

The Dryad

Hans Christian Andersen

We're going to Paris to see the exposition!

Now we're there! It was a speedy journey, done completely without witchcraft - we went by steam, in a ship and on a railroad. Our time is indeed a time of fairy tales.

Now we are in a large hotel in the middle of Paris. The staircase is decorated with flowers, and soft carpets are spread over the steps. Our room is pleasant; the balcony door is open, and we can look out onto a large square. Down there is spring, which has come to Paris, having arrived at the same time we did, in the form of a big, young chestnut tree with delicate leaves beginning to open. How much more richly that tree is dressed in the beauty of spring than the other trees on the square! One of them has stepped out of the row of living trees and lies on the ground with its roots torn up. Where that tree stood the young chestnut will be planted, and there it will grow.

It is still standing high up on the heavy wagon that brought it to Paris this morning from many miles out in the country. For years it had stood out there, close to a mighty oak, under which the pious old pastor often used to sit and tell his stories to the listening children. Of course, the young chestnut tree had also listened.

The Dryad that lived in this tree was then but a child; she could remember way back when the chestnut tree was so small it could hardly peep over the tall grass blades and ferns. These were then as large as they ever would be; but the tree grew bigger every year, drinking in air and sunshine, dew and rain; the powerful winds shook it and bent it back and forth, which was an important part of its education.

The Dryad was pleased with her life and enjoyed living, was pleased with the sunshine and the songs of birds; but she liked best of all the human voice for she knew the language of people as well as that of the animals. Butterflies, cockchafers, and dragonflies - indeed, everything that could fly came to visit her, and everyone that came would gossip. They talked about the villages, the vineyards, the woods, and the old castle with its park, in which there were dikes and canals; down there in water also dwelt beings who in their own way could fly from place to place - beneath the water - beings with knowledge and imagination, but who said nothing, for they were too wise. The swallow, which often dived down deep into the water, told about the bright goldfish, the fat turbot, the sturdy perch, and the old moss-covered carp. The swallow gave very good descriptions, but it's always better to go and look for oneself, it said. But how could the Dryad ever see all these things? She had to be satisfied with the beautiful landscape and the buzz of human activity.

Everything was delightful, but most delightful when the old pastor stood there under the oak tree and talked about France and about the great deeds of men and women whose names are remembered through the ages with admiration. The Dryad heard of the shepherd maid, Joan of Arc, of Charlotte Corday; she learned of ancient times, and the times of Henry IV and Napoleon I, and she even heard of the genius and glory of our own times. She heard of names that were deep in the hearts of the people, and that France is the world's country, the world's gathering place of genius, with the Cradle of Liberty at its center.

The village children listened attentively, and the Dryad just as attentively; she became a school child like the rest. In the shapes of the drifting clouds she could see many pictures of those things she had learned. The cloudy sky was her picture book.

She had thought she was very happy in this beautiful France, but she began to believe

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that the birds - in fact, all creatures that could fly - were much better off than she. Even the fly could look far beyond her horizon. France was so large and so beautiful, but she could see only a very small part of it. France was as broad as the world, with vineyards and forests and great cities, and of all these Paris was the greatest and most glorious! The birds could fly there, but she, never!

Among the village children there was a little girl so ragged and so poor, but very pretty to look upon. She was always singing and laughing, and often tied red flowers in her black hair.

"Don't go to Paris!" said the old pastor. "Poor child, if you go there it will be the ruin of you!"

And yet she went. The Dryad often thought of her, for they had both had the same desire and yearning to see the great city.

Spring came, and then summer; autumn came, and then winter. A couple of years went by.

The Dryad's tree was bearing its first chestnut blossoms, and the birds chirped around them in the bright sunlight. A noble lady came driving along the road in a grand carriage. She herself was driving the beautiful and spirited horses, with a smartly dressed little groom sitting behind her. The Dryad recognized her; the old pastor knew her. He shook his head and said sadly, "You did go there, and it proved your ruin, poor Marie!"

"She, poor?" thought the Dryad. "No! What a change! She's dressed like a duchess; that's what she got in the city of enchantment. Oh, if only I were there in all that light and splendor! When I look over there where I know the city is, I can see how it lights up the clouds in the night."

Indeed, she would look in that direction every evening, every night; there she could see the brightness along the horizon. On clear, moonlit nights she missed the bright cloudiness; she missed the drifting clouds that showed her pictures of the great city and its history.

The child clings to its picture book. The Dryad clings to her cloud book, her book of thoughts.

