The flail from heaven

A countryman was once going out to plough with a pair of oxen. When he got to the field, both the animals' horns began to grow, and went on growing, and when he wanted to go home they were so big that the oxen could not get through the gateway for them. By good luck a butcher came by just then, and he delivered them over to him, and made the bargain in this way, that he should take the butcher a measure of turnip-seed, and then the butcher was to count him out a Brabant thaler for every seed. I call that well sold! The peasant now went home, and carried the measure of turnip-seed to him on his back. On the way, however, he lost one seed out of the bag. The butcher paid him justly as agreed on, and if the peasant had not lost the seed, he would have had one thaler the more. In the meantime, when he went on his way back, the seed had grown into a tree which reached up to the sky. Then thought the peasant, "As thou hast the chance, thou must just see what the angels are doing up there above, and for once have them before thine eyes." So he climbed up, and saw that the angels above were threshing oats, and he looked on. While he was thus watching them, he observed that the tree on which he was standing, was beginning to totter; he peeped down, and saw that someone was just going to cut it down. "If I were to fall down from hence it would be a bad thing," thought he, and in his necessity he did not know how to save himself better than by taking the chaff of the oats which lay there in heaps, and twisting a rope of it. He likewise snatched a hoe and a flail which were lying about in heaven, and let himself down by the rope. But he came down on the earth exactly in the middle of a deep, deep hole. So it was a real piece of luck that he had brought the hoe, for he hoed himself a flight of steps with it, and mounted up, and took the flail with him as a token of his truth, so that no one could have any doubt of his story.

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