there is no one in the world more clever than she is; do you think she would like to let the water close over her head?" "You don't understand me," said the duckling. "I think I must go into the world again." "Very well, go," said the hen; and the duckling went.

Very near the cottage he found some water, where he could swim and dive; but all creatures avoided him because he was so ugly, therefore he was always alone. One evening there came a beautiful flock of birds out of the bushes. They curved their graceful necks, while their soft plumage shone with dazzling whitness. The duckling felt quite a strange sensation as he watched them fly up in the air. He stretched out his neck towards them, and uttered a cry so strange that it frightened himself. How he loved the white birds! how he longed to be with them.

By-and-bye winter came, and froze the water quite hard. The ice crackled round the duckling and at last shut him in, so that he could not get out. Early in the morning a peasant who was passing saw what had happened, broke the ice with his axe, took up the duckling, and carried it home to his wife.

The warmth revived the poor thing and it began to fly about; the children wanted to play with it, but they only frightened it; it ran to the door which was open, and