A balmy, cloudless sky was like a blank page to her, and it had now been several days since she had seen one like that. It was summertime, and the days were hot and sultry, without a cooling breeze; every flower and leaf was drowsy, and people were, too.

The clouds rose at that corner of the horizon where in the night the brightness announced, "Here is Paris!" All the clouds gathered and rose together, forming what appeared to be whole mountains; they pushed through the air and spread out over the entire countryside as far as the Dryad could see. They were heaped in mighty, rocklike, thundery-blue masses, layer on layer, high into the air. Then flashes of light shot out from them. "These are also the servants of God our Master," the old pastor had said. And then out flashed a bluish, blinding light, a blaze of lightning, which tried to rival the sun itself; it shattered the piled-up clouds.

The lightning struck down, down at the mighty old oak tree, splitting it to its very roots; the crown was shattered, the trunk torn apart. The tree crashed down and fell as if spreading itself out to receive the messenger of light. Not even the mightiest cannon could roar through the air and over the land at the birth of a king's son as did the thunder in saluting the passing of the old oak tree.

The rain streamed down. A refreshing breeze sprang up; the storm was over, and a holiday calm settled on the countryside. The villagers gathered around the fallen old oak tree; the old pastor spoke a few words in praise of it, and a painter made a sketch of the

old tree as a lasting souvenir.

"Everything passes on," said the Dryad, "passes on as the clouds do, never to return."

Never again did the pastor come there. The roof of the schoolhouse had crashed in, and the pulpit was broken. No more did the children come. But autumn came, and winter came, and then spring. And during this time the Dryad's eyes were turned toward that corner on the distant horizon where every evening and night the lights of Paris shone like a belt of radiance. Out of Paris sped locomotive after locomotive, train after train, whistling and roaring, constantly. At every hour, in the evenings, at midnight, in the morning, and throughout the day, the trains arrived, and from these, and into these, people from all countries of the world pushed. A new wonder of the world drew them to Paris. How did this wonder show itself?

"A gorgeous flower of art and industry," people said, "has sprung up on the barren sands of the Champ de Mars. It's a gigantic sunflower, and from its leaves you can study geography or statistics, or become as wise as a councilman, or be inspired by art and poetry, or learn about the products and greatness of every country.

"It's a fairy-tale flower," others said, "a colored lotus, spreading its green leaves like a velvet carpet, the leaves that shot up in the early spring. Summer will see it in its greatest glory, and the storms of autumn will blow it away, leaving neither leaves nor roots."

Before the military school, the Champ de Mars lay stretched out in time of peace, a field without grass and straw, a piece of sandy desert cut from the African wilderness, where Fata Morgana shows her mysterious air castles and hanging gardens; they were more magnificent, more wondrous, now on the Champ de Mars, for they had been converted into reality by human skill.

"They have built the palace of the modern Alladin," it was said. "Day after day, hour after hour, it unfolds more and more of its new splendors."

There was an endless array of halls in marble and many colors. The giant with bloodless veins moved his steel and iron limbs there in the great circular hall. Works of art in metal, in stone, in tapestry, loudly proclaimed the powerful genius that labored in all the lands of the world. There were picture gallery and flower show. Everything that hand and brain could create was on exhibition in the workshop of the mechanic. Even relics from ancient castles and peat moors were to be found there. The overwhelmingly great, colorful show should have been reproduced in miniature and squeezed into the dimensions of a toy, to be seen and appreciated in its entirety.

There on the Champ de Mars stood, as on a huge Christmas table, Alladin's castle of art and industry, and around it were knickknacks of greatness from every country; every nation found a memory of its home.

There was the royal palace of Egypt, and there a caravanserai from the desert. The Bedouin from the land of the hot sun galloped past; and there were the Russian stables, with beautiful fiery horses from the steppes. Over there was the small thatched cottage of a Danish peasant, with Dannebrog, the flag of Denmark, next to Gustavus Vasa's beautifully carved wooden cottage from Dalarna. American log cabins, English cottages, French pavilions, mosques, churches, and theaters were all spread about in a wonderful manner. And in the middle of all this was the fresh green turf, with clear running water, flowering shrubs, rare trees, and glass houses where one might imagine oneself in a tropical forest. Complete rose gardens, brought from Damascus, bloomed in glory under glass roofs. What colors and fragrance! Artificial grottoes contained specimens of various fishes in fresh- and salt-water ponds - it was like standing at the bottom of the ocean there among the fishes and polyps.

Word spread that all these things were now being exhibited on the Champ de Mars, and

an immense crowd of human beings crawled all over this richly decked feast table like a swarm of ants on a journey. Some went on foot or were drawn in wagons, for not everyone's legs can endure such tiresome traveling.

