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NILFAN FERNANDES DA SILVA JÚNIOR



**UMA PROPOSTA DE TRADUÇÃO COMENTADA DE *THE LIFE AND
ADVENTURES OF SANTA CLAUS*, DE L. FRANK BAUM**

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Banca de Avaliação:

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Stéfano Paschoal (UFU)

Examinador: Prof. Dr. Igor Antônio Lourenço da Silva

Examinadora: Prof.^a Dr.^a Carolina Duarte Damasceno Ferreira

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RESUMO

O propósito deste trabalho é apresentar uma análise linguístico-cultural da tradução de nomes (sejam eles comuns ou próprios, topônimos ou antropônimos) da obra *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus* (1902), de L. Frank Baum, para o português brasileiro. O nosso objetivo principal, porém, pautou-se em conciliar a tradução dos nomes com as características particulares da Literatura Infantojuvenil, como a ludicidade e os jogos de palavras. Para a análise cultural da literatura, utilizamos os trabalhos de Thomson-Wohlgemuth (1998), Fernandes e Queiroga (2016) e Azenha Júnior (2005). Quanto à análise dos nomes, tomamos como base a lista de procedimentos técnicos propostos por Fernandes (2016): *rendition* (tradução simples), *copy* (cópia), *transcription* (transcrição), *substitution* (substituição), *recreation* (recriação), *transposition* (transposição), *addition* (adição), *deletion* (eliminação), *phonological replacement* (substituição fonológica) e *conventionality* (convenção). Constatou-se que o tradutor precisa empregar tanto da sua criatividade quanto dos conhecimentos acadêmicos adquiridos para poder recriar essas palavras, fazendo com que soem natural aos ouvidos das crianças e, ao mesmo tempo, assemelhem-se ao sentido original.

Palavras-chave: Literatura Infantojuvenil, Tradução de Literatura Infantojuvenil; tradução de nomes, L. Frank Baum.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this work is to present a linguistic-cultural analysis of the translation of names (whether common or proper, toponyms or anthroponyms) of the novel *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus* (1902), by L. Frank Baum, to Brazilian Portuguese. Our main objective, however, was to reconcile the translation of names with the particular characteristics of Children's Literature, such as playfulness and wordplay. For the cultural analysis of the literature, we used the works of Thomson-Wohlgemuth (1998), Fernandes and Queiroga (2016) and Azenha Júnior (2005). With regard to the analysis of names, we take as a base the list of technical procedures proposed by Fernandes (2016): *rendition*, *copy*, *transcription*, *substitution*, *recreation*, *transposition*, *addition*, *deletion*, *phonological replacement*, and *conventionality*. It was found that the translator needs to use both the creativity and the acquired academic knowledge to be able to recreate these words, making them sound natural to the children's ears and, at the same time, resemble the original meaning.

Key-words: Children's Literature, Children's Literature Translation, translation of names, L. Frank Baum.

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INTRODUÇÃO

Este trabalho é uma proposta de tradução comentada do romance *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus* (1902), do autor estadunidense L. Frank Baum, destinado ao público infantojuvenil, ainda não traduzido para o português brasileiro. Com esta proposta, e com base nas reflexões e estudos de base bibliográfica, pretendemos responder certas questões linguísticas e culturais. Nosso enfoque principal será na tradução de nomes, que aparecem em abundância na narrativa, sejam eles comuns ou próprios. Os nomes são elementos importantes, que caracterizam, definem e delimitam os personagens, refletem os lugares retratados, e até mesmo brincam com todo o enredo. Eles podem transmitir diversos significados, cada um deles com simbologia e semântica particulares. Sabemos que alguns estudiosos da área dos Estudos da Tradução, como Lawrence Venuti (2002), separam as traduções em dois grandes grupos, sejam eles: a tradução domesticadora, mais voltada para a valorização da cultura do país da língua-alvo; e a tradução estrangeirizadora, mais voltada para uma aproximação da cultura do país da língua-fonte. O importante em nosso estudo será compreender quando se deve traduzir e adaptar (num nível mais domesticador), e quando não é necessário fazê-lo (a estrangeirização), quais os procedimentos devem ser utilizados, e quais as possibilidades criativas à disposição. Pretendemos analisar essa problemática, sempre atentando ao potencial público-alvo (as crianças e jovens) e à cultura de ambos os países.

A ideia de traduzir o livro originou-se primariamente como curiosidade, logo após o término de uma pós-graduação em Tradução pela Estácio de Sá, em 2013. Como trabalho de conclusão de curso da pós-graduação, traduzimos o pequeno conto *A Kidnapped Santa Claus*, de 1904, também de autoria de Frank Baum, que serviu como texto-base para uma análise de tradução comentada. Este conto faz parte do mesmo universo criativo de *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus* e o tomamos como uma das fontes de referência para a tradução do romance. O que começou como um exercício criativo de tradução acabou por tomar forma e servir como texto de análise para a atual proposta de tradução comentada. Logo após minha formação na pós-graduação, resolvi, pois, com o intuito de treinar minhas habilidades tradutórias, traduzir o romance acima mencionado. O texto ficou “na gaveta” até que tive a ideia de utilizá-lo como base para minhas reflexões acerca daquilo que aprendera durante o curso de Tradução da Universidade Federal de Uberlândia. Tomando o texto novamente, e agora com um maior cabedal de conhecimentos sobre a tradução e as tarefas que envolve, resolvi corrigi-lo e reescrever certas passagens que não haviam ficado muito boas na primeira

versão. É com essa segunda versão, revisada, que pretendo tecer meus comentários e análises sobre o processo e as dificuldades tradutórias encontradas, juntamente com a ajuda de textos teóricos, principalmente da área da Tradução Infantojuvenil.

Na tradução comentada serão apontadas algumas dificuldades que poderão se enquadrar como questões linguísticas ou culturais. Por se tratar de uma monografia, resolvemos escolher como tópico central a tradução dos nomes. Como eles se ligam às culturas de origem e de chegada? Quais os procedimentos técnicos que podemos utilizar ao traduzi-los? Quais os maiores desafios adaptativos? Como os nomes podem soar agradáveis para um público infantil? Pretendemos responder essas e outras questões envolvendo a tradução dos nomes e a literatura infantojuvenil.

Apoiando-nos em exemplos e em outros artigos de tradução que abordam a literatura infantil e a tradução de nomes, nossos objetivos específicos são os seguintes:

*Estudar as características fundamentais que compõem o gênero da Literatura Infantojuvenil e a Tradução da Literatura Infantojuvenil;

*Refletir acerca do processo de tradução de *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus*, com o enfoque na tradução de Literatura Infantojuvenil e o modo que soe o mais acessível para o público-alvo;

*Pesquisar soluções para a questão da tradução de nomes (tanto comuns quanto próprios) e para questões culturais e criativas que a envolve, e que serão elucidadas no capítulo 4.

Para as questões das diferenças culturais e a melhor adequação ao público infantojuvenil, usaremos como teoria o texto *A tradução para a criança e para o jovem: a prática como base da reflexão e da relação profissional* (2005), de Azenha Júnior, o qual afirma que o tradutor sempre projeta em sua mente qual a definição de infância numa esfera diacrônica, levando também em consideração diferentes aspectos como costumes, ideologias, crenças etc. Para maior adequação e aceitabilidade por parte dos leitores infantojuvenis, o tradutor se faz valer de diversas estratégias linguísticas, semânticas e estilísticas que poderão ser notadas de diversas formas: na escolha lexical (relações linguísticas específicas, reconstrução de relações de autoridades, formalidade X informalidade), na adaptação, na recriação de aspectos poéticos (como rima, provérbios, trocadilhos, poemas, jogos infantis). Já em *Translation of Children's Literature* de Queiroga e Fernandes (2016) encontramos

ainda outros desafios apontados como: o registro, a combinação de imagens e texto, o uso de jogos de palavras e outras referências culturais. Quais são as maiores dificuldades linguístico-tradutórias em todo esse processo, mais especificamente no quesito semântico e estilístico? Qual a melhor maneira de adequação a uma literatura destinada ao público infantojuvenil? Qual a direção das adaptações necessárias para tornar o texto o mais agradável possível pelo público-alvo selecionado? Como traduzir elementos culturais específicos, como os nomes (sejam eles comuns ou próprios, topônimos ou antropônimos), dos seres fantásticos ou de referências geográficas? Ao fim deste trabalho de tradução comentada pretendemos, se não responder, pelo menos propor alternativas plausíveis para tais questionamentos. Além disso, nossa tradução será apenas uma das possíveis versões para essa complexa temática da tradução de textos infantojuvenis e tradução de nomes.

Nosso referencial teórico consistirá também de estudos da área da Tradução que tratam principalmente dessa inter-relação entre a parte linguística e a parte cultural. Pretendemos sintonizar nossa tradução num espaço entre domesticação (mais ligado à língua-alvo) e estrangeirização (mais ligado à língua-fonte) ou, como exposto por Eugene Nida em *Principles of Correspondence* (2000), entre equivalência formal e equivalência dinâmica. Sobre as peculiaridades culturais, levaremos em consideração aquilo que Itamar Even-Zohar declara em seu artigo *The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem* (2000). Segundo ele, as traduções são afetadas sobremaneira pelas literaturas nas quais estão inseridas e, tais traduções (e seus respectivos sucessos ou rejeições), estariam condicionadas à questão entre literaturas periféricas X literaturas hegemônicas.

Também será de extrema importância em nosso estudo a análise do processo tradutório levando-se em conta o gênero da Literatura Infantojuvenil, e aquilo que os estudiosos alertam quanto a suas características particulares. Apesar da complexa e diversificada quantidade de textos escritos para jovens e crianças, podemos ressaltar a relação sempre assimétrica entre a instância produtora e a receptora. Como já apontado por Dias apud Azenha, em *A tradução para crianças e para o jovem* (2005, p. 370): “o processo de escritura de literatura infantil e juvenil é sempre assimétrico. Ou seja, são adultos que escrevem e traduzem para ‘não adultos’”. O autor ainda aponta outras características típicas desse tipo de texto: a escolha dos itens lexicais acessíveis à compreensão do público destinatário, a escolha de estruturas sintáticas condizentes, os jogos e brincadeiras de linguagem, o aspecto lúdico, o imaginário infantil, dentre outros. Ele ainda salienta que o tradutor, por mais transparente que seja, sempre dialoga com o texto e traz para dentro dele a sua própria visão de mundo e

herança cultural, uma característica que sempre enriquece esse intercâmbio de textos e culturas diferentes. Lincoln e Queiroga, em *Translation of Children's Literature* (2016), por sua vez, apontam para outros fatores importantes da literatura infantil, como a influência dos pais e professores, a interpretação, a censura, a intenção de valores e a dificuldade de se delimitar com clareza o que realmente é a Literatura Infantojuvenil.

Uma das características importantes que permeia muitos textos infantis é a presença constante de nomes. Vamos nos ocupar desta questão linguístico-cultural, levando em consideração o estudo de Lincoln Fernandes em *Translation of Names in Children's Fantasy Literature: Bringing the Young Reader into Play* (2016). Segundo ele, os nomes carregam uma significação bastante particular e são mais do que simples nomes: eles podem ter efeitos cômicos, mitológicos, religiosos, intertextuais, podem indicar gênero, nacionalidade ou até mesmo possuírem uma significação histórico-cultural. Dentro das dez categorias que ele explicita, pretendemos observar quais seriam as mais adequadas para a tradução dos nomes neste romance.

Será também de grande valia todo o embasamento teórico proposto por Gabrielle Thomson-Wohlgemuth em seu trabalho de pós-graduação em Tradução da Universidade de Surrey, intitulado: *Children's Literature and its Translation: An Overview* (1998). Como o próprio nome indica, esse trabalho apresenta-se como um panorama geral da tradução aplicada ao gênero da Literatura Infantojuvenil e traz definições as mais diversas, desde questões culturais e éticas (como a censura, a assimetria e a manipulação), até aspectos mais práticos, como a adaptação, a modernização, o embelezamento e tópicos gramaticais concernentes. Além deste trabalho, mostrou-se também como um auxílio complementar a obra *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader* (2006), de Gillian Lathey, um compêndio de diversos artigos sobre a tradução e a literatura infantojuvenil escrita por diversos estudiosos do assunto abordando variados temas a este respeito, como a censura, abordagens teóricas, Estudos da Tradução, intertextualidade e ideologias.

Atendo-nos, portanto, a todo o presente referencial teórico e às abordagens (tanto bibliográficas quanto da prática no curso de Tradução) anteriormente explicitadas, podemos resumir os principais passos de nossa pesquisa como sendo os seguintes:

1. Leitura do original *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus*;
2. Leitura dos teóricos que tratam dos principais temas abordados no processo de tradução comentada como: Lincoln, Queiroga, Azenha Jr –

que nos auxiliaram principalmente na questão da Literatura Infantojuvenil, seus marcadores culturais e as características típicas desse tipo de texto; Lincoln Fernandes – o apoio para a tradução de nomes; Thomson-Wohlgemuth, auxílio tanto em aspectos práticos e linguísticos quanto culturais;

3. Análise de tradução do romance a partir das abordagens da tradução de nomes e das características da Literatura Infantojuvenil, levando em consideração o processo tradutório desenvolvido e as estratégias propostas.

O texto integral foi retirado do site Project Gutenberg, que disponibiliza obras gratuitas que já se encontram em domínio público. O texto original encontrar-se-á ao final do trabalho, na seção de anexo. Todas as citações em inglês serão acompanhadas de suas respectivas traduções em notas de rodapé.

Todo o processo tradutório também se refletirá em minha experiência como futuro tradutor, principalmente na área da Tradução Literária. Ao traduzir esta obra para o português brasileiro, pretendemos contribuir de alguma maneira para a divulgação da literatura americana e da obra de Baum e, ao mesmo tempo, enriquecer a cultura literária infantojuvenil brasileira. E, como tradução comentada, desenvolver propostas tradutórias plausíveis e coerentes de análises linguísticas e culturais que poderão servir como auxílio para próximos trabalhos de tradução de LIJ, ainda tão menosprezados em nosso país.

CAPÍTULO 2 - O AUTOR E A OBRA

2.1- L. FRANK BAUM: O AUTOR

O escritor estadunidense Lyman Frank Baum, mais conhecido como L. Frank Baum, nasceu no dia 15 de maio de 1856, na pequena cidade de Chittenango, estado de Nova York. Seu pai era um rico homem de negócios e sua família morava na grande propriedade de Rose Lawn. Desde criança mostrou habilidade na escrita e vivia a distribuir jornais e panfletos feitos por ele mesmo para os familiares e amigos. Em sua vida adulta, dedicou-se aos mais diversos ofícios, dentre eles, ator, editor, criador de galinhas de raça, comerciante e caixeiro-

viajante. Porém, a profissão que mais lhe interessava era a de dramaturgo, apesar de não ter gozado de muito sucesso nela.

Em 1882, casou-se com Maud Gage, filha da sufragista e ativista dos direitos femininos Matilda Joslyn Gage. Tiveram quatro filhos. Foi sua sogra quem o incentivou a escrever, devido a sua grande capacidade narrativa. Por causa, muito provavelmente, dessa grande influência, é que o feminismo sempre foi um elemento importante em suas histórias. Em 1888, mudaram-se para Aberdeen, Dakota, onde se tornou editor do jornal local. Em 1891, o jornal faliu, o que fez com que Baum e sua família fossem para Chicago. Ele foi trabalhar como editor do *Evening Post* e, mais tarde, como vendedor de vitrines de lojas.

Sua carreira como escritor de histórias infantis começou no ano de 1897 com o livro *Mamãe Gansa em Prosa*, uma coleção das então famosas histórias da Mamãe Gansa, ilustrada por Maxfield Parrish. Dois anos depois, em 1899, a publicação de *Papai Ganso: um novo livro* tornou-se um best-seller juvenil naquele ano.

Porém, foi realmente com *O Maravilhoso Mágico de Oz*, lançado em 1900, que Baum ganhou reconhecimento da crítica e sucesso financeiro. Não havia nada igual na literatura infantojuvenil da época, e seu livro logo foi elogiado graças a seu humor, fantasia e integridade da natureza humana refletidos nos personagens. Foram também consideradas inovadoras as ilustrações feitas por W. W. Denslow. Segundo o editor da obra, George M. Hill, foram vendidos 10 mil exemplares em duas semanas e 80 mil foram impressos nos seis primeiros meses. Apresentando-se como um moderno conto de fadas, o livro conta a história de Dorothy, uma garotinha que vivia no Kansas com seus tios. Certo dia, ela e seu cãozinho Totó são pegos de surpresa por um furacão e sua casa vai parar na fictícia cidade dos Munchkins, bem em cima da malvada Bruxa do Leste. Para voltar novamente a sua casa, a boa Bruxa do Norte lhe dá a instrução de seguir a trilha de tijolos amarelos até a Cidade das Esmeraldas, onde reside o famoso Mágico de Oz. Durante sua peregrinação, a garotinha faz amizade com o Homem de Lata, que deseja um coração; o Espantalho, que anseia por um cérebro; e o Leão, que almeja coragem. A real fascinação da história reside mesmo nas diversas situações pitorescas que os personagens precisam enfrentar e nas reações de cada um deles.

O sucesso do livro foi tanto que Baum se viu obrigado a escrever outras treze continuações, todas elas ambientadas na Terra de Oz. Dois anos após a publicação de *O Maravilhoso Mágico de Oz*, Baum trabalhou ativamente na primeira montagem do musical

para a Broadway, que ficou em cartaz por oito anos. Suas obras posteriores, entretanto, não foram muito bem recebidas no teatro. Mesmo assim, a *magnum opus* de Baum ficou para sempre no legendário infantil e inspirou a cultura *pop* de maneira jamais vista: foram diversas adaptações para o cinema, teatro, musicais e desenhos animados. Em 1939, o filme *O Mágico de Oz* se tornou um sucesso retumbante da MGM, estrelado por Judy Garland como Dorothy. Um filme memorável tanto pela recente tecnologia do Technicolor, quanto pelo musical e roteiro. Teve seis indicações ao Oscar, ganhando como Melhor Canção Original e Melhor Trilha Sonora, tornando-se um clássico *cult* do cinema.

Nos anos subsequentes Frank Baum dedicou-se à literatura infantil e escreveu diversas outras obras: foram 50 romances, mais de 80 contos, alguns poemas e peças de teatro. Alguns foram publicados sob pseudônimos, como Edith Van Dyne e Laura Bancroft. Em certo momento, ele declara que havia encerrado as suas obras sobre a Terra de Oz, e que passara a se dedicar a outras obras de fantasia como *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus*, *Queen Zixi of Ix* e *The Master Key*. Contudo, apesar de toda essa prolificidade, nenhuma outra de suas obras ganhou tanto sucesso quanto a história da garotinha do Kansas.

Em 1910, ele mudou-se para a cidade de Hollywood e fundou a *Oz Film Manufacturing Company*, a fim de produzir filmes baseados em suas obras. Apesar de toda a sua criatividade e espírito empreendedor, não obteve sucesso, já que o mercado ainda não estava interessado em obras de cunho infantojuvenil naquela época.

L. Frank Baum morreu em 5 de maio de 1919, por causa de um derrame. Tornou-se um ícone da literatura norte-americana e da literatura de fantasia e infantojuvenil, deixando um imenso legado. Suas obras inspiraram e ainda inspiram a literatura contemporânea, o cinema, a moda e a cultura *pop* em geral. Sua literatura, cheia de alegorias, incluía dentre suas fábulas e fantasias, diversas mensagens políticas, sociais, educativas, e até mesmo religiosas. Entretanto, o mais importante, é que ele despertou a maravilha da leitura em milhões de crianças ao redor do mundo.

2.2- A OBRA E OS GÊNEROS

The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus (tradução nossa: A vida e as aventuras do Papai Noel), daqui em diante também tratado como TLASC, é um livro infantil escrito por L.

Frank Baum, lançado no dia 12 de abril de 1902. Assim como outros livros do mesmo autor, como *Queen Zixi of Ix*, *The Master Key* e *The Magical Monarch of Mo*, este livro não pertence ao ciclo da Terra de Oz. Não obteve o mesmo sucesso e abrangência do grande *O Maravilhoso Mágico de Oz* (2013), mas mesmo assim destacou-se de certa forma por seu conteúdo de fantasia maravilhosa e natalina, ao retratar um dos maiores ícones do Natal conhecido por crianças do mundo todo: o Papai Noel. O livro possui maior destaque na cultura americana e certa iconicidade no âmbito da literatura natalina em geral. Algumas adaptações cinematográficas já foram realizadas baseadas no romance infantil: uma animação em *stop-motion* de 1985 e outra animação de 2000, esta última transmitida no Brasil pela Rede Globo. Pouco mais tarde, em 1904, Baum publica um pequeno conto baseado nessa mesma história: *A Kidnapped Santa Claus* (tradução nossa: O sequestro do Papai Noel), em que Papai Noel é sequestrado e enviado para as Cavernas dos Demônios - uma alusão cristã aos pecados capitais.

A obra da qual propomos uma tradução, *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus*, narra a história de vida do Papai Noel, esse ser mitológico que já se encontra enraizado na cultura popular mundial e que tem por hábito entregar presentes a todas as crianças do mundo na véspera de Natal. Na história, o então bebê Nicolau é encontrado na floresta encantada de Burzi e adotado por uma ninfa, Necile, com a permissão e auxílio de todos os seres mágicos como elfos, nuques, fadas e do grande espírito da floresta, Ak, o lenhador. Conforme cresce, ele começa a perceber que é o único ser de sua espécie dentro daquela floresta magnífica e descobre que seus semelhantes vivem nas cidades. Ao percorrer as diversas cidades e vilarejos do mundo com o grande Ak, ele logo se apaixona pela inocência das crianças e percebe que elas são as criaturas que mais precisam de amparo num mundo dominado pela ganância e astúcia dos homens adultos. Noel cresce com esse amor no coração e, na idade adulta, decide morar no Vale Risonho. Lá começa a criar diversos brinquedos maravilhosos, coisas que as crianças nunca haviam visto antes. Durante a história, Noel passa por diversas aventuras e contratempos: a dificuldade da criação dos brinquedos, os problemas com os grandes barões ricos das cidades, a solução que encontrou para poder entregar todos os brinquedos com a ajuda das renas, e até mesmo uma grande batalha entre os seres encantados da floresta e os terríveis e malignos óguas. Enfim, Papai Noel passa a ser reconhecido por todas as crianças e pais do mundo todo. Ao final, quando Noel já se encontrava em idade bem avançada, e quando todos já esperavam sua morte, os espíritos bons do mundo se reúnem e concedem a imortalidade a este homem tão bem-aventurado.

A linguagem de L. Frank Baum não é rebuscada. Como ele mesmo disse, o seu objetivo principal era entreter as crianças e, para isso, precisaria de uma linguagem mais simples e que fosse acessível a elas. Apesar de ser uma leitura agradável e fluida, cheia de diálogos e cenas de aventuras, devemos nos lembrar de seu aspecto diacrônico, pois foi escrita há mais de 100 anos. Há muitas palavras e expressões que não seriam usadas por nenhum escritor de língua inglesa da contemporaneidade. Observa-se a presença constante de descrições e repetições em diversas passagens, muito diferente dos atuais livros de fantasia infantojuvenis que são cheios de ação, diálogos rápidos e uma trama que envolve mais frequentemente os temas modernos. Ainda assim, o livro continua sendo cativante e divertido. Em nossa proposta de tradução, pretendemos transmitir ao máximo as mensagens e os valores do texto original, porém ao mesmo tempo adaptando a linguagem para um contexto um pouco mais palatável para as crianças de nossos dias, conferindo ao texto uma boa legibilidade (ou *readability*).

Além disso, o texto é repleto de alegorias e temáticas mais sensíveis, que só podem realmente ser compreendidas por leitores adultos. Gabriele Thomson-Wohlgemuth, em sua dissertação de mestrado, *Children's Literature and its Translation. An Overview* (1998), chama esse fenômeno de *double addressing* (endereçamento duplo), ao explicitar que a literatura infantojuvenil possui, ao mesmo tempo, dois receptores e duas mensagens que podem ser decodificadas: as crianças conseguem ler a história num nível de entretenimento e educação, enquanto os leitores adultos conseguem ler nas entrelinhas e observar as mensagens mais complexas.

Com isso observamos que TLASC trata não somente de mitologia, Natal e infância, como também fala de temas mais profundos, como política e sociologia (no início, o grande Lorde de Lerdo desconfiava do bom homem e não o deixava entregar seus presentes a sua filha; o Barão Marrão ameaçava pendurá-lo num gancho caso chegasse perto do castelo; havia diferenças de tratamento entre as crianças pobres e as crianças ricas que Noel logo percebeu, apesar de todas elas necessitarem de amor e carinho); religião e misticismo (Qual seria a origem dos espíritos da floresta? Quem criou o Manto da Imortalidade, que fica secretamente guardado nas cúpulas do Céu?); a vida humana; a questão do bem e do mal; dentre outros assuntos que poderiam ser mais bem refletidos numa análise literária mais aprofundada. Nossa proposta, apesar de focada na parte da linguística e cultural da tradução do romance, não pôde descartar todas essas inferências e características literárias.

Os gêneros literários dos quais este romance se compõe também nos dizem muito sobre a narrativa e o modo como trataremos a tradução. Primeiramente, ele faz parte da literatura infantojuvenil (também abreviado como LIJ), ou seja, foi escrito originalmente para a apreciação de crianças e jovens. Diríamos ainda que, devido a sua linguagem mais infantil e a seu caráter lúdico, o público-alvo real desse tipo de história seriam crianças, da idade entre 6 a 12 anos, majoritariamente. A classificação do que pode ser chamado de literatura infantojuvenil nunca foi fácil, desde os primeiros estudos sobre o que podemos, aqui, denominar um gênero. Existem diversas definições, e cada teórico levanta um argumento específico para delimitar esta área da Literatura, como podemos perceber pelo artigo de Fernandes e Queiroga, *Translations of Children's Literature* (2016): segundo Oittinen, a literatura infantil é aquela que pode ser lida pela ou para a criança; de acordo com John Rowe Townsend, a LIJ é definida pelos agentes de produção, como os editores; já para Townsend, Knowles e Malmkjaer, a LIJ abrangeria qualquer narrativa escrita ou publicada para crianças, incluindo publicações para jovens. Receio que todas essas definições soem apenas parcialmente corretas, se não um pouco pretensiosas. Nem tudo o que é lido para crianças pode ser adequado a elas, ou mesmo apreciado por elas. Os agentes de produção (como os editores, autores e tradutores) não conseguem determinar o que é ou não LIJ. A literatura não é algo objetivo como as ciências exatas, para poder ser encaixada milimetricamente num sistema ou noutro. Podemos até mesmo citar exemplos controversos e irregulares dentro da LIJ: *Robinson Crusóe* e *As Viagens de Gulliver* foram originalmente escritas como literatura adulta, mas logo ganharam a admiração das crianças; por sua vez, *Alice no País das Maravilhas* é originalmente um livro infantil que recebeu as graças do público adulto devido aos seus diversos significados ocultos.

De todas as definições de LIJ com que nos deparamos em nossas pesquisas, aquela que nos pareceu mais acertada é a de Cecília Meireles. Observe o trecho abaixo retirado do mesmo artigo previamente citado:

While Townshend (1980) shows how the editor is responsible for this classification, Meireles presents a different perspective based on the child as the responsible for such classification. For her children are responsible for the delimitation of what is considered children's literature according to their own preferences. For Meireles, the right thing would be to classify as children's literature what children read with utility and pleasure, though a notably subjective and difficult definition to follow. (FERNANDES E QUEIROGA, 2016, p. 67) ¹

¹ Tradução nossa: Enquanto Townshend (1980) apresenta o editor como o responsável por essa classificação, Meireles apresenta uma perspectiva diferente baseada na criança como sendo responsável por tal classificação.

