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The Young Giant and the Tailor

A husbandman had once a son, who was born no bigger than my thumb, and for many years did not grow a hair's breadth taller. One day as the father was going to plough in the field, the little fellow said, "Father, let me go too." "No," said his father; "stay where you are, you can do no good out of doors, and if you go perhaps I may lose you." Then little Thumbling fell a-crying: and his father, to quiet him, at last said he might go. So he put him in his pocket, and when he was in the field pulled him out and set him upon a newly made furrow, that he might look about. While he was sitting there, a great giant came striding over the hill. "Do you see that tall steeple-man?" said the father: "he will run away with you." (Now he only said this to frighten the little boy if he should be naughty.) But the giant had long legs, and with two or three strides he really came close to the furrow, and picked up little Thumbling to look at him; and taking a liking to the little chap went off with him. The father stood by all the time, but could not say a word for fright; for he thought his child was really lost, and that he should never see him again.

But the giant took care of him at his house in the woods, and laid him in his bosom and fed him with the same food that he lived on himself. So Thumbling, instead of being a little dwarf, became like the giant—tall and stout and strong: so that at the end of two years when the old giant took him into the wood to try him, and said, "Pull up that birch-tree for yourself to walk with;" the lad was so strong that he tore it up by the root. The giant thought he should make him a still stronger man than this: so after taking care of him two years more, he took him into the wood to try his strength again. This time he took hold of one of the thickest oaks, and pulled it up as if it were mere sport to him. Then the old giant said, "Well done, my man, you will do now." So he carried him back to the field where he first found him.

His father happened to be just then ploughing as the young giant went up to him, saying, "Look here, father, see who I am;—don't you see I am your son?" But the husbandman was frightened, and cried out, "No, no, you are not my son; begone about your business." "Indeed, I am your son; let me plough a little, I can plough as well as you." "No, go your ways," said the father, but as he was afraid of the tall man, he at last let go the plough and sat down on the ground beside it. Then the youth laid hold of the ploughshare, and though he only pushed with one hand, he drove it deep into the earth. The ploughman cried out, "If you must plough, pray do not push so hard; you are doing more harm than good;" but he took off the horses, and said, "Father, go home and tell my mother to get ready a good dinner; I'll go round the field meanwhile." So he went on driving the plough without any horses, till he had done two mornings' work by himself; then he harrowed it, and when all was over, took up plough, harrow, horses and all, and carried them home like a bundle of straw.

When he reached the house he sat himself down on the bench, saying, "Now, mother, is dinner ready?" "Yes," said she, for she dared not deny him; so she brought two large dishes full, enough to have lasted herself and her husband eight days; however, he soon ate it all up, and said that was but a taste. "I see very well, father, that I shan't get enough to eat at your house; so if you will give me an iron walking-stick, so strong that I cannot break it against my knees, I will go away again." The husbandman very gladly put his two horses to the cart and drove them to the forge, and brought back a bar of iron as long and as thick as his two horses could draw; but the lad laid it against his knee; and snap! it went like a broken beanstalk. "I see, father," said he, "you can get no stick that will do for me, so I'll go and try my luck by myself."

Then away he went, and turned blacksmith, and travelled till he came to a village where lived a miserly smith, who earned a good deal of money, but kept all he got to himself, and gave nothing away to anybody. The first thing he did was to step into the smithy, and ask if the smith did not want a journeyman. "Aye," said the cunning fellow, (as he looked at him and thought what a stout chap he was, and how lustily he would work and earn his bread,) "what wages do you ask?" "I want no pay," said he; "but every fortnight when the other workmen are paid, you shall let me give you two strokes over the shoulders to amuse myself." The old smith thought to himself he could bear this very well, and reckoned on saving a great deal of money; so the bargain was soon struck.

