# Frederick and Catherine

There was once on a time a man who was called Frederick and a woman called Catherine, who had married each other and lived together as young married folks. One day Frederick said, "I will now go and plough, Catherine; when I come back, there must be some roast meat on the table for hunger, and a fresh draught for thirst." - "Just go, Frederick," answered Kate, "just go, I will have all ready for you." Therefore when dinner-time drew near she got a sausage out of the chimney, put it in the frying-pan, put some butter to it, and set it on the fire. The sausage began to fry and to hiss, Catherine stood beside it and held the handle of the pan, and had her own thoughts as she was doing it. Then it occurred to her, "While the sausage is getting done thou couldst go into the cellar and draw beer." So she set the frying-pan safely on the fire, took a can, and went down into the cellar to draw beer. The beer ran into the can and Kate watched it, and then she thought, "Oh, dear! The dog upstairs is not fastened up, it might get the sausage out of the pan. Well thought of." And in a trice she was up the cellar-steps again, but the Spitz had the sausage in its mouth already, and trailed it away on the ground. But Catherine, who was not idle, set out after it, and chased it a long way into the field; the dog, however, was swifter than Catherine and did not let the sausage journey easily, but skipped over the furrows with it. "What's gone is gone!" said Kate, and turned round, and as she had run till she was weary, she walked quietly and comfortably, and cooled herself. During this time the beer was still running out of the cask, for Kate had not turned the tap. And when the can was full and there was no other place for it, it ran into the cellar and did not stop until the whole cask was empty. As soon as Kate was on the steps she saw the mischance. "Good gracious!" she cried. "What shall I do now to stop Frederick knowing it!" She thought for a while, and at last she remembered that up in the garret was still standing a sack of the finest wheat flour from the last fair, and she would fetch that down and strew it over the beer. "Yes," said she, "he who saves a thing when he ought, has it afterwards when he needs it," and she climbed up to the garret and carried the sack below, and threw it straight down on the can of beer, which she knocked over, and Frederick's draught swam also in the cellar. "It is all right," said Kate, "where the one is the other ought to be also," and she strewed the meal over the whole cellar. When it was done she was heartily delighted with her work, and said, "How clean and wholesome it does look here!"

At mid-day home came Frederick: "Now, wife, what have you ready for me?" - "Ah, Freddy," she answered, "I was frying a sausage for you, but whilst I was drawing the beer to drink with it, the dog took it away out of the pan, and whilst I was running after the dog, all the beer ran out, and whilst I was drying up the beer with the flour, I knocked over the can as well, but be easy, the cellar is quite dry again." Said Frederick, "Kate, Kate, you should not have done that! to let the sausage be carried off and the beer run out of the cask, and throw out all our flour into the bargain!" - "Indeed, Frederick, I did not know that, you should have told me."

The man thought, "If my wife is like this, I must look after things more." Now he had got together a good number of thalers which he changed into gold, and said to Catherine, "Look, these are counters for playing games; I will put them in a pot and bury them in the stable under the cow's manger, but mind you keep away from them, or it will be the worse for you." Said she, "Oh, no, Frederick, I certainly will not go." And when Frederick was gone some pedlars came into the village who had cheap earthen-bowls and pots, and asked the young woman if there was nothing she wanted to bargain with them for? "Oh, dear people," said Catherine, "I have no money and can buy nothing, but if you have any use for yellow counters I will buy of you." - "Yellow counters, why not? But just let us see them." - "Then go into the stable and dig under the cow's manger, and you will find the yellow counters. I am not allowed to go there." The rogues went thither, dug and found pure gold. Then they laid hold of it, ran away, and left their pots and bowls behind in the house. Catherine though she must use her new things, and as she had no lack in the kitchen already without these, she knocked the bottom out of every pot, and set them all as ornaments on the paling which went round about the house. When Frederick came and saw the new decorations, he said, "Catherine, what have you been about?" - "I have bought them, Frederick, for the

counters which were under the cow's manger. I did not go there myself, the pedlars had to dig them out for themselves." - "Ah, wife," said Frederick, "what have you done? Those were not counters, but pure gold, and all our wealth; you should not have done that." - "Indeed, Frederick," said she, "I did not know that, you should have forewarned me."

Catherine stood for a while and bethought to herself; then she said, "Listen, Frederick, we will soon get the gold back again, we will run after the thieves." - "Come, then," said Frederick, "we will try it; but take with you some butter and cheese that we may have something to eat on the way." - "Yes, Frederick, I will take them." They set out, and as Frederick was the better walker, Catherine followed him. "It is to my advantage," thought she, "when we turn back I shall be a little way in advance." Then she came to a hill where there were deep ruts on both sides of the road. "There one can see," said Catherine, "how they have torn and skinned and galled the poor earth, it will never be whole again as long as it lives," and in her heart's compassion she took her butter and smeared the ruts right and left, that they might not be so hurt by the wheels, and as she was thus bending down in her charity, one of the cheeses rolled out of her pocket down the hill. Said Catherine, "I have made my way once up here, I will not go down again; another may run and fetch it back." So she took another cheese and rolled it down. But the cheeses did not come back, so she let a third run down, thinking. "Perhaps they are waiting for company, and do not like to walk alone." As all three stayed away she said, "I do not know what that can mean, but it may perhaps be that the third has not found the way, and has gone wrong, I will just send the fourth to call it." But the fourth did no better than the third. Then Catherine was angry, and threw down the fifth and sixth as well, and these were her last. She remained standing for some time watching for their coming, but when they still did not come, she said, "Oh, you are good folks to send in search of death, you stay a fine long time away! Do you think I will wait any longer for you? I shall go my way, you may run after me; you have younger legs than I." Catherine went on and found Frederick, who was standing waiting for her because he wanted something to eat. "Now just let us have what you have brought with you," said he. She gave him the dry bread. "Where have you the butter and the cheeses?" asked the man. "Ah, Freddy," said Catherine, "I smeared the cart-ruts with the butter and the cheeses will come soon; one ran away from me, so I sent the others after to call it." Said Frederick, "You should not have done that, Catherine, to smear the butter on the road, and let the cheeses run down the hill!" - "Really, Frederick, you should have told me."