Segundo Cecília Meireles, a LIJ ainda é classificada dentro de um padrão *a priori*, quando na verdade deveria ser classificada como *a posteriori*, ou seja, após a apreciação de seu público-alvo: as crianças e jovens. É simplesmente esse público-alvo, portanto, que delimitará o que é e o que não é literatura infantojuvenil, o que eles leem por utilidade ou prazer, e não a obra em si ou os agentes de produção. Porém, além disso, há ainda outro fator que dificulta a classificação das obras infantojuvenis: a complicação cada vez crescente de discernir o que é infantil (voltado para as crianças, geralmente até a pré-adolescência) e o que é juvenil (ou para jovens adultos). No Brasil, temos uma grande dificuldade de discernir esses dois públicos devido à não-uniformidade das terminologias (ora falamos literatura infantil para englobar tudo, ora literatura infantojuvenil). O mesmo problema parece não ser muito frequente nos países de língua inglesa, que distinguem entre *Children's Literature* e *Young Adult Literature*. Porém esse problema está intrinsecamente atrelado a outro, de cunho sociocultural, que é a constante mudança do conceito de infância ao longo do tempo: a criança que era quase tratada como uma miniatura de adulto na época dos irmãos Grimm, não era a mesma do começo do século XX, quando Baum escreveu seus livros; e também não é a mesma da recente era Harry Potter. Esse é outro fator importante para levarmos em consideração, pois durante a tradução percebemos diversos elementos culturais e diacrônicos em TLASC. Podemos citar também, como outro elemento que dificulta a caracterização e delimitação da LIJ, a relação assimétrica entre a produção e a recepção dessa literatura, pois o que ocorre é que, na esmagadora maioria das vezes, temos um adulto na produção ou como elemento intermediador (autores, tradutores, editores, bibliotecários, pais, professores), sobrando para a criança apenas a recepção.

O segundo gênero literário em que podemos enquadrar este romance infantil é no gênero da literatura maravilhosa. Ela difere daquilo que o estudioso do assunto Tzvetan Todorov chama de literatura fantástica em seu livro *Introdução à literatura fantástica* (1975) e que causa bastante confusão entre os leitores. Para ele, a literatura fantástica é aquela em que se encontra uma incerteza, uma hesitação frente a algum fenômeno aparentemente inexplicável dentro da trama. Por exemplo, numa cena em que aparece um vulto misterioso andando por um castelo à noite: enquanto aquela aparição se mostrar duvidosa, se se trata realmente de algo de outro mundo, ou se é apenas alguém tentando pregar uma peça no

Para ela, as crianças são incumbidas de delimitar o que é considerado literatura infantojuvenil segundo suas próprias preferências. Para Meireles, a coisa certa a se fazer seria classificar como literatura infantojuvenil aquilo que as crianças leem enquanto utilidade e lazer, embora seja uma definição especialmente subjetiva e difícil de seguir. (Fernandes e Queiroga, p. 67)

protagonista, essa literatura pode ser denominada como literatura fantástica. O fantástico seria, segundo ele, “a hesitação experimentada por um ser que só conhece as leis naturais, em face de um acontecimento aparentemente sobrenatural” (TODOROV, 1975, p. 31). Já a literatura maravilhosa, por sua vez, qualifica-se como uma literatura em que o leitor sabe que está em uma espécie de “mundo paralelo” ou em um “mundo de fantasia”, em que as regras do nosso mundo real não se aplicam ou que podem ser quebradas. As histórias maravilhosas são aquelas que, mesmo situadas fora do mundo da realidade, narram acontecimentos ocorridos num passado indeterminado, por meio de um narrador onisciente. Todorov fornece ainda outros detalhes sobre o maravilhoso:

No caso do maravilhoso, os elementos sobrenaturais não provocam qualquer reação particular nem nas personagens, nem no leitor implícito. Não é uma atitude para com os acontecimentos narrados que caracteriza o maravilhoso, mas a própria natureza desses acontecimentos. (...) Relaciona-se geralmente o gênero maravilhoso ao conto de fadas; de fato, o conto de fadas não é senão uma das variedades do maravilhoso e os acontecimentos sobrenaturais aí não provocam qualquer surpresa (...). (TODOROV, 1975, p. 60)

The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus, portanto, é um romance maravilhoso, uma vez que nem o leitor e nem os personagens se questionam sobre os acontecimentos sobrenaturais e as diferentes leis da natureza que acontecem durante a trama. Todos aceitam que naquele mundo encontramos florestas encantadas, seres que não existem no nosso mundo real (fadas, ninfas, espíritos, demônios), animais falantes etc. Não pretendemos aqui analisar o que é real ou não, mas aceitar aquele mundo de fantasia, suspender a descrença. Por esses motivos, o TLASC também está inserido dentro do contexto dos contos de fadas, bastante interligado às narrativas maravilhosas. Novaes Coelho em *O conto de fadas: símbolos, mitos, arquétipos* (2003, p. 79) sugere que os contos de fadas são aquelas narrativas que, além de pertencerem ao universo do maravilhoso, giram também “em torno de uma problemática espiritual/ética/existencial, ligada à realização do indivíduo, basicamente por intermédio do Amor”. Essa definição resume todo o romance, pois ele narra a história de amor de Papai Noel pelas crianças do mundo e, ao mesmo tempo, mostra-nos a sua jornada espiritual/existencial.

Por fim, é conveniente, ainda, mencionarmos a literatura natalina, que também há tempos anda de mãos dadas com a literatura infantojuvenil. Não é uma literatura muito extensa e também não encontramos nenhuma pesquisa acadêmica que trate do assunto. Podemos dizer, contudo, que, juntamente com nosso romance de análise, há ainda outros que se destacaram igualmente como natalinos e infantojuvenis como *Um Cântico de Natal*, de

Charles Dickens, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, de Dr. Seuss e o poema *The Night Before Christmas* de Clement Clarke Moore (que também retrata São Nicolau). Todos eles apresentam o Natal sob um ponto de vista bastante emotivo, otimista e que enaltece o espírito do homem. TLASC é uma história bem mais famosa em seu país de origem, os Estados Unidos, do que no Brasil, talvez por apresentar elementos natalinos mais comuns entre os habitantes do hemisfério norte, como o cenário com a neve, e também elementos de seu folclore local, como Jack Frost.

Podemos dizer, portanto, que TLASC se enquadra, ao mesmo tempo, dentro de três grandes gêneros literários: o da literatura infantojuvenil, o das narrativas maravilhosas/contos de fadas e o da literatura natalina. Com isso em mente, acreditamos ter levantado as questões necessárias para nos portarmos frente ao nosso público-alvo, primordialmente as crianças, e de como abordar a tradução infantojuvenil.

CAPÍTULO 3- A TRADUÇÃO INFANTOJUVENIL

A tradução de literatura infantojuvenil, bem como a própria LIJ, sempre foi alvo de menosprezo no meio acadêmico, na crítica e nos Estudos da Tradução. Seu estudo sistemático é relativamente recente. Segundo o compêndio *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader* (2006), foi somente em 1976, com o terceiro simpósio da *International Research Society for Children's Literature* (IRSCL) que a tradução nessa área começou a representar uma fonte de interesse acadêmico. Desde então, a área vem crescendo cada vez mais e não mostra sinais de enfraquecimento. Hoje em dia, a grande maioria dos livros infantojuvenis que estão nas prateleiras das livrarias é produto de tradução. Podemos mencionar obras como *Harry Potter*, *O Hobbit*, *O Pequeno Príncipe*, *Crônicas de Nárnia*, dentre outras, que atraem milhões de pequenos e jovens leitores.

Todavia, apesar de toda essa influência e poder mercadológico, a tradução da LIJ apresenta sérios problemas a serem enfrentados, dos mais diversos níveis. Por ser considerada uma literatura menor e, por conseguinte, de menor importância, verifica-se uma notável falta de interesse em pesquisas na área e em investimentos financeiros. Os críticos, editores e até mesmo a Academia reforçam este círculo vicioso ao equivocadamente acusarem tal literatura de ser mais simples, apenas direcionada a um público que ainda não atingiu seu pleno

potencial intelectual, ou por constar de obras com menos complexidade estilística e estética. Soma-se a isso a questão da relação assimétrica entre produtor e receptor da obra, já discutida no capítulo anterior. Esse tipo de literatura é sempre mediado pelo autor, tradutor, editor, bibliotecário, pais, dentre outros, que escolhem e cerceiam aquilo que pode ser mais bem adequado para um público específico, no caso crianças e jovens. Essa assimetria mantém-se, de certa forma, sempre ligada à questão da censura e do que Thomson-Wohlgemuth em sua dissertação de mestrado (1998) chama de *purification* (purificação). Ela nem sempre é necessária, mas ocorre para formar versões mais “limpas” dos textos, daquilo que os adultos consideram que seria inapropriado para o público-alvo, quer por questões ideológicas, pedagógicas ou morais. Por meio de acréscimos, omissões ou substituições de partes do texto original, os tradutores (ou editores) censuram assuntos que soam mais delicados, como tabus, questões religiosas ou políticas, racismo, nudez etc. Devemos lembrar, como profissionais que lidam com essa faixa etária, que não se deve subestimar a capacidade de leitura e de compreensão de crianças e jovens. Eles conseguem lidar muito bem com os mais diversos temas, desde questões sexuais, até mesmo com o sofrimento e com a morte, se bem tratadas e bem conduzidas numa narrativa e, conseqüentemente, na tradução.

É preciso que abordemos também a questão da Teoria dos Polissistemas, proposta pelo teórico dos Estudos da Tradução Itamar Even-Zohar. Em seu artigo *The Position of Translated Literature Within the Literary Polysystem* (2000) ele explica que as literaturas (e suas respectivas traduções e culturas nas quais estão inseridas), formam um conjunto de normas e influências que estão sempre interconectadas. Acontece que há literaturas e culturas que se mantêm sempre no topo, como literaturas de posição central (como a norte-americana, a inglesa e de alguns países europeus), enquanto outras se encontram nos sistemas periféricos (é o caso de países cujas línguas não se enquadram dentro das posições hegemônicas, como é o Brasil), num eterno jogo de poder. Esse é um dos grandes motivos pelo qual a LIJ no Brasil é dominada majoritariamente por traduções, e não por obras de autores brasileiros. E é também por causa desse fenômeno que muitas de nossas obras nacionais e traduções apresentam todo um sistema americanizado e europeizado, com uma grande influência da língua inglesa. Na mesma dissertação supramencionada, Shavit desenvolveu a teoria de Even-Zohar para se adequar à LIJ, e afirma que a literatura infantojuvenil sempre se ajusta bastante (com adaptações, simplificações, didatismos) por também fazer parte dessa marginalidade dentro do polissistema. Sobre o mesmo estudo, Gabriele Thomson-Wohlgemuth (1998) relata que, com os funcionalistas, o propósito (*Skopos*) passou a ter maior importância, bem como as

expectativas e necessidades dos leitores. A Teoria do Escopo (cf. *Skopostheorie*), conceito dos Estudos da Tradução proposto por Hans Josef Vermeer, proporciona mais liberdade aos tradutores ao prescrever que a tradução leva em conta a função dos textos de partida e de chegada, além da importância dos leitores e da respectiva cultura em que está inserido.

Além de todos esses problemas “burocráticos” e acadêmicos envolvendo a tradução da literatura infantojuvenil, temos ainda que levar em consideração a grande complexidade do ato tradutório em si deste gênero literário. Cada estudioso do assunto apresenta diferentes tópicos que podem ser considerados questões centrais ao traduzir LIJ. Para O’Sullivan, em *Translation of Children’s Literature* (2016), os tópicos centrais seriam: os níveis de domesticação e de estrangeirização, a imagem da criança e da infância (da perspectiva do tradutor e da sociedade do texto de chegada), a comunicação assimétrica, os aspectos semióticos e de legibilidade, e outros elementos (como jogos de palavras, rimas, o nonsense etc.). Segundo Tabbert, ainda no mesmo artigo previamente citado, os problemas realmente importantes a serem enfrentados pelo profissional de tradução seriam: o registro, as variações dialetais, a estilística, a combinação de textos verbais e não verbais, as referências culturais e o uso lúdico das palavras. Para Azenha Júnior (2005), as características indispensáveis a se notarem são: a escolha de um léxico acessível, o emprego de estruturas sintáticas condizentes, os textos e ilustrações, os jogos e brincadeiras de linguagem, a noção da infância, e o domínio dos recursos expressivos. Podemos dizer que todos têm razão naquilo que dizem. Todos esses elementos (além de outros) são questões muito importantes e devem ser levados em consideração no ato tradutório.

A LIJ se vale não apenas daquilo que é pedagógico e moral, mas desperta interesse no público através do prazer, do lúdico. As brincadeiras com a linguagem ajudam no despertar do lúdico (metáforas, cores, desenhos, quebra da linearidade), apoiados até mesmo por marcadores culturais (topônimos, sátira, humor...). A língua está sempre conectada com a cultura na qual o texto de chegada está inserido. E todo esse aspecto de ludicidade auxilia a criança e o adolescente a focarem no texto, a reterem o máximo de informações possíveis e ainda servem como uma reflexão sobre o mundo adulto. Isso também exige do tradutor um alto grau de recriação, de inventividade. Em TLASC as brincadeiras com as palavras percorrem todo o texto: desde a recriação de nomes (como neologismos de topônimos e antropônimos), nas rimas, na repetição de palavras e frases, no humor, e até mesmo na criação de nota de rodapé. A parte poética, como nos exemplos em que Papai Noel canta, também

pode ser incluída dentre dos jogos lúdicos (com suas rimas, jogos verbais, trocadilhos, versos etc.). A linguagem poética é sempre desafiadora na LIJ e se vincula profundamente com a cultura e com uma adequação entre as palavras e o ritmo.

Quanto à questão dos níveis de domesticação (aproximação da tradução à língua de chegada) e estrangeirização (aproximação à língua de origem) nos textos de LIJ, todos os artigos e estudiosos são unânimes ao dizerem que a linha mestra da tradução do gênero seria o equilíbrio entre a simplificação e a complexidade das estruturas, nunca menosprezando os leitores. Este tópico está intimamente relacionado à questão da adaptação e o tradutor deve saber delinear até que ponto o texto pode ser adaptado e recriado, ao mesmo tempo atentando-se para a questão da fidelidade do texto. Para Bastin, em *Translation of Children's Literature* (2016), uma adaptação pode ser definida como um conjunto de intervenções tradutórias que resulta num texto reconhecido mais como uma representação. Procedimentos como omissão, paráfrase, adição, compõem desvios ou adaptações do original. O tradutor também precisa considerar as referências e as adaptações de espaço e de tempo. O apagamento e substituição de termos, entretanto, podem “apagar a cor local” do texto, elemento que é bastante apreciado pelas crianças. Thomson-Wohlgemuth (1998) apresenta exemplos de procedimentos que podem ser utilizados pelo tradutor, a fim de tornar o texto mais adaptado às necessidades do público-alvo, como são os casos de: simplificação (a história é simplificada para a criança poder compreender melhor o contexto; daí retiram-se do texto palavras, sentenças, passagens inteiras mais complexas, ambiguidade, ironia); localização (todo o texto é transferido de significado para um novo país, língua ou época, que seja mais familiar para o leitor; há autores, como Klinberg, que advoga a não localização, pois a criança deve depreender a importância de novas culturas); embelezamento (de maneira não muito correta na maioria das vezes, e devido a uma concepção errônea da noção de criança, os tradutores muitas vezes adicionam frases ou partes inteiras, ou mudam a atmosfera da cena para o texto se tornar mais “adequado” para os leitores); e modernização (ocorre quando o tradutor ajusta a linguagem e o ambiente do texto para mais próximo da época do leitor, para melhor compreensão). O tradutor, porém, está sempre andando sobre uma linha tênue entre não deixar o texto muito estrangeirizado (e de difícil compreensão) ou apagar itens que compõem a atmosfera própria do texto e da língua fonte, numa tentativa de adaptar e domesticar o texto. Em *Translation of Children's Literature*, Jobe pondera sobre essa dificuldade:

(...) the excessive proximity to the source text (literalness) may result in a lack of vitality or make it difficult to read (lack of readability), an adapted version, on the

other hand, can remove from the text elements judged as inseparable and fruit of the author's intention. (LINCOLN E QUEIROGA, 2016, p. 69)²

Dessa maneira, o ato tradutório envolve tomar decisões quanto à criança, aos grupos intermediários, aos ajustes necessários e aos princípios teóricos da tradução. No já citado *Children's Literature and its Translation. An Overview* (1998), O'Sullivan afirma que o tradutor precisa fazer certas indagações para compreender até que nível se adapta ou não um texto, como, por exemplo: até que grau de estrangeirismo o jovem leitor consegue compreender? Quais as peculiaridades devem ser adaptadas? Quantas explicações uma criança precisa para se conectar ao texto?

Já Shavit acredita que a liberdade na tradução da LIJ segue os seguintes princípios: o quanto ajustamos o texto para torná-lo mais apropriado e útil para as crianças e o quanto conciliamos o texto quanto à caracterização e nível de linguagem das crianças. Katharina Reiss vê a necessidade de adaptação ligando-se a três características do leitor infantil: conhecimento de mundo limitado, experiência de mundo limitada, e competência linguística não totalmente desenvolvida. Para ela, há sempre duas escolas de tradução de LIJ: uma que defende que as alterações impedem a criança de conhecer a cultura alheia, enquanto outra diz que as adaptações são necessárias para a compreensão e cognição.

As questões culturais compõem outra grande complexidade ao se traduzir literatura infantojuvenil. Sabe-se que qualquer texto literário está intimamente ligado a seu contexto cultural, e é função do tradutor solucionar possíveis empecilhos referentes a este tópico. O tradutor, portanto, pode adaptar o texto quanto às relações sociais, históricas, ideológicas, próprias das características da língua e da cultura de chegada. Ele deve ficar atento à ancoragem cultural do texto, com suas questões específicas, como hábitos, crenças, costumes e valores. Em *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus*, as especificidades culturais podem ser claramente observadas, desde a geografia e clima onde se passa a história (Papai Noel mora num vale que neva na época do Natal, ao contrário do Natal tropical do Brasil; a vegetação é típica de regiões de clima subtropical), personagens típicos do folclore norte-americano ou estrangeiro (como ninfas, *goblins*, Jack Frost) e também de hábitos bem particulares (as crianças penduram suas meias na lareira, as medidas são calculadas em milhas, há palácios e castelos nas vilas em que Noel visita), dentre tantas outras. Mesmo os nomes próprios e

² (...) a proximidade excessiva ao texto-fonte (literalidade) pode resultar em uma falta de vitalidade ou fazer com que o texto seja difícil de ler (falta de legibilidade), uma versão mais adaptada, por outro lado, pode remover do texto elementos considerados como inseparáveis ou fruto da intenção do autor. (Lincoln e Queiroga, p. 69)

neologismos de Baum são marcadamente culturais e carregam significados específicos. Os diacronismos históricos também podem ser incluídos dentro dos elementos culturais a serem adaptados. É preciso, entretanto, tomar cuidado com palavras muito na moda, pois o texto pode ficar muito datado, e também com palavras que estão em desuso ou são muito arcaicas, pois podem soar bastante eruditas e, possivelmente, tornarem-se incompreensíveis para o público leitor.

É preciso mencionar ainda a questão da estilística e as questões linguísticas e gramaticais. Geralmente os textos de LIJ possuem um estilo dinâmico e construções mais simples, para se adequarem ao nível cognitivo das crianças e jovens. Isso tudo está intrinsecamente ligado aos fenômenos da *readability* (legibilidade) – que diz que o texto não se relaciona apenas a questões gramaticais e de gênero, mas também a uma carga emocional; e também da *speakability* - a capacidade do texto de ser lido em voz alta e possuir ritmo, entonação e pontuação corretos.

Podemos dizer que a literatura infantojuvenil pode ser tão complexa quanto a literatura dita “adulta”, pois sua complexidade exige do tradutor o uso de um alto grau de criatividade, empatia e trabalho com a linguagem lúdica. A LIJ possui um caráter multidisciplinar e pode-se dizer que hoje em dia não se aplica essa ideia equivocada de que certa literatura é fácil, incapaz, menor. As crianças enxergam o mundo de um modo diferente, sem preconceitos, cheio de fantasia, e isso serve sempre como parâmetro para a escrita e tradução de LIJ. Um livro adequado para crianças seria aquele interessante para elas, que elas compreendem, não livros alienantes, extremamente pedagógicos, ou que causam tédio. Na mesma dissertação de mestrado já citada, Matsuno resume de forma brilhante aquilo que se esperar de uma tradução de literatura infantojuvenil: “*Young children cannot read books objectively. They get involved. In books, children can experience various adventures which they can’t experience in their actual daily life*”³ (1998, p. 15).

A LIJ (e, portanto, sua tradução) corresponde, parcial ou integralmente, ao mundo imaginativo da criança. A tradução sempre honra o papel comunicativo. Mesmo apesar de toda a complexidade, muito ainda deve ser feito e estudado. Há pouco material sobre o assunto. No próximo capítulo, adentraremos o cerne de nossa análise: a discussão sobre a

³ Tradução nossa: “Crianças mais novas não conseguem ler objetivamente os livros. Elas se envolvem. Nos livros, as crianças podem experimentar diversas aventuras que não encontram na vida real”.

tradução de nomes, principalmente relacionados a questões linguísticas e culturais, e a todo esse intrincado meio da tradução de literatura infantojuvenil.

CAPÍTULO 4- ANÁLISE DE NOMES: TRADUÇÃO COMENTADA

A tradução de nomes é um tópico bastante delicado e que se relaciona tanto com o aspecto linguístico quanto com o aspecto cultural de qualquer narrativa. Muitas pessoas consideram que a tradução de nomes não deve ocorrer, principalmente a de nomes próprios, ou ocorrer o mínimo possível, tanto para não desfigurar a obra original quanto pelo alto grau de complexidade imposto por tal tarefa. Porém, o que essas pessoas não consideram é que um nome sempre traz consigo uma carga semântica, cultural e simbólica que caracteriza e define o personagem, local ou a coisa que está sendo nomeado. Os nomes agem como signos de associações históricas, sociais, religiosas, de gênero, mitológicas, intertextuais, de nacionalidade, de classe, dentre tantas outras associações. Para Thomson-Wohlgemuth, há uma divergência de opiniões entre os teóricos, alguns apoiando a adaptação, outros refutando a tradução de nomes em prol da estrangeiridade. Caberia, pois, à subjetividade e à análise final do tradutor decidir.

Os nomes inseridos em uma narrativa ajudam a definir e caracterizar, criando efeitos cômicos, significativos, culturais, adaptativos, de exotismo ou estranheza. Nos livros infantis e infantojuvenis eles podem ainda ser explorados não apenas com um caráter semântico-linguístico e cultural, mas também com um aspecto lúdico, fantástico, poético, dentre outros. Esses efeitos transmitem ao leitor uma mensagem, seja no nível textual, ou num nível mais profundo de significado. Com apenas um nome o autor é capaz de descrever certa característica particular relevante da narrativa ou de algum personagem, por exemplo. Pelo nome podemos saber se o personagem será retratado como traiçoeiro, bondoso, maligno, misterioso, dentre outros. Podemos citar, como alguns exemplos ilustrativos, o caso de *Os Miseráveis* de Victor Hugo: o bispo Bienvenu e Cosette. Apesar de não traduzidos para o português, os dois possuem fortes significados originários da língua francesa. Enquanto o primeiro quer dizer “bem-vindo” e significa compaixão e misericórdia para o protagonista Jean Valjean, o segundo personagem vem de “chosette”, que significa “pequena coisa”, dando a entender sobre a fragilidade da menina.

Tomamos como referência principal para a tradução de nomes o artigo *Translation of Names in Children's Fantasy Literature: Bringing the Young Reader into Play* (2006), de Lincoln Fernandes. Nele o autor nos apresenta algumas definições de nomes, como manipulá-los para um maior benefício da obra e do leitor e alguns procedimentos técnicos que podemos utilizar. Primeiramente, devemos saber qual é a definição de nome que o autor considera. Segundo ele:

(...) names are thus defined as the word(s) by which an individual referent is identified, that is to say, the word(s) whose main function is/are to identify, for instance, an individual person, animal, place, or thing (see Nord 2003: 183). In this sense, names possess a certain deictic quality in that they point directly to a single, concrete referent; however, sometimes they may also acquire a semantic load which takes them “beyond the singular mode of signification” (Hermans 1988: 12). Therefore, names are viewed as mono-referential – they refer to a single entity – but not as mono-functional, since they may function as carriers, for instance, of semantic, semiotic, and/or sound symbolic meanings in literary works.⁴ (FERNANDES, 2016, p. 45)

Para o autor ainda, os nomes podem expressar três tipos específicos de significados, sejam eles: o semântico, o semiótico e o sonoro/simbólico. O primeiro sentido possui um grande papel na literatura infantojuvenil, uma vez que ativa uma carga de significado que descreve certa característica importante na narrativa ou cria efeitos cômicos. Eles são usados como importantes significantes que podem conter pistas de como será o destino de certas personagens. Lincoln cita o nome do protagonista que dá nome à série *Artemis Fowl*, de Eoin Colfer. Apesar de não traduzido, o sobrenome *Fowl* possui a mesma sonoridade da palavra inglesa “*foul*”, que significa “sórdido” ou “alguém possivelmente desleal”. Já no sentido semiótico os nomes funcionam mais como signos de diversas maneiras, sejam eles de associações históricas, de classe, de gênero, religioso ou mitológico. Esse parece ser o tipo de nome mais complicados de se traduzir, pois ele é considerado o que o autor chama de *culture-specific item* (item culturalmente específico). É o caso, por exemplo, de nomes bíblicos como Gabriel ou David, ou ainda nomes históricos como Ptolomeu ou Mozart. Por fim, ainda temos os nomes relacionados ao som e ao simbólico. O uso específico de sons pode estar relacionado a uma relação sistemática a categorias de significados simbólicos. É o caso das

⁴ Tradução nossa: (...) nomes são definidos como sendo a(s) palavra(s) pela(s) qual(is) um referente individual é identificado, isto é, trata-se da(s) palavra(s) cuja principal função é identificar, por exemplo, um indivíduo, animal, lugar ou coisa (ver Nord 2003: 183). Nesse sentido, os nomes possuem certa qualidade dêitica, pois apontam diretamente para um único e concreto referente; entretanto, às vezes, eles também podem adquirir uma carga semântica que os leva “para além do modo singular de significação” (Hermans 1988: 12). Portanto, os nomes são vistos como mono-referenciais – eles se referem a uma única entidade - mas não mono-funcionais, uma vez que podem funcionar como portadores, por exemplo, de significados semânticos, semióticos e/ou simbólicos e sonoros em obras literárias. (Lincoln, p. 45)

onomatopeias ou de grupos de sons (fonestemas). Na série Harry Potter, de J. K. Rowling, um dos fundadores da escola mágica de Hogwarts chama-se Slytherin. Esse grupo de sons, /sl/, está bastante relacionada a palavras da língua inglesa que denotam desagrado, como “slug” (lesma), “slime” (lodo), “slithery” (escorregadio), que mostra aos leitores o caráter não muito bem quisto dos membros de tal casa. É preciso ter em mente que alguns nomes e suas sequências fonológicas não usuais podem se tornar uma grande barreira linguística para os jovens leitores. Justamente por esta razão a “domesticação” dos nomes na LIJ é ainda mais importante.

A esta questão da barreira fonológica ligam-se diretamente outras questões igualmente importantes a que o tradutor precisa estar atento: o conhecimento prévio do leitor, o contexto, a *memorability* (memorabilidade) – os nomes devem ser memoráveis, a *readability* (legibilidade) – os nomes devem ser legíveis, a *adequacy* (adequação) – quando o tradutor segue mais a língua de partida e a *acceptability* (aceitabilidade) – quando o tradutor adere mais às normas da língua de chegada. Em suma, o tradutor considera diversos fatores, dos linguísticos aos culturais, passando por toda a questão ideológica e simbólica, para poder se ver apto a traduzir (ou não) um nome.

Tendo em mente todas essas características e critérios da tradução de nomes, prosseguiremos com a análise dos nomes em *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus*. Por se tratar de uma obra infantojuvenil, como vimos anteriormente no capítulo 2, há grande quantidade de nomes, sejam neologismos do próprio autor (como *Weekum*, *awgwas* e *Ethop*) ou nomes já conhecidos (*goblin*, *fairy* e *Santa Claus*, por exemplo). São apresentados como termos de conhecimento geral (*Santa Claus*), para expressar humor (*the Laughing Valley of Hohaho*), afeto ou pequenez (*Mayrie*), exotismo (*Ethop*), espanto (*goblin-goozzle*) ou até mesmo certo grau de religiosidade (*Mantle of Immortality*). Cada um deles deve ser tratado como uma unidade de sentido específica e importante para a narrativa como um todo. Seguiremos com a análise dos nomes levando em consideração a classificação dos dez procedimentos técnicos apresentados por Lincoln Fernandes (2016) no artigo acima citado, a saber: *rendition* (tradução simples), *copy* (cópia) *transcription* (transcrição), *substitution* (substituição), *recreation* (recriação), *deletion* (eliminação), *addition* (adição), *transposition* (transposição), *phonological replacement* (substituição fonológica) e *conventionality* (convenção), explicados nos subcapítulos subsequentes nos exemplos em que ocorrem.

