

ONE EYE, TWO EYES, THREE EYES

BY GRIMM

There was once a woman who had three daughters, of whom the eldest was named "One Eye," because she had only one eye in the middle of her forehead. The second had two eyes, like other people, and she was called "Two Eyes." The youngest had three eyes, two like her second sister, and one in the middle of her forehead, like the eldest, and she bore the name of "Three Eyes."

Now because little Two Eyes looked just like other people, her mother and sisters could not endure her. They said to her, "You are not better than common folks, with your two eyes; you don't belong to us."

So they pushed her about, and threw all their old clothes to her for her to wear, and gave her only the pieces that were left to eat, and did everything that they could to make her miserable. It so happened that little Two Eyes was sent into the fields to take care of the goats, and she was often very hungry, although her sisters had as much as they liked to eat. So one day she seated herself on a mound in the field, and began to weep and cry so bitterly that two little rivulets flowed from her eyes. Once, in the midst of her sorrow she looked



up, and saw a woman standing near her who said, "What are you weeping for, little Two Eyes?"

"I cannot help weeping," she replied; "for because I have two eyes, like other people, my mother and sisters cannot bear me; they push me about from one corner to another and make me wear their old clothes, and give me nothing to eat but what is left, so that I am always hungry. To-day they gave me so little that I am nearly starved."

"Dry up your tears, little Two Eyes," said the wise woman; "I will tell you something to do which will prevent you from ever being hungry again. You have only to say to your own goat:

"Little goat, if you're able,
Pray deck out my table,'

"and immediately there will be a pretty little table before you full of all sorts of good things for you to eat, as much as you like. And when you have had enough, and you do not want the table any more, you need only say:

"Little goat, when you're able,
Remove my nice table,'
and it will vanish from your eyes."

Then the wise woman went away. "Now," thought little Two Eyes, "I will try if what she says is true, for I am very hungry," so she said:

"Little goat, if you're able,
Pray deck out my table."

The words were scarcely spoken, when a beautiful little table stood really before her; it had a white cloth and plates, and knives and forks, and silver spoons, and such a delicious dinner, smoking hot as if it had just come from the kitchen. Then little Two Eyes sat down and said the shortest grace she knew—"Pray God be our guest for all time. Amen"—before she allowed herself to taste anything. But oh, how she did enjoy her dinner! and when she had finished, she said, as the wise woman had taught her:

"Little goat, when you're able,
Remove my nice table."

In a moment, the table and everything upon it had disappeared. "That is a pleasant way to keep house," said little Two Eyes, and felt quite contented and happy. In the evening, when she went home with the goat, she found an earthenware dish with some scraps which her sisters had left for her, but she did not touch them. The next morning she went away with the goat, leaving them behind where they had been placed for her. The first and second times that she did so, the sisters did not notice it; but when they found it happened every day, they said one to the other, "There is something strange about little Two Eyes, she leaves her supper every day, and all that has been put for her has been wasted; she must get food somewhere else."

So they determined to find out the truth, and they arranged that when Two Eyes took her goat to the field, One Eye should go with her to take particular notice of what she did, and discover if anything was brought for her to eat and drink.

So when Two Eyes started with her goat, One Eye said to her, "I am going with you to-day to see if the goat gets her food properly while you are watching the rest."

But Two Eyes knew what she had in her mind. So she drove the goat into the long grass, and said, "Come, One Eye, let us sit down here and rest, and I will sing to you."

One Eye seated herself, and, not being accustomed to walk so far, or to be out in the heat of the sun, she began to feel tired, and as little Two Eyes kept on singing, she closed her one eye and fell fast asleep.

When Two Eyes saw this, she knew that One Eye could not betray her, so she said:

"Little goat, if you are able,
Come and deck my pretty table."

She seated herself when it appeared, and ate and drank very quickly, and when she had finished she said:

"Little goat, when you are able,
Come and clear away my table."

It vanished in the twinkling of an eye; and then Two Eyes woke up One Eye, and said, "Little One Eye, you are a clever one to watch goats; for, while you are asleep, they might be running all over the world. Come, let us go home!"

So they went to the house, and little Two Eyes again left the scraps on the dish untouched, and

One Eye could not tell her mother whether little Two Eyes had eaten anything in the field; for she said to excuse herself, "I was asleep."

The next day the mother said to Three Eyes, "You must go to the field this time, and find out whether there is anyone who brings food to little Two Eyes; for she must eat and drink secretly."

So when little Two Eyes started with her goat, Three Eyes followed, and said, "I am going with you to-day, to see if the goats are properly fed and watched."

But Two Eyes knew her thoughts; so she led the goat through the long grass to tire Three Eyes, and at last she said, "Let us sit down here and rest, and I will sing to you, Three Eyes."

She was glad to sit down, for the walk and the heat of the sun had really tired her; and, as her sister continued her song, she was obliged to close two of her eyes, and they slept, but not the third. In fact, Three Eyes was wide awake with one eye, and heard and saw all that Two Eyes did; for poor little Two Eyes, thinking she was asleep, said her speech to the goat, and the table came with all the good things on it, and was carried away when Two Eyes had eaten enough; and the cunning Three Eyes saw it all with her one eye. But she pretended to be asleep when her sister came to wake her and told her she was going home.

That evening, when little Two Eyes again left the supper they placed aside for her, Three Eyes said to her mother, "I know where the proud thing gets her good eating and drinking;" and then she described all she had seen in the field. "I saw it all with one eye," she said; "for she had made my other two

eyes close with her fine singing, but luckily the one in my forehead remained open."

Then the envious mother cried out to poor little Two Eyes, "You wish to have better food than we, do you? You shall lose your wish!" She took up a butcher's knife, went out, and stuck the good little goat in the heart, and it fell dead.