The next morning the new workman was about to begin to work; but at the first stroke that he hit, when his master brought him the iron red hot, he shivered it in pieces, and the anvil sunk so deep into the earth, that he could not get it out again. This made the old fellow very angry; "Halloo!" cried he, "I can't have you for a workman, you are too clumsy; we must put an end to our bargain." "Very well," said the other, "but you must pay for what I have done, so let me give you

only one little stroke, and then the bargain is all over." So saying, he gave him a thump that tossed him over a load of hay that stood near. Then he took the thickest bar of iron on the forge for a walking-stick, and went on his way.

When he had journeyed some way, he came to a farm-house, and asked the farmer if he wanted a foreman. The farmer said, "Yes," and the same wages were agreed for as before with the blacksmith. The next morning the workmen were all to go into the wood; but the giant was found to be fast asleep in his bed when the rest were all up and ready to start. "Come, get up," said one of them to him, "it is high time to be stirring; you must go with us." "Go your way," muttered he sulkily, "I shall have done my work and get home long before you." So he lay in bed two hours longer, and at last got up and cooked and ate his breakfast, and then at his leisure harnessed his horses to go to the wood. Just before the wood was a hollow, through which all must pass; so he drove the cart on first, and built up behind him such a mound of faggots and briars that no horse could pass. This done, he drove on, and as he was going into the wood met the others coming out on their road home; "Drive away," said he, "I shall be home before you still." However, he only went a very little way into the wood and tore up one of the largest timber trees, put it into his cart, and turned about homewards. When he came to the pile of faggots, he found all the others standing there, not being able to pass by. "So," said he, "you see if you had staid with me, you would have been home just as soon, and might have slept an hour or two longer." Then he took his tree on one shoulder, and his cart on the other, and pushed through as easily as though he were laden with feathers, and when he reached the yard showed the tree to the farmer, and asked if it was not a famous walking-stick. "Wife," said the farmer, "this man is worth something; if he sleeps longer, still he works better than the rest."



"But at the first stroke that he hit, when his master brought him the iron red hot, he shivered it in pieces."

Time rolled on, and he had served the farmer his whole year; so when his fellow-labourers were paid, he said he also had a right to take his wages. But great dread came upon the farmer, at the thought of the blows he was to have, so he begged him to give up the old bargain, and take his whole farm and stock instead. "Not I," said he, "I will be no farmer; I am foreman, and so I mean to keep, and be paid as we agreed." Finding he could do nothing with him, the farmer only begged one fortnight's respite, and called together all his friends, to ask their advice in the matter. They bethought themselves for a long time, and at last agreed that the shortest way was to kill this troublesome foreman. The next thing was to settle how it was to be done; and it was agreed that he should be ordered to carry into the yard some

great mill-stones, and to put them on the edge of a well; that then he should be sent down to clean it out, and when he was at the bottom, the mill-stones should be pushed down upon his head. Everything went right, and when the foreman was safe in the well, the stones were rolled in. As they struck the bottom, the water splashed to the very top. Of course they thought his head must be crashed to pieces; but he only cried out, "Drive away the chickens from the well; they are pecking about in the sand above me, and throwing it into my eyes, so that I cannot see." When his job was done, up he sprung from the well, saying, "Look here! see what a fine neck-cloth I have!" as he pointed to one of the mill-stones, that had fallen over his head, and hung about his neck.

The farmer was again overcome with fear, and begged another fortnight to think of it. So his friends were called together again, and at last gave this advice; that the foreman should be sent and made to grind corn by night at the haunted mill, whence no man had ever yet come out in the morning alive. That very evening he was told to carry eight bushels of corn to the mill, and grind them in the night. Away he went to the loft, put two bushels in his right pocket, two in his left, and four in a long sack slung over his shoulders, and then set off to the mill. The miller told him he might grind there in the day-time, but not by night, for the mill was bewitched, and whoever went in at night had been found dead in the morning. "Never mind, miller, I shall come out safe," said he; "only make haste and get out of the way, and look out for me in the morning."

