

A FAIRY-TALE

About Ivan the Fool and His Two Brothers, Semen the Warrior and Taras the Paunch, and His Dumb Sister Malanya, and About the Old Devil and the Three Young Devils

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I.

In a certain kingdom, in a certain realm, there lived a rich peasant. He had three sons, Semen the Warrior, Taras the Paunch, and Ivdn the Fool, and a daughter Malanya, the dumb old maid.

Semen the Warrior went to war, to serve the king; Taras the Paunch went to a merchant in the city, to sell wares; but Ivan the Fool and the girl remained at home, to work and hump their backs.

Semen the Warrior earned a high rank and an estate, and married a lord's daughter. His salary was big, and his estate was large, but still he could not make both ends meet: whatever he collected, his wife scattered as though from a sleeve, and they had no money.

Semen the Warrior came to his estate, to collect the revenue. His clerk said to him :

" Where shall it come from? We have neither cattle, nor tools: neither horses, nor cows, nor plough, nor harrow. Everything has to be provided, then there will be an income."

And Semen the Warrior went to his father :

« You are rich, father," he said, " and you have not given me anything. Cut off a third and I will transfer it to my estate."

And the old man said :

" You have brought nothing to my house, why should I give you a third ? It will be unfair to Ivdn and to the girl."

But Semen said :

« But he is a fool, and she is a dumb old maid. What do they need ?

"

And the old man said :

" As Ivdn says so it shall be ! "

But Ivdn said:

" All right, let him have it 1 "

So Semdn the Warrior took his third from the house, transferred it to his estate, and again went away to serve the king.

Taras the Paunch, too, earned much money, – and married a merchant woman. Still he did not have enough, and he came to his father, and said :

" Give me my part! "

The old man did not want to give Tards his part :

"You," he said, "have brought nothing to the house, and everything in the house has been earned by Ivan. I cannot be unfair to him and to the girl."

But Tards said :

" What does he want it for ? He is a fool. He cannot marry, for no one will have him; and the dumb girl does not need anything, either. Give me," he said, " half of the grain, Ivan ! I will not take your tools, and of your animals I want only the gray stallion, – you cannot plough with him."

Ivan laughed.

" AU right," he said, " I will earn it again."

So Tards, too, received his part. Tards took the grain to town, and drove off the gray stallion, and Ivdn was left with one old mare, and he went on farming and supporting his father and his mother.

II.

The old devil was vexed because the brothers had not quarrelled in dividing up, but had parted in love. And so he called up three young devils.

" You see," he said, " there are three brothers, Semdn the Warrior, Tards the Paunch, and Ivan the Fool. They ought to be quarrelling, but, instead, they live peacefully; they exchange with each other bread and salt. The fool has spoiled all my business. Go all three of you, – get hold of them, and mix them up in such a way that they shall tear out one another's eyes. Can you do it ?"

"We can," they said.

" How are you going to do it ?"

"We will do it like this," they said : " First we will ruin them, so that they will have nothing to eat; then we will throw them all in a heap, so that they will quarrel together."

" Very well," he said. " I see that you know your business. Go, and do not return to me before you have muddled all three, or else I will flay all three of you."

The three devils all went to a swamp, and considered how to take bold of the matter: they quarrelled and quarrelled, for they wanted each of them to get the easiest job, and finally they decided to cast lots for each man. If one of them got through first, he was to come and help the others. The devils cast lots, and set a time when they were to meet again in the swamp, in order to find out who was through, and who needed help.

When the time came, the devils gathered in the swamp.

They began to talk about their affairs. The first devil, Semdn the Warrior's, began to speak.

" My affair," he said, " is progressing. To-morrow my Semdn will go to his father."

His comrades asked him how he did it.

" In the first place," he said, " I brought such bravery over Sem^n that he promised his king to conquer the whole world, and the king made him a commander and sent him out to fight the King of India. They came together for a fight. But that very night I wet all his powder, and I went over to the King of India and made an endless number of soldiers for him out of straw. When Semdn's soldiers saw the straw soldiers walking upon them on all sides, they lost their courage. Semdn commanded them to fire their cannon and their guns, but they could not fire them. Semdn's soldiers were frightened and ran away like sheep. And the King of India vanquished them. Sem^n is disgraced, - they have taken his estate from him, and to-morrow he is to be beheaded. I have only one day's work left to do: to let him out of the prison, so that he can run home. Tomorrow I shall be through with him, so tell me which of you I am to aid!"

Then the other devil, Taras's, began to speak:

" I do not need any help," he said," for my affair is also progressing nicely, - Taras will not live another week.

- In the first place, I have raised a belly on him, and made him envious. He is so envious of other people's property that, no matter what he sees, he wants to buy it. He has bought up an endless lot of things and spent all his money on them and is still buying. He now buys on other people's money. He has quite a lot on his shoulders, and is so entangled that he will never free himself. In a week the time will come for him to pay, and I will change all his wares into manure, - and he will not be able to pay his debts, and will go to

his father's."

They began to ask the third devil, Ivan's.

" How is your business ?"

