```
water causes them to stir as if they had life. Fishes, both large and small, glide between the branches, as birds fly among the trees here upon land. In the deepest spot of all, stands the castle of the Sea King, Its walls are built of coral, and the long, gothic wholews are in the deadern of a queen. The Sea King had been a widower for many years, and his aged mother kept grand-daight proud of her high birth; on that account she wore twelve oysters on her tall; while others, also of high rank, were only allowed to wear six. She was, however, deserving of very great praise, especially for her care of the little sea-princesses, had not seen the very great praise, especially for her care of the little sea-princesses, had not seen the very great praise, especially for her care of the little sea-princesses, had not seen the very great praise, especially for her care of the little sea-princesses, had not seen the walls. The large amber windows were open, and the light searn in the light stream up to the princesses, at each of the dark depths of the sea to use the deadern of the large would of the walls. The large amber windows were open, and the light stream up to the princesses, at each of the dark depths of the sea in calm weather the sun could be seen, looking like a purple flower, with the blues key shone, instead of the dark depths of the sea. In calm weather the sun could be seen, looking like a purple flower, with the light streaming from the believe the princesses had a little plot princesses had a little plot princesses had a little plot princesses. In calm weather the sun could be seen, looking like a purple flower, with the light streaming from the wereks of vessels, she cared for nothing but her pretty red flowers, like the sun, and contained flowers as red as his rays at sunset. She was a strange and she princesses, had a little plot princesses, and a little plot princesses had a little plot princesses had a little
  she had hundreds of things to talk about; but the most beautiful, she said, was to lie in the moonlight, on a sandbank, in the quiet sea, near the coast, and to gaze on a large town nearby, where the lights were twinkling like hundreds of stars; to listen to the sounds of the music, the noise of carriages, and e voices of human beings, and then to hear the merry bells peal out from the church steeples; and because she could not go near to all those wonderful things, she longed for them more than ever. Oh, did not the youngest sister listen eagerly to all these descriptions? and afterwards, when she stood at to open window looking up through the dark blue water, she thought of the great city, with all its bustle and noise, and even fancied she could hear the sound of the church bells, down in the depths of the sea. In another year the second sister received permission to rise to the surface of the water, and to sw
   about where she pleased. She rose just as the sun was setting, and this, she said, was the most beautiful sight of all. The whole sky looked like gold, while violet and rose-colored clouds, which she could not describe, floated over her; and, still more rapidly than the clouds, flew a large flock of v
  towards the setting sun, looking like a long white veil across the sea. She also swam towards the sun; but it sunk into the waves, and the rosy tints faded from the clouds and from the sea. She also swam towards the sun; but it sunk into the waves, and the rosy tints faded from the sea. She also swam towards the sun; but it sunk into the waves, and the rosy tints faded from the sea. She also swam towards the sun; but it sunk into the waves, and the rosy tints faded from the sea. She also swam towards the sun; but it sunk into the waves, and the rosy tints faded from the sea. She also swam towards the sun; but it sunk into the waves, and the rosy tints faded from the sea.