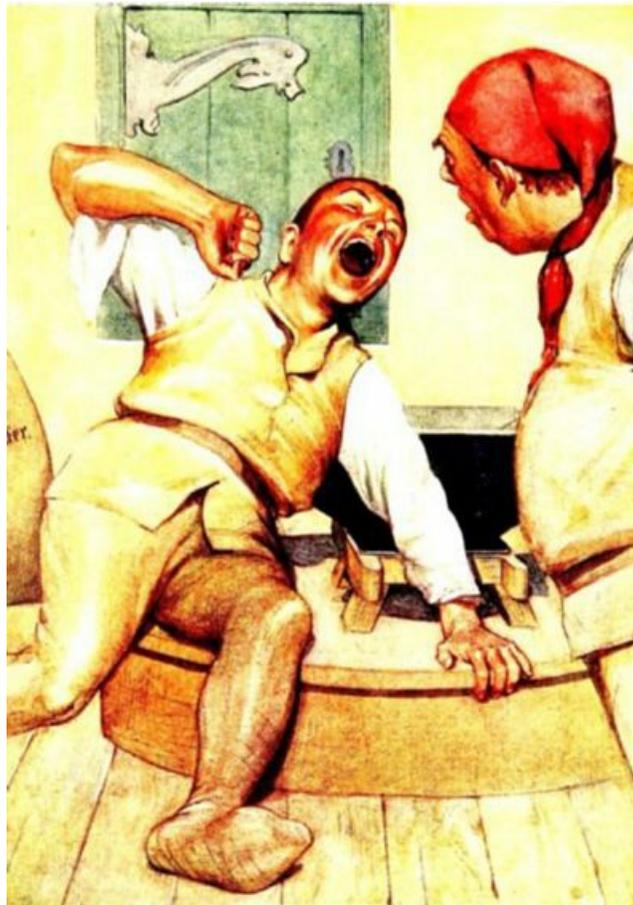
So he went into the mill and put the corn into the hopper, and about twelve o'clock sat himself down on the bench in the miller's room. After a little time the door all at once opened of itself, and in came a large table. On the table stood wine and meat, and many good things besides: all seemed placed there by themselves; at any rate there was no one to be seen. The chairs next moved themselves round it, but still neither guests nor servants came; till all at once he saw fingers handling the knives and forks and putting food on the plates, but still nothing else was to be seen. Now our friend felt somewhat hungry as he looked at the dishes, so he sat himself down at the table and ate whatever he liked best; and when he had had enough, and the plates were empty, on a sudden he heard something blow out the lights. When it was pitch dark he felt a tremendous blow upon his head; "If I get such another box on the ear," said he, "I shall just give it back again;" and this he really did, when the next blow came. Thus the game went on all night; and he never let fear get the better of him, but kept dealing his blows round, till at day-break all was still. "Well, miller," said he in the morning, "I have had some little slaps on the face, but I've given as good, I'll warrant you; and meantime I have eaten as much as I liked." The miller was glad to find the charm was broken, and would have given him a great deal of money; "I want no money, I have quite enough," said he, as he took the meal on his back, and went home to his master to claim his wages.

But the farmer was in a rage, knowing there was no help for him, and paced the room up and down till the drops of sweat ran down his forehead. Then he opened the window for a little fresh air, and before he was aware, his foreman gave him the first blow, and kicked him out of the window over the hills and far away, and next sent his wife after him; and there, for aught I know, they may be flying in the air still: but the young giant took up his iron walking-stick and walked off.

Perhaps this was the same giant that the Bold Little Tailor met, when he set out on his travels, as I will tell you next.

It was a fine summer morning when this little man bound his girdle round his body, and looked about his house to see if there was any thing good to take with him on his journey into the wide world. He could only find an old cheese; but that was better than nothing; so he took it up; and, as he was going out, the old hen met him at the door, and he packed her too into his wallet with the cheese. Then off he set, and when he had climbed a high hill, he found the giant sitting on the top. "Good day, comrade," said he; "there you sit at your ease, and look the wide world over: I have a mind to go and try my luck in that same world; what do you say to going with me?" Then the giant looked at him, and said, "You are a poor trumpery little knave." "That may be," said the tailor; "but we shall see who is the best man of the two." The giant, finding the little man so bold, began to be a little more respectful, and said they would soon try who was master. So he took a large stone in his hand and squeezed it till water dropped from it; "Do that," said he, "if you have a mind to be thought a strong man." "Is that all?" said the tailor; "I will soon do as much;" so he put his hand in his wallet, pulled out the cheese (which was quite new), and squeezed it till the whey ran out. "What do you say now, Mr. Giant? my squeeze was a better one than yours." Then the giant, not seeing that it was only a cheese, did not know what to say for himself,

