

**TALES BY MUSAEUS,
TIECK, RICHTER. IN TWO
VOLUMES. VOL. II, 1827**

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Tales by Musaeus, Tieck, Richter. In two Volumes. Vol. II, 1827 by Thomas Carlyle

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THOMAS CARLYLE

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Eng. Sem.

TALES

BY

MUSÆUS, TIECK, RICHTER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY

THOMAS CARLYLE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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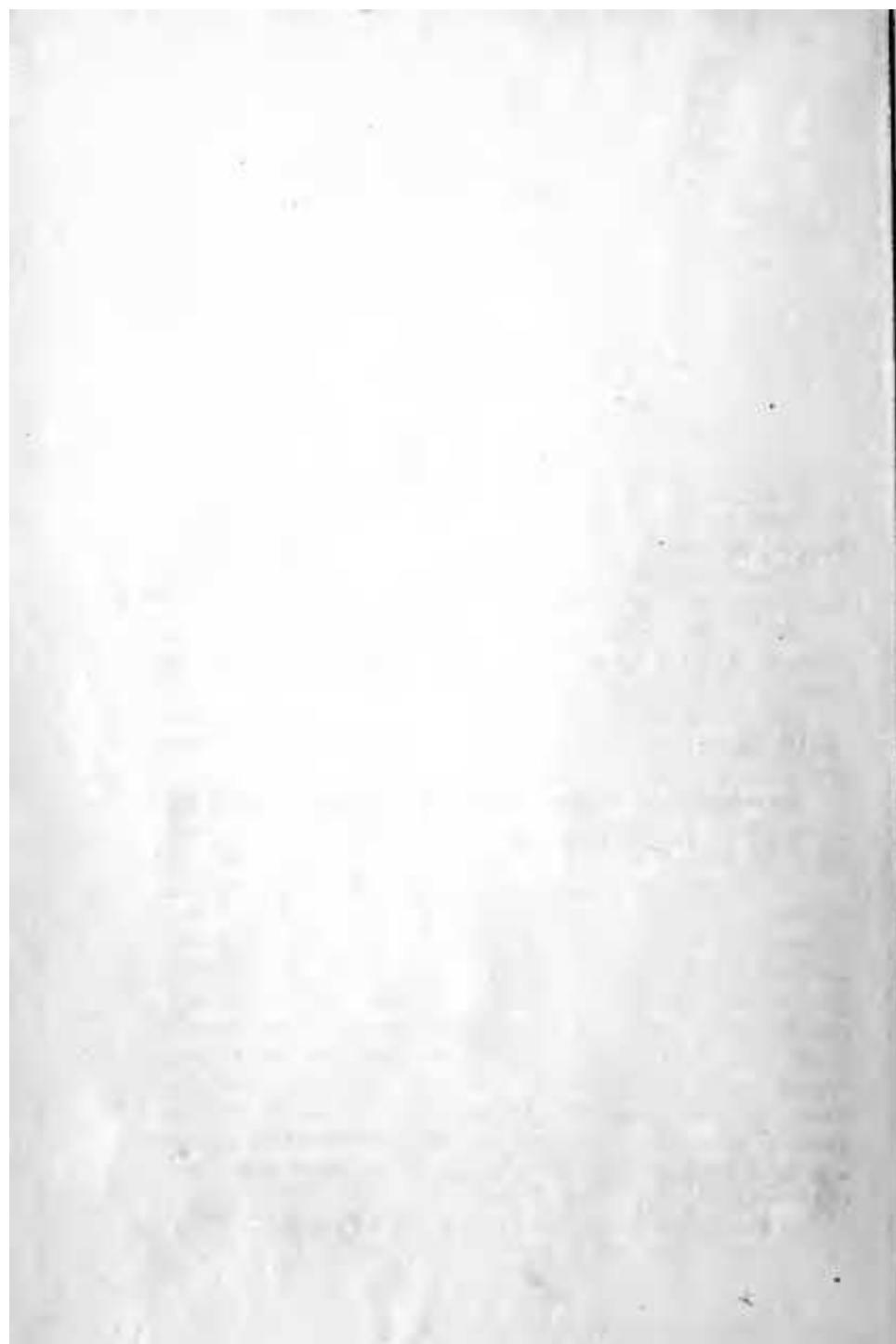


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THE ELVES.

"WHERE is our little Mary?" said the father.

"She is playing out upon the green there with our neighbour's boy," replied the mother.

"I wish they may not run away and lose themselves," said he; "they are so thoughtless."