" I must say, my business is not progressing at all. The first thing I did was to spit into his kvas jug, so as to give him a belly-ache, and I went to his field and made the soil so hard that he should not be able to overcome it. I thought that he would never plough it up, but he, the fool, came with his plough and began to tear up the soil. His belly-ache made him groan, but he stuck to his ploughing. I broke one plough of his, but he went home, fixed another plough, wrapped new leg-rags on him, and started once more to plough. I crept under the earth, and tried to hold the ploughshare, but I could not do it, - he pressed so hard on the plough; the ploughshares are sharp, and he has cut up my hands. He has ploughed up nearly the whole of it, - only a small strip is left. Come and help me, brothers, or else, if we do not overpower him, all our labours will be lost. If the fool is left and continues to farm, they will have no want, for he will feed them all."

Semen's devil promised to come on the morrow to help him, and thereupon the devils departed.

III.

Ivan ploughed up all the fallow field, and only one strip was left. His belly ached, and yet he had to plough. He straightened out the lines, turned over the plough, and went to the field. He had just made one furrow, and was coming back, when something pulled at the plough as though it had caught in a root. It was the devil that had twined his legs about the plough-head and was holding it fast.

" What in the world is that ? " thought Ivan. " There were no roots here before, but now there are."

Ivan stuck his hand down in the furrow, and felt something soft. He grabbed it and pulled it out. It was as black as a root, but something was moving on it. He took a glance at it, and, behold, it was a live devil.

" I declare," he said, " it is a nasty thing!" And Ivdn swung him and was about to strike him against the ploughhandle ; but the devil began to scream.

" Do not beat me," he said, " and I will do for you anything you wish."

« Wbat will you do for me ?"

" Say what you want! "

Ivdn scratched himself.

" My belly aches, – can you cure me ?"

«I can," he said.

" Very well, cure me! "

The devil bent down to the furrow, scratched awhile in it, pulled out a few roots, – three of them in a bunch, – and gave them to Ivan.

" Here," he said, " is a root, which, if you swallow, will make your ache go away at once."

Ivan took the roots, tore them up, and swallowed one. His belly-ache stopped at once.

Then the devil began to beg again:

" Let me go, now, and I will slip through the earth, and will not come up again."

" All right," he said, " God be with you! "

And the moment Ivan mentioned God's name, the devil bolted through the earth, as a stone plumps into the water, and only a hole was left. Ivan put the remaining two roots in his cap, and started to finish his work. He ploughed up the strip, turned over the plough, and went home. He unhitched the horse, came to the house, and there found his eldest brother, Sem6n the Warrior, with his wife, eating supper. His estate had been taken from him, and he had with difficulty escaped from prison and come to his father's to live.

Њer6n saw Ivan, and, " I have come to live with you," he said. " Feed me and my wife until I find a new place! "

" All right," he said, " stay here! "

Ivan wanted to sit down on a bench, but the lady did not like the smell of Ivan. So she said to her husband:

" I cannot eat supper with a stinking peasant."

" All right," he said, " I have to go anyway to pasture the mare for the night."

Ivan took some bread and his caftan, and went out to herd his mare.

IV.

That night Sem6n's devil got through with his work and by agreement went to find Ivan's devil, to help to make an end of the fool. He came to the field and looked for him everywhere, but found only the hole.

« Something has evidently gone wrong with my comrade," he thought, – " I must take his place. The ploughing is done, – I shall have to catch him in the mowing time."

The devil went to the meadows and sent a flood on the mowing so that it was all covered with mud. Ivdn returned in the morning from the night watch, whetted his scythe, and went out to mow the meadows. He came, and began to mow: he swung the scythe once, and a second time, and it grew dull and would not cut, – it was necessary to grind it. Ivan worked hard and in vain.

" No," he said, " I will go home, and will bring the grindstone with me, and a round loaf. If I have to stay here for a week, I will not give up until I mow it all."

When the devil heard it he thought:

"This fool is stiff-necked, – I cannot get at him. I must try something else."

Ivan came back, ground his scythe, and began to mow. The devil crept into the grass and began to catch the scythe by the snath-end and to stick the point into the ground. It went hard with Ivan, but he finished the mowing, and there was left only one scrubby place in the swamp. The devil crawled into the swamp and thought:

" If I get both my paws cut, I will not let him mow it."

Ivan went into the swamp; the grass was not dense, but he found it hard to move the scythe. Ivan grew angry and began to swing the scythe with all his might. The devil gave in ; he had hardly time to get away, – he saw that matters were in bad shape, so he hid in a bush. Ivan swung the scythe with all his might and struck the bush, and cut off half of the devil's tail. Ivdn finished the mowing, told the girl to rake it up, and himself went to cut the rye.

He went out with a round knife, but the bobtailed devil had been there before him and had so mixed up the rye that he could not cut it with the round knife. Ivan went back, took the sickle, and began to cut it; he cut all the rye.

" Now I must go to the oats," he said.

The bobtailed devil heard it, and thought:

" I could not cope with him on the rye, but I will get the better of him in the oats, – just let the morning come."

The devil ran in the morning to the oats-field, but the oats were

all cut down. Ivan had cut them in the night, to keep them from dropping the seed.

The devil grew angry:

" The fool has cut me all up, and has worn me out. I have not seen such trouble even in war-time. The accursed one does not sleep, – I cannot keep up with him. I will go now to the ricks, and will rot them all."

And the devil went to the rye-rick, climbed between the sheaves, and began to rot them: he warmed them up, and himself grew warm and fell asleep.

Ivan hitched his mare, and went with the girl to haul away the ricks. He drove up to one and began to throw the sheaves into the cart. He had just put two sheaves in when he stuck his fork straight into the devil's back; he raised it, and, behold, on the prongs was a live devil, and a bobtailed one at that, and he was writhing and twisting, and trying to get off.