o the sea. On the banks she saw green hills covered with beautiful vines; palaces and castles peeped out from amid the proud trees of the forest; she heard the birds singing, and the rays of the sun were so powerful that she was obliged often to dive down under the water to cool her burning face. In a narr own creek she found a whole troop of little human children, quite naked, and sporting about in the water; she wanted to play with them, but they fled in a great fright; and then a little black animal came to the water; it was a dog, but she did not know that, for she had never before seen one. This animal barked at her so terribly that she became frightened, and rushed back to the open sea. But she said she should never forget the beautiful forest, the green hills, and the pretty little children who could swim in the water, although they had not fish's tails. The fourth sister was more timid; she remained in the midst o
 the sea, but she said it was quite as beautiful there as nearer the land. She could see for so many miles around her, and the skips, but at such a great whates sported in the winter; so when her turn came, she saw what the others had not seen the first time they were of the most singular shapes, and left the wind play with her long hair, and she remarked that all the ships sailed by rapid, and steered as far away as they could from the icebergs as they rocked and tosses.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            Imly on the floating iceberg, watching the blue lightning, as it darted its forked flashes into the sea. When first the sisters had permission to rise to the surface, hey could g o when they pleased, and they had become indifferent about it. They wished themselves back again in the water, and after a month had pas the even ing hours, the five sisters would twine their arms round each other, and rise to the surface, in a row. They had more beautiful voices than
    on the heaving sea. On all the ships the sails were reeted with fear and trembling, while she sat ca
        were each delighted with the new and beautiful sights they saw; but now, as grown-up girls, t
       they said it was much more beautiful down below, and pleasanter to be at home. Yet often, in
     y human being could have; and before the approach of a storm, and when they expected a ship
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            , they swam before the vessel, and sang sweetly of the delights to be found in the depths of the sea, and begging the sailors not to fear
   hey sank to the bottom. But the sailors could not understand the song, they took it for the how
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            orm. And these things were never to be beautiful for them; for if the ship sank, the men were drowned, and their dead bodies alone read
   ed the palace of the Sea King. When the sisters rose, arm-in-arm, through the water in this wa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ngest sister would stand quite alone, looking after them, ready to cry, only that the mermaids have no tears, and therefore they suffer
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           I the people who live in it." At last she reached her fifteenth year. "Well, now, you are grown up," said the old dowager, her grandmot s in her hair, and every flower leaf was half a pearl. Then the old lady ordered eight great oysters to attach themselves to the tail of the
        "Oh, were I but fifteen years old," said she: "I know that I shall love the world up there, an
   so you must let me adorn you like your other sisters." and she placed a wreath of white lilie
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         r pain," replied the old lady. Oh, how gladly she would have shaken off all this grandeur, and laid aside the heavy wreath! The red flowers
d, "Farewell," and rose as lightly as a bubble to the surface of the water. The sun had just set as she raised her head above the waves; but
  n her own garden would have suited her much better, but she could not help herself: so she
  ne clouds were tinted with crimson and gold, and through the glimmering twilight beamed t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             he evening star in all its beauty. The sea was calm, and the air mild and fresh. A large ship, with three masts, lay becalmed on the water, with
  one sail set; for not a breeze stiffed, and the sailors sat idle on deck or amongst the riggi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ng. There was music and song on board; and, as darkness came on, a hundred colored lanterns were lighted, as if the flags of all nations
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            the waves lifted her up, she could look in through clear glass window-panes, and see a number of well-dressed people within xteen years of age, and his birthday was being kept with much rejoicing. The sailors were dancing on deck, but when the
   mong them was a young prince, the most beautiful of all, with large black eyes; he was since came out of the cabin, more than a hundred rockets rose in the air, making it as brigh
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          t as day. The little mermaid was so startled that she dived under water; and when she again stretched out her head, it
     ared as if all the stars of heaven were falling around her, she had never seen such firewo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             rks before. Great suns spurted fire about, splendid fireflies flew into the blue air, and everything was reflected in the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             mallest rope, could be distinctly and plainly seen. And how handsome the young prince looked, as he pressed the han yet the little mermaid could not take her eyes from the ship, or from the beautiful prince. The colored lanterns had been seen to be seen to be seen the ship of the s
 is of all present and smiled at them, while the music resounded through the clear night air.
