



The Foolish King

THERE was once a king who always found strange jobs for his servants to do. One day he called one of his servants and said to him, "You must get me half a jar of bull's milk."

The servant could not believe what he had just heard. "My Lord," he protested, "I cannot do what you ask. Bulls do not give milk."

The king would not listen to the servant. "Do you dare to disobey my command? I am your king. You must do as I say!"

Very worried, the servant went home. He could neither eat nor sleep. His daughter saw that her father was worried. She asked him what was troubling him. All he told her was that she could not solve his problem. She was, however, determined to find out why her father was so disturbed. She kept asking and

asking. Finally, her father told her what the problem was. She promised to help her father find a way out.

Late that very night, she came to her father and, very excited, said to him, "Father, father, I have found the answer."

"What is it?" he asked.

She told him her plan. Then she asked him to do exactly as she requested. He agreed.

Early the next morning, the girl put some dirty clothes in her basket and carried them to the bank of the river near the king's palace. She began to slap the clothes on the rocks like a washer-woman would. This



loud slapping disturbed the early morning stillness.

The king was awakened by the noise. He came to the river and asked the girl why she was making such a loud noise so early in the morning.

"O King," said the girl, "I am very sorry about the noise but, last night, one of your male servants gave birth to a baby and all his clothes are dirty. have now come to wash them."

"Why are you such a fool?" the king exclaimed. "A man cannot give birth to a baby!"

"What I tell you is the truth," insisted the girl. "Why don't you come with me and I'll show you?"

"I have no time to waste with such foolishness," said the king angrily. "Just as a bull can't give milk, in like manner a man can't give birth."

Just then the girl's father happened to pass that way. Bowing before the king, he said, "You are indeed right, O wise king, for I have searched all over but have found no bull that gives even a drop of milk."

The king shook his head. He realized that he had made quite a fool of himself. All he could do now was to order his servant to return to his regular duties at the palace.