though he could hardly believe his eyes; at last he took up a stone, and threw it up so high that it went almost out of sight; "Now then, little pygmy, do that if you can." "Very good," said the other; "your throw was not a bad one, but after all your stone fell to the ground; I will throw something that shall not fall at all." "That you can't do," said the giant: but the tailor took his old hen out of the wallet, and threw her up in the air, and she, pleased enough to be set free, flew away out of sight. "Now, comrade," said he, "what do you say to that?" "I say you are a clever hand," said the giant, "but we will now try how you can work."



"Well, Miller,' said he in the morning, 'I have had some little slaps on the face, but I've given as good, I'll warrant you.'"

Then he led him into the wood, where a fine oak tree lay felled. "Now let us drag it out of the wood together." "Very well; do you take the thick end, and I will carry all the top and branches, which are much the largest and heaviest." So the giant took the trunk and laid it on his shoulder; but the cunning little rogue, instead of carrying anything, sat himself at his ease among the branches, and let the giant carry stem, branches, and tailor into the bargain. All the way they went he made merry, and whistled and sang his song as if carrying the tree were mere sport; while the giant after he had borne it a good way could carry it no longer, and said, "I must let it fall." Then the tailor sprung down and held the tree as if he were carrying it, saying, "What a shame that such a big lout as you cannot carry a tree like this!" Then on they went together till they came to a tall cherry tree; and the giant took hold of the top stem and bent it down to pluck the ripest fruit, and when he had done, gave it over to his friend that he too might eat; but the little man was so weak that he could not hold the tree down, and up he went with it swinging in the air. "Halloo!" said the giant, "what now? can't you hold that twig?" "To be sure I could," said the other; "but don't you see there's a huntsman, who is going to shoot into the bush where we stood? so I took a jump over the tree to be out of his way; do you do the same." The giant tried to follow, but the tree was far too high to jump over, and he only stuck fast in the branches, for the tailor to laugh at him. "Well! you are a fine fellow after all," said the giant; "so come home and sleep with me and a friend of mine in the mountains to-night."

The tailor had no business upon his hands, so he did as he was bid, and the giant gave him a good supper, and a bed to sleep upon; but the tailor was too cunning to lie down upon it, and crept slyly into a corner, and slept there soundly. When midnight came, the giant came softly in with his iron walking-stick, and gave such a stroke upon the bed where he

thought his guest was lying, that he said to himself, "It's all up now with that grasshopper; I shall have no more of his tricks." In the morning the giants went off into the woods, and quite forgot him, till all on a sudden they met him trudging along, whistling a merry tune; and so frightened were they at the sight, that they both ran away as fast as they could.

Then on went the little tailor following his spuddy nose, till at last he reached the king's court, and began to brag very loud of his mighty deeds, saying he was come to serve the king. To try him, they told him that the two giants who lived in a part of the kingdom a long way off, were become the dread of the whole land; for they had begun to rob, plunder and ravage all about them, and that if he was so great a man as he said, he should have a hundred soldiers and should set out to fight these giants, and if he beat them he should have half the kingdom. "With all my heart!" said he; "but as for your hundred soldiers, I believe I shall do as well without them." However, they set off together till they came to a wood: "Wait here, my friends," said he to the soldiers, "I will soon give a good account of these giants:" and on he went casting his sharp little eye here, there, and everywhere around him. After a while he spied them both lying under a tree, and snoring away till the very boughs whistled with the breeze. "The game's won, for a penny," said the little man, as he filled his wallet with stones, and climbed the tree under which they lay.