Then they ate the dry bread together, and Frederick said, "Catherine, did you make the house safe when you came away?" - "No, Frederick, you should have told me to do it before." - "Then go home again, and make the house safe before we go any farther, and bring with you something else to eat. I will wait here for you." Catherine went back and thought, "Frederick wants something more to eat, he does not like butter and cheese, so I will take with me a handkerchief full of dried pears and a pitcher of vinegar for him to drink." Then she bolted the upper half of the door fast, but unhinged the lower door, and took it on her back, believing that when she had placed the door in security the house must be well taken care of. Catherine took her time on the way, and thought, "Frederick will rest himself so much the longer." When she had once reached him she said, "Here is the house-door for you, Frederick, and now you can take care of the house yourself." - "Oh, heavens," said he, "what a wise wife I have! She takes the under-door off the hinges that everything may run in, and bolts the upper one. It is now too late to go back home again, but since you have brought the door here, you shall just carry it farther." - "I will carry the door, Frederick, but the dried pears and the vinegar-jug will be too heavy for me, I will hang them on the door, it may carry them."

And now they went into the forest, and sought the rogues, but did not find them. At length as it grew dark they climbed into a tree and resolved to spend the night there. Scarcely, however, had they sat down at the top of it than the rascals came thither who carry away with them what does not want to go, and find things before they are lost. They sat down under the very tree in which Frederick and Catherine were sitting, lighted a fire, and were about to share their booty. Frederick got down on the other side and collected some stones together. Then he climbed up again with them, and wished to throw them at the thieves and kill them. The stones, however, did not hit them, and the knaves cried, "It will soon be morning, the wind is shaking down the fir-apples. Catherine still had the door on her back, and as it pressed so heavily on her, she thought it was the fault of the dried pears,

and said, "Frederick, I must throw the pears down." - "No, Catherine, not now," he replied, "they might betray us." - "Oh, but, Frederick, I must! They weigh me down far too much." - "Do it, then, and be hanged!" Then the dried pears rolled down between the branches, and the rascals below said, "The leaves are falling." A short time afterwards, as the door was still heavy, Catherine said, "Ah, Frederick, I must pour out the vinegar." - "No, Catherine, you must not, it might betray us." - "Ah, but, Frederick, I must, it weighs me down far too much." - "Then do it and be hanged!" So she emptied out the vinegar, and it besprinkled the robbers. They said amongst themselves, "The dew is already falling." At length Catherine thought, "Can it really be the door which weighs me down so?" and said, "Frederick, I must throw the door down." - "No, not now, Catherine, it might discover us." - "Oh, but, Frederick, I must. It weighs me down far too much." - "Oh, no, Catherine, do hold it fast." - "Ah, Frederick, I am letting it fall!" - "Let it go, then, in the devil's name." Then it fell down with a violent clatter, and the rascals below cried, "The devil is coming down the tree!" and they ran away and left everything behind them. Early next morning, when the two came down they found all their gold again, and carried it home.

When they were once more at home, Frederick said, "And now, Catherine, you, too, must be industrious and work." - "Yes, Frederick, I will soon do that, I will go into the field and cut corn." When Catherine got into the field, she said to herself, "Shall I eat before I cut, or shall I sleep before I cut? Oh, I will eat first." Then Catherine ate and eating made her sleepy, and she began to cut, and half in a dream cut all her clothes to pieces, her apron, her gown, and her shift. When Catherine awoke again after a long sleep she was standing there half-naked, and said to herself, "Is it I, or is it not I? Alas, it is not I." In the meantime night came, and Catherine ran into the village, knocked at her husband's window, and cried, "Frederick." - "What is the matter?" - "I should very much like to know if Catherine is in?" - "Yes, yes," replied Frederick, "she must be in and asleep." Said she, "'Tis well, then I am certainly at home already," and ran away.

Outside Catherine found some vagabonds who were going to steal. Then she went to them and said, "I will help you to steal." The rascals thought that she knew the situation of the place, and were willing. Catherine went in front of the houses, and cried, "Good folks, have you anything? We want to steal." The thieves thought to themselves, "That's a fine way of doing things," and wished themselves once more rid of Catherine. Then they said to her, "Outside the village the pastor has some turnips in the field. Go there and pull up some turnips for us." Catherine went to the ground, and began to pull them up, but was so idle that she did not gather them together. Then a man came by, saw her, and stood still and thought that it was the devil who was thus rooting amongst the turnips. He ran away into the village to the pastor, and said, "Mr. Pastor, the devil is in your turnip-ground, rooting up turnips." - "Ah, heavens," answered the pastor, "I have a lame foot, I cannot go out and drive him away." Said the man, "Then I will carry you on my back," and he carried him out on his back. And when they came to the ground, Catherine arose and stood up her full height. "Ah, the devil!" cried the pastor, and both hurried away, and in his great fright the pastor could run better with his lame foot than the man who had carried him on his back could do with his sound one.

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