n extinguished, no more rockets rose in the air, and the cannon had ceased firing; but the se
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              estless, and a moaning, grumbling sound could be heard beneath the waves: still the little mermaid remained by the ca
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          and the noble ship continued her passage; but soon the waves rose higher, heavy clouds darkened the sky, and lightni
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ued her flying course over the raging sea. The waves rose mountains high, as if they would have overtopped the mast; but the shi ed pleasant sport; not so to the sailors. At length the ship groaned and creaked; the thick planks gave way under the lashing o
  appeared in the distance. A dreadful storm was approaching; once more the sails were reefed, and the g
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      reat ship purs
    ved like a swan between them, and then rose again on their lofty, foaming crests. To the little mermaid
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 his appear
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   the water rushed in. The little mermaid now perceived that the crew were in danger; even she herself was obliged to be care
   e sea as it broke over the deck; the mainmast snapped asunder like a reed; the ship lay over on her sid
  I to avoid the beams and planks of the wreck which lay scattered on the water. At one moment it was
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      pitch dark that she could not see a single object, but a flash of lightning revealed the whole scene; she could see every or
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       eep waves, and she was glad, for she thought he would now be with her; and then she remembered that human beings commust not die. So she swam about among the beams and planks which strewed the surface of the sea, forgetting that the
   who had been on board excepting the prince; when the ship parted, she had seen him sink into the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             t he
  ould crush her to pieces. Then she dived deeply under the dark waters, rising and falling with the w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       ill at length she managed to reach the young prince, who was fast losing the power of swimming in that stormy sea. His
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             aves, t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ad above the water, and let the waves drift them where they would. In the morning the storm had ce
  ed; but of the ship not a single fragment could be seen. The sun rose up red and glowing from the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ack the hue of health to the prince's cheeks; but his eyes remained closed. The mermaid kissed his high, smooth
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           eams bro
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        shed that he might live. Presently they came in sight of land; she saw lofty blue mountains, on which t
 w rested as if a flock of swans were lying upon them. Near the coast were beautiful green
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        ding, whether a church or a convent she could not tell. Orange and citron trees grew in the garden, and before
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       m with the handsome prince to the beach, which was covered with fine, white sand, and there she laid him in the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  she swa
warm sunshine, taking care to raise his head higher than his body. Then bells sounded in the large
self between some high rocks that rose out of the water; then she covered her head and neck wit
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ilding, and
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       a number of young girls came into the garden. The little mermaid swam out farther from the shore and placed he
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                the foam of the sea so that her little face might not be seen, and watched to see what would become of the poor prince. She did not wait long nly for a moment; then she fetched a number of people, and the mermaid saw that the prince came to life again, and smiled upon those who stood round him.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     led away into the great building, she dived down sorrowfully into the water, and returned to her father's castle. She had always be
     thoughtful, and now she was more so than ever. Her sisters asked her what she had seen d
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       g her first visit to the surface of the water; but she would tell them nothing. Many an evening and morning did she rise to the place where she had left the
                ie saw the fruits in the garden ripen till they were gathered, the snow on the tops of the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            tains melt away; but she never saw the prince, and therefore she returned home, always more sorrowful than before. It was her only comfort to sit in h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ave up tending her flowers, and they grew in wild confusion over the paths, twining their long leaves and stems round the branches of the trees, so t
 the whole place became dark and gloomy. At length she could bear it no longer, and told one of
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       and where his palace stood. "Come, little sister," said the other princesses; then they entwined their arms and rose up in a long row to the surface