When little Two Eyes saw this, she went out into the field, seated herself on a mound, and wept most bitter tears.

Presently the wise woman stood again before her, and said, "Little Two Eyes, why do you weep?"

"Ah!" she replied, "I must weep. The goat, who every day spread my table so beautifully, has been killed by my mother, and I shall have again to suffer from hunger and sorrow."

"Little Two Eyes," said the wise woman, "I will give you some good advice. Go home, and ask your sister to give you the inside of the slaughtered goat, and then go and bury it in the ground in front of the house-door."

On saying this the wise woman vanished.

Little Two Eyes went home quickly, and said to her sister, "Dear sister, give me some part of my poor goat. I don't want anything valuable; only give me the inside."

Her sister laughed, and said, "Of course you can have that, if you don't want anything else."

So little Two Eyes took the inside; and in the evening, when all was quiet, buried it in the ground outside the house-door, as the wise woman had told her to do.

The next morning, when they all rose and looked out of the window, there stood a most won-

derful tree, with leaves of silver and apples of gold hanging between them. Nothing in the wide world could be more beautiful or more costly. They none of them knew how the tree could come there in one night, excepting little Two Eyes. She supposed it had grown up from the inside of the goat; for it stood over where she had buried it in the earth.

Then said the mother to little One Eye, "Climb up, my child, and break off some of the fruit from the tree."

One Eye climbed up, but when she tried to catch a branch and pluck one of the apples, it escaped from her hand, and so it happened every time she made the attempt, and, do what she would, she could not reach one.

"Three Eyes," said the mother, "climb up, and try what you can do; perhaps you will be able to see better with your three eyes than One Eye can."

One Eye slid down from the tree, and Three Eyes climbed up. But Three Eyes was not more skilful; with all her efforts she could not draw the branches, nor the fruit, near enough to pluck even a leaf, for they sprang back as she put out her hand.

At last the mother was impatient, and climbed up herself, but with no more success, for, as she appeared to grasp a branch, or fruit, her hand closed upon thin air.

"May I try?" said little Two Eyes; "perhaps I may succeed."

"You, indeed!" cried her sisters; "you, with your two eyes, what can you do?"

But Two Eyes climbed up, and the golden apples did not fly back from her when she touched them, but almost laid themselves on her hand, and

she plucked them one after another, till she carried down her own little apron full.

The mother took them from her, and gave them to her sisters, as she said little Two Eyes did not handle them properly; but this was only from jealousy, because little Two Eyes was the only one who could reach the fruit, and she went into the house feeling more spiteful to her than ever.

It happened that while all three sisters were standing under the tree together a young knight rode by. "Run away, quick, and hide yourself, little Two Eyes; hide yourself somewhere, for we shall be quite ashamed for you to be seen." Then they pushed the poor girl, in great haste, under an empty cask, which stood near the tree, and several of the golden apples that she had plucked along with her.

As the knight came nearer they saw he was a handsome man; and presently he halted, and looked with wonder and pleasure at the beautiful tree with its silver leaves and golden fruit.

At last he spoke to the sisters, and asked: "To whom does this beautiful tree belong? If a man possessed only one branch he might obtain all he wished for in the world."

"This tree belongs to us," said the two sisters, "and we will break off a branch for you if you like." They gave themselves a great deal of trouble in trying to do as they offered; but all to no purpose, for the branches and the fruit evaded their efforts, and sprung back at every touch.

"This is wonderful," exclaimed the knight, "that the tree should belong to you, and yet you are not able to gather even a branch."

They persisted, however, in declaring that the tree was their own property. At this moment little Two Eyes, who was angry because her sisters had not told the truth, caused two of the golden apples to slip out from under the cask, and they rolled on till they reached the feet of the knight's horse. When he saw them, he asked in astonishment where they came from.

The two ugly maidens replied that they had another sister, but they dared not let him see her, for she had only two eyes, like common people, and was named little Two Eyes.

But the knight felt very anxious to see her, and called out, "Little Two Eyes, come here." Then came Two Eyes, quite comforted, from the empty cask, and the knight was astonished to find her so beautiful.

Then he said, "Little Two Eyes, can you break off a branch of the tree for me?"

"Oh yes," she replied, "I can, very easily, for the tree belongs to me." And she climbed up, and, without any trouble, broke off a branch with its silver leaves and golden fruit and gave it to the knight.

He looked down at her as she stood by his horse, and said: "Little Two Eyes, what shall I give you for this?"

"Ah!" she answered, "I suffer from hunger and thirst, and sorrow, and trouble, from early morning till late at night; if you would only take me with you, and release me, I should be so happy."

Then the knight lifted the little maiden on his horse, and rode home with her to his father's castle. There she was given beautiful clothes to wear, and as much to eat and drink as she wished, and as she

grew up the young knight loved her so dearly that they were married with great rejoicings.

Now, when the two sisters saw little Two Eyes carried away by the handsome young knight, they were overjoyed at their good fortune. "The wonderful tree belongs to us now," they said; "even if we cannot break off a branch, yet everybody who passes will stop to admire it, and make acquaintance with us, and, who knows? we may get husbands after all."

But when they rose the next morning, lo! the tree had vanished, and with it all their hopes. And on this very morning, when little Two Eyes looked out of her chamber window of the castle, she saw, to her great joy, that the tree had followed her.

Little Two Eyes lived for a long time in great happiness; but she heard nothing of her sisters, till one day two poor women came to the castle, to beg for alms. Little Two Eyes saw them, and, looking earnestly in their faces, she recognised her two sisters, who had become so poor that they were obliged to beg their bread from door to door.

But the good sister received them most kindly, and promised to take care of them and give them all they wanted. And then they did indeed repent and feel sorry for having treated her so badly in their youthful days.