From early dawn until late at night they came there. Steamer after steamer, crowded with visitors, glided down the Seine. The mass of carriages was continually increasing, and the multitude of travelers on foot and horseback increased; streetcars and busses were jammed, packed, and spilling over with human beings. All these currents flowed toward one goal - the Paris Exposition!

Every entrance was bright with the flag of France, and around the bazaar of all nations waved the flags of the various countries. A burring and buzzing sounded from the hall of the machines, and chimes rang out from the towers, while the tones of the organs sounded from the churches, mingled with hoarse, nasal strains from Oriental coffeehouses. It was a Babel empire, a Babel language, a wonder of the world.

All this really happened - at least, according to reports. Who hasn't heard about it? The Dryad knew all about it; she knew everything that has been told here of the world's new wonder in the city of cities. "Hurry, all you birds, fly there and see it; then come back and tell me about it!" was the prayer of the Dryad.

Her longing grew until it became a great desire; it became the one thought of her life. And then . . .

In the silent, solemn night the full moon was shining, and from its face the Dryad saw a spark come forth, as bright as a falling star, and fall to the foot of the tree, whose branches shivered as if shaken by a tempest - and then a mighty, shining figure stood there. It spoke with a tender voice, and yet as powerfully as the judgment-day trumpet that kisses to life and calls to judgment.

"You shall go to the city of enchantments! There you shall take root and enjoy the air and the sunshine, but your life shall be shortened. The long procession of years that awaited you here in the open country will shrink to a small number. Poor Dryad, it will be your ruin! Your longing will grow and your great desire and craving will increase until the tree itself will be a prison to you. You will leave your shelter and change your nature; you will fly forth to mingle with human beings, and then your years will shrink to half of a May fly's lifetime - to one night only! The flame of your life will be blown out. The leaves of the tree will wither and blow away, never to return."

So said the voice; thus it rang out. And then the shining being disappeared - but not the Dryad's longing and desire; she trembled in a violent fever of anticipated joy. Rejoicingly she said, "I shall go the city of cities. Life will begin for me - floating like the clouds, whither no one knows!"

The time of fulfillment came at early dawn, when the moon had grown pale and the skies had reddened; then the words of promise were to come true. Men came with spades and poles. They dug carefully around and deep under the roots of the tree. Then they lifted the tree out of the ground with its roots and the earth about them, and wound straw mats around the roots to make a warm foot bag. And then the tree was set on a wagon and tied securely. Now it was to go on a journey to Paris, and it was to remain and grow in the great metropolis of France, the city of cities.

The branches and leaves of the chestnut tree trembled as they began to move it. The Dryad trembled, too, but with the joy of expectation.

"Away! Away!" sounded every heartbeat. "Away! Away!" rang the trembling words of longing. The Dryad forgot to say "Farewell" to her old home, to the swaying blades of grass and the innocent daisies that had looked up to her as to a great lady in the garden of our Father, a young princess playing shepherdess in the country.

The chestnut tree on the wagon nodded "Farewell" or "Away!" - the Dryad didn't know which. Her thoughts and dreams were of the wonderful new and yet familiar life which would soon unfold itself. Neither the happy heart of an innocent child nor the heart filled with passion was ever more filled with thought than hers was on her journey to Paris.

Not "Farewell!" - but "Away! Away!" The wagon wheels turned round and round; the distance came near and then soon lay behind. The country changed, as the clouds above changed. New vineyards, woods, villages, villas, and gardens came into view, came closer, and then rolled past. The chestnut tree moved on, and the Dryad moved on with it. Locomotive after locomotive roared past. They blew clouds that took on the shapes of figures, which spoke of Paris, where they came from and where the Dryad was going.

Of course, everything around her knew where she was going. It seemed to her that every tree she passed stretched its branches toward her and begged, "Take me with you! Take me with you!" In every tree there lived a yearning dryad.

What a change! What a trip! The houses seemed to come springing right up out of the ground, more and more of them, closer and closer together. Chimneys appeared like flowerpots, placed side by side, one after another, on the roofs. Huge inscriptions, in letters a yard long, and colorfully painted figures covered the walls from ground to roofs, and shone brightly.

"Where does Paris begin, and when will I be there?" the Dryad asked herself.

There were increasing crowds of people; the tumult and noise grew louder. Carriage followed carriage; people were on foot and on horseback. There were shops on all sides, and music, song, talking, and screaming.

Now the Dryad, in her tree, was in the center of Paris.