of the water, close by the spot where they k
                                                                                                                         new the prince's palace stood. It was b
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         w shining stone, with long flights of marble steps, one of which reached quite down to the sea. Splendid gilded cupolas rose over the roof, and be
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             of the lofty windows could be seen noble rooms, with costly silk curtains and hangings of tapestry; while the walls were covered with beautiful plant its sparkling jets high up into the glass cupola of the ceiling, through which the sun shone down upon the water and upon the beautiful plant
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         he spent many an evening and many a night on the water near the palace. She would swim much nearer the shore than any of the other
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             arble balcony, which threw a broad shadow on the water. Here she would sit and watch the young prince, who thought himself quite alone in
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 w channel under the m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              ing and flags waving. She peeped out from among the green rushes, and if the wind caught her long silvery-white veil, those who saw it belie
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           she heard them relate so many good things about the doings of the young prince, that she was glad she had saved his life whe
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              ed him; but he knew nothing of all this, and could not even dream of her. She grew more and more fond of human beings, and wished more an
s, and mount the high hills which were far above the clouds; and the lands they possessed, their woods and their fields, stretched far away be
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               e applied to her old grandmother, who knew all about the upper world, which she very rightly called the lands above the sea. "If human bei
  re not drowned," asked the little mermaid, "can they live forever? do they never die as we do here in the sea?" "Y
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     they must also die, and their term of life is even shorter than ours. We sometimes live to three hundred years, but when we cease to exist
    we only become the foam on the surface of the water, and we have not even a grave down here of those we love
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             , we shall never live again; but, like the green sea-weed, when once it has been cut off, we can never flourish more. Human beings, on
     contrary, have a soul which lives forever, lives after the body has been turned to dust. It rises up through the c
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          ittering stars. As we rise out of the water, and behold all the land of the earth, so do they rise to unknown and glorious regions
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             hat I have to live, to be a human being only for one day, and to have the hope of knowing the happiness of that glorious world above the
"So I shall die," said the little mermaid, "and as the foam of the sea I shall be driven about never again to hear the music of the waves, o
   nall never see." "Why have not we an immortal soul?" asked the little mermaid mournfully; "I would give gladly
                 ou must not think of that," said the old woman; "we feel ourselves to be much happier and much better
 to see the pretty flowers nor the red sun. Is there anything I can do to win an immortal soul?"
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    man were to love you so much that you were more to him than his father or mother; and if all his thoughts and all his love were fixed upon y
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       soul would glide
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     into your body and you would obtain a share in the future happiness of mankind. He would give a soul to you and retain his own as well; bu
 this can never happen. Your fish's tail, which amongst us is considered so beautiful, is thought on earth to be q
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          uite ugly; they d
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   o not know any better, and they think it necessary to have two stout props, which they call legs, in order to be handsome." Then the little m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               about during t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      he three hundred years that we have to live, which is really quite long enough; after that we can rest ourselves all the better. This evening
  are going to have a court ball." It is one of those splendid sights which we can never see on earth. The walls a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          of the large ball-room were of thick, but transparent crystal. May hundreds of colossal shells, some of a deep red, others of a grass gre
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               nd the ceilir
 stood on each side in rows, with blue fire in them, which lighted up the whole saloon, and shone through the w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             he sea was also illuminated. Innumerable fishes, great and small, swam past the crystal walls; on some of them the scales glowed wi