As soon as he was safely up, he threw one stone after another at the nearest giant, till at last he woke up in a rage, and shook his companion, crying out, "What did you strike me for?" "Nonsense! you are dreaming," said the other, "I did not strike you." Then both lay down to sleep again, and the tailor threw stones at the second giant, till he sprung up and cried, "What are you about? you struck me." "I did not," said the other; and on they wrangled for a while, till as both were tired they made up the matter, and fell asleep again. But then the tailor began his game once more, and flung the largest stone he had in his wallet with all his force and hit the first giant on the nose. "That is too bad," cried he, as if he was mad, "I will not bear it." So he struck the other a mighty blow; he of course was not pleased at this, and gave him just such another box on the ear; and at last a bloody battle began; up flew the trees by the roots, the rocks and stones went bang at one another's heads, and in the end both lay dead upon the spot. "It is a good thing," said the tailor, "that they let my tree stand, or I must have made a fine jump." Then down he ran, and took his sword and gave each of them a very fine wound or two on the breast and set off to look for the soldiers. "There lie the giants," said he; "I have killed them, but it has been no small job, for they even tore trees up in their struggle." "Have you any wounds?" asked they. "That is a likely matter, truly," said he; "they have not touched a hair of my head." But the soldiers would not believe him till they rode into the wood and found the giants weltering in their blood, and the trees lying around torn up by the roots.

The king, after he had got rid of his enemies, was not much pleased at the thoughts of giving up half his kingdom to a tailor; so he said, "You have not yet done; in the palace court lies a bear with whom you must pass the night, and if when I rise in the morning I find you still living, you shall then have your reward." Now he thought he had got rid of him, for the bear had never yet let any one go away alive who had come within reach of his claws. "Very well," said the tailor, "I am willing."

So when evening came our little tailor was led out and shut up in the court with the bear, who rose at once to give him a friendly welcome with his paw. "Softly, softly, my friend," said he; "I know a way to please you;" then at his ease and as if he cared nothing about the matter, he pulled out of his pocket some fine walnuts, cracked them, and ate the kernels. When the bear saw this, he took a great fancy to having some nuts too; so the tailor felt in his pocket and gave him a handful, not of walnuts, but nice round pebbles. The bear snapt them up, but could not crack one of them, do what he would. "What a clumsy thick head thou art!" thought the beast to itself; "thou canst not crack a nut to-day." Then said he to the tailor, "Friend, pry crack me the nuts." "Why, what a lout you are," said the tailor, "to have such a jaw as that, and not to be able to crack a little nut! Well! engage to be friends with me and I'll help you." So he took the stones, and sliely changed them for nuts, put them in his mouth, and crack! they went. "I must try for myself, however," said the bear; "now I see how you do it, I am sure I can do it myself." Then the tailor gave him the cobble stones again, and the bear lay down and worked away as hard as he could, and bit and bit with all his force till he broke all his teeth, and lay down quite tired.

But the tailor began to think this would not last long, and that the bear might find him out and break the bargain; so he pulled a fiddle out from under his coat and played him a tune. As soon as the bear heard it, he could not help jumping up and beginning to dance; and when he had jigged away for a while, the thing pleased him so much that he said, "Hark ye, friend! is the fiddle hard to play upon?" "No! not at all!" said the other; "look ye, I lay my left hand here, and then I take

the bow with my right hand thus, and scrape it over the strings there, and away it goes merrily, hop, sa, sa! fal, lal, la!" "Will you teach me to fiddle," said the bear, "so that I may have music whenever I want to dance?" "With all my heart; but let me look at your claws, they are so very long that I must first clip your nails a little bit." Then the bear lifted up his paws one after another, and the tailor screwed them down tight, and said, "Now wait till I come with my scissors." So he left the bear to growl as loud as he liked, and laid himself down on a heap of straw in the corner and slept soundly. In the morning when the king came, he found the tailor sitting merrily eating his breakfast, and could no longer help keeping his word; and thus the little man became a great one.

[The end of *Grimm's Fairy Tales; The Young Giant and The Tailor* by the Brothers Grimm]