The big, heavy wagon stopped in a little square where trees were planted and around which were high houses. Every window had its own balcony, and from these people looked down at that fresh, young chestnut tree which had been driven there to be planted in the place of the dead, uprooted tree that lay on the ground. People passing by stopped for a while to smile at that fresh green bit of early spring. The older trees, their leaves yet scarcely budding, greeted it with rustling branches, "Welcome! Welcome!" And the fountain, which spouted its water into the air so that it splashed into the basin, let the wind carry a few drops to the new arrival, to give it welcome drink.

The Dryad felt the tree being taken down from the wagon and then being put into its destined home. The roots were covered with earth, and fresh green turf was laid on top of that. Blooming shrubs were planted, and earthen pots with flowers in them were placed about. Thus a whole little garden appeared in the midst of the square.

The dead, uprooted tree, killed by gas fumes, hearth smoke, and all the stifling city air, was thrown upon the wagon and hauled away. The crowd watched; old people and children sat upon the bench in the little park, looking at the leaves of the newly planted tree. And we, who tell you about all this, stood on our balcony, gazing down on the young tree that had just come from the fresh air of the country and said what the old pastor would have said if he had been there, "Poor Dryad!"

"How happy I am, how happy!" said the Dryad. "And yet I can't quite understand it. I can't explain how I feel; it all seems to be the way I thought it would be, and yet it isn't quite what I expected!"

The houses were so high and so close. The sun shone upon only one wall; that was covered with posters and placards, and people crowded and thronged around it. Carriages rushed by, light ones and heavy ones. Busses, filled to overflowing, rattled by like moving houses. Carts and carriages squabbled over the right of way.

"Won't these overgrown houses standing so stiflingly close," thought the Dryad, "move away and make room for other shapes and forms, the way the clouds do in the sky? "Why don't they move aside, so I can really see Paris and beyond Paris?" She felt she had to see Notre-Dame, the Vendôme Column, and the many wonderful works that had drawn and were still drawing so many people there.

But the houses didn't move from their places.

The lamps were lighted while it was still daylight, and the gaslight gleamed from all the shopwindows, lighting up the branches of the trees; it was almost like summer sunlight. But the stars above looked exactly the same as the Dryad had seen them back home. She thought she felt a clean and mild breeze come from there. She felt uplifted, strengthened, and could feel a new vigor flow through the tree from the very tips of the leaves to its roots. She then realized that she was in the world of living people and felt she was looked upon with kindly eyes; all around her were tumult and tones, colors and lights. The tones of wind instruments came to her from the side streets, hurdy-gurdies playing dance-provoking melodies. Yes, for dancing, for dancing! for pleasure and amusement, these were played. It was a music to make men and horses, even carriages trees, and houses, dance, if they could. All this fanned an intoxicating yearning for pleasure in the heart of the Dryad.

"How glorious! How beautiful all this is!" she cried rejoicingly. "I'm in Paris!"

The day that came, and the night that followed it, and then the following day brought the same display, the same uproar, the same life, changing and yet always the same.

"By now I know every tree and flower in this square; I know every house, balcony, and shop in this little corner where they've stuck me and where I can see nothing of the great and mighty city. Where is the Arc de Triomphe, and the boulevards, and that wonder of the world? I can't see anything of all this. I stand as if imprisoned in a cage here among these high houses, which I know by heart now, with all their inscriptions, posters, and placards - all the painted delicacies for which I have no more appetite. Where is that which I've heard so much about, which I have known and longed for, the reason I wanted to come here? What have I got - gained, found? I yearn as much as I did before. I know the life I want. I want to go out among the living people and mingle with them; I want to fly like the birds and see and feel and become like a human being! I would rather really live for half a day than spend a lifetime of years in daily idleness and languor, becoming sick, sinking, falling like dew in the meadow, and then disappearing! I want to sail like the clouds, bathe in the sun of life, look down on everything below as the clouds do, and then disappear as they do - where, no one knows!"

This was the sigh of the Dryad, going aloft as a prayer.

"Take from me all my years of life and grant me but half of a May fly's life! Free me from my prison; give me human life and human happiness, though it be but for a fleeting moment, for only this one night, and then punish me, if you wish, for my longing for life! Free me, even if this dwelling of mine, this fresh young tree, wither, be cut down, turned to ashes, and blown away by the winds!"

There was a rustling among the boughs of the tree, and a strange sensation came over it. Every leaf shivered, and fiery sparks seemed to shoot forth from them. A gust of wind shook the crown of the tree. And then there came forth a feminine form - the Dryad herself! In the same instant she found herself beneath the green boughs, rich with leaves and lit by gaslight from all sides. She was as young and beautiful as poor Marie, to whom one had said, "The great city will be your ruin!"

