and secret rabble-rouser, and an order of deportation for him was to be obtained from the King. However, in order that the King might not in future be deprived of rabbits, quails, and partridges, a hunt was to be taken out for him on lease, at his own expense, in a neighbouring state.

But everything turned out quite otherwise. When the King had returned to his Residence with the bridal pair and all his retinue, he

⁸ Cat-mint is “Katzenmünze” and setwell is “Katzenwurzel” (literally: cat-root). Not for the first or last time, Bechstein combines his love of puns with his herbal knowledge.

immediately summoned the ministers to a confidential meeting to make known to them the betrothal of Her Highness the Princess-daughter. The good King was very contented and happy with this match, and when Pitpicker presented the draft bill regarding the molehills, and Changepenny the book of the servants' bill, Nitpicker proposed the abolition of or reduction to *one* person of the Minstrel, Court Fool and Poet, and Changepenny the deportation of Puss-in-Boots from the Kingdom, on suspicion of trichromatic sentiments, the King gave them to understand, in the following speech, which the Court Newspaper Writer took down in shorthand in an adjoining room:

“*Gentlemen!* Let us not be over-precipitate with the molehills; there are many other hills to be levelled in the land. As for the Servants' Bill, we shall leave everything the way it is for the time being. We require no services to be performed without payment, for the Honourable Ministers, let us not forget, do not serve without payment. My having *two* jackanapes too many may be true, and I am certainly thinking of dismissing them.

Gentlemen! You propose the *deportation* of Puss-in-Boots, the highly merotorious Master of the Forest of my dear son-in-law, the Lord Count Carabas. Should I have his black and red patches whitewashed? This *deportation* is out of the question. Let the worthy fellow keep his bodily colour, I shall take it under my protection; he wears white and red, Our colours, and black and red, his former master's colours, what more do you wish for? Proclaim to our loyal and much-loved subjects these new happy tidings of the Royal House. *You are dismissed, gentlemen!*”

On the next day, the Court Newspaper appeared with a rosy red

border and printed on wove machine paper. It contained the following article, which gave rise to unbounded jubilation throughout the land:

“It has pleased His Majesty the King to betroth his beloved Princess-Daughter to the Count of Carabas, and to bestow the title of ‘Lordship’ on the latter.

Further, it has pleased His Majesty the King to dissolve the Ministry of Nitpicker and Change penny, with grateful recognition of the services they have rendered and his particular good will, and to charge his son-in-law, His Lordship the Count Carabas, with the formation of a new ministry.

Further, it has pleased His Majesty the King to appoint the quondam Master of the Forest and travelling attendant of His Lordship Count Carabas as Master of the Huntsmen, to raise him to the peerage under the name of *Tom of Tommenstein*, and to confer on him a divided coat of arms, showing a silver rabbit on a red field above and a black mouse on a silver field below, and a partridge flying up on the helmet. As supporters there shall be, for particular reasons, two courier’s boots, each one with the foot turned outwards.”

Besides this, the Court Newspaper contained a number of new promotions. Gentle Heinrich became ‘Concert-Master,’ the Cook ‘Master of the Kitchen,’ the Court Trumpeter ‘Court Musician par excellence,’ the Court Fool ‘Counsellor for Comedy,’ and the Poet ‘Counsellor of the Consistory’; and they all made merry at the news. The Court Newspaper Writer received the title of ‘Historiographer.’

When the day for the marriage ceremony of the noble bridal couple

arrived, and the entire Court was assembled in their finest apparel, there also arrived the great moment at which loyal service received its full reward and celebrated its fairest victory. The King had the Master of the Huntsmen Tom of Tommenstein summoned to his presence, and when the latter gracefully bent his knee before him, the good King, with paternal joy, hung a heavy golden chain of honour around his neck and favoured him with an *embrace*. When this was accomplished, to the clangour of trumpets and bray of kettle-drums, Tom received, from the hands of the fair young bride, a luxurious hunter's pouch that she had fabricated with her own illustrious hands, on which Tom's coat of arms was embroidered in silver, silk, and pearls. The rabbit's eye was a large ruby, and the mouse was worked out of steel pearls. The gradation of colours was wonderful. In the pouch there was – a wallet.

The people over whom the good King ruled returned his hunting rights to him, of their own free will, so he would not be obliged to *lease* a hunt from a neighbour.

All those employed at Court thanked Heaven that the stingy ministers had been removed. The Fool turned a great many somersaults and the Court Poet composed an epic in twenty cantos, entitled: *In the Driving Seat, Less sure on his Feet, Beating a Retreat, or the Picked Nit at the Solsticial Point of Favour*, which he dedicated to His Excellency Tom of Tommenstein.

The dismissed ministers having saved up a great deal of money, they retired to their country estates and consumed their irresponsibly high pension in unclouded serenity.

The reason why the lovely pictures which adorn this lovely fairy tale do not show the ministers is that they completely disappeared from the sight of their contemporaries and returned to their former insignificance.

The King was happy and ruled freely, faithfully, and well again; Gottlieb was happy with his angelically fair Princess; and Tom of Tommenstein was also happy, and they all lived joyfully and cheerfully until the end of their days.