4.1- A TRADUÇÃO DE NOMES COMUNS

O importante a se notar é que a tradução de nomes não se restringe apenas à tradução de nomes próprios, mas também de nomes comuns. Enquanto os primeiros se distinguem por pertencerem a indivíduos ou a um grupo de indivíduos, os últimos não são aplicáveis a indivíduos distinguíveis de uma classe ou grupo. Em TLASC podemos citar, por exemplo, todos os nomes comuns das várias espécies de seres mágicos e folclóricos que se apresentam no romance, além das variadas espécies de plantas. A grande maioria desses seres é aquela já conhecida no âmbito da mitologia ou do esoterismo, principalmente oriundo da América do Norte ou Europa, e são relativamente fáceis de traduzir, como, por exemplo, *fairy* – fada, *gnome* – gnomo, *nymph* – ninfa, *sprite* – espírito, *Sleep Fays* – fadas do sono, *Wind Demons* – Demônios do vento, *Light Elves* – Elfos da luz. Segundo a classificação de Fernandes, podemos enquadrá-los no procedimento mais comum, a *rendition* (tradução simples), que ocorre quando o nome é transparente e há quase uma ligação 1:1 dos significantes (e dos significados)⁵. Podemos verificar que o autor utilizou vários desses nomes de criaturas imaginárias provenientes do folclore por se tratar de seres a que as crianças americanas já estão habituadas e também por conferir um tom lúdico à obra. Na sociedade brasileira, os seres folclóricos mais conhecidos pelas crianças são outros: Saci, Cuca, Curupira, Caipora. Entretanto, é importante mencionar que esses seres mágicos estão justamente na intersecção de seres igualmente conhecidos pelas crianças brasileiras. Mesmo não sendo de origem brasileira, muito provavelmente as crianças e jovens já leram livros ou assistiram filmes que retratam tais criaturas, não sendo, portanto, um grande obstáculo tradutório.

As maiores dificuldades se apresentaram quando o autor se utilizava de neologismos, palavras totalmente inventadas para completar o seu rol de criaturas mágicas. É o caso de *knook* e *ryls*, por exemplo. Nada no nome indica qualquer referência a algum ser mágico ou mitológico. Talvez a sonoridade das palavras. Enquanto os primeiros são criaturinhas meio feias e encurvadas, as segundas são espécies de elfos ou fadinhas. Mesmo assim, não há qualquer referente ou indicação de palavra parecida em nenhum dicionário de língua inglesa. Por se tratar de uma obra de cunho infantil, e por essas palavras serem potenciais elementos que prejudicariam a legibilidade, resolvemos adaptá-las. Quanto à primeira classe de seres, traduzimos apenas abrisleirando a sua escrita, baseada nos mesmos sons. Dessa forma, *knook*

⁵ Dicotomia proposta pelo linguista Ferdinand de Saussure, no qual o signo linguístico é composto pelo significante (a imagem acústica, a forma) e pelo significado (o conceito, o sentido).

foi transformado em “nuque”, mais palatável à língua portuguesa brasileira. Este procedimento chama-se *transcription* (transcrição), que é quando o nome é adaptado de acordo com a morfologia, a fonologia e a gramática da língua-alvo. O mesmo se aplica para os malvados *awgwas*, seres vilanescos que são inimigos dos bons habitantes da floresta e que guerreiam contra eles no capítulo 7, *A grande batalha entre o bem e o mal*, na unidade da *Idade Adulta*. Não há nenhuma palavra semelhante em inglês e nada que possa auxiliar em nossa tradução diretamente, pois se trata de outra invenção do autor. Optamos, por falta de qualquer referente, por transcrever os sons, adaptando-o para a escrita do português em “óguas”.

Já a outra espécie de seres, os *ryls*, preferimos traduzir por “elfos”. Mesmo não sendo um significante imediato (elf), estes seres possuem as características aproximadas de tal grupo de criaturas. O narrador os descreve como aparentados das ninfas e seres de bom coração. As ninfas, originalmente espíritos femininos da mitologia grega, eram retratadas como espécies de fadas ou mulheres graciosas, bastante ligadas à natureza. Já os elfos, provenientes da mitologia nórdica, eram seres igualmente feéricos, belos e mágicos. A correspondência pareceu ser o suficiente para manter o significado, apesar dos significantes não serem análogos. Nesse caso, foi utilizada a *substitution* (substituição), que ocorre quando há uma troca por nomes não relacionados (*ryl* e elfo não são relacionados no nível do significante, entretanto o são no nível do significado). A mesma classificação se aplica para *gadgol*. Trata-se do nome de outra espécie de seres, dessa vez malignos, que possuíam o péssimo hábito de se chocarem contra as árvores, ferindo-as e envenenando-as. Preferimos, também por substituição, traduzir por “diabinho”, pois mantém um significado bastante semelhante, condizente com as características desse grupo de seres e, ao mesmo tempo, soam divertido para as crianças brasileiras, já acostumadas ao termo, principalmente para se referir a alguém ruim ou a alguma criança indisciplinada, por exemplo.

Contudo, uma das passagens mais complicadas na tradução aconteceu não com um nome comum de seres mágicos, mas com a tradução de nomes comuns de objetos. Observe este parágrafo do capítulo 8 – *A primeira viagem com as renas*, da *Idade Adulta*:

The dollies were, he had found, the most delightful of all playthings for babies and little girls, and often those who could not say "dolly" would call for a "doll" in their sweet baby talk. So Claus resolved to make many dolls, of all sizes, and to dress them in bright-colored clothing. The older boys—and even some of the girls—loved the images of animals, so he still made cats and elephants and horses. And many of the little fellows had musical natures, and longed for drums and cymbals and whistles and horns. So he made a number of toy drums, with tiny sticks to beat them

with; and he made whistles from the willow trees, and horns from the bog-reeds, and cymbals from bits of beaten metal.⁶ (BAUM, 1902, p. 93)

O maior obstáculo tradutório deste excerto não foi apenas uma questão cultural, mas também uma questão linguística. No parágrafo acima, a palavra “dolly” (e seu plural “dollies”) foi apocopada para “doll” pelas crianças que não conseguiam dizer a palavra inteira, marcando ainda uma característica própria das crianças: o aprendizado de novas palavras e a sua competência linguística ainda não totalmente desenvolvida. O difícil foi trazer esse mesmo sentido semântico-linguístico para o português. A palavra “dolly” é derivada de “doll”, utilizada costumeiramente pelas crianças, conforme informa o *Cambridge Dictionary*. O sufixo -y, bem como sua variante -ie, é na maioria das vezes, empregado para formar o diminutivo ou expressar um tom de informalidade ou até mesmo afeição, segundo o *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*. Baseando-nos nesse raciocínio, traduzimos, portanto, “dolly” por “bonequinha⁷” (uma forma diminutiva e, ao mesmo tempo, afetuosa) e “doll” por “boneca”. Não recupera exatamente o mesmo sentido do inglês, uma vez que as crianças brasileiras não empregam usualmente o diminutivo “bonequinha” mais do que a própria palavra “boneca”, mas conserva o jogo de palavras. Ambas as palavras foram traduzidas segundo a *rendition*. A tradução dos nomes de instrumentos musicais, por outro lado, não apresentou grandes dificuldades, e utilizamos do mesmo procedimento. Preferimos manter os nomes mais comuns e conhecidos dos objetos por não suscitarem nenhuma dificuldade tradutória, ou jogo de palavras, nem polissemia. Até mesmo *cymbals*, que foi traduzido para “címbalos”, possui um referente direto e, apesar de não muito conhecido pelas crianças atuais, é melhor que seu outro correlato, que seria “pratos”, e que se confunde com outro referente, o prato de comida.

O outro grupo de substantivos comuns que aparece na narrativa é o das diversas plantas que constituem a abundante flora da floresta e do Vale. O grande impedimento foi conseguir encontrar o significante exato em português para a vegetação, predominantemente típica dos climas temperados e da América do Norte. No parágrafo acima notamos dois deles,

⁶ As bonequinhas eram, como ele tinha descoberto, o maior dos encantos para os bebês e as meninas, e muitas das vezes aqueles que não conseguiam falar “bonequinha” pediam apenas por uma “boneca” com sua doce fala. Então Noel resolveu fazer muitas bonecas, de todos os tamanhos, e vesti-las com roupas bem coloridas. Os meninos mais velhos – e até mesmo algumas das meninas – amavam as figuras de animais, então ele ainda fazia gatos, elefantes e cavalos. Muitos dos pequeninos tinham um dom musical, e adoravam tambores, címbalos, apitos e cornetas. Pensando nisso, ele fez uma série de tambores de brinquedo com pequenas varetas para batucá-los, apitos de salgueiros, cornetas de juncos e címbalos de pedaços de metal batido.

⁷ Não há, ainda, uma tradução definitiva para o termo.

que integram os brinquedos das crianças: os apitos eram feitos de salgueiros e as cornetas de juncos.

A primeira das plantas, o salgueiro, é facilmente referenciável em português, principalmente por ser uma planta que também cresce em terras brasileiras e bastante conhecida. As palavras *willow trees* puderam ser traduzidas pelo procedimento simples da *rendition* e são facilmente encontradas em dicionários, da mesma forma como outros integrantes da flora, como *daisy* (margarida) *cowlisp* (prímula), *rose* (rosa), *tulip* (tulipa) e *pansy* (amor-perfeito).

A segunda planta mencionada no parágrafo, *bog-reed*, traduzido como junco, ofereceu mais dificuldades, pois se trata de um termo sem referentes em português. O *bog-reed* é uma planta alta, proveniente de regiões alagadiças e que se assemelha a grammas altas. Seu nome científico é *Calamagrostis stricta*. Por não haver correspondência no Brasil, resolvemos traduzir por uma planta bastante semelhante em aparência, substituindo-a por junco, apesar de ela pertencer a outro gênero, o *Juncus*.

A maioria das plantas, porém, apesar de possuírem correspondentes, não possuem um referente transparente. São casos que podem ser vistos quando os elfos falam sobre os pigmentos que eles utilizam para tingir suas plantas e que também poderiam servir para pintar os brinquedos de Noel. Observe o trecho:

"They will need a bit of yellow, also," remarked the Yellow Ryl; "I must fetch some of the yellow that I use to color my buttercups and goldenrods with." (...)

"I see you have a blue ribbon around Blinkie's neck," added the Blue Ryl. "I will get some of the color that I use to paint the bluebells and forget-me-nots with, and then you can carve a wooden ribbon on the toy cat's neck and paint it blue."⁸ (BAUM, 1902, p. 72)

Encontrar os correspondentes dessas quatro plantas citadas acima foi uma tarefa árdua. Contudo, depois de algumas pesquisas na internet e principalmente utilizando a ferramenta *Google Images* para comparar as imagens das plantas em português e em inglês, encontramos os significantes. Descobrimos, dessa forma, que todas elas possuem flores com as cores

⁸ - Eles precisarão de um pouco de amarelo também – observou o Ryl Amarelo. -Vou buscar um pouco do amarelo que uso para colorir os meus botões-de-ouro e os minhas varas-de-ouro. (...)

- Vejo que Piscadela tem uma fita azul no pescoço - acrescentou o Ryl Azul.

-Vou trazer um pouco da cor que eu uso para pintar os jacintos-dos-campos e os miosótis, para que você possa esculpir um laço de madeira no pescoço do gato de brinquedo e pintá-lo de azul.

características de cada elfo. A *buttercup* (botão-de-ouro) e a *goldenrod* (vara-de-ouro) são amarelas. As próprias palavras já nos remetem ao tom amarelo (*gold*, ouro). Enquanto *bluebell* (jacinto-dos-campos) e *forget-me-not* (miosótis) são azuis ou roxo-azuladas. A mesma dificuldade em encontrar referentes em português aconteceu também com outras plantas, como *thimothy-grass* (erva-dos-prados) e *bramblebush* (amoreira-silvestre). Nesses casos levamos em conta o procedimento técnico da *rendition*, mesmo se tratando de plantas exóticas, desconhecidas, e pertencentes àquela região específica da América do Norte e Estados Unidos. A busca pelos significantes exatos de tais plantas possibilitou manter um ar de exotismo da narrativa (caracterizando-a em uma região diferente da nossa). Nesse contexto, uma grande domesticação, com plantas nativas de regiões tropicais ou do Brasil (como bananeiras, palmeiras, bromélias ou sibipirunas) desconfiguraria toda a construção imagética e espacial da narrativa.

Um terceiro grupo de plantas a se traduzir e, talvez o mais complicado, foi o das plantas inventadas pelo próprio autor, no âmbito das palavras, neologismos. Por não haver significante nenhum parecido em português tivemos que, de fato, adaptar os termos. Mais frequentemente, optamos por uma tradução literal. Nesse caso empregamos vários dos procedimentos técnicos, conforme melhor se encaixasse semântica e linguisticamente. Uma observação importante a ser feita é que empregamos mais de um procedimento ao mesmo tempo na maioria das palavras. Utilizamos uma mistura entre *rendition* e *copy* (a simples cópia de termos) em *casa plant* (planta-casa) e *goa tree* (árvore-goá); *rendition* e *transcription* em *grawle plant* (planta-gróli), utilizando, portanto, da pura transcrição de sons; *rendition* com *transposition* (a mudança de classes de palavras) em *soft-eyed* (olho-macio), uma vez que o sufixo *-eyed*, utilizado para caracterizar de maneira adjetiva, transformou-se no substantivo “olho”, em português; e até mesmo pode-se dizer que ocorreu a mistura de três procedimentos quando se traduziu *marbon plant* para “planta-mármore”. Utilizamos *rendition*, *transcription*, e *phonological replacement*. Este último combina o procedimento de adaptar o sistema morfológico e fonológico para a língua-alvo. Verifica-se, portanto, que os procedimentos descritos por Fernandes, apesar de bastante acurados e pertinentes em muitos casos, não abrangem completamente os procedimentos de que o tradutor necessita para se fazer valer em sua prática. Eles constituem artifícios que auxiliam o tradutor e não oferecem descrições exatas de como se portar em relação à tradução de todos os termos. Por fim, temos a palavra *bell-udder*, que escolhemos traduzir por “teta-de-sino”, utilizando a *recreation* ao tentar recriar um efeito parecido, mesmo que o termo tenha sido traduzido literalmente, já que

este significante não existe na língua portuguesa. Esse foi, provavelmente, o mais difícil termo neológico traduzido, pois se assemelha bastante com *cow's udder* (teta-de-vaca), uma planta que destoa completamente da planta de que se fala no original, pois, em vez de fornecer néctar, ela é bastante venenosa e, ainda por cima, nativa da América do Sul.

4.2- A TRADUÇÃO DE NOMES PRÓPRIOS

Passemos agora à tradução dos nomes próprios, aqueles que, segundo Fernandes, como anteriormente mencionado, designam seres ou eventos individuais. O estudo desse tipo de nomes é chamado de *Onomastics* (Onomástica), que é geralmente subdividido entre o estudo de nomes de pessoas (*Anthroponomastics* – Antroponomástica ou estudo dos antropônimos) e de nomes de lugares (*Toponomastics* – Toponomástica ou estudo dos topônimos). Seguindo a mesma lista de procedimentos técnicos, começemos pela *rendition*. Trata-se de nomes transparentes, coincidentes e semanticamente motivados. É o caso, por exemplo, dos nomes de procedimentos e formalidades que acontecem dentro da floresta encantada - como *Feast of Nuts* (Banquete das Castanhas), *Law of the Forest* (Lei da Floresta), *Royal Circle of the Queen* (Círculo Real da Rainha), *Golden Chalice* (Cálice Dourado) -; do *Mantle of Immortality* (Manto da Imortalidade), concedido a Noel ao final da história; do nome do local onde Papai Noel mora (*Laughing Valley* - Vale Risonho) e do título de Ak, *Master Woodsman* (Mestre Lenhador). Quanto a esses dois últimos, há observações importantes a serem feitas. O *Laughing Valley* é claramente uma brincadeira elaborada por Baum, que condiz com a natureza de Papai Noel, que também é um personagem alegre e risonho. O espaço, portanto, condiz com o temperamento de nosso protagonista e o adjetivo “risonho” carrega em si uma sonoridade agradável. Já *Master Woodsman* causou um pouco mais de dúvida. Por ele ser um grande espírito que protege as florestas, e pela palavra “*woodsman*” apresentar mais de um significado possível, foi preciso mais atenção para escolher entre “lenhador”, “homem da floresta” ou “ermitão”. Contudo, uma pequena passagem nos dá a resposta: “*The Master Woodsman stood first, bearing a gleaming ax that shone like burnished silver*”⁹.

⁹ O Mestre Lenhador encabeçava, com um machado reluzente que brilhava feito prata polida.

O segundo procedimento utilizado, *copy* (cópia), abrange um grupo de tamanho aparentemente semelhante. São nomes que, devido à semelhança ortográfica com o sistema da língua portuguesa, e por serem de fácil leitura (*readability*) por parte dos jovens leitores, não precisaram de nenhum ajuste. É o caso dos nomes dos personagens da rainha Zurline, da ninfa Necile, de nomes de crianças como Ned e Sara, de outro grande espírito do mundo (Bo), e de Jack Frost. Este último é um daqueles casos ímpares, pois ele foi copiado justamente por também se ajustar ao procedimento da *conventionality* (convenção). Jack Frost é um espírito que personifica o gelo e o inverno, e já é convencionalmente aceito dessa forma em português, mesmo se apresentando na língua inglesa. Até mesmo em filmes e livros, Jack Frost já é conhecido por esse nome, e não por algum tipo de tradução ou *phonological replacement*, como em “João do Gelo”, por exemplo. Talvez soasse estranho justamente por Jack Frost pertencer a um imaginário que não é nosso, uma vez que não possuímos no Brasil um inverno rigoroso com neve e gelo. Esse personagem é claramente importado da mitologia da América do Norte e da Europa.

No terceiro procedimento temos a *transcription* (transcrição), utilizada quando se quer adaptar ou transliterar um nome a fim de aproximá-lo das letras/língua/sistema gramatical da língua-alvo. O autor chama os nomes “transcritos” de *unmotivated* (não-motivados), já que eles não carregam nenhuma expressão semântica específica. Esses nomes tiveram que ser adaptados em algum nível da língua, fosse fonológico, morfológico ou gramatical, a fim de preservar a legibilidade. No caso de TLASC, podemos relatar os exemplos de quatro nomes, todos eles inventados pelo autor, e que soariam totalmente estranhos aos ouvidos dos leitores brasileiros se não fosse traduzidos. Utilizamos, portanto, esse procedimento, abrisseirando para o nosso sistema fonológico e de escrita. São eles a grande floresta encantada de *Burzee* (Burzi), a leoa *Shiegra* (Xiegra), e os topônimos *Ethop* (Itópe), *Patalonia* (Patalônia) e *Tatary* (Tatária). Nos últimos três nomes acrescentamos acentos gráficos, concordando com a tonicidade própria do português. A palavra *Patalonia* é bem parecida com outro topônimo bem conhecido, a Patagônia, uma região geográfica na Argentina. Todos eles são neologismos que foram utilizados para soarem “exóticos”, até mesmo para os ouvidos dos leitores estadunidenses.

A *substitution* (substituição) encontra-se em poucos casos. Trata-se de uma substituição por um nome não relacionado semântica ou formalmente. Em nossa tradução, ela se ocorreu com os nomes dos *ryls* (elfos), que já foi explicitado acima na tradução de nomes

comuns. Tivemos uma mistura de *substitution* e *rendition* com os nomes próprios de *Yellow Ryl* (Elfo Amarelo), *Blue Ryl* (Elfo Azul), *Red Ryl* (Elfo Vermelho), o que se repetiu com a tradução de nomes de elfos de outras cores. Ocorreu também com dois antropônimos. O menino que Papai Noel resgata da tempestade de neve chama-se *Weekum*, um nome sem qualquer referente em português e difícil de ser pronunciado. Optamos por substituí-lo por “William”¹⁰, um nome que se assemelha ortograficamente, porém mais conhecido no Brasil. Outro nome de criança, *Dick*, foi substituído por “Rique”, também mais comum. Num site da internet chamado *Behind the name*, que explica a origem dos nomes, observa-se que *Dick* é, também, um dos diminutivos do nome “Richard”.

O quinto procedimento aplicado foi o da *recreation* (recriação), que acontece quando o tradutor recria um nome inventado na língua original, tentando reproduzir na língua-alvo um efeito similar. Este foi um dos grupos de nomes que mais requereu ousadia, criatividade e poder de observação. Ocorreu tanto com topônimo quanto com antropônimo. Quanto ao primeiro tipo, temos *Phunnyland*, que foi traduzido por “Engraçalândia”, uma vez que o nome se compõe da palavra “phunny” (que vem de *funny* = engraçado). Trata-se de outro nome que se utiliza do recurso da ludicidade, brincando com a composição de palavras, recurso bastante característico da LIJ. Já com antropônimos aparecem mais exemplos. É o caso dos ajudantes de Papai Noel, *Kilter* (Pirado) e *Wisk* (Tremelique), e de sua gatinha de estimação *Blinkie* (Piscadela). *Kilter*, segundo o *McMillan Dictionary* é um adjetivo que denota “alguém ou alguma coisa um pouco estranha ou maluca”, “algo que não está certo de alguma maneira”. Por isso, nossa opção por “Pirado”. Já a tradução de *Wisk* foi um pouco mais complicada e feita por meio de associações. O nome *Wisk* assemelha-se com o verbo *whisk*, que, segundo o *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, designa “um movimento rápido ou chicoteado”. Dessa forma, utilizando o nome como uma forma de caracterização do personagem, resolvemos nomeá-lo de “Tremelique”. O terceiro nome, da gata *Blinkie*, foi bem mais transparente. O verbo *blink* significa “pisar”, enquanto o sufixo *-ie*, como já explicado anteriormente, é um sufixo que confere significado de diminutivo ou de afeição. Assim, optamos por “Piscadela”, que é tanto um diminutivo de “pisar”, quanto uma palavra mais afetuosa e que soa divertida. Repare que o autor sempre parece estar envolvido numa brincadeira ou jogo que envolve o nome e o seu caráter lúdico e engraçado para as crianças, ressaltando o grande valor que os nomes possuem dentro das narrativas infantojuvenis. Os nomes não só especificam, definem ou delimitam,

¹⁰ Não há, ainda, uma tradução definitiva para o termo.

eles caracterizam os personagens e fazem com que eles sejam facilmente reconhecíveis por meio deles.

Dois nomes, porém, cuja recriação se mostrou mais difícil foram os nomes dos grandes homens abastados que viviam nas áreas ricas das cidades em que Papai Noel costumava entregar seus presentes. Eles, por medo ou ignorância, sempre ameaçavam Noel quando ele se aproximava para tentar levar algum presente ou conforto para seus filhos. Vejamos o trecho abaixo, retirado do capítulo 2 – *Noel faz seu primeiro brinquedo*, na *Idade Adulta*:

Only at the beautiful palace of the Lord of Lerd and at the frowning castle of the Baron Braun was Claus refused admittance. There were children at both places; but the servants at the palace shut the door in the young stranger's face, and the fierce Baron threatened to hang him from an iron hook on the castle walls.¹¹ (BAUM, 1902, p. 66)

Além da questão social e de diferença de classes que poderia ser mais bem aprofundada em outro trabalho, temos ainda a questão de como traduzir nomes tão peculiares. O primeiro, *Lord of Lerd*, além de apresentar um título como antropônimo, ainda é constituído de um topônimo (*Lerd*). Apesar de haver uma cidade no Irã com o mesmo nome, ela não é muito conhecida, e creio que o autor neste caso quis inventar mais uma vez, criando um lugar fictício para manter a atmosfera mítica própria dos contos de fadas. Resolvemos, dessa forma, traduzi-lo por “Lorde de Lerdo”. Utilizamos, para isso, tanto o procedimento da *rendition* na primeira parte do nome (*Lord* mantém uma rápida ligação com a palavra “lorde”) e, na segunda, a *recreation* propriamente dita. Para manter essa mesma relação de um lugar fictício, também sonoridade e grafia parecidas, além do sentido humorístico, resolvemos traduzir *Lerd* por “Lerdo”. Segundo o *Dicionário Houaiss da língua portuguesa*, o adjetivo “lerdo” pode denotar tanto uma “pessoa que se move vagarosamente”, quanto um “sujeito estúpido, grosseiro”, o que se encaixa perfeitamente no comportamento do personagem. Já *Baron Braun* foi traduzido para “Barão Marrão”, tradução para a qual utilizamos os mesmos procedimentos da *rendition* (*Baron* = barão) e da *recreation*. Esta última merece alguns comentários. Desenvolvemos um jogo de linguagem semelhante ao de Baum, para chegarmos a esse nome em português. Primeiramente a palavra *Braun* soa bastante similar ao nome da cor marrom (*brown*). Outra característica é que o título e o nome do barão formam uma

¹¹ Somente no belo palácio do Lorde de Lerdo e no castelo carrancudo do Barão Marrão que Noel não conseguiu entrar. Havia crianças em ambos os palácios, mas os serviçais fechavam a porta na cara do jovem estranho, e o feroz barão ameaçou pendurá-lo num gancho de ferro nas paredes do castelo.

aliteração. Trata-se de um recurso estilístico que consiste na repetição de sons consonantais, no caso a letra “b” no início das palavras. Esse jogo aliterativo se perdeu na tradução, porém houve um ganho com o uso da rima (o “-ão” ao final das palavras) que ajuda a manter a brincadeira. Além disso, a palavra “marrão” se assemelha à palavra “marrento” que, segundo o dicionário citado acima, é uma característica própria do “sujeito que é cheio de ousadia, atrevimento”. Esse nome também se encaixa muito bem com a personalidade irritadiça do barão.

Passemos agora para o procedimento técnico da *transposition* (transposição), que acontece quando a palavra traduzida pertence à classe de palavras distinta da palavra no original. A transposição ocorreu em dois dos nomes próprios, todos eles designando o nome de uma festividade da floresta: *Budding Day* (Dia do Brotamento) e *Ceremony of Leaf Shedding* (Cerimônia do Desfolhamento). São nomes de fácil tradução, mas exigiram essa mudança de classe de palavras, pois, de outro modo, a tradução soaria estranha. *Budding* (adjetivo) transformou-se em um substantivo em português (brotamento), e *leaf*, que está adjetivando o substantivo *shedding*, incorporou-se ao substantivo “desfolhamento”.

O *phonological replacement* (substituição fonológica), outro procedimento, trata-se da troca de um nome da língua-fonte para um que se assemelhe fonologicamente a ele na língua-alvo. O nome traduzido precisa existir na língua de chegada e, de alguma forma, evocar o som da língua de partida. Citaremos alguns dos antropônimos. Um dos grandes espíritos do mundo chama-se *Kern*, o Mestre Lavrador. Traduzimos por “Kevin”, um nome muito mais conhecido no Brasil e de pronúncia mais fácil. Outra tradução de nome próprio foi a de *Mayrie*, que se transformou em “Mariazinha”. O nome se assemelha muito à *Mary* (Maria) e o diminutivo, como já explicado anteriormente, foi conferido pelo sufixo *-ie*, ao final da palavra. Já com *Bessie Blithesome*, a filha do Lorde de Lerdo, podemos dizer que ocorreu tanto *phonological replacement* (Bete soa parecido com *Bessie*, e é conhecido no português brasileiro) quanto *rendition*, com o adjetivo “*blithesome*” (alegre, jovial). Outro caso interessante ocorreu com um dos nomes do local de moradia de Papai Noel: *Laughing Valley of Hohaho*. Este último nome, *Hohaho*, faz lembrar rapidamente a característica gargalhada de Papai Noel. Porém, no Brasil, sua risada é mais reconhecida (visual e fonologicamente) como “Ho Ho Ho”. Apenas juntamos as sílabas.