The mother looked for the little ones, and brought them their evening luncheon. "It is warm," said the boy; "and Mary had a longing for the red cherries."

"Have a care, children," said the mother, "and do not run too far from home, and not into the wood; Father and I are going to the fields."

Little Andres answered: "Never fear, the wood frightens us; we shall sit here by the house, where there are people near us."

The mother went in, and soon came out again with her husband. They locked the door, and turned towards the fields to look after their labourers, and see their hay-harvest in the meadow. Their house lay upon a little green height, encircled by a pretty ring of paling, which likewise enclosed their fruit and flower garden. The hamlet stretched somewhat deeper down, and on the other side lay the castle of the Count. Martin rented the large farm from this nobleman; and was living in contentment with his wife and only child; for he yearly saved some money, and had the prospect of becoming a man of substance by his industry, for the ground was productive, and the Count not illiberal.

As he walked with his wife to the fields, he gazed cheerfully

round, and said : "What a different look this quarter has, Brigitta, from the place we lived in formerly ! Here it is all so green ; the whole village is bedecked with thick-spreading fruit-trees ; the ground is full of beautiful herbs and flowers ; all the houses are cheerful and cleanly, the inhabitants are at their ease : nay I could almost fancy that the woods are greener here than elsewhere, and the sky bluer ; and, so far as the eye can reach, you have pleasure and delight in beholding the bountiful Earth."

"And whenever you cross the stream," said Brigitta, "you are, as it were, in another world, all is so dreary and withered ; but every traveller declares that our village is the fairest in the country far and near."

"All but that fir-ground," said her husband ; "do but look back to it, how dark and dismal that solitary spot is lying in the gay scene : the dingy fir-trees with the smoky huts behind them, the ruined stalls, the brook flowing past with a sluggish melancholy."

"It is true," replied Brigitta ; "if you but approach that spot, you grow disconsolate and sad, you know not why. What sort of people can they be that live there, and keep themselves so separate from the rest of us, as if they had an evil conscience ?"

"A miserable crew," replied the young Farmer : "gipsies, seemingly, that steal and cheat in other quarters, and have their board and hiding-place here. I wonder only that his Lordship suffers them."

"Who knows," said the wife, with an accent of pity, "but perhaps they may be poor people, wishing, out of shame, to conceal their poverty ; for, after all, no one can say aught ill of them ; the only thing is, that they do not go to church, and none knows how they live ; for the little garden, which indeed seems altogether waste, cannot possibly support them ; and fields they have none."

"God knows," said Martin, as they went along, "what trade they follow ; no mortal comes to them ; for the place they live in is as if bewitched and excommunicated, so that even our wildest fellows will not venture into it."

Such conversation they pursued, while walking to the fields.

That gloomy spot they spoke of lay aside from the hamlet. In a dell, begirt with firs, you might behold a hut, and various ruined office-houses; rarely was smoke seen to mount from it, still more rarely did men appear there; though at times curious people, venturing somewhat nearer, had perceived upon the bench before the hut, some hideous women, in ragged clothes, dandling in their arms some children equally dirty and ill-favoured; black dogs were running up and down upon the boundary; and, of an evening, a man of monstrous size was seen to cross the footbridge of the brook, and disappear in the hut; and, in the darkness, various shapes were observed, moving like shadows round a fire in the open air. This piece of ground, the firs and the ruined huts, formed in truth a strange contrast with the bright green landscape, the white houses of the hamlet, and the stately new-built castle.

The two little ones had now eaten their fruit; it came into their heads to run races; and the little nimble Mary always got the start of the less active Andres. "It is not fair," cried Andres at last: "let us try it for some length, then we shall see who wins."

"As thou wilt," said Mary; "only to the brook we must not run."

"No," said Andres; "but there, on the hill, stands the large pear-tree, a quarter of a mile from this. I shall run by the left, round past the fir-ground; thou canst try it by the right over the fields; so we do not meet till we get up, and then we shall see which of us is swifter."

"Done," cried Mary, and began to run; "for we shall not mar one another by the way, and my father says it is as far to the hill by that side of the Gipsies' house as by this."

Andres had already started, and Mary, turning to the right, could no longer see him. "It is very silly," said she to herself: "I have only to take heart, and run along the bridge, past the hut, and through the yard, and I shall certainly be first." She was already standing by the brook and the clump of firs. "Shall I? No; it is too frightful," said she. A little white dog was standing on the farther side, and barking with might and main. In her terror, Mary thought the dog some monster, and sprang back. "Fy! fy!" said she: "the dolt is