

The Folk- and Fairy-Tales of Ludwig Bechstein: **God is Everywhere**

There were a brother and sister called Georgie and Lizzie, both kind-hearted children, who were left at home all alone; their parents had gone out over the fields carrying baskets they had woven from osiers to sell in the town. Now, the good parents had given each of their children, Georgie and Lizzie, a sizable chunk of bread as their food to last the day, but Georgie made short work of his and yet still felt a craving for food. However, he had nothing left to crumble, and nothing left to sink his teeth into. Lizzie gave him a little of her bread, but even this did not sate the boy, and he mischievously began to address his younger sister with honeyed words: "Come, dear Lizzie, let us have a little nibble at the sweet sugar-beet syrup which mother stores out in the cupboard; there's a big potful, she surely won't notice any difference, and there's not a soul to see us." But Lizzie said, "Oh, it would be very naughty of you, Georgie, to do that; don't you see the sunbeams falling on the cupboard? God has them shine up to Him, and He'll see us nibbling." And Georgie said, "Then we'll go up to the attic, where mother keeps pretty pears, and we'll eat some of them. There's no window there, the sun can't shine in, and so God won't see us."

Lizzie refused at first, but in the end the children did go up to the



attic; but here broken rays of sunlight fell in profusion through the gaps between the roof tiles and shimmered most curiously, as if they were dancing over the pears, and Lizzie said: "Oh Georgie, God sees us here as well, we may not nibble here." They went back down, and on the steps Georgie had an idea which he voiced at once: "Well, in the cellar mother has a little pot full of cream, and down there it's quite dark, so it's

impossible for God to see in; come, let's go down, Lizzie, come quickly, quickly!" Georgie took his hesitating sister firmly by the hand and swiftly dragged her along with him down into the cellar, where he carefully closed the door from inside so that no daylight would shine in and God would not see them nibbling at the cream. But a few minutes later it became a little light in the cellar; Lizzie saw the dear Sun shining in, through a crack in the wall, right on the little pot of cream, and frightened by this, she hurried back up to the parlour. Georgie, however, stayed, angrily stopped up the crack with moss, and began to eat some of the cream. But just as he was eagerly licking and lapping, a tremendous clap of thunder rolled above him and lightning flashed through the crack in the wall, making the cellar glow as bright as day, and a black figure rose up in a corner of the cellar, walked up to Georgie, and sat down directly opposite him; he had two fiery eyes which constantly darted sparkling glances at the little pot of cream, so that Georgie could not even lift a finger and had to sit perfectly still.



In the meantime, a fair angel had appeared to Lizzie up in the parlour, had brought her, together with many pretty toys and clothes, sugared cakes and sweetened milk, and had played with Lizzie until the time that her parents returned. It gave them great joy to see the pretty things, but when they asked after Georgie, Lizzie gave a start, for with the beautiful presents the angel had given her she had completely forgotten that her brother had not left the cellar, and she cried: "Oh, good heavens! He is still in the cellar, let us make haste to fetch him, he might not be able to lift the door up." They all went quickly downstairs, opened the cellar door

– and look: there was Georgie sitting as stiff as a post, holding the pot of cream in his hand. And when he heard a noise and saw his mother, he started in terror and wept. And his mother took the half-emptied pot of cream from his hands, led him out of the cellar, and gave his buttocks the smacking he so thoroughly deserved.

Never again in the whole of his life did Georgie nibble, and after this, when others tried on occasion to tempt him to mischief and to deeds that shun the light, he would invariably say: “I won’t do it, I want no part of it, God who is everywhere will see it, God preserve me!” – And he became a thoroughly true and honest man.