Finalmente, chegamos ao último procedimento utilizado, a *conventionality* (convenção). Ocorre quando já se possui na língua-alvo um nome convencionalmente aceito,

principalmente com figuras históricas e locais geográficos bastante conhecidos, como em *Archimedes* = Arquimedes, ou *London* = Londres. Esses nomes convencionados são chamados de *exonyms* (exônimos), que é como um nome é conhecido em outra língua de maneira distinta. É neste procedimento que se encaixa o nome de nosso protagonista, *Santa Claus* (Papai Noel). No Brasil, esse nome já está enraizado historicamente e seria prejudicial para o sentido traduzi-lo por outro. O procedimento é também utilizado com o nome de um dos ajudantes de Noel, *Peter* (Pedro), e com uma das crianças que recebem presente, *Margot* (Margô).

Há ainda duas passagens interessantes que merecem destaque. Uma delas é uma nota de rodapé contida no capítulo 4 – *Noel*, ainda na parte da Juventude. A nota aparece quando Necilel, a ninfa, e a Rainha Zurline conversam sobre qual deveria ser o nome apropriado para o bebezinho encontrado na floresta. Vejamos:

Some people have spelled this name Nicklaus and others Nicolas, which is the reason that Santa Claus is still known in some lands as St. Nicolas. But, of course, Neclaus is his right name, and Claus the nickname given him by his adopted mother, the fair nymph Necile.¹² (BAUM, 1902, p. 52)

Após o diálogo, as duas concordam que ele deveria se chamar Necilel, que significa, segunda a Rainha, “o pequeno de Necile”. Parece haver, portanto, alguma língua falada pelas ninfas ou habitantes da floresta, implícita ao leitor. A nota de rodapé tenta transmitir um ar de veracidade, unindo os dados da ficção com os fatos reais. O trecho explica por que *Neclaus* (Necilel), originário da língua das ninfas, acabou por se tornar, em nossa língua, *Claus* (Noel) ou *Nicolas* (Nicolau). Para isso, o autor se vale da história etimológica do nome. Analisando esse processo, com a mesma perspectiva de Lincoln Fernandes, precisamos nos atentar para cada nome em específico. *Santa Claus* (Papai Noel) e *Claus* (Noel) possuem um caráter convencionado já explicitado nos parágrafos anteriores. O mesmo acontece com o nome *Nicolas*, variante do nome inglês *Nicholas*. Apesar de existir o mesmo nome “Nicolas” no Brasil, o que nos motivou a traduzi-lo por “Nicolau” foi sua associação com *St. Nicholas* (São Nicolau). Sabe-se que a lenda de Papai Noel foi baseada na vida deste santo, nascido na Turquia, no século III, e conhecido por distribuir presentes às crianças, apesar de ser bastante difícil distinguir onde acaba a lenda e começa a realidade histórica. Já a palavra *Nicklaus*, que seria uma variação do próprio Nicolas, realmente existe em inglês, mas como não há nenhuma

¹² Algumas pessoas escreveram escreviam seu nome como Nicklaus e outras como Nicolau, o que é a razão pela qual Papai Noel ainda é conhecido em alguns lugares como São Nicolau. Mas, é claro, Necilel é seu nome correto e Noel é o apelido dado pela sua mãe adotiva, a linda ninfa Necile.

correspondência com algum nome em português, preferimos optar pela *copy* (cópia), até porque não é um nome tão diferente e difícil de pronunciar. Com o nome “verdadeiro” de Papai Noel, *Neclaus*, resolvemos traduzi-lo por “Necilel” utilizando do procedimento da *recreation* (recriação) por alguns motivos. Buscamos recriar o nome com vistas a reproduzir os mesmos efeitos da língua-fonte. Baseando-nos no diálogo da narrativa que diz que Necilel significa “o pequeno de Necile”, resolvemos, dessa forma, incorporar o nome da ninfa e do final da palavra “Noel” dentro do vocábulo. É um nome de fácil pronúncia, apesar de inventado, e não soa estranho como quanto tivesse sido traduzido com o *rendition*, como *Neclaus* – “Nenoel”.

A segunda passagem, também cheia de novos nomes, aparece no capítulo 11 – *As primeiras meias foram penduradas nas chaminés*, na parte da *Idade Adulta*. Somos apresentados a todas as dez renas que serviriam de ajudantes de Papai Noel, puxando seu trenó na noite de Natal. Observe o excerto:

Then, at twilight, the ten reindeer appeared and Flossie introduced them all to Claus. They were Racer and Pacer, Reckless and Speckless, Fearless and Peerless, and Ready and Steady, who, with Glossie and Flossie, made up the ten who have traversed the world these hundreds of years with their generous master.¹³ (BAUM, 1902, p. 109)

As renas são apresentadas de duas em duas, e cada nome rima com o outro. Dessa forma, o ponto chave de orientação foi tentar traduzir ou adaptar esses nomes mantendo o mesmo efeito da rima. E, para isso, tivemos que sacrificar um pouco o sentido, apesar de termos conseguido uma tradução que remete ao original em todos os nomes das dez renas. Alguns deles têm o sentido mais transparente e puderam ser traduzidos pela *rendition*. Podemos mencionar, neste método, os nomes de *Racer* (Corredor), *Pacer* (Marchador) e *Fearless* (Corajoso). Até mesmo *Steady* (Sensato), pôde ser enquadrado nessa categoria, apesar de seu significado mais usual ser “estável, firme”, segundo o *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. Outros entraram na categoria da *substitution* (substituição), pois são nomes que não se relacionam nas duas línguas formalmente, apesar de manterem ainda uma relação semântica mais distante. São os casos de *Ready* (Imediato), que na verdade significa “pronto”, “preparado”; *Peerless* (Formoso), que quer dizer “inigualável”, “sem-par”; e *Reckless* (Afoito), que na verdade é “imprudente”, “inconsequente”. Como foi nossa opção a rima em

¹³ Então, ao crepúsculo, as dez renas apareceram e Sedoso as apresentou a Noel. Elas eram Corredor e Marchador, Afoito e Pernoito, Corajoso e Formoso, Imediato e Sensato, que, juntamente com Brilhoso e Sedoso, formavam as dez renas que cruzam o mundo há centenas de anos com seu generoso mestre.

detrimento do sentido (original), a substituição se fez necessária nesses casos. O mesmo aconteceu com o nome da rena “*Speckless*”, que significa literalmente “sem mancha” e que foi traduzido por “Pernoito”. Dessa vez, utilizamos o procedimento da *recreation*, pois a palavra “pernoito” não existe em português, sendo apenas baseada na palavra “pernoite”, que denota uma “estada”, a ação de “pernoitar”, mantendo a rima. Sobraram, dessa forma, apenas os nomes das duas renas principais, *Glossie* e *Flossie*, que foram traduzidos respectivamente por “Brilhoso” e “Sedoso”. Podemos dizer que a tradução desses nomes requereu tanto a *rendition*, devido à relação entre *gloss* – brilho e *floss* – um tipo de tecido como a seda; quanto a *recreation*, já que essas palavras não existem originalmente na língua inglesa. Preferimos substituir o sufixo *-ie*, que, como já explicado anteriormente possibilita uma ideia de diminutivo ou afeição, pelo sufixo *-oso*, que emprega a ideia de “extensão” ou “abundância”, a fim de manter a rima e usar um sufixo que fosse bastante empregado no português.

Houve dois procedimentos que não foram utilizadas em nenhum dos casos: a *deletion* (eliminação) e a *addition* (adição). A primeira delas trata-se da remoção completa de um nome, geralmente sem importância. A segunda, quando uma informação extra é acrescentada, tornando o nome mais compreensível. Acreditamos que esses dois procedimentos devam ser utilizados como último recurso na tradução, apenas quando houver algum caso muito delicado de intraduzibilidade, o que não ocorreu com nenhum dos nomes de *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus*. Todos os nomes puderam ser traduzidos, adaptados, recriados ou substituídos de alguma forma, de maneira criativa, e que pudesse agradar o máximo possível um potencial público-alvo de crianças e adolescentes, que desejariam não apenas ler o livro para se informar, mas também para seu entretenimento.

CONCLUSÃO

O romance *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus* nos ofereceu uma grande oportunidade de realizar uma análise linguística e cultural unindo duas áreas ainda não muito exploradas: a tradução de nomes (sejam eles comuns ou próprios) e a tradução de Literatura Infantojuvenil. Em primeira instância, a nossa experiência de traduzir integralmente um romance possibilitou-nos utilizar toda a gama de conhecimentos enciclopédicos e específicos

de nosso curso de Tradução da UFU. Passando pela pesquisa gramatical e de termos, diagramação e revisão, todo o processo foi um grande aprendizado.

Como já dissemos, tanto a literatura quanto a tradução de Literatura Infantojuvenil são ainda bastante menosprezadas social e academicamente. Com a tradução em si, pretendemos enriquecer esta literatura de alguma forma, uma vez que esta obra não havia sido ainda traduzida para o português brasileiro. Com a nossa análise de Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso, pretendemos apresentar um caso de estudo em que a tradução prática se combine com a análise de um tema específico desta literatura, no caso, a tradução de nomes.

Percebemos que essa tarefa não é de modo algum simples. O tradutor se vale de todo um arcabouço cultural e de conhecimento de mundo para poder trazer para o público infantojuvenil uma obra que o agrade, que informe, e que ao mesmo tempo não seja alienante e nem soe muito estrangeira. O profissional, entretanto, utiliza todos os seus recursos gramaticais e referenciais para poder manter na língua de chegada um efeito semelhante àquele ocorrido na língua de origem. Por meio de substituições, adaptações, associações, recriações, o tradutor é capaz de entregar ao seu público uma obra agradável e coerente.

No caso do romance analisado, por meio dos procedimentos técnicos listados por Lincoln Fernandes (2016), percebemos que emoldurar a tradução de certos termos em “caixas” específicas não é muito apropriado. A maior parte dos nomes pôde ser traduzida por meio dos procedimentos da *rendition* (tradução simples), *copy* (cópia), *transcription* (transcrição), *substitution* (substituição), *recreation* (recriação), *transposition* (transposição), *phonological replacement* (substituição fonológica) e *conventionality* (convenção). Alguns desses nomes não se enquadraram perfeitamente em apenas um deles e tivemos que usar mais de um procedimento, ou até mesmo outras associações para poder chegar ao nosso destino final: fazer com que as palavras não soem estranhas, que sejam compreensíveis e legíveis. Não utilizamos nem os procedimentos da *addition* (adição), nem o da *deletion* (eliminação), pois conseguimos adaptar ou recriar todos os nomes de maneira exitosa. Não esquecemos, contudo, que grande parte desses nomes caracteriza personagens, definem espaços, combinam-se de maneira intrincada com a narrativa e, principalmente, compõem um universo lúdico, humorístico e até mesmo nonsense, características essas que agradam sobremaneira o público infantil.

Esperamos, portanto, que nossa análise sirva de auxílio a futuros trabalhos que contemplem tanto a tradução de obras infantojuvenis quanto a tradução de nomes. Esses

assuntos são extensos e conseguem abarcar uma variedade de subtópicos. Da mesma forma, esperamos que a Literatura Infantojuvenil ganhe o devido apoio e atenção que merece no âmbito acadêmico.

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ANEXO

Anexo - THE LIFE AND ADVENTURE OF SANTA CLAUS, BY L. FRANK. BAUM

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YOUTH

1. Burzee

Have you heard of the great Forest of Burzee? Nurse used to sing of it when I was a child. She sang of the big tree-trunks, standing close together, with their roots intertwining below the earth and their branches intertwining above it; of their rough coating of bark and queer, gnarled limbs; of the bushy foliage that roofed the entire forest, save where the sunbeams found a path through which to touch the ground in little spots and to cast weird and curious shadows over the mosses, the lichens and the drifts of dried leaves.

The Forest of Burzee is mighty and grand and awesome to those who steal beneath its shade. Coming from the sunlit meadows into its mazes it seems at first gloomy, then pleasant, and afterward filled with never-ending delights.

For hundreds of years it has flourished in all its magnificence, the silence of its inclosure unbroken save by the chirp of busy chipmunks, the growl of wild beasts and the songs of birds.

Yet Burzee has its inhabitants—for all this. Nature peopled it in the beginning with Fairies, Knooks, Ryls and Nymphs. As long as the Forest stands it will be a home, a refuge and a playground to these sweet immortals, who revel undisturbed in its depths.

Civilization has never yet reached Burzee. Will it ever, I wonder?

2. The Child of the Forest

Once, so long ago our great-grandfathers could scarcely have heard it mentioned, there lived within the great Forest of Burzee a wood-nymph named Necile. She was closely related to the mighty Queen Zurline, and her home was beneath the shade of a widespreading oak. Once every year, on Budding Day, when the trees put forth their new buds, Necile held the Golden Chalice of Ak to the lips of the Queen, who drank therefrom to the prosperity of the Forest. So you see she was a nymph of some importance, and, moreover, it is said she was highly regarded because of her beauty and grace.

When she was created she could not have told; Queen Zurline could not have told; the great Ak himself could not have told. It was long ago when the world was new and nymphs were needed to guard the forests and to minister to the wants of the young trees. Then, on some day not remembered, Necile sprang into being; radiant, lovely, straight and slim as the sapling she was created to guard.

Her hair was the color that lines a chestnut-bur; her eyes were blue in the sunlight and purple in the shade; her cheeks bloomed with the faint pink that edges the clouds at sunset; her lips were full red, pouting and sweet. For costume she adopted oak-leaf green; all the wood-nymphs dress in that color and know no other so desirable. Her dainty feet were sandal-clad, while her head remained bare of covering other than her silken tresses.

Necile's duties were few and simple. She kept hurtful weeds from growing beneath her trees and sapping the earth-food required by her charges. She frightened away the Gadgols, who took evil delight in flying against the tree-trunks and wounding them so that they drooped and died from the poisonous contact. In dry seasons she carried water from the brooks and pools and moistened the roots of her thirsty dependents.

That was in the beginning. The weeds had now learned to avoid the forests where wood-nymphs dwelt; the loathsome Gadgols no longer dared come nigh; the trees had become old and sturdy and could bear the drought better than when fresh-sprouted. So Necile's duties were lessened, and time grew laggard, while succeeding years became more tiresome and uneventful than the nymph's joyous spirit loved.

Truly the forest-dwellers did not lack amusement. Each full moon they danced in the Royal Circle of the Queen. There were also the Feast of Nuts, the Jubilee of Autumn Tintings, the

solemn ceremony of Leaf Shedding and the revelry of Budding Day. But these periods of enjoyment were far apart, and left many weary hours between.

That a wood-nymph should grow discontented was not thought of by Necile's sisters. It came upon her only after many years of brooding. But when once she had settled in her mind that life was irksome she had no patience with her condition, and longed to do something of real interest and to pass her days in ways hitherto undreamed of by forest nymphs. The Law of the Forest alone restrained her from going forth in search of adventure.

While this mood lay heavy upon pretty Necile it chanced that the great Ak visited the Forest of Burzee and allowed the wood-nymphs as was their wont—to lie at his feet and listen to the words of wisdom that fell from his lips. Ak is the Master Woodsman of the world; he sees everything, and knows more than the sons of men.

That night he held the Queen's hand, for he loved the nymphs as a father loves his children; and Necile lay at his feet with many of her sisters and earnestly harkened as he spoke.

"We live so happily, my fair ones, in our forest glades," said Ak, stroking his grizzled beard thoughtfully, "that we know nothing of the sorrow and misery that fall to the lot of those poor mortals who inhabit the open spaces of the earth. They are not of our race, it is true, yet compassion well befits beings so fairly favored as ourselves. Often as I pass by the dwelling of some suffering mortal I am tempted to stop and banish the poor thing's misery. Yet suffering, in moderation, is the natural lot of mortals, and it is not our place to interfere with the laws of Nature."

"Nevertheless," said the fair Queen, nodding her golden head at the Master Woodsman, "it would not be a vain guess that Ak has often assisted these hapless mortals."

Ak smiled.

"Sometimes," he replied, "when they are very young—'children,' the mortals call them—I have stopped to rescue them from misery. The men and women I dare not interfere with; they must bear the burdens Nature has imposed upon them. But the helpless infants, the innocent children of men, have a right to be happy until they become full-grown and able to bear the trials of humanity. So I feel I am justified in assisting them. Not long ago—a year, maybe—I found four poor children huddled in a wooden hut, slowly freezing to death. Their parents had gone to a neighboring village for food, and had left a fire to warm their little ones while they

were absent. But a storm arose and drifted the snow in their path, so they were long on the road. Meantime the fire went out and the frost crept into the bones of the waiting children."

"Poor things!" murmured the Queen softly. "What did you do?"

"I called Nelko, bidding him fetch wood from my forests and breathe upon it until the fire blazed again and warmed the little room where the children lay. Then they ceased shivering and fell asleep until their parents came."

"I am glad you did thus," said the good Queen, beaming upon the Master; and Necile, who had eagerly listened to every word, echoed in a whisper: "I, too, am glad!"

"And this very night," continued Ak, "as I came to the edge of Burzee I heard a feeble cry, which I judged came from a human infant. I looked about me and found, close to the forest, a helpless babe, lying quite naked upon the grasses and wailing piteously. Not far away, screened by the forest, crouched Shiegra, the lioness, intent upon devouring the infant for her evening meal."

"And what did you do, Ak?" asked the Queen, breathlessly.

"Not much, being in a hurry to greet my nymphs. But I commanded Shiegra to lie close to the babe, and to give it her milk to quiet its hunger. And I told her to send word throughout the forest, to all beasts and reptiles, that the child should not be harmed."

"I am glad you did thus," said the good Queen again, in a tone of relief; but this time Necile did not echo her words, for the nymph, filled with a strange resolve, had suddenly stolen away from the group.

Swiftly her lithe form darted through the forest paths until she reached the edge of mighty Burzee, when she paused to gaze curiously about her. Never until now had she ventured so far, for the Law of the Forest had placed the nymphs in its inmost depths.

Necile knew she was breaking the Law, but the thought did not give pause to her dainty feet. She had decided to see with her own eyes this infant Ak had told of, for she had never yet beheld a child of manual the immortals are full-grown; there are no children among them. Peering through the trees Necile saw the child lying on the grass. But now it was sweetly sleeping, having been comforted by the milk drawn from Shiegra. It was not old enough to know what peril means; if it did not feel hunger it was content.

Softly the nymph stole to the side of the babe and knelt upon the sward, her long robe of rose leaf color spreading about her like a gossamer cloud. Her lovely countenance expressed curiosity and surprise, but, most of all, a tender, womanly pity. The babe was newborn, chubby and pink. It was entirely helpless. While the nymph gazed the infant opened its eyes, smiled upon her, and stretched out two dimpled arms. In another instant Necile had caught it to her breast and was hurrying with it through the forest paths.

3. The Adoption

The Master Woodsman suddenly rose, with knitted brows. "There is a strange presence in the Forest," he declared. Then the Queen and her nymphs turned and saw standing before them Necile, with the sleeping infant clasped tightly in her arms and a defiant look in her deep blue eyes.

And thus for a moment they remained, the nymphs filled with surprise and consternation, but the brow of the Master Woodsman gradually clearing as he gazed intently upon the beautiful immortal who had willfully broken the Law. Then the great Ak, to the wonder of all, laid his hand softly on Necile's flowing locks and kissed her on her fair forehead.

"For the first time within my knowledge," said he, gently, "a nymph has defied me and my laws; yet in my heart can I find no word of chiding. What is your desire, Necile?"

"Let me keep the child!" she answered, beginning to tremble and falling on her knees in supplication.

"Here, in the Forest of Burzee, where the human race has never yet penetrated?" questioned Ak.

"Here, in the Forest of Burzee," replied the nymph, boldly. "It is my home, and I am weary for lack of occupation. Let me care for the babe! See how weak and helpless it is. Surely it can not harm Burzee nor the Master Woodsman of the World!"

"But the Law, child, the Law!" cried Ak, sternly.

"The Law is made by the Master Woodsman," returned Necile; "if he bids me care for the babe he himself has saved from death, who in all the world dare oppose me? "Queen Zurline,

who had listened intently to this conversation, clapped her pretty hands gleefully at the nymph's answer.

"You are fairly trapped, O Ak!" she exclaimed, laughing. "Now, I pray you, give heed to Necile's petition."

The Woodsman, as was his habit when in thought, stroked his grizzled beard slowly. Then he said:

"She shall keep the babe, and I will give it my protection. But I warn you all that as this is the first time I have relaxed the Law, so shall it be the last time. Never more, to the end of the World, shall a mortal be adopted by an immortal. Otherwise would we abandon our happy existence for one of trouble and anxiety. Good night, my nymphs!"

Then Ak was gone from their midst, and Necile hurried away to her bower to rejoice over her new-found treasure.

4. Claus

Another day found Necile's bower the most popular place in the Forest. The nymphs clustered around her and the child that lay asleep in her lap, with expressions of curiosity and delight. Nor were they wanting in praises for the great Ak's kindness in allowing Necile to keep the babe and to care for it. Even the Queen came to peer into the innocent childish face and to hold a helpless, chubby fist in her own fair hand.

"What shall we call him, Necile?" she asked, smiling. "He must have a name, you know."

"Let him be called Claus," answered Necile, "for that means 'a little one.'"

"Rather let him be called Neclaus,"¹⁴ returned the Queen, "for that will mean 'Necile's little one.'"

¹⁴Some people have spelled this name Nicklaus and others Nicolas, which is the reason that Santa Claus is still known in some lands as St. Nicolas. But, of course, Neclaus is his right name, and Claus the nickname given him by his adopted mother, the fair nymph Necile.

The nymphs clapped their hands in delight, and Neclaus became the infant's name, although Necile loved best to call him Claus, and in afterdays many of her sisters followed her example.

Necile gathered the softest moss in all the forest for Claus to lie upon, and she made his bed in her own bower. Of food the infant had no lack. The nymphs searched the forest for bell-udders, which grow upon the goa-tree and when opened are found to be filled with sweet milk. And the soft-eyed does willingly gave a share of their milk to support the little stranger, while Shiegra, the lioness, often crept stealthily into Necile's bower and purred softly as she lay beside the babe and fed it.

So the little one flourished and grew big and sturdy day by day, while Necile taught him to speak and to walk and to play.

His thoughts and words were sweet and gentle, for the nymphs knew no evil and their hearts were pure and loving. He became the pet of the forest, for Ak's decree had forbidden beast or reptile to molest him, and he walked fearlessly wherever his will guided him.

Presently the news reached the other immortals that the nymphs of Burzee had adopted a human infant, and that the act had been sanctioned by the great AK. Therefore many of them came to visit the little stranger, looking upon him with much interest. First the Ryls, who are first cousins to the wood-nymphs, although so differently formed. For the Ryls are required to watch over the flowers and plants, as the nymphs watch over the forest trees. They search the wide world for the food required by the roots of the flowering plants, while the brilliant colors possessed by the full-blown flowers are due to the dyes placed in the soil by the Ryls, which are drawn through the little veins in the roots and the body of the plants, as they reach maturity. The Ryls are a busy people, for their flowers bloom and fade continually, but they are merry and light-hearted and are very popular with the other immortals.

Next came the Knooks, whose duty it is to watch over the beasts of the world, both gentle and wild. The Knooks have a hard time of it, since many of the beasts are ungovernable and rebel against restraint. But they know how to manage them, after all, and you will find that certain laws of the Knooks are obeyed by even the most ferocious animals. Their anxieties make the Knooks look old and worn and crooked, and their natures are a bit rough from associating with wild creatures continually; yet they are most useful to humanity and to the world in

general, as their laws are the only laws the forest beasts recognize except those of the Master Woodsman.

Then there were the Fairies, the guardians of mankind, who were much interested in the adoption of Claus because their own laws forbade them to become familiar with their human charges. There are instances on record where the Fairies have shown themselves to human beings, and have even conversed with them; but they are supposed to guard the lives of mankind unseen and unknown, and if they favor some people more than others it is because these have won such distinction fairly, as the Fairies are very just and impartial. But the idea of adopting a child of men had never occurred to them because it was in every way opposed to their laws; so their curiosity was intense to behold the little stranger adopted by Necile and her sister nymphs.

Claus looked upon the immortals who thronged around him with fearless eyes and smiling lips. He rode laughingly upon the shoulders of the merry Ryls; he mischievously pulled the gray beards of the low-browed Knooks; he rested his curly head confidently upon the dainty bosom of the Fairy Queen herself. And the Ryls loved the sound of his laughter; the Knooks loved his courage; the Fairies loved his innocence.

The boy made friends of them all, and learned to know their laws intimately. No forest flower was trampled beneath his feet, lest the friendly Ryls should be grieved. He never interfered with the beasts of the forest, lest his friends the Knooks should become angry. The Fairies he loved dearly, but, knowing nothing of mankind, he could not understand that he was the only one of his race admitted to friendly intercourse with them.

Indeed, Claus came to consider that he alone, of all the forest people, had no like nor fellow. To him the forest was the world. He had no idea that millions of toiling, striving human creatures existed.

And he was happy and content.

5. The Master Woodsman

Years pass swiftly in Burzee, for the nymphs have no need to regard time in any way. Even centuries make no change in the dainty creatures; ever and ever they remain the same, immortal and unchanging.

Claus, however, being mortal, grew to manhood day by day. Necile was disturbed, presently, to find him too big to lie in her lap, and he had a desire for other food than milk. His stout legs carried him far into Burzee's heart, where he gathered supplies of nuts and berries, as well as several sweet and wholesome roots, which suited his stomach better than the belludders. He sought Necile's bower less frequently, till finally it became his custom to return thither only to sleep.

The nymph, who had come to love him dearly, was puzzled to comprehend the changed nature of her charge, and unconsciously altered her own mode of life to conform to his whims. She followed him readily through the forest paths, as did many of her sister nymphs, explaining as they walked all the mysteries of the gigantic wood and the habits and nature of the living things which dwelt beneath its shade.

The language of the beasts became clear to little Claus; but he never could understand their sulky and morose tempers. Only the squirrels, the mice and the rabbits seemed to possess cheerful and merry natures; yet would the boy laugh when the panther growled, and stroke the bear's glossy coat while the creature snarled and bared its teeth menacingly. The growls and snarls were not for Claus, he well knew, so what did they matter?

He could sing the songs of the bees, recite the poetry of the wood-flowers and relate the history of every blinking owl in Burzee. He helped the Ryls to feed their plants and the Knooks to keep order among the animals. The little immortals regarded him as a privileged person, being especially protected by Queen Zurline and her nymphs and favored by the great Ak himself.

One day the Master Woodsman came back to the forest of Burzee. He had visited, in turn, all his forests throughout the world, and they were many and broad.

Not until he entered the glade where the Queen and her nymphs were assembled to greet him did Ak remember the child he had permitted Necile to adopt. Then he found, sitting familiarly

in the circle of lovely immortals, a broad-shouldered, stalwart youth, who, when erect, stood fully as high as the shoulder of the Master himself.

Ak paused, silent and frowning, to bend his piercing gaze upon Claus. The clear eyes met his own steadfastly, and the Woodsman gave a sigh of relief as he marked their placid depths and read the youth's brave and innocent heart. Nevertheless, as Ak sat beside the fair Queen, and the golden chalice, filled with rare nectar, passed from lip to lip, the Master Woodsman was strangely silent and reserved, and stroked his beard many times with a thoughtful motion.

With morning he called Claus aside, in kindly fashion, saying:

"Bid goodby, for a time, to Necile and her sisters; for you shall accompany me on my journey through the world."

The venture pleased Claus, who knew well the honor of being companion of the Master Woodsman of the world. But Necile wept for the first time in her life, and clung to the boy's neck as if she could not bear to let him go. The nymph who had mothered this sturdy youth was still as dainty, as charming and beautiful as when she had dared to face Ak with the babe clasped to her breast; nor was her love less great. AK beheld the two clinging together, seemingly as brother and sister to one another, and again he wore his thoughtful look.

6. Claus Discovers Humanity

Taking Claus to a small clearing in the forest, the Master said: "Place your hand upon my girdle and hold fast while we journey through the air; for now shall we encircle the world and look upon many of the haunts of those men from whom you are descended."

These words caused Claus to marvel, for until now he had thought himself the only one of his kind upon the earth; yet in silence he grasped firmly the girdle of the great Ak, his astonishment forbidding speech.