a purple brilliancy, and on others they shone like silver and gold. Through the halls flowed a broad stream, and
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   the mermen and the mermaids to the music of their own sweet singing. No one on earth has such a lovely voice as theirs. The little
   ermaid sang more sweetly than them all. The whole court applauded her with hands and tails; and for a mome
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     felt quite gay, for she knew she had the loveliest voice of any on earth or in the sea. But she soon thought again of the world above
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    crept away silently out of her father's palace, and while everything within was gladness and song, she sat in her own little garden som my wishes depend, and in whose hands I should like to place the happiness of my life. I will venture all for him, and to win an i
her, for she could not forget the charming prince, nor her sorrow that she had not an immortal soul like his; the
rrowful and alone. Then she heard the bugle sounding through the water, and thought--"He is certainly sailing a
 nmortal soul, while my sisters are dancing in my father's palace, I will go to the sea witch, of whom I have alwa
ning whirlpools, behind which the sorceress lived. She had never been that way before: neither flowers nor gra
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      h afraid, but she can give me counsel and help." And then the little mermaid went out from her garden, and took the road to the fo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       vs been so
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       othing but bare, gray, sandy ground stretched out to the whirlpool, where the water, like foaming mill-wheels, whirled round every
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       ss grew the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         ed to pass, to reach the dominions of the sea witch; and also for a long distance the only road lay right across a gua
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 thought of the prince, and of the human soul for which she longed, and her courage returned. She fastened her long flowing hair round her head, so that the sa itsh shoots through the water, between the supple arms and fingers of the ugly polypi, which were stretched out on each side of her. She saw that each letons of human beings who had perished at sea, and had sunk down into the deep waters, skeletons of land animals, oars, rudders, and chests of ships we this seemed the most shocking of all to the little princess. She now came to a space of marshy ground in the wood, where large, fat water-snakes were rollin bones of shipwrecked human beings. There sat the sea witch, allowing a toad to eat from her mouth, just as people sometimes feed a canary with a piece of what you want, "said the sea witch." It is very stupid of you, but you shall have your way, and it will bring you to sorrow, my pretty princess. You want to ge ce may fall in love with you, and that you may have an immortal soul." And then the witch laughed so loud and disgustingly, that the toad and the snakes fell the lound of another year. I will prepare a draught for you, with which you must swim to land tomorrow before sunrise, and you will feel great pain, as if a sword were passing through you. But all who see you will say that you are the pretitest little human being they ever saw. You will p you take it will feel as if you were treading upon sharp knives, and that the blood must flow. If you will bear all this, I will help you." "Yes, I will," said the little ch; "for when once your shape has become like a human being, you can no more be a mermaid. You will never return through the water to your sisters, or to yo mother for your sake, and to love you with his whole soul, and allow the priest to join your hands that you may be man and wife, then you will never have an imm to the waves." "I will do it," said the little mermaid, and she became pale as death. "But I must be paid also," said the witch, "and it is not a trifle that I ask. You hard t
re lying tightly grasped by their clinging arms; even a little mermaid, whom they had caught and strangled; and
sugar. She called the ugly water-snakes her little chickens, and allowed them to crawl all over her bosom. "I kno
t rid of your fish's tail, and to have two supports instead of it, like human beings on earth, so that the young prin o the ground, and lay there wriggling about. "You are but just in time," said the witch; "for after sunrise to-morro sit down on the shore and drink it. Your tail will then disappear, and shrink up into what mankind calls legs, and I still have the same floating gracefulness of movement, and no dancer will ever tread so lightly; but at every ste
   tal soul. The first morning after he marries another your heart will break, and you will become foam on the cres
brital soul. The first morning after he marries another your heart will break, and you will become foam on the cres have the sweetest voice of any who dwell here in the depths of the sea, and you believe that you will be able to c with it, that it may be as sharp as a two-edged sword." "But if you take away my voice," said the little mermaid, " courage? Put out your little tongue that I may cut it off as my payment; then you shall have the powerful draugh ing the vessel with snakes, which she had tied together in a large knot; then she pricked herself in the breast, an hrew something else into the vessel, and when it began to boil, the sound was like the weeping of a crocodile. We came dumb, and would never again speak or sing. "If the polypi should seize hold of you as you return through to do this, for the polypi sprang back in terror when they caught sight of the glittering draught, which shone in he had the balk your were extinguished, and all within as least, but she did not verture to go in to them, for now she
