

ruler with his ugly tusk. The wise man, white and trembling, screamed and fled, but the fool cast himself before the boar and, grasping with his powerful hands the animal's tusk and forefeet, threw the beast dexterously upon its back and, drawing a short dirk from his leather doublets, he stabbed the boar to the heart. Then he helped King Germaine to rise. The wise man, now shamefaced, came slowly back.

“Rudolph,” said the king gravely, “why did'st thou run?”

“My noble lord,” said the wise man feebly, “I am infirm, for in my youth I was kept in luxury, and when I became a man I studied long over my books of astrology and gained no strength.”

“And how, churl, is it that thou art so strong?”

“My liege,” quoth Taric, whose muscles were still swollen, for he was a big man and broad of chest, “when I was a boy I wandered on the hills in the sunlight and became strong, and when I entered my lord's castle to become his jester I saw that I might lose my strength, but, as I knew that my liege would need me some time to fight for him in the wars, I exercised in the armory every day. I fenced with the knights, wrestled, forged heavy pieces of armor before the furnace so that, instead of becoming weak I became stronger year by year. At the same time I made merry jests and laughed in the king's throne room, hour after hour, which made me hale and hearty, for it is known, oh king, that a cheerful disposition maketh a stout body.”

The king pondered long. Then he spoke slowly—

“Rudolph, henceforth thou shall be the fool, for with too much astrology thou hast failed to keep thy body, which is the temple of the mind, and thou, Taric, shall sit at my right hand as chief counselor for he and he only, who prepares for the future, is wise.”