Then the vast forest of Burzee seemed to fall away from their feet, and the youth found himself passing swiftly through the air at a great height.

Ere long there were spires beneath them, while buildings of many shapes and colors met their downward view. It was a city of men, and Ak, pausing to descend, led Claus to its inclosure. Said the Master:

"So long as you hold fast to my girdle you will remain unseen by all mankind, though seeing clearly yourself. To release your grasp will be to separate yourself forever from me and your home in Burzee."

One of the first laws of the Forest is obedience, and Claus had no thought of disobeying the Master's wish. He clung fast to the girdle and remained invisible.

Thereafter with each moment passed in the city the youth's wonder grew. He, who had supposed himself created differently from all others, now found the earth swarming with creatures of his own kind.

"Indeed," said Ak, "the immortals are few; but the mortals are many."

Claus looked earnestly upon his fellows. There were sad faces, gay and reckless faces, pleasant faces, anxious faces and kindly faces, all mingled in puzzling disorder. Some worked at tedious tasks; some strutted in impudent conceit; some were thoughtful and grave while others seemed happy and content. Men of many natures were there, as everywhere, and Claus found much to please him and much to make him sad.

But especially he noted the children—first curiously, then eagerly, then lovingly. Ragged little ones rolled in the dust of the streets, playing with scraps and pebbles. Other children, gaily dressed, were propped upon cushions and fed with sugar-plums. Yet the children of the rich were not happier than those playing with the dust and pebbles, it seemed to Claus.

"Childhood is the time of man's greatest content," said Ak, following the youth's thoughts. "'Tis during these years of innocent pleasure that the little ones are most free from care."

"Tell me," said Claus, "why do not all these babies fare alike?"

"Because they are born in both cottage and palace," returned the Master. "The difference in the wealth of the parents determines the lot of the child. Some are carefully tended and clothed in silks and dainty linen; others are neglected and covered with rags."

"Yet all seem equally fair and sweet," said Claus, thoughtfully.

"While they are babes—yes;" agreed AK. "Their joy is in being alive, and they do not stop to think. In after years the doom of mankind overtakes them, and they find they must struggle and worry, work and fret, to gain the wealth that is so dear to the hearts of men. Such things are unknown in the Forest where you were reared." Claus was silent a moment. Then he asked:

"Why was I reared in the forest, among those who are not of my race?"

Then Ak, in gentle voice, told him the story of his babyhood: how he had been abandoned at the forest's edge and left a prey to wild beasts, and how the loving nymph Necile had rescued him and brought him to manhood under the protection of the immortals.

"Yet I am not of them," said Claus, musingly.

"You are not of them," returned the Woodsman. "The nymph who cared for you as a mother seems now like a sister to you; by and by, when you grow old and gray, she will seem like a daughter. Yet another brief span and you will be but a memory, while she remains Necile."

"Then why, if man must perish, is he born?" demanded the boy.

"Everything perishes except the world itself and its keepers," answered AK. "But while life lasts everything on earth has its use. The wise seek ways to be helpful to the world, for the helpful ones are sure to live again."

Much of this Claus failed to understand fully, but a longing seized him to become helpful to his fellows, and he remained grave and thoughtful while they resumed their journey.

They visited many dwellings of men in many parts of the world, watching farmers toil in the fields, warriors dash into cruel fray, and merchants exchange their goods for bits of white and yellow metal. And everywhere the eyes of Claus sought out the children in love and pity, for the thought of his own helpless babyhood was strong within him and he yearned to give help to the innocent little ones of his race even as he had been succored by the kindly nymph.

Day by day the Master Woodsman and his pupil traversed the earth, Ak speaking but seldom to the youth who clung steadfastly to his girdle, but guiding him into all places where he might become familiar with the lives of human beings.

And at last they returned to the grand old Forest of Burzee, where the Master set Claus down within the circle of nymphs, among whom the pretty Necile anxiously awaited him.

The brow of the great Ak was now calm and peaceful; but the brow of Claus had become lined with deep thought. Necile sighed at the change in her foster-son, who until now had been ever joyous and smiling, and the thought came to her that never again would the life of the boy be the same as before this eventful journey with the Master.

7. Claus Leaves the Forest

When good Queen Zurline had touched the golden chalice with her fair lips and it had passed around the circle in honor of the travelers' return, the Master Woodsman of the World, who had not yet spoken, turned his gaze frankly upon Claus and said:

"Well?"

The boy understood, and rose slowly to his feet beside Necile. Once only his eyes passed around the familiar circle of nymphs, every one of whom he remembered as a loving comrade; but tears came unbidden to dim his sight, so he gazed thereafter steadfastly at the Master.

"I have been ignorant," said he, simply, "until the great Ak in his kindness taught me who and what I am. You, who live so sweetly in your forest bowers, ever fair and youthful and innocent, are no fit comrades for a son of humanity. For I have looked upon man, finding him doomed to live for a brief space upon earth, to toil for the things he needs, to fade into old age, and then to pass away as the leaves in autumn. Yet every man has his mission, which is to leave the world better, in some way, than he found it. I am of the race of men, and man's lot is my lot. For your tender care of the poor, forsaken babe you adopted, as well as for your loving comradeship during my boyhood, my heart will ever overflow with gratitude. My foster-mother," here he stopped and kissed Necile's white forehead, "I shall love and cherish while life lasts. But I must leave you, to take my part in the endless struggle to which humanity is doomed, and to live my life in my own way."

"What will you do?" asked the Queen, gravely.

"I must devote myself to the care of the children of mankind, and try to make them happy," he answered. "Since your own tender care of a babe brought to me happiness and strength, it is just and right that I devote my life to the pleasure of other babes. Thus will the memory of the

loving nymph Necile be planted within the hearts of thousands of my race for many years to come, and her kindly act be recounted in song and in story while the world shall last. Have I spoken well, O Master?"

"You have spoken well," returned Ak, and rising to his feet he continued: "Yet one thing must not be forgotten. Having been adopted as the child of the Forest, and the playfellow of the nymphs, you have gained a distinction which forever separates you from your kind. Therefore, when you go forth into the world of men you shall retain the protection of the Forest, and the powers you now enjoy will remain with you to assist you in your labors. In any need you may call upon the Nymphs, the Ryls, the Knooks and the Fairies, and they will serve you gladly. I, the Master Woodsman of the World, have said it, and my Word is the Law!"

Claus looked upon Ak with grateful eyes.

"This will make me mighty among men," he replied. "Protected by these kind friends I may be able to make thousands of little children happy. I will try very hard to do my duty, and I know the Forest people will give me their sympathy and help."

"We will!" said the Fairy Queen, earnestly.

"We will!" cried the merry Ryls, laughing.

"We will!" shouted the crooked Knooks, scowling.

"We will!" exclaimed the sweet nymphs, proudly. But Necile said nothing. She only folded Claus in her arms and kissed him tenderly.

"The world is big," continued the boy, turning again to his loyal friends, "but men are everywhere. I shall begin my work near my friends, so that if I meet with misfortune I can come to the Forest for counsel or help."

With that he gave them all a loving look and turned away. There was no need to say good by, by for him the sweet, wild life of the Forest was over. He went forth bravely to meet his doom—the doom of the race of man—the necessity to worry and work.

But Ak, who knew the boy's heart, was merciful and guided his steps.

Coming through Burzee to its eastern edge Claus reached the Laughing Valley of Hohaho. On each side were rolling green hills, and a brook wandered midway between them to wind afar off beyond the valley. At his back was the grim Forest; at the far end of the valley a broad plain. The eyes of the young man, which had until now reflected his grave thoughts, became brighter as he stood silent, looking out upon the Laughing Valley. Then on a sudden his eyes twinkled, as stars do on a still night, and grew merry and wide.

For at his feet the cowslips and daisies smiled on him in friendly regard; the breeze whistled gaily as it passed by and fluttered the locks on his forehead; the brook laughed joyously as it leaped over the pebbles and swept around the green curves of its banks; the bees sang sweet songs as they flew from dandelion to daffodil; the beetles chirruped happily in the long grass, and the sunbeams glinted pleasantly over all the scene.

"Here," cried Claus, stretching out his arms as if to embrace the Valley, "will I make my home!"

That was many, many years ago. It has been his home ever since. It is his home now.

MANHOOD

1. The Laughing Valley

When Claus came the Valley was empty save for the grass, the brook, the wildflowers, the bees and the butterflies. If he would make his home here and live after the fashion of men he must have a house. This puzzled him at first, but while he stood smiling in the sunshine he suddenly found beside him old Nelko, the servant of the Master Woodsman. Nelko bore an ax, strong and broad, with blade that gleamed like burnished silver. This he placed in the young man's hand, then disappeared without a word.

Claus understood, and turning to the Forest's edge he selected a number of fallen tree-trunks, which he began to clear of their dead branches. He would not cut into a living tree. His life among the nymphs who guarded the Forest had taught him that a live tree is sacred, being a created thing endowed with feeling. But with the dead and fallen trees it was different. They

had fulfilled their destiny, as active members of the Forest community, and now it was fitting that their remains should minister to the needs of man.

The ax bit deep into the logs at every stroke. It seemed to have a force of its own, and Claus had but to swing and guide it.

When shadows began creeping over the green hills to lie in the Valley overnight, the young man had chopped many logs into equal lengths and proper shapes for building a house such as he had seen the poorer classes of men inhabit. Then, resolving to await another day before he tried to fit the logs together, Claus ate some of the sweet roots he well knew how to find, drank deeply from the laughing brook, and lay down to sleep on the grass, first seeking a spot where no flowers grew, lest the weight of his body should crush them.

And while he slumbered and breathed in the perfume of the wondrous Valley the Spirit of Happiness crept into his heart and drove out all terror and care and misgivings. Never more would the face of Claus be clouded with anxieties; never more would the trials of life weigh him down as with a burden. The Laughing Valley had claimed him for its own.

Would that we all might live in that delightful place!—but then, maybe, it would become overcrowded. For ages it had awaited a tenant. Was it chance that led young Claus to make his home in this happy vale? Or may we guess that his thoughtful friends, the immortals, had directed his steps when he wandered away from Burzee to seek a home in the great world?

Certain it is that while the moon peered over the hilltop and flooded with its soft beams the body of the sleeping stranger, the Laughing Valley was filled with the queer, crooked shapes of the friendly Knooks. These people spoke no words, but worked with skill and swiftness. The logs Claus had trimmed with his bright ax were carried to a spot beside the brook and fitted one upon another, and during the night a strong and roomy dwelling was built.

The birds came sweeping into the Valley at daybreak, and their songs, so seldom heard in the deep wood, aroused the stranger. He rubbed the web of sleep from his eyelids and looked around. The house met his gaze.

"I must thank the Knooks for this," said he, gratefully. Then he walked to his dwelling and entered at the doorway. A large room faced him, having a fireplace at the end and a table and bench in the middle. Beside the fireplace was a cupboard. Another doorway was beyond.

Claus entered here, also, and saw a smaller room with a bed against the wall and a stool set near a small stand. On the bed were many layers of dried moss brought from the Forest.

"Indeed, it is a palace!" exclaimed the smiling Claus. "I must thank the good Knooks again, for their knowledge of man's needs as well as for their labors in my behalf."

He left his new home with a glad feeling that he was not quite alone in the world, although he had chosen to abandon his Forest life. Friendships are not easily broken, and the immortals are everywhere.

Upon reaching the brook he drank of the pure water, and then sat down on the bank to laugh at the mischievous gambols of the ripples as they pushed one another against rocks or crowded desperately to see which should first reach the turn beyond. And as they raced away he listened to the song they sang:

"Rushing, pushing, on we go!

Not a wave may gently flow—

All are too excited.

Ev'ry drop, delighted,

Turns to spray in merry play

As we tumble on our way!"

Next Claus searched for roots to eat, while the daffodils turned their little eyes up to him laughingly and lisped their dainty song:

"Blooming fairly, growing rarely,

Never flowerets were so gay!

Perfume breathing, joy bequeathing,

As our colors we display."

It made Claus laugh to hear the little things voice their happiness as they nodded gracefully on their stems. But another strain caught his ear as the sunbeams fell gently across his face and whispered:

"Here is gladness, that our rays

Warm the valley through the days;

Here is happiness, to give

Comfort unto all who live!"

"Yes!" cried Claus in answer, "there is happiness and joy in all things here. The Laughing Valley is a valley of peace and good-will."

He passed the day talking with the ants and beetles and exchanging jokes with the light-hearted butterflies. And at night he lay on his bed of soft moss and slept soundly.

Then came the Fairies, merry but noiseless, bringing skillets and pots and dishes and pans and all the tools necessary to prepare food and to comfort a mortal. With these they filled cupboard and fireplace, finally placing a stout suit of wool clothing on the stool by the bedside.

When Claus awoke he rubbed his eyes again, and laughed, and spoke aloud his thanks to the Fairies and the Master Woodsman who had sent them. With eager joy he examined all his new possessions, wondering what some might be used for. But, in the days when he had clung to the girdle of the great Ak and visited the cities of men, his eyes had been quick to note all the manners and customs of the race to which he belonged; so he guessed from the gifts brought by the Fairies that the Master expected him hereafter to live in the fashion of his fellow-creatures.

"Which means that I must plow the earth and plant corn," he reflected; "so that when winter comes I shall have garnered food in plenty."

But, as he stood in the grassy Valley, he saw that to turn up the earth in furrows would be to destroy hundreds of pretty, helpless flowers, as well as thousands of the tender blades of grass. And this he could not bear to do.

Therefore he stretched out his arms and uttered a peculiar whistle he had learned in the Forest, afterward crying:

"Ryls of the Field Flowers—come to me!"

Instantly a dozen of the queer little Ryls were squatting upon the ground before him, and they nodded to him in cheerful greeting.

Claus gazed upon them earnestly.

"Your brothers of the Forest," he said, "I have known and loved many years. I shall love you, also, when we have become friends. To me the laws of the Ryls, whether those of the Forest or of the field, are sacred. I have never wilfully destroyed one of the flowers you tend so carefully; but I must plant grain to use for food during the cold winter, and how am I to do this without killing the little creatures that sing to me so prettily of their fragrant blossoms?"

The Yellow Ryl, he who tends the buttercups, made answer:

"Fret not, friend Claus. The great Ak has spoken to us of you. There is better work for you in life than to labor for food, and though, not being of the Forest, Ak has no command over us, nevertheless are we glad to favor one he loves. Live, therefore, to do the good work you are resolved to undertake. We, the Field Ryls, will attend to your food supplies."

After this speech the Ryls were no longer to be seen, and Claus drove from his mind the thought of tilling the earth.

When next he wandered back to his dwelling a bowl of fresh milk stood upon the table; bread was in the cupboard and sweet honey filled a dish beside it. A pretty basket of rosy apples and new-plucked grapes was also awaiting him. He called out "Thanks, my friends!" to the invisible Ryls, and straightway began to eat of the food.

Thereafter, when hungry, he had but to look into the cupboard to find goodly supplies brought by the kindly Ryls. And the Knooks cut and stacked much wood for his fireplace. And the Fairies brought him warm blankets and clothing.

So began his life in the Laughing Valley, with the favor and friendship of the immortals to minister to his every want.

2. How Claus Made the First Toy

Truly our Claus had wisdom, for his good fortune but strengthened his resolve to befriend the little ones of his own race. He knew his plan was approved by the immortals, else they would not have favored him so greatly.

So he began at once to make acquaintance with mankind. He walked through the Valley to the plain beyond, and crossed the plain in many directions to reach the abodes of men. These stood singly or in groups of dwellings called villages, and in nearly all the houses, whether big or little, Claus found children.

The youngsters soon came to know his merry, laughing face and the kind glance of his bright eyes; and the parents, while they regarded the young man with some scorn for loving children more than their elders, were content that the girls and boys had found a playfellow who seemed willing to amuse them.

So the children romped and played games with Claus, and the boys rode upon his shoulders, and the girls nestled in his strong arms, and the babies clung fondly to his knees. Wherever the young man chanced to be, the sound of childish laughter followed him; and to understand this better you must know that children were much neglected in those days and received little attention from their parents, so that it became to them a marvel that so goodly a man as Claus devoted his time to making them happy. And those who knew him were, you may be sure, very happy indeed. The sad faces of the poor and abused grew bright for once; the cripple smiled despite his misfortune; the ailing ones hushed their moans and the grieved ones their cries when their merry friend came nigh to comfort them.

Only at the beautiful palace of the Lord of Lerd and at the frowning castle of the Baron Braun was Claus refused admittance. There were children at both places; but the servants at the

palace shut the door in the young stranger's face, and the fierce Baron threatened to hang him from an iron hook on the castle walls. Whereupon Claus sighed and went back to the poorer dwellings where he was welcome.

After a time the winter drew near.

The flowers lived out their lives and faded and disappeared; the beetles burrowed far into the warm earth; the butterflies deserted the meadows; and the voice of the brook grew hoarse, as if it had taken cold.

One day snowflakes filled all the air in the Laughing Valley, dancing boisterously toward the earth and clothing in pure white raiment the roof of Claus's dwelling.

At night Jack Frost rapped at the door.

"Come in!" cried Claus.

"Come out!" answered Jack, "for you have a fire inside."

So Claus came out. He had known Jack Frost in the Forest, and liked the jolly rogue, even while he mistrusted him.

"There will be rare sport for me to-night, Claus!" shouted the sprite. "Isn't this glorious weather? I shall nip scores of noses and ears and toes before daybreak."

"If you love me, Jack, spare the children," begged Claus.

"And why?" asked the other, in surprise.

"They are tender and helpless," answered Claus.

"But I love to nip the tender ones!" declared Jack. "The older ones are tough, and tire my fingers."

"The young ones are weak, and can not fight you," said Claus.

"True," agreed Jack, thoughtfully. "Well, I will not pinch a child this night—if I can resist the temptation," he promised. "Good night, Claus!"

"Good night."

The young man went in and closed the door, and Jack Frost ran on to the nearest village.

Claus threw a log on the fire, which burned up brightly. Beside the hearth sat Blinkie, a big cat give him by Peter the Knook. Her fur was soft and glossy, and she purred never-ending songs of contentment.

"I shall not see the children again soon," said Claus to the cat, who kindly paused in her song to listen. "The winter is upon us, the snow will be deep for many days, and I shall be unable to play with my little friends."

The cat raised a paw and stroked her nose thoughtfully, but made no reply. So long as the fire burned and Claus sat in his easy chair by the hearth she did not mind the weather.

So passed many days and many long evenings. The cupboard was always full, but Claus became weary with having nothing to do more than to feed the fire from the big wood-pile the Knooks had brought him.

One evening he picked up a stick of wood and began to cut it with his sharp knife. He had no thought, at first, except to occupy his time, and he whistled and sang to the cat as he carved away portions of the stickups sat up on her haunches and watched him, listening at the same time to her master's merry whistle, which she loved to hear even more than her own purring songs.

Claus glanced at puss and then at the stick he was whittling, until presently the wood began to have a shape, and the shape was like the head of a cat, with two ears sticking upward.

Claus stopped whistling to laugh, and then both he and the cat looked at the wooden image in some surprise. Then he carved out the eyes and the nose, and rounded the lower part of the head so that it rested upon a neck.

Puss hardly knew what to make of it now, and sat up stiffly, as if watching with some suspicion what would come next.

Claus knew. The head gave him an idea. He plied his knife carefully and with skill, forming slowly the body of the cat, which he made to sit upon its haunches as the real cat did, with her tail wound around her two front legs.

The work cost him much time, but the evening was long and he had nothing better to do. Finally he gave a loud and delighted laugh at the result of his labors and placed the wooden cat, now completed, upon the hearth opposite the real one.

Puss thereupon glared at her image, raised her hair in anger, and uttered a defiant mew. The wooden cat paid no attention, and Claus, much amused, laughed again.

Then Blinkie advanced toward the wooden image to eye it closely and smell of it intelligently: Eyes and nose told her the creature was wood, in spite of its natural appearance; so puss resumed her seat and her purring, but as she neatly washed her face with her padded paw she cast more than one admiring glance at her clever master. Perhaps she felt the same satisfaction we feel when we look upon good photographs of ourselves.

The cat's master was himself pleased with his handiwork, without knowing exactly why. Indeed, he had great cause to congratulate himself that night, and all the children throughout the world should have joined him rejoicing. For Claus had made his first toy.

3. How the Ryls Colored the Toys

A hush lay on the Laughing Valley now. Snow covered it like a white spread and pillows of downy flakes drifted before the dwelling where Claus sat feeding the blaze of the fire. The brook gurgled on beneath a heavy sheet of ice and all living plants and insects nestled close to Mother Earth to keep warm. The face of the moon was hid by dark clouds, and the wind, delighting in the wintry sport, pushed and whirled the snowflakes in so many directions that they could get no chance to fall to the ground.

Claus heard the wind whistling and shrieking in its play and thanked the good Knooks again for his comfortable shelter. Blinkie washed her face lazily and stared at the coals with a look of perfect content. The toy cat sat opposite the real one and gazed straight ahead, as toy cats should.

Suddenly Claus heard a noise that sounded different from the voice of the wind. It was more like a wail of suffering and despair.

He stood up and listened, but the wind, growing boisterous, shook the door and rattled the windows to distract his attention. He waited until the wind was tired and then, still listening, he heard once more the shrill cry of distress.

Quickly he drew on his coat, pulled his cap over his eyes and opened the door. The wind dashed in and scattered the embers over the hearth, at the same time blowing Blinkie's fur so furiously that she crept under the table to escape. Then the door was closed and Claus was outside, peering anxiously into the darkness.

The wind laughed and scolded and tried to push him over, but he stood firm. The helpless flakes stumbled against his eyes and dimmed his sight, but he rubbed them away and looked again. Snow was everywhere, white and glittering. It covered the earth and filled the air.

The cry was not repeated.

Claus turned to go back into the house, but the wind caught him unawares and he stumbled and fell across a snowdrift. His hand plunged into the drift and touched something that was not snow. This he seized and, pulling it gently toward him, found it to be a child. The next moment he had lifted it in his arms and carried it into the house.

The wind followed him through the door, but Claus shut it out quickly. He laid the rescued child on the hearth, and brushing away the snow he discovered it to be Weekum, a little boy who lived in a house beyond the Valley.

Claus wrapped a warm blanket around the little one and rubbed the frost from its limbs. Before long the child opened his eyes and, seeing where he was, smiled happily. Then Claus warmed milk and fed it to the boy slowly, while the cat looked on with sober curiosity. Finally the little one curled up in his friend's arms and sighed and fell asleep, and Claus, filled with gladness that he had found the wanderer, held him closely while he slumbered.

The wind, finding no more mischief to do, climbed the hill and swept on toward the north. This gave the weary snowflakes time to settle down to earth, and the Valley became still again.

The boy, having slept well in the arms of his friend, opened his eyes and sat up. Then, as a child will, he looked around the room and saw all that it contained.

"Your cat is a nice cat, Claus," he said, at last. "Let me hold it."

But puss objected and ran away.

"The other cat won't run, Claus," continued the boy. "Let me hold that one." Claus placed the toy in his arms, and the boy held it lovingly and kissed the tip of its wooden ear.

"How did you get lost in the storm, Weekum?" asked Claus.

"I started to walk to my auntie's house and lost my way," answered Weekum.

"Were you frightened?"

"It was cold," said Weekum, "and the snow got in my eyes, so I could not see. Then I kept on till I fell in the snow, without knowing where I was, and the wind blew the flakes over me and covered me up."

Claus gently stroked his head, and the boy looked up at him and smiled.

"I'm all right now," said Weekum.

"Yes," replied Claus, happily. "Now I will put you in my warm bed, and you must sleep until morning, when I will carry you back to your mother."

"May the cat sleep with me?" asked the boy.

"Yes, if you wish it to," answered Claus.

"It's a nice cat!" Weekum said, smiling, as Claus tucked the blankets around him; and presently the little one fell asleep with the wooden toy in his arms.

When morning came the sun claimed the Laughing Valley and flooded it with his rays; so Claus prepared to take the lost child back to its mother.

"May I keep the cat, Claus?" asked Weekum. "It's nicer than real cats. It doesn't run away, or scratch or bite. May I keep it?"

"Yes, indeed," answered Claus, pleased that the toy he had made could give pleasure to the child. So he wrapped the boy and the wooden cat in a warm cloak, perching the bundle upon his own broad shoulders, and then he tramped through the snow and the drifts of the Valley and across the plain beyond to the poor cottage where Weekum's mother lived.

"See, mama!" cried the boy, as soon as they entered, "I've got a cat!"

The good woman wept tears of joy over the rescue of her darling and thanked Claus many times for his kind act. So he carried a warm and happy heart back to his home in the Valley.

That night he said to puss: "I believe the children will love the wooden cats almost as well as the real ones, and they can't hurt them by pulling their tails and ears. I'll make another."

So this was the beginning of his great work.

The next cat was better made than the first. While Claus sat whittling it out the Yellow Ryl came in to make him a visit, and so pleased was he with the man's skill that he ran away and brought several of his fellows.

There sat the Red Ryl, the Black Ryl, the Green Ryl, the Blue Ryl and the Yellow Ryl in a circle on the floor, while Claus whittled and whistled and the wooden cat grew into shape.

"If it could be made the same color as the real cat, no one would know the difference," said the Yellow Ryl, thoughtfully.

"The little ones, maybe, would not know the difference," replied Claus, pleased with the idea.

"I will bring you some of the red that I color my roses and tulips with," cried the Red Ryl; "and then you can make the cat's lips and tongue red."

"I will bring some of the green that I color my grasses and leaves with," said the Green Ryl; "and then you can color the cat's eyes green."

"They will need a bit of yellow, also," remarked the Yellow Ryl; "I must fetch some of the yellow that I use to color my buttercups and goldenrods with."

"The real cat is black," said the Black Ryl; "I will bring some of the black that I use to color the eyes of my pansies with, and then you can paint your wooden cat black."

"I see you have a blue ribbon around Blinkie's neck," added the Blue Ryl. "I will get some of the color that I use to paint the bluebells and forget-me-nots with, and then you can carve a wooden ribbon on the toy cat's neck and paint it blue."

So the Ryls disappeared, and by the time Claus had finished carving out the form of the cat they were all back with the paints and brushes.

They made Blinkie sit upon the table, that Claus might paint the toy cat just the right color, and when the work was done the Ryls declared it was exactly as good as a live cat.

"That is, to all appearances," added the Red Ryl.

Blinkie seemed a little offended by the attention bestowed upon the toy, and that she might not seem to approve the imitation cat she walked to the corner of the hearth and sat down with a dignified air.

But Claus was delighted, and as soon as morning came he started out and tramped through the snow, across the Valley and the plain, until he came to a village. There, in a poor hut near the walls of the beautiful palace of the Lord of Lerd, a little girl lay upon a wretched cot, moaning with pain.

Claus approached the child and kissed her and comforted her, and then he drew the toy cat from beneath his coat, where he had hidden it, and placed it in her arms.

Ah, how well he felt himself repaid for his labor and his long walk when he saw the little one's eyes grow bright with pleasure! She hugged the kitty tight to her breast, as if it had been a precious gem, and would not let it go for a single moment. The fever was quieted, the pain grew less, and she fell into a sweet and refreshing sleep.

Claus laughed and whistled and sang all the way home. Never had he been so happy as on that day.

When he entered his house he found Shiegra, the lioness, awaiting him. Since his babyhood Shiegra had loved Claus, and while he dwelt in the Forest she had often come to visit him at Necile's bower. After Claus had gone to live in the Laughing Valley Shiegra became lonely and ill at ease, and now she had braved the snow-drifts, which all lions abhor, to see him once more. Shiegra was getting old and her teeth were beginning to fall out, while the hairs that tipped her ears and tail had changed from tawny-yellow to white.

Claus found her lying on his hearth, and he put his arms around the neck of the lioness and hugged her lovingly. The cat had retired into a far corner. She did not care to associate with Shiegra.

Claus told his old friend about the cats he had made, and how much pleasure they had given Weekum and the sick girl. Shiegra did not know much about children; indeed, if she met a child she could scarcely be trusted not to devour it. But she was interested in Claus' new labors, and said:

"These images seem to me very attractive. Yet I can not see why you should make cats, which are very unimportant animals. Suppose, now that I am here, you make the image of a lioness,

the Queen of all beasts. Then, indeed, your children will be happy—and safe at the same time!"