The Dryad sat at the foot of the tree, which she had locked and whose key she had thrown away. So young, so lovely! The stars saw her, and they twinkled; the gas lamps saw her as they glittered, beckoning to her. How slender she was, and yet so strong, a child and

yet a full-grown maiden! Her dress was as smooth as silk, as green as the freshly unfolded leaves of the crown of the tree. In her nut-brown hair was a half-opened chestnut blossom. She looked like the Goddess of Spring.

For a brief moment she sat there motionless, and then she bounded off around the corner like a gazelle. She ran and darted the way reflected sunbeams dart here and there from a mirror being moved in the sunshine. If one had looked closely and could have seen what was there to see, how wondrous this would have been to him! Whenever she rested a moment, the color of her dress and of her figure was changed, according to the nature of the place where she stood and the lights that fell on her.

She reached the boulevards, where there was an ocean of light from the gas flames in the street lamps, stores, and cafés. There were rows of young and slender trees, each of which shielded its dryad from the artificial sunlight. The whole vast sidewalk was like one large dining room, with tables of all sorts of refreshments, from champagne and chartreuse to coffee and beer. There were exhibits of flowers, of pictures, statues, books, and colored materials.

From the crowd by the high houses she watched the roaring streams between the rows of trees; there was a surging river of rolling wagons, cabriolets, chariots, busses, coaches, men on horseback, and marching troops. Life and limb were endangered by any attempt to cross to the other side. Now a blue light shone the brightest, and then the gaslight was again the most brilliant; a rocket had suddenly shot up - from where, to where?

Surely this must be the greatest highway of the world's greatest city! There were charming Italian melodies, and Spanish songs with castanet accompaniment. But the strains from Minutet's music box drowned all the other sounds - that exciting cancan music which Orpheus never knew and Helen never heard. Even the wheelbarrow would have danced on its one wheel if it could have. The Dryad did dance; she whirled and soared, and changed colors like a hummingbird in the sunshine, every house and its interior being reflected on her.

As the glorious lotus flower, torn from its roots, is carried away by the whirling river, so was the Dryad carried along, and whenever she stopped she changed into a new form; consequently, no one could follow her, recognize her, or even view her. Everything passed by her like cloud pictures - face after face - but she recognized none of them; she saw no familiar forms from home. Before her mind came two bright eyes, and she thought at once of Marie. Poor Marie, that ragged, gay child with the red flowers in her black hair. She was here in this worldly city - rich and charming, as when she had driven by the pastor's house, the Dryad's tree and the old oak. More than likely, she was somewhere in this deafening uproar; perhaps she had just alighted from that magnificent carriage waiting over there. Brilliant carriages, with richly liveried coachmen and footmen wearing silk stockings, were drawn up in a line, and the nobility alighting from them were all ladies beautifully dressed. They passed through the open gates and ascended the broad, high steps that led into that stately building with the marble columns. Could this, perhaps, be the great wonder of the world? Surely Marie must be there!

"Sancta Maria!" was being sung within. The fragrance of incense rolled out under the high, painted and gilded arch, where it was always twilight. This was the Church of the Madeleine.

Dressed in the most costly black, fashioned after the finest and newest modes, the ladies of the aristocracy glided over the polished floor. Crests sparkled from the clasps of magnificent prayerbooks bound in velvet and were embroidered on perfumed handkerchiefs bordered with costly Brussels lace. A few of the women knelt in silent prayer before the high altar; others went to the confessionals. The Dryad felt an uneasiness, a fear, as if she were in a place where she should not be. It was a house of silence, a great hall of mystery and secrecy. Everything was said in whispers or in silent

trust.

Now the Dryad realized that she was wrapped in silk and a lace veil, like the ladies of wealth and noble birth. Was every one of them a child of desire and longing like herself?

A deep, painful sigh was heard; did it come from the confessional or from the bosom of the Dryad? She drew the veil more closely about her. She was breathing in incense fumes and not the fresh air. This was not the place she had long for.

"Away, away! Take flight, without rest! The May fly that lives but a day has no rest; her flight is her life!"

The Dryad was out again among the bright gas lamps and the magnificent fountains.

"Not all the water from the fountain can wash away the blood of the innocents slain here!"

Those words were spoken. Here stood many strangers who spoke in loud and lively tones, which no one had dared to do in the great hall of secrecy from which she had just come.

A big stone slab was turned and then raised - why, she did not understand. She saw an opening into the depths of the earth. The strangers stepped down, leaving the starlit sky, the brilliant gaslights, and all the life of the living.

