

The Folk- and Fairy-Tales of Ludwig Bechstein: **Flipperty Flapperty**

A mother had two daughters, her own daughter and a step-daughter. The latter was treated very badly by her stepmother until she could bear it no longer. One day, she put a little pan, some flour, and a spoon into her basket and left home. She came to a dark forest, where she ran hither and thither for a long time until she was too hungry and weary to go on. Here she took a rest, kindled a fire, and cooked herself a porridge. When it was nicely boiling there suddenly appeared a little grey man, who asked: "What's that you're cooking?" "Porridge," she said. "Oh, let me lick your spoon clean," begged the little grey man. She kindly said to him: "You're quite welcome to eat with me." Then the mannikin skipped with delight around the fire until the porridge was ready, and the two of them ate together with a good appetite. "Do you know my name?" asked the mannikin. "I am called Flipperty Flapperty, and if you come home with me now, you'll have it good!" Then they went far, far into the forest, and came at last to a castle; its gates opened, and they both walked in. Everything was splendidly decorated, and everything one could wish for was there for the having, for it was an enchanted castle and it belonged to Flipperty Flapperty.

The stepmother had set out with a sturdy cudgel in search of the runaway girl, intending, when she found her, to beat the life out of her, or at least the living daylights. And after several days she came to the gates of the enchanted castle and knocked. What was the stepdaughter's amazement when she saw that her mother had come; and what was the stepmother's amazement to find the daughter she had treated so badly in

such magnificent surroundings and dressed in the finest clothes. She was so shocked that the cudgel fell from her hand. The stepdaughter received her mother very warmly and entertained her well, and after a short stay her mother returned home, where she pronounced her stepdaughter blessed beyond measure.

Her own daughter gave ear to these words and took them to heart, and as her stepsister had explained to their mother how she had found her good fortune, so she now ran away, came to the same forest, took her rest, and began to cook porridge. Then the little grey man came and asked: "What are you cooking?" "Porridge," she said. Thereupon the mannikin spoke: "Let me lick your spoon clean." "No," the girl said defiantly and sullenly, "I can lick it clean myself." Then the girl sat down and ate the porridge alone, and the mannikin looked on, and when she had finished, the mannikin grabbed the girl and tore her into a thousand pieces and hung them on the trees. Later, the mother went in search of her daughter, believing that she must have found such good fortune as had befallen her stepdaughter. When she approached the place where her daughter hung in shreds, she thought that her daughter had hung up her washing; but how great were her horror and her misery when she came closer and saw what had happened. She fell senseless to the ground, and whether or not she made it back home is more than I can say.