Claus thought this was a good suggestion. So he got a piece of wood and sharpened his knife, while Shiegra crouched upon the hearth at his feet. With much care he carved the head in the likeness of the lioness, even to the two fierce teeth that curved over her lower lip and the deep, frowning lines above her wide-open eyes.

When it was finished he said:

"You have a terrible look, Shiegra."

"Then the image is like me," she answered; "for I am indeed terrible to all who are not my friends."

Claus now carved out the body, with Shiegra's long tail trailing behind it. The image of the crouching lioness was very life-like.

"It pleases me," said Shiegra, yawning and stretching her body gracefully. "Now I will watch while you paint."

He brought the paints the Ryls had given him from the cupboard and colored the image to resemble the real Shiegra.

The lioness placed her big, padded paws upon the edge of the table and raised herself while she carefully examined the toy that was her likeness.

"You are indeed skillful!" she said, proudly. "The children will like that better than cats, I'm sure."

Then snarling at Blinkie, who arched her back in terror and whined fearfully, she walked away toward her forest home with stately strides.

4. How Little Mayrie Became Frightened

The winter was over now, and all the Laughing Valley was filled with joyous excitement. The brook was so happy at being free once again that it gurgled more boisterously than ever and

dashed so recklessly against the rocks that it sent showers of spray high in the air. The grass thrust its sharp little blades upward through the mat of dead stalks where it had hidden from the snow, but the flowers were yet too timid to show themselves, although the Ryls were busy feeding their roots. The sun was in remarkably good humor, and sent his rays dancing merrily throughout the Valley.

Claus was eating his dinner one day when he heard a timid knock on his door.

"Come in!" he called.

No one entered, but after a pause came another rapping.

Claus jumped up and threw open the door. Before him stood a small girl holding a smaller brother fast by the hand.

"Is you Tlaus?" she asked, shyly.

"Indeed I am, my dear!" he answered, with a laugh, as he caught both children in his arms and kissed them. "You are very welcome, and you have come just in time to share my dinner."

He took them to the table and fed them with fresh milk and nut-cakes. When they had eaten enough he asked:

"Why have you made this long journey to see me?"

"I wants a tat!" replied little Mayrie; and her brother, who had not yet learned to speak many words, nodded his head and exclaimed like an echo: "Tat!"

"Oh, you want my toy cats, do you?" returned Claus, greatly pleased to discover that his creations were so popular with children.

The little visitors nodded eagerly.

"Unfortunately," he continued, "I have but one cat now ready, for I carried two to children in the town yesterday. And the one I have shall be given to your brother, Mayrie, because he is the smaller; and the next one I make shall be for you."

The boy's face was bright with smiles as he took the precious toy Claus held out to him; but little Mayrie covered her face with her arm and began to sob grievously.

"I—I—I wants a t—t—tat now!" she wailed.

Her disappointment made Claus feel miserable for a moment. Then he suddenly remembered Shiegra.

"Don't cry, darling!" he said, soothingly; "I have a toy much nicer than a cat, and you shall have that."

He went to the cupboard and drew out the image of the lioness, which he placed on the table before Mayrie.

The girl raised her arm and gave one glance at the fierce teeth and glaring eyes of the beast, and then, uttering a terrified scream, she rushed from the house. The boy followed her, also screaming lustily, and even dropping his precious cat in his fear.

For a moment Claus stood motionless, being puzzled and astonished. Then he threw Shiegra's image into the cupboard and ran after the children, calling to them not to be frightened.

Little Mayrie stopped in her flight and her brother clung to her skirt; but they both cast fearful glances at the house until Claus had assured them many times that the beast had been locked in the cupboard.

"Yet why were you frightened at seeing it?" he asked. "It is only a toy to play with!"

"It's bad!" said Mayrie, decidedly, "an'—an'—just horrid, an' not a bit nice, like tats!"

"Perhaps you are right," returned Claus, thoughtfully. "But if you will return with me to the house I will soon make you a pretty cat."

So they timidly entered the house again, having faith in their friend's words; and afterward they had the joy of watching Claus carve out a cat from a bit of wood and paint it in natural colors. It did not take him long to do this, for he had become skillful with his knife by this time, and Mayrie loved her toy the more dearly because she had seen it made.

After his little visitors had trotted away on their journey homeward Claus sat long in deep thought. And he then decided that such fierce creatures as his friend the lioness would never do as models from which to fashion his toys.

"There must be nothing to frighten the dear babies," he reflected; "and while I know Shiegra well, and am not afraid of her, it is but natural that children should look upon her image with terror. Hereafter I will choose such mild-mannered animals as squirrels and rabbits and deer

and lambkins from which to carve my toys, for then the little ones will love rather than fear them."

He began his work that very day, and before bedtime had made a wooden rabbit and a lamb. They were not quite so lifelike as the cats had been, because they were formed from memory, while Blinkie had sat very still for Claus to look at while he worked.

But the new toys pleased the children nevertheless, and the fame of Claus' playthings quickly spread to every cottage on plain and in village. He always carried his gifts to the sick or crippled children, but those who were strong enough walked to the house in the Valley to ask for them, so a little path was soon worn from the plain to the door of the toy-maker's cottage.

First came the children who had been playmates of Claus, before he began to make toys. These, you may be sure, were well supplied. Then children who lived farther away heard of the wonderful images and made journeys to the Valley to secure them. All little ones were welcome, and never a one went away empty-handed.

This demand for his handiwork kept Claus busily occupied, but he was quite happy in knowing the pleasure he gave to so many of the dear children. His friends the immortals were pleased with his success and supported him bravely.

The Knooks selected for him clear pieces of soft wood, that his knife might not be blunted in cutting them; the Ryls kept him supplied with paints of all colors and brushes fashioned from the tips of timothy grasses; the Fairies discovered that the workman needed saws and chisels and hammers and nails, as well as knives, and brought him a goodly array of such tools.

Claus soon turned his living room into a most wonderful workshop. He built a bench before the window, and arranged his tools and paints so that he could reach everything as he sat on his stool. And as he finished toy after toy to delight the hearts of little children he found himself growing so gay and happy that he could not refrain from singing and laughing and whistling all the day long.

"It's because I live in the Laughing Valley, where everything else laughs!" said Claus.

But that was not the reason.

5. How Bessie Blithesome Came to the Laughing Valley

One day, as Claus sat before his door to enjoy the sunshine while he busily carved the head and horns of a toy deer, he looked up and discovered a glittering cavalcade of horsemen approaching through the Valley.

When they drew nearer he saw that the band consisted of a score of men-at-arms, clad in bright armor and bearing in their hands spears and battle-axes. In front of these rode little Bessie Blithesome, the pretty daughter of that proud Lord of Lerd who had once driven Claus from his palace. Her palfrey was pure white, its bridle was covered with glittering gems, and its saddle draped with cloth of gold, richly brodered. The soldiers were sent to protect her from harm while she journeyed.

Claus was surprised, but he continued to whittle and to sing until the cavalcade drew up before him. Then the little girl leaned over the neck of her palfrey and said:

"Please, Mr. Claus, I want a toy!"

Her voice was so pleading that Claus jumped up at once and stood beside her. But he was puzzled how to answer her request.

"You are a rich lord's daughter," said he, "and have all that you desire."

"Except toys," added Bessie. "There are no toys in all the world but yours."

"And I make them for the poor children, who have nothing else to amuse them," continued Claus.

"Do poor children love to play with toys more than rich ones?" asked Bessie.

"I suppose not," said Claus, thoughtfully.

"Am I to blame because my father is a lord? Must I be denied the pretty toys I long for because other children are poorer than I?" she inquired earnestly.

"I'm afraid you must, dear," he answered; "for the poor have nothing else with which to amuse themselves. You have your pony to ride, your servants to wait on you, and every comfort that money can procure."

"But I want toys!" cried Bessie, wiping away the tears that forced themselves into her eyes. "If I can not have them, I shall be very unhappy."

Claus was troubled, for her grief recalled to him the thought that his desire was to make all children happy, without regard to their condition in life. Yet, while so many poor children were clamoring for his toys he could not bear to give one to them to Bessie Blithesome, who had so much already to make her happy.

"Listen, my child," said he, gently; "all the toys I am now making are promised to others. But the next shall be yours, since your heart so longs for it. Come to me again in two days and it shall be ready for you."

Bessie gave a cry of delight, and leaning over her pony's neck she kissed Claus prettily upon his forehead. Then, calling to her men-at-arms, she rode gaily away, leaving Claus to resume his work.

"If I am to supply the rich children as well as the poor ones," he thought, "I shall not have a spare moment in the whole year! But is it right I should give to the rich? Surely I must go to Necile and talk with her about this matter."

So when he had finished the toy deer, which was very like a deer he had known in the Forest glades, he walked into Burzee and made his way to the bower of the beautiful Nymph Necile, who had been his foster mother.

She greeted him tenderly and lovingly, listening with interest to his story of the visit of Bessie Blithesome.

"And now tell me," said he, "shall I give toys to rich children?"

"We of the Forest know nothing of riches," she replied. "It seems to me that one child is like another child, since they are all made of the same clay, and that riches are like a gown, which may be put on or taken away, leaving the child unchanged. But the Fairies are guardians of mankind, and know mortal children better than I. Let us call the Fairy Queen."

This was done, and the Queen of the Fairies sat beside them and heard Claus relate his reasons for thinking the rich children could get along without his toys, and also what the Nymph had said.

"Necile is right," declared the Queen; "for, whether it be rich or poor, a child's longings for pretty playthings are but natural. Rich Bessie's heart may suffer as much grief as poor Mayrie's; she can be just as lonely and discontented, and just as gay and happy. I think, friend Claus, it is your duty to make all little ones glad, whether they chance to live in palaces or in cottages."

"Your words are wise, fair Queen," replied Claus, "and my heart tells me they are as just as they are wise. Hereafter all children may claim my services."

Then he bowed before the gracious Fairy and, kissing Necile's red lips, went back into his Valley.

At the brook he stopped to drink, and afterward he sat on the bank and took a piece of moist clay in his hands while he thought what sort of toy he should make for Bessie Blithesome. He did not notice that his fingers were working the clay into shape until, glancing downward, he found he had unconsciously formed a head that bore a slight resemblance to the Nymph Necile!

At once he became interested. Gathering more of the clay from the bank he carried it to his house. Then, with the aid of his knife and a bit of wood he succeeded in working the clay into the image of a toy nymph. With skillful strokes he formed long, waving hair on the head and covered the body with a gown of oakleaves, while the two feet sticking out at the bottom of the gown were clad in sandals.

But the clay was soft, and Claus found he must handle it gently to avoid ruining his pretty work.

"Perhaps the rays of the sun will draw out the moisture and cause the clay to become hard," he thought. So he laid the image on a flat board and placed it in the glare of the sun.

This done, he went to his bench and began painting the toy deer, and soon he became so interested in the work that he forgot all about the clay nymph. But next morning, happening to notice it as it lay on the board, he found the sun had baked it to the hardness of stone, and it was strong enough to be safely handled.

Claus now painted the nymph with great care in the likeness of Necile, giving it deep-blue eyes, white teeth, rosy lips and ruddy-brown hair. The gown he colored oak-leaf green, and when the paint was dry Claus himself was charmed with the new toy. Of course it was not

nearly so lovely as the real Necile; but, considering the material of which it was made, Claus thought it was very beautiful.

When Bessie, riding upon her white palfrey, came to his dwelling next day, Claus presented her with the new toy. The little girl's eyes were brighter than ever as she examined the pretty image, and she loved it at once, and held it close to her breast, as a mother does to her child.

"What is it called, Claus?" she asked.

Now Claus knew that Nymphs do not like to be spoken of by mortals, so he could not tell Bessie it was an image of Necile he had given her. But as it was a new toy he searched his mind for a new name to call it by, and the first word he thought of he decided would do very well.

"It is called a dolly, my dear," he said to Bessie.

"I shall call the dolly my baby," returned Bessie, kissing it fondly; "and I shall tend it and care for it just as Nurse cares for me. Thank you very much, Claus; your gift has made me happier than I have ever been before!"

Then she rode away, hugging the toy in her arms, and Claus, seeing her delight, thought he would make another dolly, better and more natural than the first.

He brought more clay from the brook, and remembering that Bessie had called the dolly her baby he resolved to form this one into a baby's image. That was no difficult task to the clever workman, and soon the baby dolly was lying on the board and placed in the sun to dry. Then, with the clay that was left, he began to make an image of Bessie Blithesome herself.

This was not so easy, for he found he could not make the silken robe of the lord's daughter out of the common clay. So he called the Fairies to his aid, and asked them to bring him colored silks with which to make a real dress for the clay image. The Fairies set off at once on their errand, and before nightfall they returned with a generous supply of silks and laces and golden threads.

Claus now became impatient to complete his new dolly, and instead of waiting for the next day's sun he placed the clay image upon his hearth and covered it over with glowing coals. By morning, when he drew the dolly from the ashes, it had baked as hard as if it had lain a full day in the hot sun.

Now our Claus became a dressmaker as well as a toymaker. He cut the lavender silk, and nearly sewed it into a beautiful gown that just fitted the new dolly. And he put a lace collar around its neck and pink silk shoes on its feet. The natural color of baked clay is a light gray, but Claus painted the face to resemble the color of flesh, and he gave the dolly Bessie's brown eyes and golden hair and rosy cheeks.

It was really a beautiful thing to look upon, and sure to bring joy to some childish heart. While Claus was admiring it he heard a knock at his door, and little Mayrie entered. Her face was sad and her eyes red with continued weeping.

"Why, what has grieved you, my dear?" asked Claus, taking the child in his arms.

"I've—I've—bwoke my tat!" sobbed Mayrie.

"How?" he inquired, his eyes twinkling.

"I—I dwopped him, an' bwoke off him's tail; an'—an'—then I dwopped him an' bwoke off him's ear! An'—an' now him's all spoilt!"

Claus laughed.

"Never mind, Mayrie dear," he said. "How would you like this new dolly, instead of a cat?"

Mayrie looked at the silk-robed dolly and her eyes grew big with astonishment.

"Oh, Tlaus!" she cried, clapping her small hands together with rapture; "tan I have 'at boo'ful lady?"

"Do you like it?" he asked.

"I love it!" said she. "It's better 'an tats!"

"Then take it, dear, and be careful not to break it."

Mayrie took the dolly with a joy that was almost reverent, and her face dimpled with smiles as she started along the path toward home.

6. The Wickedness of the Awgwas

I must now tell you something about the Awgwas, that terrible race of creatures which caused our good Claus so much trouble and nearly succeeded in robbing the children of the world of their earliest and best friend.

I do not like to mention the Awgwas, but they are a part of this history, and can not be ignored. They were neither mortals nor immortals, but stood midway between those classes of beings. The Awgwas were invisible to ordinary people, but not to immortals. They could pass swiftly through the air from one part of the world to another, and had the power of influencing the minds of human beings to do their wicked will.

They were of gigantic stature and had coarse, scowling countenances which showed plainly their hatred of all mankind. They possessed no consciences whatever and delighted only in evil deeds.

Their homes were in rocky, mountainous places, from whence they sallied forth to accomplish their wicked purposes.

The one of their number that could think of the most horrible deed for them to do was always elected the King Awgwa, and all the race obeyed his orders. Sometimes these creatures lived to become a hundred years old, but usually they fought so fiercely among themselves that many were destroyed in combat, and when they died that was the end of them. Mortals were powerless to harm them and the immortals shuddered when the Awgwas were mentioned, and always avoided them. So they flourished for many years unopposed and accomplished much evil.

I am glad to assure you that these vile creatures have long since perished and passed from earth; but in the days when Claus was making his first toys they were a numerous and powerful tribe.

One of the principal sports of the Awgwas was to inspire angry passions in the hearts of little children, so that they quarreled and fought with one another. They would tempt boys to eat of unripe fruit, and then delight in the pain they suffered; they urged little girls to disobey their parents, and then would laugh when the children were punished. I do not know what causes a

child to be naughty in these days, but when the Awgwas were on earth naughty children were usually under their influence.

Now, when Claus began to make children happy he kept them out of the power of the Awgwas; for children possessing such lovely playthings as he gave them had no wish to obey the evil thoughts the Awgwas tried to thrust into their minds.

Therefore, one year when the wicked tribe was to elect a new King, they chose an Awgwa who proposed to destroy Claus and take him away from the children.

"There are, as you know, fewer naughty children in the world since Claus came to the Laughing Valley and began to make his toys," said the new King, as he squatted upon a rock and looked around at the scowling faces of his people. "Why, Bessie Blithesome has not stamped her foot once this month, nor has Mayrie's brother slapped his sister's face or thrown the puppy into the rain-barrel. Little Weekum took his bath last night without screaming or struggling, because his mother had promised he should take his toy cat to bed with him! Such a condition of affairs is awful for any Awgwa to think of, and the only way we can direct the naughty actions of children is to take this person Claus away from them."

"Good! good!" cried the big Awgwas, in a chorus, and they clapped their hands to applaud the speech of the King.

"But what shall we do with him?" asked one of the creatures.

"I have a plan," replied the wicked King; and what his plan was you will soon discover.

That night Claus went to bed feeling very happy, for he had completed no less than four pretty toys during the day, and they were sure, he thought, to make four little children happy. But while he slept the band of invisible Awgwas surrounded his bed, bound him with stout cords, and then flew away with him to the middle of a dark forest in far off Ethop, where they laid him down and left him.

When morning came Claus found himself thousands of miles from any human being, a prisoner in the wild jungle of an unknown land.

From the limb of a tree above his head swayed a huge python, one of those reptiles that are able to crush a man's bones in their coils. A few yards away crouched a savage panther, its glaring red eyes fixed full on the helpless Claus. One of those monstrous spotted spiders

whose sting is death crept stealthily toward him over the matted leaves, which shriveled and turned black at its very touch.

But Claus had been reared in Burzee, and was not afraid.

"Come to me, ye Knooks of the Forest!" he cried, and gave the low, peculiar whistle that the Knooks know.

The panther, which was about to spring upon its victim, turned and slunk away. The python swung itself into the tree and disappeared among the leaves. The spider stopped short in its advance and hid beneath a rotting log.

Claus had no time to notice them, for he was surrounded by a band of harsh-featured Knooks, more crooked and deformed in appearance than any he had ever seen.

"Who are you that call on us?" demanded one, in a gruff voice.

"The friend of your brothers in Burzee," answered Claus. "I have been brought here by my enemies, the Awgwas, and left to perish miserably. Yet now I implore your help to release me and to send me home again."

"Have you the sign?" asked another.

"Yes," said Claus.

They cut his bonds, and with his free arms he made the secret sign of the Knooks.

Instantly they assisted him to stand upon his feet, and they brought him food and drink to strengthen him.

"Our brothers of Burzee make queer friends," grumbled an ancient Knook whose flowing beard was pure white. "But he who knows our secret sign and signal is entitled to our help, whoever he may be. Close your eyes, stranger, and we will conduct you to your home. Where shall we seek it?"

"'Tis in the Laughing Valley," answered Claus, shutting his eyes.

"There is but one Laughing Valley in the known world, so we can not go astray," remarked the Knook.

As he spoke the sound of his voice seemed to die away, so Claus opened his eyes to see what caused the change. To his astonishment he found himself seated on the bench by his own door, with the Laughing Valley spread out before him. That day he visited the Wood-Nymphs and related his adventure to Queen Zurline and Necile.

"The Awgwas have become your enemies," said the lovely Queen, thoughtfully; "so we must do all we can to protect you from their power."

"It was cowardly to bind him while he slept," remarked Necile, with indignation.

"The evil ones are ever cowardly," answered Zurline, "but our friend's slumber shall not be disturbed again."

The Queen herself came to the dwelling of Claus that evening and placed her Seal on every door and window, to keep out the Awgwas. And under the Seal of Queen Zurline was placed the Seal of the Fairies and the Seal of the Ryls and the Seals of the Knooks, that the charm might become more powerful.

And Claus carried his toys to the children again, and made many more of the little ones happy.

You may guess how angry the King Awgwa and his fierce band were when it was known to them that Claus had escaped from the Forest of Ethop.

They raged madly for a whole week, and then held another meeting among the rocks.

"It is useless to carry him where the Knooks reign," said the King, "for he has their protection. So let us cast him into a cave of our own mountains, where he will surely perish."

This was promptly agreed to, and the wicked band set out that night to seize Claus. But they found his dwelling guarded by the Seals of the Immortals and were obliged to go away baffled and disappointed.

"Never mind," said the King; "he does not sleep always!"

Next day, as Claus traveled to the village across the plain, where he intended to present a toy squirrel to a lame boy, he was suddenly set upon by the Awgwas, who seized him and carried him away to the mountains.

There they thrust him within a deep cavern and rolled many huge rocks against the entrance to prevent his escape.

Deprived thus of light and food, and with little air to breathe, our Claus was, indeed, in a pitiful plight. But he spoke the mystic words of the Fairies, which always command their friendly aid, and they came to his rescue and transported him to the Laughing Valley in the twinkling of an eye.

Thus the Awgwas discovered they might not destroy one who had earned the friendship of the immortals; so the evil band sought other means of keeping Claus from bringing happiness to children and so making them obedient.

Whenever Claus set out to carry his toys to the little ones an Awgwa, who had been set to watch his movements, sprang upon him and snatched the toys from his grasp. And the children were no more disappointed than was Claus when he was obliged to return home disconsolate. Still he persevered, and made many toys for his little friends and started with them for the villages. And always the Awgwas robbed him as soon as he had left the Valley.

They threw the stolen playthings into one of their lonely caverns, and quite a heap of toys accumulated before Claus became discouraged and gave up all attempts to leave the Valley. Then children began coming to him, since they found he did not go to them; but the wicked Awgwas flew around them and caused their steps to stray and the paths to become crooked, so never a little one could find a way into the Laughing Valley.

Lonely days now fell upon Claus, for he was denied the pleasure of bringing happiness to the children whom he had learned to love. Yet he bore up bravely, for he thought surely the time would come when the Awgwas would abandon their evil designs to injure him.

He devoted all his hours to toy-making, and when one plaything had been completed he stood it on a shelf he had built for that purpose. When the shelf became filled with rows of toys he made another one, and filled that also. So that in time he had many shelves filled with gay and beautiful toys representing horses, dogs, cats, elephants, lambs, rabbits and deer, as well as pretty dolls of all sizes and balls and marbles of baked clay painted in gay colors.

Often, as he glanced at this array of childish treasures, the heart of good old Claus became sad, so greatly did he long to carry the toys to his children. And at last, because he could bear

it no longer, he ventured to go to the great Ak, to whom he told the story of his persecution by the Awgwas, and begged the Master Woodsman to assist him.

7. The Great Battle Between Good and Evil

Ak listened gravely to the recital of Claus, stroking his beard the while with the slow, graceful motion that betokened deep thought. He nodded approvingly when Claus told how the Knooks and Fairies had saved him from death, and frowned when he heard how the Awgwas had stolen the children's toys. At last he said:

"From the beginning I have approved the work you are doing among the children of men, and it annoys me that your good deeds should be thwarted by the Awgwas. We immortals have no connection whatever with the evil creatures who have attacked you. Always have we avoided them, and they, in turn, have hitherto taken care not to cross our pathway. But in this matter I find they have interfered with one of our friends, and I will ask them to abandon their persecutions, as you are under our protection."

Claus thanked the Master Woodsman most gratefully and returned to his Valley, while Ak, who never delayed carrying out his promises, at once traveled to the mountains of the Awgwas.

There, standing on the bare rocks, he called on the King and his people to appear.

Instantly the place was filled with throngs of the scowling Awgwas, and their King, perching himself on a point of rock, demanded fiercely:

"Who dares call on us?"

"It is I, the Master Woodsman of the World," responded Ak.

"Here are no forests for you to claim," cried the King, angrily. "We owe no allegiance to you, nor to any immortal!"

"That is true," replied Ak, calmly. "Yet you have ventured to interfere with the actions of Claus, who dwells in the Laughing Valley, and is under our protection."

Many of the Awgwas began muttering at this speech, and their King turned threateningly on the Master Woodsman.

"You are set to rule the forests, but the plains and the valleys are ours!" he shouted. "Keep to your own dark woods! We will do as we please with Claus."

"You shall not harm our friend in any way!" replied Ak.

"Shall we not?" asked the King, impudently. "You will see! Our powers are vastly superior to those of mortals, and fully as great as those of immortals."

"It is your conceit that misleads you!" said Ak, sternly. "You are a transient race, passing from life into nothingness. We, who live forever, pity but despise you. On earth you are scorned by all, and in Heaven you have no place! Even the mortals, after their earth life, enter another existence for all time, and so are your superiors. How then dare you, who are neither mortal nor immortal, refuse to obey my wish?"

The Awgwas sprang to their feet with menacing gestures, but their King motioned them back.

"Never before," he cried to Ak, while his voice trembled with rage, "has an immortal declared himself the master of the Awgwas! Never shall an immortal venture to interfere with our actions again! For we will avenge your scornful words by killing your friend Claus within three days. Nor you, nor all the immortals can save him from our wrath. We defy your powers! Begone, Master Woodsman of the World! In the country of the Awgwas you have no place."

"It is war!" declared Ak, with flashing eyes.

"It is war!" returned the King, savagely. "In three days your friend will be dead."

The Master turned away and came to his Forest of Burzee, where he called a meeting of the immortals and told them of the defiance of the Awgwas and their purpose to kill Claus within three days.

The little folk listened to him quietly.

"What shall we do?" asked Ak.

"These creatures are of no benefit to the world," said the Prince of the Knooks; "we must destroy them."

"Their lives are devoted only to evil deeds," said the Prince of the Ryls. "We must destroy them."

"They have no conscience, and endeavor to make all mortals as bad as themselves," said the Queen of the Fairies. "We must destroy them."

"They have defied the great Ak, and threaten the life of our adopted son," said beautiful Queen Zurline. "We must destroy them."

The Master Woodsman smiled.

"You speak well," said he. "These Awgwas we know to be a powerful race, and they will fight desperately; yet the outcome is certain. For we who live can never die, even though conquered by our enemies, while every Awgwa who is struck down is one foe the less to oppose us. Prepare, then, for battle, and let us resolve to show no mercy to the wicked!"

Thus arose that terrible war between the immortals and the spirits of evil which is sung of in Fairyland to this very day.

The King Awgwa and his band determined to carry out the threat to destroy Claus. They now hated him for two reasons: he made children happy and was a friend of the Master Woodsman. But since Ak's visit they had reason to fear the opposition of the immortals, and they dreaded defeat. So the King sent swift messengers to all parts of the world to summon every evil creature to his aid.

And on the third day after the declaration of war a mighty army was at the command of the King Awgwa. There were three hundred Asiatic Dragons, breathing fire that consumed everything it touched. These hated mankind and all good spirits. And there were the three-eyed Giants of Tatory, a host in themselves, who liked nothing better than to fight. And next came the Black Demons from Patalonia, with great spreading wings like those of a bat, which swept terror and misery through the world as they beat upon the air. And joined to these were the Goozzle-Goblins, with long talons as sharp as swords, with which they clawed the flesh from their foes. Finally, every mountain Awgwa in the world had come to participate in the great battle with the immortals.

The King Awgwa looked around upon this vast army and his heart beat high with wicked pride, for he believed he would surely triumph over his gentle enemies, who had never before been known to fight. But the Master Woodsman had not been idle. None of his people was

used to warfare, yet now that they were called upon to face the hosts of evil they willingly prepared for the fray.

Ak had commanded them to assemble in the Laughing Valley, where Claus, ignorant of the terrible battle that was to be waged on his account, was quietly making his toys.

Soon the entire Valley, from hill to hill, was filled with the little immortals. The Master Woodsman stood first, bearing a gleaming ax that shone like burnished silver. Next came the Ryls, armed with sharp thorns from bramblebushes. Then the Knooks, bearing the spears they used when they were forced to prod their savage beasts into submission. The Fairies, dressed in white gauze with rainbow-hued wings, bore golden wands, and the Wood-nymphs, in their uniforms of oak-leaf green, carried switches from ash trees as weapons.

Loud laughed the Awgwa King when he beheld the size and the arms of his foes. To be sure the mighty ax of the Woodsman was to be dreaded, but the sweet-faced Nymphs and pretty Fairies, the gentle Ryls and crooked Knooks were such harmless folk that he almost felt shame at having called such a terrible host to oppose them.

"Since these fools dare fight," he said to the leader of the Tatory Giants, "I will overwhelm them with our evil powers!"