«I declare," he said, " it is a nasty thing ! Are you here again ? "

" I am a different devil," he said. " My brother was here before. I was with your brother Semfn."

« I do not care who you are," he replied, " you will catch it, too."

He wanted to strike him against the ground, but the devil began to beg him:

« Let me go, and I will not do it again, and I will do for you anything you please."

" What can you do ? "

" I can make soldiers for you from anything."

" What good are they ? "

" You can turn them to any use you please: they will do anything."

" Can they play music ? "

" They can."

« All right, make them for me !"

And the devil said:

" Take a sheaf of rye, strike the lower end against the ground, and say : ' By my master's command not a sheaf shall you stand, but as many straws as there are so many soldiers there be.' "

Ivan took the sheaf, shook it against the ground, and spoke as the devil told him to. And the sheaf fell to pieces, and the straws were changed into soldiers, and in front a drummer was drumming, and a trumpeter blowing the trumpet. Ivan laughed.

" I declare," he said, " it is clever. This is nice to amuse the girls with."

" Let me go now," said the devil.

"No," he said, "I will do that with threshed straw, and I will not let full ears waste for nothing. I will thresh them first."

So the devil said:

" Say, ' As many soldiers, so many straws there be!

With my master's command again a sheaf it shall stand.' "

Ivdu said this, and the sheaf was as before. And the devil begged him again:

" Let me go now!"

" All right!" Ivan caught him on the cart-hurdle, held him down with his hand, and pilled him off the fork. " God be with you !" he said.

The moment he said, " God be with you," the devil bolted through the earth, as a stone plumps into the water, and only a hole was left.

Ivan went home, and there he found his second brother. Taras and his wife were sitting and eating supper. Taras the Paunch had not calculated right, and so he ran away from his debts and came to his father's. When he saw Ivan, he said :

" Ivan, feed me and my wife until I go back to trading I "

" All right," he said, " stay with us !"

Ivan took off his caftan, and seated himself at the table.

But the merchant's wife said :

" I cannot eat with a fool. He stinks of sweat."

So Taras the Paunch said :

" Ivan, you do not smell right, so go and eat in the vestibule! "

" All right," he said, and, taking bread, he went out. " It is just right," he said, " for it is time for me to go and pasture the mare for the night."

V.

That night Taras's devil got through with his job, and he went by agreement to help out his comrades, – to get the best of Ivan the Fool. He came to the field and tried to find his comrades, but all he saw was a hole in the ground ; he went to the meadows, and found a tail in the swamp, and in the rye stubbles he found another hole.

" Well," he thought, " evidently some misfortune has befallen my comrades; I must take their place, and go for the fool."

The devil went forth to find Ivan. But Ivdn was through with the field, and was chopping wood in the forest.

The brothers were not comfortable living together, and they had ordered the fool to cut timber with which to build them new huts.

The devil ran to the woods, climbed into the branches, and did not let Ivan fell the trees. Ivfn chopped the tree in the right way, so that it might fall in a clear place; he tried to make it fall, but it came down the wrong way, and fell where it had no business to fall, and got caught in the branches. Ivan made himself a lever with his axe, began to turn the tree, and barely brought it down. Ivan went to chop a second tree, and the same thing happened. He worked and worked at it, and brought it down. He started on a third tree, and again the same happened.

Ivan had expected to cut half a hundred trunks, and before he had chopped ten it was getting dark. Ivan was worn out. Vapours rose from him as though a mist were going through the woods, but he would not give up. He chopped down another tree, and his back began to ache so much that he could not work: he stuck the axe in the wood, and ^sat down to rest himself.

The devil saw that Ivan had stopped, and was glad:

" Well," he thought, " he has worn himself out, and he will stop soon. I will myself take a rest," and he sat astride a bough, and was happy.

But Ivan got up, pulled out his axe, swung with all his might, and hit the tree so hard from the other side that it cracked and came down with a crash. The devil had not expected it and had no time to straighten out his legs. The bough broke and caught the devil's hand. Ivan began to trim, and behold, there was a live devil Ivan was surprised.

" I declare," he said, " you are a nasty thing I Are you here again ?"

" I am not the same," he said. " I was with your brother Taras."

" I do not care who you are, – you will fare the same way." Ivan swung his axe, and wanted to crush him with the back of the axe.

The devil began to beg him:

" Do not kill me, – I will do anything you please for you."

" What can you do ? "

" I can make as much money for you as you wish."

" All right, make it for me ! "

And the devil taught him how to do it.

" Take some oak leaves from this tree," he said," and rub them in your hands. The gold will fall to the ground."

Ivan took some leaves and rubbed them, – and the gold began to fall.

"This is nice to have," he said, "when you are out celebrating with the boys."

" Let me go now ! " said the devil

" All right! " Ivan took his lever, and freed the devil. " God be with you," he said, and the moment he mentioned God's name, the devil bolted through the earth, as a stone plumps into the water, and only a hole was left.

VI.

The brothers built themselves houses, and began to live each by himself. But Ivan got through with his field work, and brewed some beer and invited his brothers to celebrate with him. They would not be Ivan's guests:

" We have never seen a peasant celebration," they said.

Ivan treated the peasants and their wives, and himself drank until he was drunk, and he went out into the street to the khorovod. He went up to the women, and told them to praise him.

