

In olden times when wishing still helped one, there lived a king whose daughters were all beautiful, but the youngest was so beautiful that the sun itself, which has seen so much, was astonished whenever it shone in her face. Close by the king's castle lay a great dark forest, and under an old lime-tree in the forest was a well, and when the day was very warm, the king's child went out into the forest and sat down by the side of the cool fountain, and when she was bored she took a golden ball, and threw it up on high and caught it, and this ball was her favorite plaything.

Now it so happened that on one occasion the princess's golden ball did not fall into the little hand which she was holding up for it, but on to the ground beyond, and rolled straight into the water. The king's daughter followed it with her eyes, but it vanished, and the well was deep, so deep that the

bottom could not be seen. At this she began to cry, and cried louder and louder, and could not be comforted. And as she thus lamented someone said to her, "What ails you, king's daughter? You weep so that even a stone would show pity."

She looked round to the side from whence the voice came, and saw a frog stretching forth its big, ugly head from the water. "Ah, old water-splasher, is it you," she said, "I am weeping for my golden ball, which has fallen into the well." "Be quiet, and do not weep," answered the frog, "I can help you, but what will you give me if I bring your plaything up again?" "Whatever you will have, dear frog," said she, "My clothes, my pearls and jewels, and even the golden crown which I am wearing." The frog answered, "I do not care for your clothes, your pearls and jewels, nor for your golden crown, but if you will love me and let me be your companion and play-fellow, and sit by you at your little table, and eat off your little golden plate, and drink out of your little cup, and sleep in your little bed - if you will promise me this I will go down below, and bring you your golden ball up again."

"Oh yes," said she, "I promise you all you wish, if you will but bring me my ball back again." But she thought, "How the silly frog does talk. All he does is to sit in the water

with the other frogs, and croak. He can be no companion to any human being."

But the frog when he had received this promise, put his head into the water and sank down; and in a short while came swimming up again with the ball in his mouth, and threw it on the grass. The king's daughter was delighted to see her pretty plaything once more, and picked it up, and ran away with it. "Wait, wait," said the frog. "Take me with you. I can't run as you can." But what did it avail him to scream his croak, croak, after her, as loudly as he could. She did not listen to it, but ran home and soon forgot the poor frog, who was forced to go back into his well again.