"I'm afraid!" said one of the women who stood here. "I don't dare go down! I care little about seeing the wonders there. Stay here with me!"

"And go home?" said a man. "Leave Paris without having seen the most remarkable thing of all, the wonderwork of modern times, the result of one man's mind and skill?"

"I'll not go down there," was the reply.

"The wonderwork of modern times," it had been said. And the Dryad had heard this and understood. At last she was to reach the goal of her greatest longing, and here was the entrance - down to the vast depths beneath Paris. She had not expected this, but now she had heard about it, and had seen the strangers descend, and she followed them.

The steps were of cast iron, spiral-shaped, broad and comfortable; a lamp was burning below, and deeper down there was another. She found herself in a labyrinth of endless passages and halls crossing each other. Every street and lane in Paris could be seen there, as if reflected in a mirror. Their names could be read, and every house above had its number here, and its root, which led down under the hard, lonely walk that squeezed its way along the wide canal with its onward-rolling drainage. Above this was the aqueduct of fresh running water, and still higher gas pipes and telegraph wire hung like a network. Lamps shone in the distance, as if they were reflected images from the worldly city above. Now and then a rumbling could be heard overhead; it came from the heavy wagons crossing the bridges. Where was the Dryad?

You have heard of the catacombs; they are nothing compared with this underground world, this wonder of our times, the sewers of Paris! That was where the Dryad was, and not at the World's Fair on the Champ de Mars.

On all sides were heard exclamations of astonishment, wonder, and approval.

"Out of the deep here, " they said, "come health and long life for the thousands above. Our age is the age of progress, with all its blessings!"

That was the opinion of people, the talk of people, but not that of the scavengers who were born here and built their homes and lived here - the rats. From the cracks of an old stone wall the rats squeaked so loudly and distinctly that the Dryad could understand them. A big, old rat, whose tail had been bitten off, piped in a shrill voice of his feelings, his anguish, and the only idea in his mind; and his whole family approved of every word he said.

"I am disgusted by the miaow, the human miaow, the ignorant talk! Indeed, everything is very fine now, with gas and oil, but I don't eat such things. It has become so clean and light here that one is ashamed and doesn't know what one is ashamed of. I wish we lived in the good old days of the tallow candles; those times are not so far back - those romantic times, as people call them."

"What are you talking about?" asked the Dryad. "I've never seen you before. What are you talking about?"

"The wonderful old days," said the rat, "the days when Greatgrandfather and Great-grandmother rat were young. At that time it was a great adventure to come down here. Those were the days for the rats of Paris! Mother Pest used to live down here then; she would kill human beings, but never rats. Robbers and smugglers could breathe freely down here. Then this was the asylum for the most fascinating characters I ever saw, such characters as one sees nowadays only in the melodramatic plays. Those romantic days have gone, even for us rats; we have fresh air now - and petroleum!"

Thus the rat squeaked, squeaked over the new times, and in honor of the good old days with Mother Pest.

Now they came to a carriage, a sort of open bus, drawn by two small, lively ponies. The group entered and drove along the Boulevard Sébastopol - that is, along the underground boulevard. Right above them, in Paris, was the real boulevard of that name, crowded with people.

The carriage disappeared in the twilight, and the Dryad disappeared, too, but she came to light again in the fresh, open air under the glare of the gas lamps. Here the wonder was to be found, and not in the damp atmosphere of the crossing and recrossing passages. Here she found the wonder of the world, which she had been seeking in her short lifetime. It burst forth in far richer glory than all the gaslights above, stronger than the moon, which was now gliding by.

Yes, indeed, she saw it greet her; it winked and twinkled like Venus in the heavens.

She saw a brilliant gate open into a little garden gay with light and dance music. Colored gas lamps shone on small artificial lakes and ponds, where water plants, artistically made of bent and painted tinsel, were displayed, and these hurled jets of water high into the air from their chalices, the water sparkling under the brilliant lights. Graceful weeping

willows - real, spring weeping willows - trailed their fresh green branches in curving waves, like a transparent and yet screening veil. A bowl of light among the shrubbery threw its red glow over half-lit bowers made of green foliage, while magic tones of music thrilled the ears, teasing and alluring and chasing the blood through the human limbs.

She saw beautiful young women in evening dress, with innocent smiles on their lips, and laughing with the carelessness of youth. There was a Marie with roses in her hair, but with no carriage or footmen. How they whirled about; how they swung in that wild dance, now up, now down! They laughed and smiled, and leaped as if smitten by the tarantella dance; they looked so joyous, so gay, as if ready to embrace the whole world through pure happiness!