" I will give you what you have not seen in all your lives."

The women laughed, and praised him. When they got through, they said:

" Well, let us have it!"

" I will bring it to you at once," he said.

He picked up the seed-basket and ran into the woods. The women laughed: " What a fool he is !" And they forgot about him, when, behold, he was running toward them, and carrying the basket full of something.

" Shall I let you have it ?"

" Yes."

Iv6n picked up a handful of gold and threw it to the women. O Lord, how they darted for the money ! The peasants rushed out and began to tear it out of the hands of the women. They almost crushed an old woman to death. Ivfn laughed.

" Oh, you fools," he said, " why did you crush that old woman ? Be more gentle, and I will give you some more." He began to scatter more gold. People ran up, and Ivan scattered the whole basketful. They began to ask for more. But Ivdn said:

" That is all. I will give you more some other time. Now let us have music! Sing songs ! "

The women started a song.

" I do not like your kind of songs," he said.

" What kind is better ?"

" I will show you in a minute," he said. He went to the threshing-floor, pulled out a sheaf, straightened it up, placed it on end, and struck it against the ground.

" At your master's command not a sheaf shall you stand, each straw a soldier shall be."

The sheaf flew to pieces, and out came the soldiers, and the drums began to beat and the trumpets to sound. Ivan told the soldiers to play songs, and went into the street with them. The people were surprised. The soldiers played songs, and then Ivdn took them back to the threshing-floor, and told nobody to follow him. He changed the soldiers back into a sheaf, and threw it on the loft. He went home and went to sleep behind the partition.

VII.

On the next morning his eldest brother, 3erën the Warrior, heard of it, and he went to see Ivan.

" Reveal to me," he said, " where did you find those soldiers, and where did you take them to ? "

" What is that to you ? " he said.

" What a question! With soldiers anything may be done. You can get a kingdom for yourself."

Ivan was surprised.

" Indeed ? Why did you not tell me so long ago ?" he said. " I will make as many for you as you please. Luckily the girl and I have threshed a lot of straw."

Ivan took his brother to the threshing-floor, and said: " Look here ! I will make them for you, but you take them away, or else, if we have to feed them, they will ruin the village in one day."

Зетён the Warrior promised that he would take the soldiers away, and Ivan began to make them. He struck a sheaf against the floor, there was a company; he struck another, there was a second, and he made such a lot of them that they took up the whole field.

" Well, will that do ? "

Зетён was happy, and said:

" It will do. Thank you, Ivan."

" All right," he said. " If you need more, come to me, and I will make you more. There is plenty of straw to-day."

Зетён the Warrior at once attended to the army, collected it as was proper, and went forth to fight.

No sooner had Зетён the Warrior left, than Tards the

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Paunch came. He, too, had heard of the evening's affair, and he began to beg his brother:

«Reveal to me, where do you get the gold money from ? If I had such free money, I would with it gather in all the money of the whole world."

Ivan was surprised.

«Indeed ? You ought to have told me so long ago," he said. " I will rub up for you as much as you want."

His brother was glad :

" Give me at least three seed-baskets full!"

" All right," he said, " let us go to the woods ! But hitch up the horse, or you will not be able to carry it away."

They went to the woods, and Ivan began to rub the oak leaves. He rubbed up a large heap.

« Will that do, eh ?"

Taras was happy.

«It will do for awhile," he said. « Thank you, Ivdn."

" You are welcome. If you need more, come to me, and I will rub up some more, – there are plenty of leaves left."

Tards the Paunch gathered a whole wagon-load of money, and went away to trade with it.

Both brothers left the home. And 3erën went out to fight, and Taras to trade. And 3erën the Warrior conquered a whole kingdom for himself, while TarKs the Paunch made a big heap of money by trading.

The brothers met, and they revealed to one another where 3erën got the soldiers, and Taras the money.

3erën the Warrior said to his brother:

" I have conquered a kingdom for myself, and I lead a good life, only I have not enough money to feed my soldiers with."

And Taras the Paunch said:

" And I have earned a whole mound of money, but here is the trouble: I have nobody to guard the money."

So Serndn the Warrior said.

" Let us go to our brother! I will tell him to make me more soldiers, and I will give them to you to guard your money; and you tell him to rub me more money with which to feed the soldiers."

And they went to Ivan. When they came to him, Semdn said:

" I have not enough soldiers, brother. Make me some more soldiers, – if you have to work over two stacks."

Ivan shook his head.

" I will not make you any soldiers, for nothing in the world."

" But you promised you would."

" So I did, but I will not make them for you."

" Why, you fool, won't you make them ? "

" Because your soldiers have killed a man. The other day I was ploughing in the field, when I saw a woman driving with a coffin in the road, and weeping all the time. I asked her who had died, and she said, ' Semdn's soldiers have killed my husband in a war.' I thought that the soldiers would make music, and there they have killed a man. I will give you no more."

And he stuck to it, and made no soldiers for him.

Then Tards the Paunch began to beg Ivan to make him more gold money. But Ivan shook his head.

" I will not rub any, for nothing in the world."

" But you promised you would."

" So I did, but I will not do it."

" Why, you fool, will you not do it ?"

" Because your gold coins have taken away Mikhaylovna's cow."