To begin the battle he poised a great stone in his left hand and cast it full against the sturdy form of the Master Woodsman, who turned it aside with his ax. Then rushed the three-eyed Giants of Tatory upon the Knooks, and the Goozzle-Goblins upon the Ryls, and the firebreathing Dragons upon the sweet Fairies. Because the Nymphs were Ak's own people the band of Awgwas sought them out, thinking to overcome them with ease.

But it is the Law that while Evil, unopposed, may accomplish terrible deeds, the powers of Good can never be overthrown when opposed to Evil. Well had it been for the King Awgwa had he known the Law!

His ignorance cost him his existence, for one flash of the ax borne by the Master Woodsman of the World cleft the wicked King in twain and rid the earth of the vilest creature it contained.

Greatly marveled the Tatory Giants when the spears of the little Knooks pierced their thick walls of flesh and sent them reeling to the ground with howls of agony.

Woe came upon the sharp-taloned Goblins when the thorns of the Ryls reached their savage hearts and let their life-blood sprinkle all the plain. And afterward from every drop a thistle grew.

The Dragons paused astonished before the Fairy wands, from whence rushed a power that caused their fiery breaths to flow back on themselves so that they shriveled away and died.

As for the Awgwas, they had scant time to realize how they were destroyed, for the ash switches of the Nymphs bore a charm unknown to any Awgwa, and turned their foes into clods of earth at the slightest touch!

When Ak leaned upon his gleaming ax and turned to look over the field of battle he saw the few Giants who were able to run disappearing over the distant hills on their return to Tatory. The Goblins had perished every one, as had the terrible Dragons, while all that remained of the wicked Awgwas was a great number of earthen hillocks dotting the plain.

And now the immortals melted from the Valley like dew at sunrise, to resume their duties in the Forest, while Ak walked slowly and thoughtfully to the house of Claus and entered.

"You have many toys ready for the children," said the Woodsman, "and now you may carry them across the plain to the dwellings and the villages without fear."

"Will not the Awgwas harm me?" asked Claus, eagerly.

"The Awgwas," said Ak, "have perished!"

Now I will gladly have done with wicked spirits and with fighting and bloodshed. It was not from choice that I told of the Awgwas and their allies, and of their great battle with the immortals. They were part of this history, and could not be avoided.

8. The First Journey with the Reindeer

Those were happy days for Claus when he carried his accumulation of toys to the children who had awaited them so long. During his imprisonment in the Valley he had been so industrious that all his shelves were filled with playthings, and after quickly supplying the little ones living near by he saw he must now extend his travels to wider fields.

Remembering the time when he had journeyed with Ak through all the world, he knew children were everywhere, and he longed to make as many as possible happy with his gifts.

So he loaded a great sack with all kinds of toys, slung it upon his back that he might carry it more easily, and started off on a longer trip than he had yet undertaken.

Wherever he showed his merry face, in hamlet or in farmhouse, he received a cordial welcome, for his fame had spread into far lands. At each village the children swarmed about him, following his footsteps wherever he went; and the women thanked him gratefully for the joy he brought their little ones; and the men looked upon him curiously that he should devote his time to such a queer occupation as toy-making. But every one smiled on him and gave him kindly words, and Claus felt amply repaid for his long journey.

When the sack was empty he went back again to the Laughing Valley and once more filled it to the brim. This time he followed another road, into a different part of the country, and carried happiness to many children who never before had owned a toy or guessed that such a delightful plaything existed.

After a third journey, so far away that Claus was many days walking the distance, the store of toys became exhausted and without delay he set about making a fresh supply.

From seeing so many children and studying their tastes he had acquired several new ideas about toys.

The dollies were, he had found, the most delightful of all playthings for babies and little girls, and often those who could not say "dolly" would call for a "doll" in their sweet baby talk. So Claus resolved to make many dolls, of all sizes, and to dress them in bright-colored clothing. The older boys—and even some of the girls—loved the images of animals, so he still made cats and elephants and horses. And many of the little fellows had musical natures, and longed for drums and cymbals and whistles and horns. So he made a number of toy drums, with tiny sticks to beat them with; and he made whistles from the willow trees, and horns from the bog-reeds, and cymbals from bits of beaten metal.

All this kept him busily at work, and before he realized it the winter season came, with deeper snows than usual, and he knew he could not leave the Valley with his heavy pack. Moreover, the next trip would take him farther from home than ever before, and Jack Frost was

mischievous enough to nip his nose and ears if he undertook the long journey while the Frost King reigned. The Frost King was Jack's father and never reproved him for his pranks.

So Claus remained at his work-bench; but he whistled and sang as merrily as ever, for he would allow no disappointment to sour his temper or make him unhappy.

One bright morning he looked from his window and saw two of the deer he had known in the Forest walking toward his house.

Claus was surprised; not that the friendly deer should visit him, but that they walked on the surface of the snow as easily as if it were solid ground, notwithstanding the fact that throughout the Valley the snow lay many feet deep. He had walked out of his house a day or two before and had sunk to his armpits in a drift.

So when the deer came near he opened the door and called to them:

"Good morning, Flossie! Tell me how you are able to walk on the snow so easily."

"It is frozen hard," answered Flossie.

"The Frost King has breathed on it," said Glossie, coming up, "and the surface is now as solid as ice."

"Perhaps," remarked Claus, thoughtfully, "I might now carry my pack of toys to the children."

"Is it a long journey?" asked Flossie.

"Yes; it will take me many days, for the pack is heavy," answered Claus.

"Then the snow would melt before you could get back," said the deer. "You must wait until spring, Claus."

Claus sighed. "Had I your fleet feet," said he, "I could make the journey in a day."

"But you have not," returned Glossie, looking at his own slender legs with pride.

"Perhaps I could ride upon your back," Claus ventured to remark, after a pause.

"Oh no; our backs are not strong enough to bear your weight," said Flossie, decidedly. "But if you had a sledge, and could harness us to it, we might draw you easily, and your pack as well."

"I'll make a sledge!" exclaimed Claus. "Will you agree to draw me if I do?"

"Well," replied Flossie, "we must first go and ask the Knooks, who are our guardians, for permission; but if they consent, and you can make a sledge and harness, we will gladly assist you."

"Then go at once!" cried Claus, eagerly. "I am sure the friendly Knooks will give their consent, and by the time you are back I shall be ready to harness you to my sledge."

Flossie and Glossie, being deer of much intelligence, had long wished to see the great world, so they gladly ran over the frozen snow to ask the Knooks if they might carry Claus on his journey.

Meantime the toy-maker hurriedly began the construction of a sledge, using material from his wood-pile. He made two long runners that turned upward at the front ends, and across these nailed short boards, to make a platform. It was soon completed, but was as rude in appearance as it is possible for a sledge to be.

The harness was more difficult to prepare, but Claus twisted strong cords together and knotted them so they would fit around the necks of the deer, in the shape of a collar. From these ran other cords to fasten the deer to the front of the sledge.

Before the work was completed Glossie and Flossie were back from the Forest, having been granted permission by Will Knook to make the journey with Claus provided they would to Burzee by daybreak the next morning.

"That is not a very long time," said Flossie; "but we are swift and strong, and if we get started by this evening we can travel many miles during the night."

Claus decided to make the attempt, so he hurried on his preparations as fast as possible. After a time he fastened the collars around the necks of his steeds and harnessed them to his rude sledge. Then he placed a stool on the little platform, to serve as a seat, and filled a sack with his prettiest toys.

"How do you intend to guide us?" asked Glossie. "We have never been out of the Forest before, except to visit your house, so we shall not know the way."

Claus thought about that for a moment. Then he brought more cords and fastened two of them to the spreading antlers of each deer, one on the right and the other on the left.

"Those will be my reins," said Claus, "and when I pull them to the right or to the left you must go in that direction. If I do not pull the reins at all you may go straight ahead."

"Very well," answered Glossie and Flossie; and then they asked: "Are you ready?"

Claus seated himself upon the stool, placed the sack of toys at his feet, and then gathered up the reins.

"All ready!" he shouted; "away we go!"

The deer leaned forward, lifted their slender limbs, and the next moment away flew the sledge over the frozen snow. The swiftness of the motion surprised Claus, for in a few strides they were across the Valley and gliding over the broad plain beyond.

The day had melted into evening by the time they started; for, swiftly as Claus had worked, many hours had been consumed in making his preparations. But the moon shone brightly to light their way, and Claus soon decided it was just as pleasant to travel by night as by day.

The deer liked it better; for, although they wished to see something of the world, they were timid about meeting men, and now all the dwellers in the towns and farmhouses were sound asleep and could not see them.

Away and away they sped, on and on over the hills and through the valleys and across the plains until they reached a village where Claus had never been before.

Here he called on them to stop, and they immediately obeyed. But a new difficulty now presented itself, for the people had locked their doors when they went to bed, and Claus found he could not enter the houses to leave his toys.

"I am afraid, my friends, we have made our journey for nothing," said he, "for I shall be obliged to carry my playthings back home again without giving them to the children of this village."

"What's the matter?" asked Flossie.

"The doors are locked," answered Claus, "and I can not get in."

Glossie looked around at the houses. The snow was quite deep in that village, and just before them was a roof only a few feet above the sledge. A broad chimney, which seemed to Glossie big enough to admit Claus, was at the peak of the roof.

"Why don't you climb down that chimney?" asked Glossie.

Claus looked at it.

"That would be easy enough if I were on top of the roof," he answered.

"Then hold fast and we will take you there," said the deer, and they gave one bound to the roof and landed beside the big chimney.

"Good!" cried Claus, well pleased, and he slung the pack of toys over his shoulder and got into the chimney.

There was plenty of soot on the bricks, but he did not mind that, and by placing his hands and knees against the sides he crept downward until he had reached the fireplace. Leaping lightly over the smoldering coals he found himself in a large sitting-room, where a dim light was burning.

From this room two doorways led into smaller chambers. In one a woman lay asleep, with a baby beside her in a crib.

Claus laughed, but he did not laugh aloud for fear of waking the baby. Then he slipped a big doll from his pack and laid it in the crib. The little one smiled, as if it dreamed of the pretty plaything it was to find on the morrow, and Claus crept softly from the room and entered at the other doorway.

Here were two boys, fast asleep with their arms around each other's neck. Claus gazed at them lovingly a moment and then placed upon the bed a drum, two horns and a wooden elephant.

He did not linger, now that his work in this house was done, but climbed the chimney again and seated himself on his sledge.

"Can you find another chimney?" he asked the reindeer.

"Easily enough," replied Glossie and Flossie.

Down to the edge of the roof they raced, and then, without pausing, leaped through the air to the top of the next building, where a huge, old-fashioned chimney stood.

"Don't be so long, this time," called Flossie, "or we shall never get back to the Forest by daybreak."

Claus made a trip down this chimney also and found five children sleeping in the house, all of whom were quickly supplied with toys.

When he returned the deer sprang to the next roof, but on descending the chimney Claus found no children there at all. That was not often the case in this village, however, so he lost less time than you might suppose in visiting the dreary homes where there were no little ones.

When he had climbed down the chimneys of all the houses in that village, and had left a toy for every sleeping child, Claus found that his great sack was not yet half emptied.

"Onward, friends!" he called to the deer; "we must seek another village."

So away they dashed, although it was long past midnight, and in a surprisingly short time they came to a large city, the largest Claus had ever visited since he began to make toys. But, nothing daunted by the throng of houses, he set to work at once and his beautiful steeds carried him rapidly from one roof to another, only the highest being beyond the leaps of the agile deer.

At last the supply of toys was exhausted and Claus seated himself in the sledge, with the empty sack at his feet, and turned the heads of Glossie and Flossie toward home.

Presently Flossie asked:

"What is that gray streak in the sky?"

"It is the coming dawn of day," answered Claus, surprised to find that it was so late.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Glossie; "then we shall not be home by daybreak, and the Knooks will punish us and never let us come again."

"We must race for the Laughing Valley and make our best speed," returned Flossie; "so hold fast, friend Claus!"

Claus held fast and the next moment was flying so swiftly over the snow that he could not see the trees as they whirled past. Up hill and down dale, swift as an arrow shot from a bow they dashed, and Claus shut his eyes to keep the wind out of them and left the deer to find their own way.

It seemed to him they were plunging through space, but he was not at all afraid. The Knooks were severe masters, and must be obeyed at all hazards, and the gray streak in the sky was growing brighter every moment.

Finally the sledge came to a sudden stop and Claus, who was taken unawares, tumbled from his seat into a snowdrift. As he picked himself up he heard the deer crying:

"Quick, friend, quick! Cut away our harness!"

He drew his knife and rapidly severed the cords, and then he wiped the moisture from his eyes and looked around him.

The sledge had come to a stop in the Laughing Valley, only a few feet, he found, from his own door. In the East the day was breaking, and turning to the edge of Burzee he saw Glossie and Flossie just disappearing in the Forest.

9. "Santa Claus!"

Claus thought that none of the children would ever know where the toys came from which they found by their bedsides when they wakened the following morning. But kindly deeds are sure to bring fame, and fame has many wings to carry its tidings into far lands; so for miles and miles in every direction people were talking of Claus and his wonderful gifts to children. The sweet generousness of his work caused a few selfish folk to sneer, but even these were forced to admit their respect for a man so gentle-natured that he loved to devote his life to pleasing the helpless little ones of his race.

Therefore the inhabitants of every city and village had been eagerly watching the coming of Claus, and remarkable stories of his beautiful playthings were told the children to keep them patient and contented.

When, on the morning following the first trip of Claus with his deer, the little ones came running to their parents with the pretty toys they had found, and asked from whence they came, they was but one reply to the question.

"The good Claus must have been here, my darlings; for his are the only toys in all the world!"

"But how did he get in?" asked the children.

At this the fathers shook their heads, being themselves unable to understand how Claus had gained admittance to their homes; but the mothers, watching the glad faces of their dear ones, whispered that the good Claus was no mortal man but assuredly a Saint, and they piously blessed his name for the happiness he had bestowed upon their children.

"A Saint," said one, with bowed head, "has no need to unlock doors if it pleases him to enter our homes."

And, afterward, when a child was naughty or disobedient, its mother would say:

"You must pray to the good Santa Claus for forgiveness. He does not like naughty children, and, unless you repent, he will bring you no more pretty toys."

But Santa Claus himself would not have approved this speech. He brought toys to the children because they were little and helpless, and because he loved them. He knew that the best of children were sometimes naughty, and that the naughty ones were often good. It is the way with children, the world over, and he would not have changed their natures had he possessed the power to do so.

And that is how our Claus became Santa Claus. It is possible for any man, by good deeds, to enshrine himself as a Saint in the hearts of the people.

10. Christmas Eve

The day that broke as Claus returned from his night ride with Glossie and Flossie brought to him a new trouble. Will Knook, the chief guardian of the deer, came to him, surly and ill-tempered, to complain that he had kept Glossie and Flossie beyond daybreak, in opposition to his orders.

"Yet it could not have been very long after daybreak," said Claus.

"It was one minute after," answered Will Knook, "and that is as bad as one hour. I shall set the stinging gnats on Glossie and Flossie, and they will thus suffer terribly for their disobedience."

"Don't do that!" begged Claus. "It was my fault."

But Will Knook would listen to no excuses, and went away grumbling and growling in his ill-natured way.

For this reason Claus entered the Forest to consult Necile about rescuing the good deer from punishment. To his delight he found his old friend, the Master Woodsman, seated in the circle of Nymphs.

Ak listened to the story of the night journey to the children and of the great assistance the deer had been to Claus by drawing his sledge over the frozen snow.

"I do not wish my friends to be punished if I can save them," said the toy-maker, when he had finished the relation. "They were only one minute late, and they ran swifter than a bird flies to get home before daybreak."

Ak stroked his beard thoughtfully a moment, and then sent for the Prince of the Knooks, who rules all his people in Burzee, and also for the Queen of the Fairies and the Prince of the Ryls.

When all had assembled Claus told his story again, at Ak's command, and then the Master addressed the Prince of the Knooks, saying:

"The good work that Claus is doing among mankind deserves the support of every honest immortal. Already he is called a Saint in some of the towns, and before long the name of Santa Claus will be lovingly known in every home that is blessed with children. Moreover, he is a son of our Forest, so we owe him our encouragement. You, Ruler of the Knooks, have known him these many years; am I not right in saying he deserves our friendship?"

The Prince, crooked and sour of visage as all Knooks are, looked only upon the dead leaves at his feet and muttered: "You are the Master Woodsman of the World!"

Ak smiled, but continued, in soft tones: "It seems that the deer which are guarded by your people can be of great assistance to Claus, and as they seem willing to draw his sledge I beg that you will permit him to use their services whenever he pleases."

The Prince did not reply, but tapped the curled point of his sandal with the tip of his spear, as if in thought.

Then the Fairy Queen spoke to him in this way: "If you consent to Ak's request I will see that no harm comes to your deer while they are away from the Forest."

And the Prince of the Ryls added: "For my part I will allow to every deer that assists Claus the privilege of eating my casa plants, which give strength, and my grawle plants, which give fleetness of foot, and my marbon plants, which give long life."

And the Queen of the Nymphs said: "The deer which draw the sledge of Claus will be permitted to bathe in the Forest pool of Nares, which will give them sleek coats and wonderful beauty."

The Prince of the Knooks, hearing these promises, shifted uneasily on his seat, for in his heart he hated to refuse a request of his fellow immortals, although they were asking an unusual favor at his hands, and the Knooks are unaccustomed to granting favors of any kind. Finally he turned to his servants and said:

"Call Will Knook."

When surly Will came and heard the demands of the immortals he protested loudly against granting them.

"Deer are deer," said he, "and nothing but deer. Were they horses it would be right to harness them like horses. But no one harnesses deer because they are free, wild creatures, owing no service of any sort to mankind. It would degrade my deer to labor for Claus, who is only a man in spite of the friendship lavished on him by the immortals."

"You have heard," said the Prince to Ak. "There is truth in what Will says."

"Call Glossie and Flossie," returned the Master.

The deer were brought to the conference and Ak asked them if they objected to drawing the sledge for Claus.

"No, indeed!" replied Glossie; "we enjoyed the trip very much."

"And we tried to get home by daybreak," added Flossie, "but were unfortunately a minute too late."

"A minute lost at daybreak doesn't matter," said Ak. "You are forgiven for that delay."

"Provided it does not happen again," said the Prince of the Knooks, sternly.

"And will you permit them to make another journey with me?" asked Claus, eagerly.

The Prince reflected while he gazed at Will, who was scowling, and at the Master Woodsman, who was smiling.

Then he stood up and addressed the company as follows:

"Since you all urge me to grant the favor I will permit the deer to go with Claus once every year, on Christmas Eve, provided they always return to the Forest by daybreak. He may select any number he pleases, up to ten, to draw his sledge, and those shall be known among us as Reindeer, to distinguish them from the others. And they shall bathe in the Pool of Nares, and eat the casa and grawle and marbon plants and shall be under the especial protection of the Fairy Queen. And now cease scowling, Will Knook, for my words shall be obeyed!"

He hobbled quickly away through the trees, to avoid the thanks of Claus and the approval of the other immortals, and Will, looking as cross as ever, followed him.

But Ak was satisfied, knowing that he could rely on the promise of the Prince, however grudgingly given; and Glossie and Flossie ran home, kicking up their heels delightedly at every step.

"When is Christmas Eve?" Claus asked the Master.

"In about ten days," he replied.

"Then I can not use the deer this year," said Claus, thoughtfully, "for I shall not have time enough to make my sacksful of toys."

"The shrewd Prince foresaw that," responded Ak, "and therefore named Christmas Eve as the day you might use the deer, knowing it would cause you to lose an entire year."

"If I only had the toys the Awgwas stole from me," said Claus, sadly, "I could easily fill my sack for the children."

"Where are they?" asked the Master.

"I do not know," replied Claus, "but the wicked Awgwas probably hid them in the mountains."

Ak turned to the Fairy Queen.

"Can you find them?" he asked.

"I will try," she replied, brightly.

Then Claus went back to the Laughing Valley, to work as hard as he could, and a band of Fairies immediately flew to the mountain that had been haunted by the Awgwas and began a search for the stolen toys.

The Fairies, as we well know, possess wonderful powers; but the cunning Awgwas had hidden the toys in a deep cave and covered the opening with rocks, so no one could look in. Therefore all search for the missing playthings proved in vain for several days, and Claus, who sat at home waiting for news from the Fairies, almost despaired of getting the toys before Christmas Eve.

He worked hard every moment, but it took considerable time to carve out and to shape each toy and to paint it properly, so that on the morning before Christmas Eve only half of one small shelf above the window was filled with playthings ready for the children.

But on this morning the Fairies who were searching in the mountains had a new thought. They joined hands and moved in a straight line through the rocks that formed the mountain, beginning at the topmost peak and working downward, so that no spot could be missed by their bright eyes. And at last they discovered the cave where the toys had been heaped up by the wicked Awgwas.

It did not take them long to burst open the mouth of the cave, and then each one seized as many toys as he could carry and they all flew to Claus and laid the treasure before him.

The good man was rejoiced to receive, just in the nick of time, such a store of playthings with which to load his sledge, and he sent word to Glossie and Flossie to be ready for the journey at nightfall.

With all his other labors he had managed to find time, since the last trip, to repair the harness and to strengthen his sledge, so that when the deer came to him at twilight he had no difficulty in harnessing them.

"We must go in another direction to-night," he told them, "where we shall find children I have never yet visited. And we must travel fast and work quickly, for my sack is full of toys and running over the brim!"

So, just as the moon arose, they dashed out of the Laughing Valley and across the plain and over the hills to the south. The air was sharp and frosty and the starlight touched the snowflakes and made them glitter like countless diamonds. The reindeer leaped onward with strong, steady bounds, and Claus' heart was so light and merry that he laughed and sang while the wind whistled past his ears:

"With a ho, ho, ho!

And a ha, ha, ha!

And a ho, ho! ha, ha, hee!

Now away we go

O'er the frozen snow,

As merry as we can be!"

Jack Frost heard him and came racing up with his nippers, but when he saw it was Claus he laughed and turned away again.

The mother owls heard him as he passed near a wood and stuck their heads out of the hollow places in the tree-trunks; but when they saw who it was they whispered to the owlets nestling near them that it was only Santa Claus carrying toys to the children. It is strange how much those mother owls know.

Claus stopped at some of the scattered farmhouses and climbed down the chimneys to leave presents for the babies. Soon after he reached a village and worked merrily for an hour distributing playthings among the sleeping little ones. Then away again he went, signing his joyous carol:

"Now away we go

O'er the gleaming snow,

While the deer run swift and free!

For to girls and boys

We carry the toys

That will fill their hearts with glee!"

The deer liked the sound of his deep bass voice and kept time to the song with their hoofbeats on the hard snow; but soon they stopped at another chimney and Santa Claus, with sparkling eyes and face brushed red by the wind, climbed down its smoky sides and left a present for every child the house contained.

It was a merry, happy night. Swiftly the deer ran, and busily their driver worked to scatter his gifts among the sleeping children.

But the sack was empty at last, and the sledge headed homeward; and now again the race with daybreak began. Glossie and Flossie had no mind to be rebuked a second time for tardiness, so they fled with a swiftness that enabled them to pass the gale on which the Frost King rode, and soon brought them to the Laughing Valley.

It is true when Claus released his steeds from their harness the eastern sky was streaked with gray, but Glossie and Flossie were deep in the Forest before day fairly broke.

Claus was so wearied with his night's work that he threw himself upon his bed and fell into a deep slumber, and while he slept the Christmas sun appeared in the sky and shone upon hundreds of happy homes where the sound of childish laughter proclaimed that Santa Claus had made them a visit.

God bless him! It was his first Christmas Eve, and for hundreds of years since then he has nobly fulfilled his mission to bring happiness to the hearts of little children.

11. How the First Stockings Were Hung by the Chimneys

When you remember that no child, until Santa Claus began his travels, had ever known the pleasure of possessing a toy, you will understand how joy crept into the homes of those who had been favored with a visit from the good man, and how they talked of him day by day in loving tones and were honestly grateful for his kindly deeds. It is true that great warriors and mighty kings and clever scholars of that day were often spoken of by the people; but no one of them was so greatly beloved as Santa Claus, because none other was so unselfish as to devote himself to making others happy. For a generous deed lives longer than a great battle or a king's decree or a scholar's essay, because it spreads and leaves its mark on all nature and endures through many generations.

The bargain made with the Knook Prince changed the plans of Claus for all future time; for, being able to use the reindeer on but one night of each year, he decided to devote all the other days to the manufacture of playthings, and on Christmas Eve to carry them to the children of the world.

But a year's work would, he knew, result in a vast accumulation of toys, so he resolved to build a new sledge that would be larger and stronger and better-fitted for swift travel than the old and clumsy one.

His first act was to visit the Gnome King, with whom he made a bargain to exchange three drums, a trumpet and two dolls for a pair of fine steel runners, curled beautifully at the ends. For the Gnome King had children of his own, who, living in the hollows under the earth, in mines and caverns, needed something to amuse them.

In three days the steel runners were ready, and when Claus brought the playthings to the Gnome King, his Majesty was so greatly pleased with them that he presented Claus with a string of sweet-toned sleigh-bells, in addition to the runners.

"These will please Glossie and Flossie," said Claus, as he jingled the bells and listened to their merry sound. "But I should have two strings of bells, one for each deer."

"Bring me another trumpet and a toy cat," replied the King, "and you shall have a second string of bells like the first."

"It is a bargain!" cried Claus, and he went home again for the toys.

The new sledge was carefully built, the Knooks bringing plenty of strong but thin boards to use in its construction. Claus made a high, rounding dash-board to keep off the snow cast behind by the fleet hoofs of the deer; and he made high sides to the platform so that many toys could be carried, and finally he mounted the sledge upon the slender steel runners made by the Gnome King.

It was certainly a handsome sledge, and big and roomy. Claus painted it in bright colors, although no one was likely to see it during his midnight journeys, and when all was finished he sent for Glossie and Flossie to come and look at it.

The deer admired the sledge, but gravely declared it was too big and heavy for them to draw.

"We might pull it over the snow, to be sure," said Glossie; "but we would not pull it fast enough to enable us to visit the far-away cities and villages and return to the Forest by daybreak."

"Then I must add two more deer to my team," declared Claus, after a moment's thought.

"The Knook Prince allowed you as many as ten. Why not use them all?" asked Flossie. "Then we could speed like the lightning and leap to the highest roofs with ease."

"A team of ten reindeer!" cried Claus, delightedly. "That will be splendid. Please return to the Forest at once and select eight other deer as like yourselves as possible. And you must all eat of the casa plant, to become strong, and of the grawle plant, to become fleet of foot, and of the marbon plant, that you may live long to accompany me on my journeys. Likewise it will be well for you to bathe in the Pool of Nares, which the lovely Queen Zurline declares will render you rarely beautiful. Should you perform these duties faithfully there is no doubt that on next Christmas Eve my ten reindeer will be the most powerful and beautiful steeds the world has ever seen!"

So Glossie and Flossie went to the Forest to choose their mates, and Claus began to consider the question of a harness for them all.

In the end he called upon Peter Knook for assistance, for Peter's heart is as kind as his body is crooked, and he is remarkably shrewd, as well. And Peter agreed to furnish strips of tough leather for the harness.

This leather was cut from the skins of lions that had reached such an advanced age that they died naturally, and on one side was tawny hair while the other side was cured to the softness of velvet by the deft Knooks. When Claus received these strips of leather he sewed them neatly into a harness for the ten reindeer, and it proved strong and serviceable and lasted him for many years.

The harness and sledge were prepared at odd times, for Claus devoted most of his days to the making of toys. These were now much better than the first ones had been, for the immortals often came to his house to watch him work and to offer suggestions. It was Necile's idea to make some of the dolls say "papa" and "mama." It was a thought of the Knooks to put a squeak inside the lambs, so that when a child squeezed them they would say "baa-a-a!". And the Fairy Queen advised Claus to put whistles in the birds, so they could be made to sing, and wheels on the horses, so children could draw them around. Many animals perished in the Forest, from one cause or another, and their fur was brought to Claus that he might cover with it the small images of beasts he made for playthings. A merry Ryl suggested that Claus make a donkey with a nodding head, which he did, and afterward found that it amused the little ones immensely. And so the toys grew in beauty and attractiveness every day, until they were the wonder of even the immortals.