The Dryad felt herself irresistibly drawn into the dance. Her small, delicate feet were shod in silken shoes as brown as the ribbon that fluttered from her hair onto her bare shoulders. The large folds of the green silk dress enveloped her, but could not hide the perfectly shaped legs and the dainty feet, which seemed to be trying to draw a magic circle in the air before her dancing cavalier's head. Was she in the enchanted garden of Armida? What was the name of this place? In bright gas flames outside shone the name "Mabille."

There were shouts and applause, rockets and running water, and the popping of champagne bottles. The dance was Bacchanalian, wild. And above all this the moon was

sailing across the sky, its face sloping a bit. The sky was cloudless, clear and pure, and one thought of looking right into heaven from Mabilie.

A consuming intoxication seized the Dryad, like the aftereffect of opium. Her eyes spoke, and her lips spoke, but her words were drowned by the tones of flute and violin. Her cavalier whispered words in her ear with the rhythm of the cancan; she did not understand them, nor do we understand them. He stretched his arms out to her, around her - but embraced only the transparent, gas filled air! The Dryad was carried away by the wind like a rose petal; and high in the air she saw a flame ahead, a brilliant light at the top of a tower. This light came from the goal of her desires, from the red lighthouse of the Fata Morgana of the Champ de Mars. The spring breeze carried her to it. She circled around the tower, and the workmen thought it was a butterfly that had come too early in the spring and was fluttering down to die.

The moon was shining, and so were the gaslights and lanterns in the great halls, and throughout the widespread buildings of all nations they shone on the green hills and on the rocks that human skill had created and over which waterfalls were precipitated by the power of the "bloodless giant."

The depths of the oceans and of bodies of fresh water - the realm of fishes - were displayed there. One could imagine oneself at the bottom of the sea - deep down in a diving bell, with the water pressing hard on all sides against the thick glass walls. Fathom-long polyps, flexible, bending like eels, trembling with living thorns, swayed to and fro and held fast to the bottom of the sea.

A large flounder lay close by in deep thought, spreading himself out comfortably. A crab, resembling an enormous spider, crawled over him, while the shrimps moved about swiftly and restlessly, as if they were the moths and butterflies of the ocean.

Many beautiful plants were growing in the fresh water. Goldfish had arranged themselves in rows like red cows in a pasture, with all their heads in one direction, so that the stream would flow into their mouths. Thick, fat tenches stared with dull eyes at the glass walls; they knew they were in the Paris Exposition; they knew they had completed a tiring journey in tubs filled with water, and had been on a railroad train, where they had become landsick as men become seasick on the ocean. They had also come to see the Exposition, and they saw it from their own salt-or fresh-water "loges," gazing at the swarms of humans that passed by from morning to night. All the countries of the world had sent their specimens of humanity there, so that the old tenches and breams, the perch and moss-covered carps, might look at the creatures and give their opinions about the various tribes.

"Man is a scalefish," said a slimy little carp, "changing his scales two or three times a day. They make mouth noises - speaking, they call it. We don't change our scales, and we make ourselves understood much more easily, by the motions of the corners of our mouths and the look in our eyes. We have many advantages over men."

"But they've learned how to swim," said a small fresh-water fish. "I come from the great inland lake, and in the hot days of summer people go into the water there, but first they strip off their scales and then they swim. The frogs have taught them how to do it; the hind legs push and the front legs row, but they can't do it very long. They think they can rival us, but they can't Poor people!"

The fishes stared; they thought that the crowd of people there now was the same one they had seen in the bright daylight; yes, and they even believed those figures were the same ones that had beaten against their nerves of observation on the very first day.

A little perch with pretty, mottled skin and an enviably rounded back said he was sure that the same "human scum" was still there.

"I can see it, too, very plainly," said a golden tench. "I distinctly see a beautiful, well-shaped human, a 'long -legged lady,' or whatever it is they call her. She has mouth corners and staring eyes like us, two balloons in the back, a folded umbrella hanging down in front, and a lot of seaweed on her dingling and dangling. She ought to throw all that off and go about the way we do, in nature's gift, and then she would look like an honorable tench - that is, as much as a human can look like us."

"What's become of that laced one, that he-human?"

"He was riding around here in a wheel chair, sitting there with paper, ink, and a pen, and writing everything down. What was he doing? They called him a journalist."

"He is still riding around!" said a moss-covered, old-maid carp who had a bit of worldly temptation stuck in her throat, making her quite hoarse. She had once swallowed a fishhook and since then had been swimming about tolerantly with the hook in her throat. "Journalist," she said; "that's spoken like a fish. It really means a sort of octopus among men!"