" How so ? "

" They just did. Mikhaylovna had a cow, whose milk the children sipped, but the other day the children came to me to ask for some milk. I said to them: ' Where is your cow ? ' And they answered : * Tards the Paunch's clerk came, and he gave mother three gold pieces, and she gave him the cow, and now we have no milk to sip.' I thought you wanted to play with the gold pieces, and you take the cow away from the children. I will iZot give you any more."

And the fool stuck to it, and did not give him any. So the brothers went away.

They went away, and they wondered how they might mend matters. Then Semdn said :

" This is what we shall do. You give me money to feed the soldiers with, and I will give you half my kingdom with the soldiers to guard your money." Tards agreed to it. The brothers divided up, and both became kings, and rich men.

VIII.

Вит Ivfn remained at home, supporting father and mother, and working

the field with the dumb girl.

One day Ivan's watch-dog grew sick: he had the mange and was dying. Ivan was sorry for him, and he took some bread from the dumb girl, put it in his hat, and took it out and threw it to the dog. But the cap was torn, and with the bread one of the roots fell out. The old dog swallowed it with the bread. And no sooner had he swallowed it than he jumped up, began to play and to bark, and wagged his tail, – he was well again.

When his father and his mother saw that, they were surprised.

" With what did you cure the dog ?"

And Ivan said to them:

" I had two roots with which to cure all diseases, and he swallowed one."

It happened that at that time the king's daughter grew ill, and the king proclaimed in all the towns and villages that he would reward him who should cure her, and that if it should be an unmarried man, he should have his daughter for a wife. The same was also proclaimed in Ivan's village.

Father and mother called Ivdn, and said to him :

" Have you heard what the king has proclaimed ? You said that you had a root, so go and cure the king's daughter. You will get a fortune for the rest of your life."

" All right," he said. And he got ready to go. He was dressed up, and went out on the porch, and saw a beggar woman with a twisted arm.

" I have heard that you can cure," she said. " Cure my arm, for I cannot dress myself."

And Ivdn said:

« All right! " He took the root, gave it to the beggar woman, and told her to swallow it.

She swallowed it, and was cured at once and could wave her arm. Ivan's parents came out to see him on his way to the king, and when they heard that he had given away the last root and had nothing left with which to cure the king's daughter, they began to upbraid him.

" You have taken pity on the beggar woman, but you have no pity on the king's daughter."

But he hitched his horse, threw a little straw into the hamper, and was getting ready to drive away.

" Where are you going, fool ?"

" To cure the king's daughter."

" But you have nothing to cure her with!"

" All right," he said, and drove away.

He came to the king's palace, and the moment he stepped on the porch, the king's daughter was cured.

The king rejoiced, and sent for Ivan. He had him all dressed up:

" Be my son-in-law! " he said.

" All right," he said.

And Ivan married the king's daughter. The king died soon after, and Ivdn became king. Thus all three brothers were kings.

IX.

The three brothers were reigning.

The elder brother, Semfn the Warrior,- lived well With his straw soldiers he got him real soldiers. He commanded his people to furnish a soldier to each ten homes, and ever)' such soldier had to be tall of stature, and white of body, and clean of face. And he gathered a great many such soldiers and taught them all what to do. And if any one acted contrary to his will, he at once sent his soldiers against that person, and did as he pleased. And all began to be afraid of him.

He had an easy life. Whatever he wished for, or his eyes fell upon, was his. He would send out bis soldiers, and they would take away and bring to him whatever he needed.

Taras the Paunch, too, lived well. The money which he had received from Ivan he had not spent, but he had increased it greatly. He, too, had good order in his kingdom. The money he kept in coffers, and exacted more money from the people. He exacted money from each soul for walking past, and driving past, and for bast shoes, and leg-rags, and shoe-laces. And no matter what he wished, he had; for money they brought him everything, and they went to work for him, because everybody needs money.

Nor did Ivdn the Fool live badly. As soon as he had buried his father-in-law, he took off his royal garments and gave them to his wife to put away in the coffer. He put on his old hempen shirt and

trousers, and his bast shoes, and began to work.

" I do not feel well," he said. " My belly is growing larger, and I cannot eat, nor sleep."

He brought his parents and the dumb girl, and began to work again.

People said to him:

" But you are a king !"

" All right," he said, " but a king, too, has to eat."

The minister came to him, and said:

" We have no money with which to pay salaries."

"All right," he said, "if you have none, pay no salaries !"

" But they will stop serving you."

" All right," he said, " let them stop serving ! They will have more time for work. Let them haul manure. They have not hauled any for a long time."

People came to IvLn to have a case tried. One said:

" He stole money from me."

But IvLn replied:

" All right, evidently he needed it."

All saw that Ivan was a fool. His wife said to him:

" They say about you that you are a fool."

" All right," he said.

IvLn's wife, too, was a fool, and she thought and thought.

" Why should I go against my husband ? " she said.

" The thread belongs where the needle is."

She took off her regal garments, put them in a coffer, and went to the dumb girl to learn to work. She learned, and began to help her husband.

All the wise men left Ivan's kingdom, and only the fools were left. Nobody had any money. They lived and worked and fed themselves and all good people.

The old devil waited and waited for some news from the young devils

about how they had destroyed the three brothers, but none came. He went to find out for himself : he looked everywhere for the three, but found only three holes.

" Well," he thought, " evidently they did not get the best of them. I shall have to try it myself."

He went to find the brothers, but they were no longer in their old places. He found them in different kingdoms. All three were living and reigning there. That vexed the old devil.

