

## THE WATER SPRITE

A LITTLE brother and sister were one day playing together by the side of a well, and not being careful, they both fell in.

Under the water they found a fairy, who said to them, "Now I have caught you, I intend you to work for me." So she carried them both away.

When they arrived at her home she set the maiden to spin hard, tangled flax, and gave her a cask full of holes to fill with water; and she sent the boy to the wood with a blunt axe, and told him to cut wood for her fire.

The children became at last so impatient with this treatment that they waited till one Sunday, when the fairy was at church, and ran away. But the church was close by, and as they were flying away like two birds she espied them, and went after them with great strides.

The children saw her coming in the distance, and the maiden threw behind her a great brush, which instantly became a mountain covered with prickly points, over which the fairy had the greatest trouble to climb. But the children saw that she had managed to get over and was coming near.

The boy then threw a comb behind him, which became a mountain of combs, with hundreds of teeth sticking up; but the fairy knew how to hold fast on this, and soon clambered over it. The maiden next threw a looking-glass behind, which became a mountain also, and was so slippery that it was impossible to get over it.

Then thought the fairy, "I will go home and fetch my axe and break the looking-glass." But when she came back and had broken the looking-glass, the children had been for a long time too far away for her to overtake them, so she was obliged to sink back into the well.