Thus the fishes talked on in their own way. But amid this artificial grotto and its water-filled tanks there sounded hammer blows and the songs of workmen, who had to work at night in order to get everything completed. These songs resounded in the midsummer night's dream of the Dryad, who stood there herself, but was soon to fly again and disappear.

"These are goldfish, " she said, and nodded to them. "I'm glad to have been able to see you. Yes, I know you and have known you for a long time! The swallow told me all about you in my own home. How pretty and shining and charming you are! I could kiss each and every one of you! I know the others, too. That must be a crucian, and this is a delicate bream, and there's an old moss-covered carp. I know you, but you don't know me."

The fishes just stared, unable to understand a word she said; they gazed through the dim twilight.

The Dryad was gone; she was in the open air again, where the world's "wonder flower" spread its fragrance from many lands - from the rye-bread land, the codfish seashore, the Russian-leather country, eau-de-cologne valley, and rose-oil Orient.

When we drive home half asleep in our carriage after a ball, the melodies we have heard continue to ring plainly in our ears, and we may sing each of them again. And as in the dead man's eye the last impression received in life remains photographed for some time, so the impression of the day's tumult and brilliance remained yet upon the eye of the night; it was neither absorbed nor quite blown away. The Dryad could see it and knew that it would persist even into the morrow.

Now the Dryad was among fragrant roses; she thought she recognized them as being from her own country, from the castle park and the garden of the pastor. She also saw a red pomegranate blossom; it was one like this that Marie had worn in her coal-black hair. The memory of her childhood home in the country rushed back into her thoughts; eagerly she drank in the sights around her, while a feverish desire seized her and carried her through the wondrous halls.

She was tired, and her fatigue increased. She felt a yearning to rest on the soft Oriental cushions and carpets, or to duck into the clear water as did the branches of the weeping willow. But the May fly has no rest. In a few minutes the day would end. Her thoughts and her limbs trembled, and she sank in the grass beside the babbling stream.

"You spring from the earth with eternal life," she said. "Cool my tongue; give me a refreshing drink!"

"I am no living spring," answered the water. "I run by machinery!"

"Give me some of your freshness, you green grass!" begged the Dryad. "Give me one of

the fragrant flowers!"

"We shall die if we are torn from our plants," answered grass blade and flower.

"Kiss me, you cooling breeze! Give me but a single kiss!"

"Soon the sun will kiss the clouds red," said the wind, "and then you will be among the dead, gone as all this glory will be gone before the year is out. And then I can once more play with the light, loose sand in this place and blow the dust over the earth and into the air. Dust! Nothing but dust!"

The Dryad felt a terror creep over her, like a woman who, bleeding to death in the bath from a severed artery, still wishes to live, while her strength gradually leaves her from loss of blood. She rose, staggered a few steps forward, and then sank again before a little church. The door was open; a light burned on the altar, and the organ sounded. What music! The Dryad never had heard such tones before, though she seemed to hear familiar voices; they came from the depths of the great heart of creation. She thought she heard the whistling of the old oak tree; she thought she heard the old pastor speaking of the great deeds of famous men and of what a creation of God could and might give to the coming ages and thus win himself eternal life. The tones of the organ swelled and rang out; they spoke in song:

"Your desire and longing tore your roots from the place God had given them. That became your ruin, poor Dryad!"

Then the tones from the organ grew soft and gentle; they sounded like weeping and then died away like a weeping whisper. The clouds in the sky began to redden with the dawn. The wind whispered, and sang, "Go away, you dead, for the sun is rising!" The first ray fell upon the Dryad; her figure was radiant with changing colors, like a soap bubble before it bursts, vanishes, and becomes a drop, a tear, which falls and disappears. Poor Dryad, a dewdrop, only a tear, wept, and swept away!

The sun shone down on the Champ de Mars' Fata Morgana, shone over mighty Paris, over the little square with its trees and its rippling fountain, and between the high houses, where the chestnut tree stood, its branches now drooping, its leaves withered, the tree that only yesterday had stood as erect and fresh as spring itself. It was dead now, said the people, for the Dryad had left it, had passed away like the clouds - where, no one knew. On the ground there lay a withered, crumpled chestnut blossom. All the holy water of the church could not recall it to life. Human feet soon stepped on it and crushed it into the dust.

All this has happened and been experienced. We ourselves have seen it, at the Paris Exposition in 1867, in our time, the great and wonderful time of fairy tales.

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