" I shall have to do the work myself," he said.

First of all he went to King Sem4n. He did not go to him in his own form, but in the shape of a general. He went to him, and said:

" I have heard that you, King Semfn, are a great warrior. I have had good instruction in this business, and I want to serve you."

King Semdn began to ask him questions, and he saw that he was a clever man, and so received him into his service.

The old general began to teach King Semfn how to gather a great army.

" In the first place," he said, " you must collect more soldiers, for too many people in your kingdom are walking about idly. You must shave the heads of all the young men without exception, and then you will have an army which will be five times as large as it is now. In the second place, you must introduce new guns and can-506 non. I will get you the kind of guns that fire one hundred bullets at once, as though pouring out pease. Aud I will get you cannon that burn with their fire: whether a man, or a horse, or a wall, - they burn everything."

King Semfn listened to his new general, and ordered all the young men without exception to be drafted as soldiers, and started new factories. He had a lot of new guns and cannon made, and at once started a war against a neighbouring king. The moment the enemy's army came out against him, he ordered his soldiers to fire at them with bullets and to burn them with the cannon fire. He at once maimed and burnt one-half the army. The neighbouring king became frightened, and he surrendered and gave up his kingdom to him. King Sem^n was happy.

" Now I will vanquish the King of India," he said.

But the King of India heard of King Semfn, and adopted all his inventions and added a few of his own. The King of India drafted not only all the young men, but he also made all the unmarried women serve as soldiers, and so he had even more soldiers than King Semdn. He adopted all of King Senin's guns and cannon, and introduced flying in the air and throwing explosive bombs from above.

King Semfn went out to make war on the King of India. He thought that he would conquer him as he had conquered before; but the scythe was cutting too fine, – the King of India did not give Semdn's army a chance to fire a single shot, for he sent his women into the air, to throw explosive bombs on Semfn's army. The women began to pour the bombs on Semfn's army, like borax on cockroaches, and the whole army ran away, and King Semfn was left alone. The King of India took possession of the whole of Semen's kingdom, and Sem4n the Warrior ran whither his eyes took him.

The old devil had done up this brother, and he made for King Taras. He took the shape of a merchant and settled in Tards's kingdom. He started an establishment, and began to issue money. The merchant paid high prices for everything, and the whole nation rushed to the merchant to get his money. And the people had so much money that they paid all their back taxes and paid on time all the taxes as they fell due. King Taras was happy.

" Thanks to the merchant," he thought, " I shall now have more money than ever, and my life will improve."

And King Taras fell on new plans. He began to build himself a new palace: he commanded the people to haul lumber and stone, and to come to work, and offered high prices for everything. King Taras thought that as before the people would rush to work for him. But, behold, all the lumber and stone was being hauled to the merchant, and only the labourers were rushing to the king.

King Taras offered higher prices, but the merchant went higher still. King Taras had much money, but the merchant had more still, and the merchant could offer better pay than the king. The royal palace came to a standstill, – it could not be built.

King Taras wanted to get a garden laid out. When the fall came, King Taras proclaimed that he wanted people to come and set out trees for him; but nobody came, as they were all digging a pond for the merchant.

Winter came. King Taras wanted to buy sable furs for a new coat, and he sent out men to buy them. The messenger came back, and said that there were no sables, – that all the furs were in the merchant's possession, as he had offered a higher price, and that he had made himself a sable rug.

King Tards wanted to have some stallions. He sent messengers to buy them for him; but they came back, and said that the merchant had all the good stallions, and they were hauling water and filling up the pond.

All the business of the king came to a stop. Men would not do anything for him, but worked only for the merchant; all he received was the merchant's money, for taxes.

And the king collected such a mass of money that he did not know

what to do with it, and his life grew bad. The king stopped planning things, and only thought of how he might pass his life peacefully, but he could not do so. He was oppressed in everything. His cooks, and his coachmen, and his servants began to leave him for the merchant. And he began to suffer for lack of food. He would send the women to market to buy provisions, but there was nothing there, for the merchant bought up everything, and all he received was money for taxes.

King Tanis grew angry and sent the merchant abroad; but the merchant settled at the border and continued to do his work: as before, people dragged for the merchant's money all the things from the king to him. The king was in a bad plight: he did not eat for days at a time, and the rumour was spread that the merchant was boasting that he was going to buy the king himself with his money. King Tanis lost his courage, and did not know what to do.

Semdn the Warrior came to him, and said:

" Support me, for the King of India has vanquished me."

But Tards himself was pinched.

" I have not eaten myself for two days," he said.

XL

The old devil had done up the two brothers, and now went to Ivan. The old devil took the shape of a general, and he came to Ivan and tried to persuade him to provide himself with an army.

" It will not do for a king to live without an army," he said. "Just command me, and I will gather soldiers from among your people, and will get you up an army."

Ivan took his advice.

" All right," he said, " get me up an army: teach them to play good music, - I like that."

The old devil started to go over the kingdom, to gather volunteers. He said that they should go and get their crowns shaved, for which they would get a bottle of vddka each, and a red cap.

The fools laughed at him.

"We have all the liquor we want," they said, "for we distil it ourselves, and as for caps, our women will make us any we want, even motley ones, with tassels at that."

Not one of them would go. The Old devil went to Ivan and said:

" Your fools will not go of their own will; you will have to force them."