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              r hand like a lwinkling star. So she passed quickly through 'he wood and the marsh, and between the rushing whiripools. She saw that in her father's palace the torc e was dumb and going to leave them forever, she felt as if her heart would break. She stole into the garden, took a flower from the flower-beds of each of her sisters, d not risen when she came in sight of the prince's palace, and approached the beautiful marble steps, but the moon shone clear and bright. Then the little mermaid dron, and lay like one dead. When the sun arose and shone over the sea, she recovered, and felt a sharp pain; but just before her stood the handsome young prince. He stail was gone, and that she had as pretty a pair of white legs and tiny feet as any little maiden could have; but she had no clothes, so she wrapped herself in her long wfully with her deep blue eyes; but she could not speak. Every step she took was as the witch had said it would be, she felt as if treading upon the points of needles or all who saw her wondered at her graceful-swaying movements. She was very soon arrayed in costly robes of silk and muslin, and was the most beautiful readily to have the most beautiful readily to have the most beautiful and danced as no one yet had been able to dance. At each moment her beauty became more revealed, and her expressive eyes appealed more directly to the heart that danced again quite readily, to please bim, though each time her foot touched the floor it seemed as if she trod on sharp knives. The prince said she should remain wher, that she might accompany him on horseback. They rode together through the sweet-scented woods, where the green boughs touched their shoulders, and the her had should remain wher, that she might accompany him on horseback. They rode together through the sweet-scented woods, where the green boughs touched their shoulders, and the broad marble steps; for it eased her burning feet to bathe them in the cold sea-water; and then she thought of all those below in the deep. Once during the night re
   es in the ballroom were extinguished, and all within asleep; but she did not venture to go in to them, for now sh
 cissed her hand a thousand times towards the palace, and then rose up through the dark blue waters. The sun ha
tank the magic draught, and it seemed as if a two-edged sword went through her delicate body: she fell into a swo
ixed his coal-black eyes upon her so earnestly that she cast down her own, and then became aware that her fish'
that this coal-black eyes upon the so earnestly that she cast down her own, and then became aware that her hish, thick hair. The prince asked her who she was, and where she came from, and she looked at him mildly and sorro sharp knives; but she bore it willingly, and stepped as lightly by the prince's side as a soap-bubble, so that he and he palace; but she was dumb, and could neither speak nor sing. Beautiful female slaves, dressed in silk and gold, eat sorrow to the little mermaid; she knew how much more sweetly she herself could sing once, and she thought, "
In the songs of the slaves. Every one was enchanted, especially the prince, who called her his little foundling; and she the him always, and she received permission to sleep at his door, on a velvet cushion. He had a page's dress made fo ittle birds sang among the fresh leaves. She climbed with the prince to the tops of high mountains; and although her elling to distant lands. While at the prince's palace, and when all the household were asleep, she would go and sit on the ner sisters came up arm-in-arm, singing sorrowfully, as they floated on the water. She beckoned to them, and then they er, who had not been to the surface of the sea for many years, and the old Sea King, her father, with his crown on his heady, and he loved her as he would love a little child, but it never came into his head to make her his wife; yet, unless he marry love me the best of them all?" the eyes of the little marmaid seemed to say, when he took her in his arms, and kissed her.
she is the only one in the world whom I could love; but you are like her, and you have almost driven her image out of my mind
saved his life," thought the little mermaid. "I carried him over the sea to the wood where the temple stands: I sat beneath the foa
ly, but she could not shed tears. "He says the maiden belongs to the holy temple, therefore she will never return to the world. The it was said that the prince must marry, and that the beautiful daughter of a neighboring king would be his wife, for a fine ship was ee his daughter. A great company were to go with him. The little mermaid smiled, and shook her head. She knew the prince's thought ge me to bring her home as my bride. I cannot love her; she is not like the beautiful maiden in the temple, whom you resemble. If I were
I was self that the prince must very mort at the isomitiful designation of an eleghancing the self-designation of an eleghancing the self-designation of the self-designation 
