

The Folk- and Fairy-Tales of Ludwig Bechstein:

The Tale of the Man in the Moon



In olden times, a man went into the forest one blessed Sunday morning, chopped a mighty bundle of wood for himself, tied it up, thrust a stick through the faggot, hoisted it onto his back, and carried it homewards.

On the way he met a gentleman in his Sunday best, going no doubt to church, who stopped, and accosted the bundle-bearer with the words: “Do you not know that this is Sunday on Earth, on which day the Good Lord rested after creating the world and all beasts of the field and all men? Do you not know that it is written in the Third Commandment:¹ Thou shalt keep the Sabbath Day holy?” The inquirer was the Good Lord Himself; but that woodcutter was quite obdurate and replied: “Sunday on earth or Monday in heaven, what concern is that of mine, and what concern is it of yours?”

“Then you shall carry your bundle of brushwood for all eternity,” said the Good Lord, “and because Sunday on Earth is of so very little consequence to you, henceforth you shall have everlasting Monday and stand in the Moon, a manifest warning to those who desecrate the Sabbath with work!”

Ever since that time, the man with the bundle of faggots has stood in the Moon, and he will doubtless stay standing there till kingdom come.

¹ To Anglicans, the Fourth Commandment: hence Benjamin Thorpe’s alteration in his 1853 translation in *Yule-Tide Stories*.