" All right," he said, " drive them by force ! "

And so the old devil announced that all the fools were to inscribe themselves as soldiers, and that Ivdn would execute those who would not go.

The fools came to the general and said:

" You say that the king will have us killed if we do not become soldiers, but you do not tell us what we shall have to do as soldiers. They say that soldiers, too, are killed."

" Yes, that cannot be helped."

When the fools heard that, they became stubborn.

« We will not go," they said. " If so, let us be killed at home! Death cannot be escaped anyway."

<< Fools that you are ! " said the old devil. " A soldier may be killed or not, but if you do not go, King Ivdn will certainly have you killed."

The fools considered the matter, and went to see Ivan the Fool.

" Your general has come," they said, " and tells us all to turn soldiers. ' If you become soldiers,' he says, ' you may be killed, or not, but if you do not become soldiers King Ivan will certainly put you to death.' Is that true ?"

Ivan began to laugh.

" How can I, one man, have you all put to death ? If I were not a fool, I should explain that to you, but as it is, I do not understand it myself."

«If so," they said, " we shall not become soldiers."

« All right," he said, " don't."

The fools went to the general and refused to become soldiers.

The old devil saw that his business did not work, so he went to the King of Cockroachland, and got into his favour.

« Let us go," he said, " and wage war on King Ivdn, and vanquish him. He has no money, but he has plenty of grain, and cattle, and all kinds of things."

The King of Cockroachland went out to make war: he had gathered a large army, and collected guns and cannon, and left his borders, to enter Ivan's kingdom.

People came to Ivan and said:

" The King of Cockroach land is coming against us."

« All right," he said, " let him come."

The King of Cockroachland crossed the border, and sent the advance-guard to find Ivan's army. They looked and looked for it, and could not find it. They thought that they might wait for it to show up. But they heard nothing about it, – there was no army to fight.

The King of Cockroachland sent out his men to take possession of the villages. The soldiers came to one village,– and there the fools jumped out to look at the soldiers and to marvel at them. The soldiers began to take away the grain and the cattle: the fools gave it all up, and did not resist. The soldiers went to the next village, and the same happened. The soldiers walked for a day or two, and everywhere the same happened. They gave up all they had, and nobody resisted, and they invited the soldiers to come and live with them:

" If you, dear people," they said, " have not enough to live on in your country, come and settle among us."

The soldiers walked and walked, but no army was to be found; everywhere people were living, and feeding themselves and other people, and they did not resist, but invited them to come and live with them.

The soldiers felt bad, and they came back to the King of Cockroachland.

"We cannot fight here," they said, "so take us to some other place: war would be a good thing, but this is as though we were to cut soup. We cannot fight here."

The King of Cockroachland grew wroth, and commanded his soldiers to march through the whole kingdom, and destroy villages and houses, and burn the grain and kill the cattle.

" If you do not obey my command," he said," I shall have you all executed."

The soldiers became frightened, and began to carry out the king's command. They started to burn the houses and the grain, and to kill the cattle. And still the fools did not resist, but only wept. The old men wept, and the old women wept, and the children wept.

" Why do you offend us ? Why do you destroy the property ? If you need it, take it along!"

The soldiers felt ashamed. They did not go any farther, and the whole army ran away.

XII.

The old devil went away, – he could not get at Ivan by means of the soldiers. The old devil changed into a clean-looking gentleman, and went to live in Ivan's kingdom : he wished to get at him by means of money, as he had done with Taras the Paunch.

" I want to do you good," he said, " and to teach you what is good and proper. I will build a house in your country, and will start an establishment."

" All right," he said, " stay here ! "

The clean-looking gentleman stayed overnight, and the following morning he took a large bag of gold to the market-square, and a sheet of paper, and said:

" You are all of you living like pigs. I will teach you how to live. Build me a house according to this plan ! You work, and I will show you how, and will pay gold money to you."

And he showed them the gold. The fools were astounded : they had no such a thing as money, and only exchanged things among themselves, or paid with work. They marvelled at the gold and said:

" They are nice things."

And for these gold things they began to give him what they had and to work for him. The old devil rejoiced and thought:

" My affair is proceeding favourably. I will now ruin Ivan completely, as I have ruined Tards, and will buy him up, guts and all."

As soon as the fools had any gold, they gave it all away to their women for necklaces, and their girls wove it into

514 their braids, and the children began to play in the streets with those pretty things. When all had enough of it, they refused to get any more. The clean-looking gentleman's palace was not half done, and the grain and the cattle were not yet attended to for the year. And the gentleman demanded that they should go and work for him, and haul his grain, and drive his cattle; he promised them much gold for everything and for all work.

But no one came to work, and they brought nothing to him. Only now and then a boy or girl would run in to exchange an egg for a gold coin; otherwise nobody came, and he had nothing to eat. The clean-looking gentleman was starved, and he went to the village to buy something to eat: he went into one yard, and offered a gold coin for a chicken, but the woman would not take it.

" I have too many of them as it is," she said.

He went to a homeless woman, to buy a herring of her, and offered her a gold coin.

" I do not want it, dear man," she said. " I have no children, and so there is nobody to play with it; I myself have three of these for show."

He went to a peasant to buy bread of him, but the peasant, too, would not take the money.

" I do not want it," he said. " If you want bread, for Christ's sake, wait, and I will have my wife cut you off a piece."

The devil just spit out and ran away from the peasant. Not only would he not take anything for Christ's sake, but it was worse than cutting him even to hear that word.

