

Until all the straw that had been spread  
Had been deftly spun into golden thread.

At sunrise came the king  
To the chamber, and, behold,  
Instead of the ugly heaps of straw  
Were bobbins full of gold!  
This made him greedier than before;  
And he led the maiden out at the door  
Into a new room, where she saw  
Still larger and larger heaps of straw,  
A chair to sit in, a spinning-wheel,  
A little can of oil, and a reel;  
And he said that straw, too, must be spun  
To gold before the next day's sun  
Was an hour high in the morning sky,  
And if 'twas not done, she must die.

Down sank she in despair,  
Her tears falling like rain;  
She could not spin a single thread,  
She could not reel a skein.

But the door swung back, and through the chink,  
With the same droll smile and merry wink,  
The dwarf peered, saying, "What will you do  
If I'll spin the straw once more for you?"  
"Ah me, I can give not a single thing,"  
She cried, "except my finger-ring."  
He took the slender toy,  
And slipped it over his thumb;  
Then down he sat and whirled the wheel,  
Hum, and hum-m, and hum-m-m;  
Round and round with a droning sound,  
Many a yellow spool he wound,  
Many a glistening skein he reeled;  
And still, like bees in a clover-field,  
The wheel went hum, and hum-m and hum-m-m.  
Next morning the king came,  
Almost before sunrise,  
To the chamber where the maiden was,  
And could scarce believe his eyes  
To see the straw, to the smallest shreds,  
Made into shining amber threads.  
And he cried, "When once more I have tried  
Your skill like this, you shall be my bride;