When another Christmas Eve drew near there was a monster load of beautiful gifts for the children ready to be loaded upon the big sledge. Claus filled three sacks to the brim, and tucked every corner of the sledge-box full of toys besides.

Then, at twilight, the ten reindeer appeared and Flossie introduced them all to Claus. They were Racer and Pacer, Reckless and Speckless, Fearless and Peerless, and Ready and Steady, who, with Glossie and Flossie, made up the ten who have traversed the world these hundreds of years with their generous master. They were all exceedingly beautiful, with slender limbs, spreading antlers, velvety dark eyes and smooth coats of fawn color spotted with white.

Claus loved them at once, and has loved them ever since, for they are loyal friends and have rendered him priceless service.

The new harness fitted them nicely and soon they were all fastened to the sledge by twos, with Glossie and Flossie in the lead. These wore the strings of sleigh-bells, and were so delighted with the music they made that they kept prancing up and down to make the bells ring.

Claus now seated himself in the sledge, drew a warm robe over his knees and his fur cap over his ears, and cracked his long whip as a signal to start.

Instantly the ten leaped forward and were away like the wind, while jolly Claus laughed gleefully to see them run and shouted a song in his big, hearty voice:

"With a ho, ho, ho!

And a ha, ha, ha!

And a ho, ho, ha, ha, hee!

Now away we go

O'er the frozen snow,

As merry as we can be!

There are many joys

In our load of toys,

As many a child will know;

We'll scatter them wide

On our wild night ride

O'er the crisp and sparkling snow!"

Now it was on this same Christmas Eve that little Margot and her brother Dick and her cousins Ned and Sara, who were visiting at Margot's house, came in from making a snow man, with their clothes damp, their mittens dripping and their shoes and stockings wet through and through. They were not scolded, for Margot's mother knew the snow was melting, but they were sent early to bed that their clothes might be hung over chairs to dry. The shoes were placed on the red tiles of the hearth, where the heat from the hot embers

would strike them, and the stockings were carefully hung in a row by the chimney, directly over the fireplace. That was the reason Santa Claus noticed them when he came down the chimney that night and all the household were fast asleep. He was in a tremendous hurry and seeing the stockings all belonged to children he quickly stuffed his toys into them and dashed up the chimney again, appearing on the roof so suddenly that the reindeer were astonished at his agility.

"I wish they would all hang up their stockings," he thought, as he drove to the next chimney. "It would save me a lot of time and I could then visit more children before daybreak."

When Margot and Dick and Ned and Sara jumped out of bed next morning and ran downstairs to get their stockings from the fireplace they were filled with delight to find the toys from Santa Claus inside them. In fact, I think they found more presents in their stockings than any other children of that city had received, for Santa Claus was in a hurry and did not stop to count the toys.

Of course they told all their little friends about it, and of course every one of them decided to hang his own stockings by the fireplace the next Christmas Eve. Even Bessie Blithesome, who made a visit to that city with her father, the great Lord of Lerd, heard the story from the children and hung her own pretty stockings by the chimney when she returned home at Christmas time.

On his next trip Santa Claus found so many stockings hung up in anticipation of his visit that he could fill them in a jiffy and be away again in half the time required to hunt the children up and place the toys by their bedsides.

The custom grew year after year, and has always been a great help to Santa Claus. And, with so many children to visit, he surely needs all the help we are able to give him.

12. The First Christmas Tree

Claus had always kept his promise to the Knooks by returning to the Laughing Valley by daybreak, but only the swiftness of his reindeer has enabled him to do this, for he travels over all the world.

He loved his work and he loved the brisk night ride on his sledge and the gay tinkle of the sleigh-bells. On that first trip with the ten reindeer only Glossie and Flossie wore bells; but each year thereafter for eight years Claus carried presents to the children of the Gnome King, and that good-natured monarch gave him in return a string of bells at each visit, so that finally every one of the ten deer was supplied, and you may imagine what a merry tune the bells played as the sledge sped over the snow.

The children's stockings were so long that it required a great many toys to fill them, and soon Claus found there were other things besides toys that children love. So he sent some of the Fairies, who were always his good friends, into the Tropics, from whence they returned with great bags full of oranges and bananas which they had plucked from the trees. And other Fairies flew to the wonderful Valley of Phunnyland, where delicious candies and bonbons grow thickly on the bushes, and returned laden with many boxes of sweetmeats for the little ones. These things Santa Claus, on each Christmas Eve, placed in the long stockings, together with his toys, and the children were glad to get them, you may be sure.

There are also warm countries where there is no snow in winter, but Claus and his reindeer visited them as well as the colder climes, for there were little wheels inside the runners of his sledge which permitted it to run as smoothly over bare ground as on the snow. And the children who lived in the warm countries learned to know the name of Santa Claus as well as those who lived nearer to the Laughing Valley.

Once, just as the reindeer were ready to start on their yearly trip, a Fairy came to Claus and told him of three little children who lived beneath a rude tent of skins on a broad plain where there were no trees whatever. These poor babies were miserable and unhappy, for their parents were ignorant people who neglected them sadly. Claus resolved to visit these children before he returned home, and during his ride he picked up the bushy top of a pine tree which the wind had broken off and placed it in his sledge.

It was nearly morning when the deer stopped before the lonely tent of skins where the poor children lay asleep. Claus at once planted the bit of pine tree in the sand and stuck many candles on the branches. Then he hung some of his prettiest toys on the tree, as well as several bags of candies. It did not take long to do all this, for Santa Claus works quickly, and when all was ready he lighted the candles and, thrusting his head in at the opening of the tent, he shouted:

"Merry Christmas, little ones!"

With that he leaped into his sledge and was out of sight before the children, rubbing the sleep from their eyes, could come out to see who had called them.

You can imagine the wonder and joy of those little ones, who had never in their lives known a real pleasure before, when they saw the tree, sparkling with lights that shone brilliant in the gray dawn and hung with toys enough to make them happy for years to come! They joined hands and danced around the tree, shouting and laughing, until they were obliged to pause for breath. And their parents, also, came out to look and wonder, and thereafter had more respect and consideration for their children, since Santa Claus had honored them with such beautiful gifts.

The idea of the Christmas tree pleased Claus, and so the following year he carried many of them in his sledge and set them up in the homes of poor people who seldom saw trees, and placed candles and toys on the branches. Of course he could not carry enough trees in one load of all who wanted them, but in some homes the fathers were able to get trees and have them all ready for Santa Claus when he arrived; and these the good Claus always decorated as prettily as possible and hung with toys enough for all the children who came to see the tree lighted.

These novel ideas and the generous manner in which they were carried out made the children long for that one night in the year when their friend Santa Claus should visit them, and as such anticipation is very pleasant and comforting the little ones gleaned much happiness by wondering what would happen when Santa Claus next arrived.

Perhaps you remember that stern Baron Braun who once drove Claus from his castle and forbade him to visit his children? Well, many years afterward, when the old Baron was dead and his son ruled in his place, the new Baron Braun came to the house of Claus with his train of knights and pages and henchmen and, dismounting from his charger, bared his head humbly before the friend of children.

"My father did not know your goodness and worth," he said, "and therefore threatened to hang you from the castle walls. But I have children of my own, who long for a visit from Santa Claus, and I have come to beg that you will favor them hereafter as you do other children."

Claus was pleased with this speech, for Castle Braun was the only place he had never visited, and he gladly promised to bring presents to the Baron's children the next Christmas Eve.

The Baron went away contented, and Claus kept his promise faithfully.

Thus did this man, through very goodness, conquer the hearts of all; and it is no wonder he was ever merry and gay, for there was no home in the wide world where he was not welcomed more royally than any king.

OLD AGE

1. The Mantle of Immortality

And now we come to a turning-point in the career of Santa Claus, and it is my duty to relate the most remarkable that has happened since the world began or mankind was created.

We have followed the life of Claus from the time he was found a helpless infant by the Wood-Nymph Necile and reared to manhood in the great Forest of Burzee. And we know how he began to make toys for children and how, with the assistance and goodwill of the immortals, he was able to distribute them to the little ones throughout the world.

For many years he carried on this noble work; for the simple, hard-working life he led gave him perfect health and strength. And doubtless a man can live longer in the beautiful Laughing Valley, where there are no cares and everything is peaceful and merry, than in any other part of the world.

But when many years had rolled away Santa Claus grew old. The long beard of golden brown that once covered his cheeks and chin gradually became gray, and finally turned to pure white. His hair was white, too, and there were wrinkles at the corners of his eyes, which showed plainly when he laughed. He had never been a very tall man, and now he became fat, and waddled very much like a duck when he walked. But in spite of these things he remained as lively as ever, and was just as jolly and gay, and his kind eyes sparkled as brightly as they did that first day when he came to the Laughing Valley.

Yet a time is sure to come when every mortal who has grown old and lived his life is required to leave this world for another; so it is no wonder that, after Santa Claus had driven his reindeer on many and many a Christmas Eve, those staunch friends finally whispered among themselves that they had probably drawn his sledge for the last time.

Then all the Forest of Burzee became sad and all the Laughing Valley was hushed; for every living thing that had known Claus had used to love him and to brighten at the sound of his footsteps or the notes of his merry whistle.

No doubt the old man's strength was at last exhausted, for he made no more toys, but lay on his bed as in a dream.

The Nymph Necile, she who had reared him and been his foster-mother, was still youthful and strong and beautiful, and it seemed to her but a short time since this aged, gray-bearded man had lain in her arms and smiled on her with his innocent, baby lips.

In this is shown the difference between mortals and immortals.

It was fortunate that the great Ak came to the Forest at this time. Necile sought him with troubled eyes and told him of the fate that threatened their friend Claus.

At once the Master became grave, and he leaned upon his ax and stroked his grizzled beard thoughtfully for many minutes. Then suddenly he stood up straight, and poised his powerful head with firm resolve, and stretched out his great right arm as if determined on doing some mighty deed. For a thought had come to him so grand in its conception that all the world might well bow before the Master Woodsman and honor his name forever!

It is well known that when the great Ak once undertakes to do a thing he never hesitates an instant. Now he summoned his fleetest messengers, and sent them in a flash to many parts of the earth. And when they were gone he turned to the anxious Necile and comforted her, saying:

"Be of good heart, my child; our friend still lives. And now run to your Queen and tell her that I have summoned a council of all the immortals of the world to meet with me here in Burzee this night. If they obey, and harken unto my words, Claus will drive his reindeer for countless ages yet to come."

At midnight there was a wondrous scene in the ancient Forest of Burzee, where for the first time in many centuries the rulers of the immortals who inhabit the earth were gathered together.

There was the Queen of the Water Sprites, whose beautiful form was as clear as crystal but continually dripped water on the bank of moss where she sat. And beside her was the King of the Sleep Fays, who carried a wand from the end of which a fine dust fell all around, so that no mortal could keep awake long enough to see him, as mortal eyes were sure to close in sleep as soon as the dust filled them. And next to him sat the Gnome King, whose people inhabit all that region under the earth's surface, where they guard the precious metals and the jewel stones that lie buried in rock and ore. At his right hand stood the King of the Sound Imps, who had wings on his feet, for his people are swift to carry all sounds that are made. When they are busy they carry the sounds but short distances, for there are many of them; but sometimes they speed with the sounds to places miles and miles away from where they are made. The King of the Sound Imps had an anxious and careworn face, for most people have no consideration for his Imps and, especially the boys and girls, make a great many unnecessary sounds which the Imps are obliged to carry when they might be better employed.

The next in the circle of immortals was the King of the Wind Demons, slender of frame, restless and uneasy at being confined to one place for even an hour. Once in a while he would leave his place and circle around the glade, and each time he did this the Fairy Queen was obliged to untangle the flowing locks of her golden hair and tuck them back of her pink ears. But she did not complain, for it was not often that the King of the Wind Demons came into the heart of the Forest. After the Fairy Queen, whose home you know was in old Burzee, came the King of the Light Elves, with his two Princes, Flash and Twilight, at his back. He never went anywhere without his Princes, for they were so mischievous that he dared not let them wander alone.

Prince Flash bore a lightning-bolt in his right hand and a horn of gunpowder in his left, and his bright eyes roved constantly around, as if he longed to use his blinding flashes. Prince Twilight held a great snuffer in one hand and a big black cloak in the other, and it is well known that unless Twilight is carefully watched the snuffers or the cloak will throw everything into darkness, and Darkness is the greatest enemy the King of the Light Elves has.

In addition to the immortals I have named were the King of the Knooks, who had come from his home in the jungles of India; and the King of the Ryls, who lived among the gay flowers

and luscious fruits of Valencia. Sweet Queen Zurline of the Wood-Nymphs completed the circle of immortals.

But in the center of the circle sat three others who possessed powers so great that all the Kings and Queens showed them reverence.

These were Ak, the Master Woodsman of the World, who rules the forests and the orchards and the groves; and Kern, the Master Husbandman of the World, who rules the grain fields and the meadows and the gardens; and Bo, the Master Mariner of the World, who rules the seas and all the craft that float thereon. And all other immortals are more or less subject to these three.

When all had assembled the Master Woodsman of the World stood up to address them, since he himself had summoned them to the council.

Very clearly he told them the story of Claus, beginning at the time when as a babe he had been adopted a child of the Forest, and telling of his noble and generous nature and his life-long labors to make children happy.

"And now," said Ak, "when he had won the love of all the world, the Spirit of Death is hovering over him. Of all men who have inhabited the earth none other so well deserves immortality, for such a life can not be spared so long as there are children of mankind to miss him and to grieve over his loss. We immortals are the servants of the world, and to serve the world we were permitted in the Beginning to exist. But what one of us is more worthy of immortality than this man Claus, who so sweetly ministers to the little children?"

He paused and glanced around the circle, to find every immortal listening to him eagerly and nodding approval. Finally the King of the Wind Demons, who had been whistling softly to himself, cried out:

"What is your desire, O Ak?"

"To bestow upon Claus the Mantle of Immortality!" said Ak, boldly.

That this demand was wholly unexpected was proved by the immortals springing to their feet and looking into each other's face with dismay and then upon Ak with wonder. For it was a grave matter, this parting with the Mantle of Immortality.

The Queen of the Water Sprites spoke in her low, clear voice, and the words sounded like raindrops splashing upon a window-pane.

"In all the world there is but one Mantle of Immortality," she said.

The King of the Sound Fays added:

"It has existed since the Beginning, and no mortal has ever dared to claim it."

And the Master Mariner of the World arose and stretched his limbs, saying:

"Only by the vote of every immortal can it be bestowed upon a mortal."

"I know all this," answered Ak, quietly. "But the Mantle exists, and if it was created, as you say, in the Beginning, it was because the Supreme Master knew that some day it would be required. Until now no mortal has deserved it, but who among you dares deny that the good Claus deserves it? Will you not all vote to bestow it upon him?"

They were silent, still looking upon one another questioningly.

"Of what use is the Mantle of Immortality unless it is worn?" demanded Ak. "What will it profit any one of us to allow it to remain in its lonely shrine for all time to come?"

"Enough!" cried the Gnome King, abruptly. "We will vote on the matter, yes or no. For my part, I say yes!"

"And I!" said the Fairy Queen, promptly, and Ak rewarded her with a smile.

"My people in Burzee tell me they have learned to love him; therefore I vote to give Claus the Mantle," said the King of the Ryls.

"He is already a comrade of the Knooks," announced the ancient King of that band. "Let him have immortality!"

"Let him have it—let him have it!" sighed the King of the Wind Demons.

"Why not?" asked the King of the Sleep Fays. "He never disturbs the slumbers my people allow humanity. Let the good Claus be immortal!"

"I do not object," said the King of the Sound Imps.

"Nor I," murmured the Queen of the Water Sprites.

"If Claus does not receive the Mantle it is clear none other can ever claim it," remarked the King of the Light Elves, "so let us have done with the thing for all time."

"The Wood-Nymphs were first to adopt him," said Queen Zurline. "Of course I shall vote to make him immortal."

Ak now turned to the Master Husbandman of the World, who held up his right arm and said "Yes!"

And the Master Mariner of the World did likewise, after which Ak, with sparkling eyes and smiling face, cried out:

"I thank you, fellow immortals! For all have voted 'yes,' and so to our dear Claus shall fall the one Mantle of Immortality that it is in our power to bestow!"

"Let us fetch it at once," said the Fay King; "I'm in a hurry."

They bowed assent, and instantly the Forest glade was deserted. But in a place midway between the earth and the sky was suspended a gleaming crypt of gold and platinum, aglow with soft lights shed from the facets of countless gems. Within a high dome hung the precious Mantle of Immortality, and each immortal placed a hand on the hem of the splendid Robe and said, as with one voice:

"We bestow this Mantle upon Claus, who is called the Patron Saint of Children!"

At this the Mantle came away from its lofty crypt, and they carried it to the house in the Laughing Valley.

The Spirit of Death was crouching very near to the bedside of Claus, and as the immortals approached she sprang up and motioned them back with an angry gesture. But when her eyes fell upon the Mantle they bore she shrank away with a low moan of disappointment and quitted that house forever.

Softly and silently the immortal Band dropped upon Claus the precious Mantle, and it closed about him and sank into the outlines of his body and disappeared from view. It became a part of his being, and neither mortal nor immortal might ever take it from him.

Then the Kings and Queens who had wrought this great deed dispersed to their various homes, and all were well contented that they had added another immortal to their Band.

And Claus slept on, the red blood of everlasting life coursing swiftly through his veins; and on his brow was a tiny drop of water that had fallen from the ever-melting gown of the Queen of the Water Sprites, and over his lips hovered a tender kiss that had been left by the sweet Nymph Necile. For she had stolen in when the others were gone to gaze with rapture upon the immortal form of her foster son.

2. When the World Grew Old

The next morning, when Santa Claus opened his eyes and gazed around the familiar room, which he had feared he might never see again, he was astonished to find his old strength renewed and to feel the red blood of perfect health coursing through his veins. He sprang from his bed and stood where the bright sunshine came in through his window and flooded him with its merry, dancing rays. He did not then understand what had happened to restore to him the vigor of youth, but in spite of the fact that his beard remained the color of snow and that wrinkles still lingered in the corners of his bright eyes, old Santa Claus felt as brisk and merry as a boy of sixteen, and was soon whistling contentedly as he busied himself fashioning new toys.

Then Ak came to him and told of the Mantle of Immortality and how Claus had won it through his love for little children.

It made old Santa look grave for a moment to think he had been so favored; but it also made him glad to realize that now he need never fear being parted from his dear ones. At once he began preparations for making a remarkable assortment of pretty and amusing playthings, and in larger quantities than ever before; for now that he might always devote himself to this work he decided that no child in the world, poor or rich, should hereafter go without a Christmas gift if he could manage to supply it.

The world was new in the days when dear old Santa Claus first began toy-making and won, by his loving deeds, the Mantle of Immortality. And the task of supplying cheering words, sympathy and pretty playthings to all the young of his race did not seem a difficult undertaking at all. But every year more and more children were born into the world, and these, when they grew up, began spreading slowly over all the face of the earth, seeking new

homes; so that Santa Claus found each year that his journeys must extend farther and farther from the Laughing Valley, and that the packs of toys must be made larger and ever larger.

So at length he took counsel with his fellow immortals how his work might keep pace with the increasing number of children that none might be neglected. And the immortals were so greatly interested in his labors that they gladly rendered him their assistance. Ak gave him his man Kilter, "the silent and swift." And the Knook Prince gave him Peter, who was more crooked and less surly than any of his brothers. And the Ryl Prince gave him Nuter, the sweetest tempered Ryl ever known. And the Fairy Queen gave him Wisk, that tiny, mischievous but lovable Fairy who knows today almost as many children as does Santa Claus himself.

With these people to help make the toys and to keep his house in order and to look after the sledge and the harness, Santa Claus found it much easier to prepare his yearly load of gifts, and his days began to follow one another smoothly and pleasantly.

Yet after a few generations his worries were renewed, for it was remarkable how the number of people continued to grow, and how many more children there were every year to be served. When the people filled all the cities and lands of one country they wandered into another part of the world; and the men cut down the trees in many of the great forests that had been ruled by Ak, and with the wood they built new cities, and where the forests had been were fields of grain and herds of browsing cattle.

You might think the Master Woodsman would rebel at the loss of his forests; but not so. The wisdom of Ak was mighty and farseeing.

"The world was made for men," said he to Santa Claus, "and I have but guarded the forests until men needed them for their use. I am glad my strong trees can furnish shelter for men's weak bodies, and warm them through the cold winters. But I hope they will not cut down all the trees, for mankind needs the shelter of the woods in summer as much as the warmth of blazing logs in winter. And, however crowded the world may grow, I do not think men will ever come to Burzee, nor to the Great Black Forest, nor to the wooded wilderness of Braz; unless they seek their shades for pleasure and not to destroy their giant trees."

By and by people made ships from the tree-trunks and crossed over oceans and built cities in far lands; but the oceans made little difference to the journeys of Santa Claus. His reindeer sped over the waters as swiftly as over land, and his sledge headed from east to west and

followed in the wake of the sun. So that as the earth rolled slowly over Santa Claus had all of twenty-four hours to encircle it each Christmas Eve, and the speedy reindeer enjoyed these wonderful journeys more and more.

So year after year, and generation after generation, and century after century, the world grew older and the people became more numerous and the labors of Santa Claus steadily increased. The fame of his good deeds spread to every household where children dwelt. And all the little ones loved him dearly; and the fathers and mothers honored him for the happiness he had given them when they too were young; and the aged grandsires and granddames remembered him with tender gratitude and blessed his name.

3. The Deputies of Santa Claus

However, there was one evil following in the path of civilization that caused Santa Claus a vast amount of trouble before he discovered a way to overcome it. But, fortunately, it was the last trial he was forced to undergo.

One Christmas Eve, when his reindeer had leaped to the top of a new building, Santa Claus was surprised to find that the chimney had been built much smaller than usual. But he had no time to think about it just then, so he drew in his breath and made himself as small as possible and slid down the chimney.

"I ought to be at the bottom by this time," he thought, as he continued to slip downward; but no fireplace of any sort met his view, and by and by he reached the very end of the chimney, which was in the cellar.

"This is odd!" he reflected, much puzzled by this experience. "If there is no fireplace, what on earth is the chimney good for?"

Then he began to climb out again, and found it hard work—the space being so small. And on his way up he noticed a thin, round pipe sticking through the side of the chimney, but could not guess what it was for.

Finally he reached the roof and said to the reindeer:

"There was no need of my going down that chimney, for I could find no fireplace through which to enter the house. I fear the children who live there must go without playthings this Christmas."

Then he drove on, but soon came to another new house with a small chimney. This caused Santa Claus to shake his head doubtfully, but he tried the chimney, nevertheless, and found it exactly like the other. Moreover, he nearly stuck fast in the narrow flue and tore his jacket trying to get out again; so, although he came to several such chimneys that night, he did not venture to descend any more of them.

"What in the world are people thinking of, to build such useless chimneys?" he exclaimed. "In all the years I have traveled with my reindeer I have never seen the like before."

True enough; but Santa Claus had not then discovered that stoves had been invented and were fast coming into use. When he did find it out he wondered how the builders of those houses could have so little consideration for him, when they knew very well it was his custom to climb down chimneys and enter houses by way of the fireplaces. Perhaps the men who built those houses had outgrown their own love for toys, and were indifferent whether Santa Claus called on their children or not. Whatever the explanation might be, the poor children were forced to bear the burden of grief and disappointment.

The following year Santa Claus found more and more of the new-fashioned chimneys that had no fireplaces, and the next year still more. The third year, so numerous had the narrow chimneys become, he even had a few toys left in his sledge that he was unable to give away, because he could not get to the children.

The matter had now become so serious that it worried the good man greatly, and he decided to talk it over with Kilter and Peter and Nuter and Wisk.

Kilter already knew something about it, for it had been his duty to run around to all the houses, just before Christmas, and gather up the notes and letters to Santa Claus that the children had written, telling what they wished put in their stockings or hung on their Christmas trees. But Kilter was a silent fellow, and seldom spoke of what he saw in the cities and villages. The others were very indignant.

"Those people act as if they do not wish their children to be made happy!" said sensible Peter, in a vexed tone. "The idea of shutting out such a generous friend to their little ones!"

"But it is my intention to make children happy whether their parents wish it or not," returned Santa Claus. "Years ago, when I first began making toys, children were even more neglected by their parents than they are now; so I have learned to pay no attention to thoughtless or selfish parents, but to consider only the longings of childhood."

"You are right, my master," said Nuter, the Ryl; "many children would lack a friend if you did not consider them, and try to make them happy."

"Then," declared the laughing Wisk, "we must abandon any thought of using these new-fashioned chimneys, but become burglars, and break into the houses some other way."

"What way?" asked Santa Claus.

"Why, walls of brick and wood and plaster are nothing to Fairies. I can easily pass through them whenever I wish, and so can Peter and Nuter and Kilter. Is it not so, comrades?"

"I often pass through the walls when I gather up the letters," said Kilter, and that was a long speech for him, and so surprised Peter and Nuter that their big round eyes nearly popped out of their heads.

"Therefore," continued the Fairy, "you may as well take us with you on your next journey, and when we come to one of those houses with stoves instead of fireplaces we will distribute the toys to the children without the need of using a chimney."

"That seems to me a good plan," replied Santa Claus, well pleased at having solved the problem. "We will try it next year."

That was how the Fairy, the Pixie, the Knook and the Ryl all rode in the sledge with their master the following Christmas Eve; and they had no trouble at all in entering the new-fashioned houses and leaving toys for the children that lived in them.

And their deft services not only relieved Santa Claus of much labor, but enabled him to complete his own work more quickly than usual, so that the merry party found themselves at home with an empty sledge a full hour before daybreak.

The only drawback to the journey was that the mischievous Wisk persisted in tickling the reindeer with a long feather, to see them jump; and Santa Claus found it necessary to watch him every minute and to tweak his long ears once or twice to make him behave himself.

But, taken all together, the trip was a great success, and to this day the four little folk always accompany Santa Claus on his yearly ride and help him in the distribution of his gifts.

But the indifference of parents, which had so annoyed the good Saint, did not continue very long, and Santa Claus soon found they were really anxious he should visit their homes on Christmas Eve and leave presents for their children.

So, to lighten his task, which was fast becoming very difficult indeed, old Santa decided to ask the parents to assist him.

"Get your Christmas trees all ready for my coming," he said to them; "and then I shall be able to leave the presents without loss of time, and you can put them on the trees when I am gone."

And to others he said: "See that the children's stockings are hung up in readiness for my coming, and then I can fill them as quick as a wink."

And often, when parents were kind and good-natured, Santa Claus would simply fling down his package of gifts and leave the fathers and mothers to fill the stockings after he had darted away in his sledge.

"I will make all loving parents my deputies!" cried the jolly old fellow, "and they shall help me do my work. For in this way I shall save many precious minutes and few children need be neglected for lack of time to visit them."

Besides carrying around the big packs in his swift-flying sledge old Santa began to send great heaps of toys to the toy-shops, so that if parents wanted larger supplies for their children they could easily get them; and if any children were, by chance, missed by Santa Claus on his yearly rounds, they could go to the toy-shops and get enough to make them happy and contented. For the loving friend of the little ones decided that no child, if he could help it, should long for toys in vain. And the toy-shops also proved convenient whenever a child fell ill, and needed a new toy to amuse it; and sometimes, on birthdays, the fathers and mothers go to the toy-shops and get pretty gifts for their children in honor of the happy event.

Perhaps you will now understand how, in spite of the bigness of the world, Santa Claus is able to supply all the children with beautiful gifts. To be sure, the old gentleman is rarely seen in these days; but it is not because he tries to keep out of sight, I assure you. Santa Claus is the same loving friend of children that in the old days used to play and romp with them by the hour; and I know he would love to do the same now, if he had the time. But, you see, he is so

busy all the year making toys, and so hurried on that one night when he visits our homes with his packs, that he comes and goes among us like a flash; and it is almost impossible to catch a glimpse of him.

And, although there are millions and millions more children in the world than there used to be, Santa Claus has never been known to complain of their increasing numbers.

"The more the merrier!" he cries, with his jolly laugh; and the only difference to him is the fact that his little workmen have to make their busy fingers fly faster every year to satisfy the demands of so many little ones.

"In all this world there is nothing so beautiful as a happy child," says good old Santa Claus; and if he had his way the children would all be beautiful, for all would be happy.