, looking up through the dark blue water, and watching the fish as they splashed about with their fins and tails. She could see the moon and stars shining faintly; but through the water they looked larger than they do to our eyes. When something like a black cloud passed between her and them, she knew th at it was either a whale swimming over her head, or a ship full of human beings, who never imagined that a pretty little mermaid was standing beneath them, holding out her white hands towards the keel of their ship. As soon as the eldest was fifteen, she was allowed to rise to the surface of the ocean. When she came back, she had hundreds of things to talk about; but the most beautiful, she said, was to lie in the moonlight, on a sandbank, in the quiet sea, near the coast, and to gaze on a large town nearby, where the lights were twinkling like hundreds of stars; to listen to the sounds of the music, the noise of
f carriages, and the voices of human beings, and then to hear the merry bells peal out from the church steeples; and because she could not go near to all those wonderful things, she longed for them more than ever. Oh, did not the youngest sister listen eagerly to all these descriptions? and afterwards, who is the second at the open window looking up through the dark blue water, she thought of the depths of the sea. In another year the second sister received permission to rise to the surface of the
water, and to swim about where she pleased. She rose just as the sun was setting, and this, she said, was the most beautiful sight of all. The whole sky looked like gold, while violet and rose-colored clouds, which she could not describe, floated over her; and, still more rapidly than the clouds, flew a large
ock of wild swans towards the setting sun, looking like a long white veil across the sea. She also swam towards the sun; but it sunk into the waves, and the rosy tints faded from the clouds and from the sea. The third sister's turn followed; she was the boldest of them all, and she swam up a broad river that
emptied itself into the sea. On the banks she saw green hills covered with beautiful vines; palaces and castles peeped out from amid the proud trees of the forest; she heard the birds singing, and the rays of the sun were so powerful that she was obliged often to dive down under the water to cool her burning face. In a narrow creek she found a whole troop of little human children, quite naked, and sporting about in the water; it was a dog, but she did not know that, for she had never before seen one. This
s animal barked at her so terribly that she became frightened, and rushed back to the open sea. But she said she should never forget the beautiful forest, the green hills, and the pretty little children who could swim in the water, although they had not fish's tails. The fourth sister was more timid; she remain d in the midst of the sea, but she said it was quite as beautiful there as nearer the land. She could see for so many miles around her, and the sky above looked like sea-gulls. The dolphins sported in the waves, and the
reat whales spouted water from their nostrils till it seemed as if a hundred fountains were playing in every direction. The fifth sister's birthday occurred in the winter; so when her turn came, she saw what the others had not seen the first time they went up. The sea looked quite green, and large icebergs were of the most singular shapes, and glittered like diamonds. She had seated herself upon one of the largest, and let the wind play with her long hair, and she remarked that all the ships sailed by rapidly
and steered as far away as they could from the iceberg, as if they were afraid of it. Towards evening, as the sun went down, dark clouds covered the sky, the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed, and the red light glowed on the icebergs as they rocked and tossed on the heaving sea. On all the ships the ails were reefed with fear and trembling, while she sat calmly on the floating iceberg, watching the blue lightning, as it darted its forked flashes into the sea. When first the sisters had permission to rise to the surface, they were each delighted with the new and beautiful sights they saw; but now, as grown-u
p girls, they could go when they pleased, and they had become indifferent about it. They wished themselves back again in the water, and after a month had passed they said it was much more beautiful down below, and pleasanter to be at home. Yet often, in the evening hours, the five sisters would twine the
eir arms round each other, and rise to the surface, in a row. They had more beautiful voices than any human being could have; and before the vessel, and sang sweetly of the delights to be found in the depths of the s
a, and begging the sailors not to fear if they sank to the bottom. But the sailors could not understand the song, they took it for the howling of the storm. And these things were never to be beautiful for them; for if the ship sank, the men were drowned, and their dead bodies alone reached the palace of the Se
a King. When the sisters rose, arm-in-arm, through the water in this way, their youngest sister would stand quite alone, looking after them, ready to cry, only that the mermaids have no tears, and therefore they suffer more. "Oh, were I but fifteen years old," said she: "I know that I shall love the world up the
e, and all the people who live in it." At last she reached her fifteenth year. "Well, now, you are grown up," said the old dowager, her grandmother; "so you must let me adorn you like your other sisters;" and she placed a wreath of white lilies in her hair, and every flower leaf was half a pearl. Then the old lady or well, now, you are grown up," said the old lady. Oh, how gladly she would have shaken off all this grandeur, and laid aside the heavy wreath! The red flowers in her old lady. Oh, how gladly she would have shaken off all this grandeur, and laid aside the heavy wreath! The red flowers in her old lady.
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