And so he did not get any bread. Everywhere it was the same ; no matter where the devil went, they gave him nothing for money, but said:

" Bring us something else, or come and work for it, or take it for Christ's sake !"

But the devil had nothing but money. He did not like to work, and for Christ's sake he could not take anything. The old devil grew angry.

« What else do you want, if I give you money ? You can buy anything for money, or hire a labourer."

The fools paid no attention to him.

"No," they said, "we do not want it. We have no taxes and no wages to pay, so what do we want with the money ? "

The old devil went to bed without eating supper.

This affair reached the ears of Ivan the Fool. They went to ask him:

" What shall we do ? A clean-looking gentleman has appeared among us: he is fond of eating and drinking, and does not like to work, and does not beg for Christ's sake, but only offers us gold pieces. So long as we did not have enough of them, we gave him everything, but now we do not give him any more. What shall we with him ? We are afraid that he will starve."

Ivan listened to what they had to say.

" All right," he said, " we shall have to feed him Let him go from farm to farm as a shepherd! "

The old devil could not help himself, and he began to go from farm to farm. The turn came to Ivan's farm. The old devil came to dinner,

and the dumb girl was just fixing it. Those who were lazy used to deceive her. Without having worked they came to dinner earlier and ate up all the porridge. And so the dumb girl contrived to tell the good-for-nothing by their hands: if one had calluses, she seated him at the table, but if not, she gave him what was left of the dinner. The old devil climbed behind the table; but the dumb girl took hold of his hands, and there were no calluses; the hands were clean and smooth, and the nails long.

The dumb girl bawled, and pulled the devil out from behind the table.

Ivan's wife said to him:

" Don't take it amiss, clean gentleman ! My sister-in-law will not let a man without calluses sit down at the table. Wait awhile! Let the people eat first, and then you will get what is left."

The old devil was insulted, because at the king's house they would feed him with the swine. He said to Ivan:

" What a fool's law you have in your country to let all men work with their hands! You have invented that in your stupidity. Do men work with their hands only ? How do you suppose clever people work? "

But Ivan said:

" How can we fools know ? We labour mostly with our hands and with our backs."

" That is so, because you are fools. I will teach you," he said, " how to work with your heads. You will see that with your heads you can work faster than with your hands."

Ivan marvelled.

" Indeed," he said, " we are called fools for good reason."

And the old devil said:

" But it is not easy to work with the head. You do not give me anything to eat because I have no calluses on my hands, and you do not know that it is a hundred times harder to work with the head. At times it just makes the head burst."

Ivan fell to musing.

" But why do you torture yourself so much, my dear ? It is no small matter to have your head burst. You had better do some easy work, – with your hands and back."

And the devil said :

"The reason I torture myself is because I pity you fools. If I did not torture myself, you would remain fools to the end of your days. I have worked with my head, and now I will teach you, too."

Ivan marvelled.

« Teach us," he said, " for now and then the hands get tired, and it would be nice to use the head instead."

The devil promised to teach him.

And Ivan proclaimed throughout his kingdom that a clean-looking man had appeared who would teach people how to work with their heads, that they could work more with their heads than with their hands, and that they should come and learn.

In Ivan's kingdom there was a high tower, and a straight staircase led up to it, and at the top there was a spyroom. Ivan took the gentleman there so that he might see better.

The gentleman stood up on the tower and began to speak from it. The fools gathered around to look at him. The fools thought that he would show them in fact how to work with the head instead of the hands. But the old devil taught them only in words how to live without working.

The fools did not understand a word. They looked and looked and went away, each to his work.

The old devil stood on the tower a day, and a second day, and kept talking. He wanted to eat; but the fools did not have enough sense to send some bread up to the tower. They thought that if he could work better with his head than with his hands, he would somehow earn bread for himself with his head. The old devil stood another day in the tower-room, and kept talking all the time. And the people came up and looked, and looked and went away.

Then Ivan asked:

" Well, has the gentleman begun to work with his head ?"

" Not yet," people said, " he is still babbling."

The old devil stood another day on the tower and began to weaken ; he tottered and struck his head against a post. One of the fools saw that, and told Ivdn's wife about it, and she ran to her husband in the field.

" Come, let us go and see," she said. " The gentleman is beginning to work with his head."

Ivan was surprised.

" Indeed ? " he said. He turned in the horse, and went to the tower.

When he came up to it, the old devil was weakened from hunger and tottering from side to side and knocking his head against the posts. Just as Ivan came up, the devil stumbled and fell and rattled down the stairs, head foremost: he counted all the steps.

"Well," said Ivan, "the clean-looking gentleman told the truth when he said that at times the head bursts. This is worse than calluses: such works will leave bumps on the head."

The old devil came down the whole staircase and struck his head against the ground. Ivan wanted to go and see how much work he had done, but suddenly the earth gave way, and the old devil went through the earth, and nothing but a hole was left.

Ivan scratched himself.

" I declare," he said, " it is a nasty thing ! It is again he. He must be the father of those others. What a big fellow he is ! "

Ivan is still living, and people are all the time rushing to his kingdom, and his brothers, too, came to him, and he is feeding them all. If any one comes and says: " Feed me ! " he replies :

" All right, stay here, we have plenty of everything."

They have but one custom in his country, and that is, if one has calluses on his hands, he may sit down at the table, and if he has not, he gets the remnants.

THE END.