

THE SHOEMAKER

A Story with a Moral



The Happy Shoemaker

THERE ONCE lived a happy shoemaker who sang from morning till night. He was perfectly happy. He worked hard, earned an honest living, and enjoyed excellent health. What more does anyone want to be happy?

In the same village there lived a very rich man. Every time he passed in front of the shoemaker's shop, he sighed and thought, "How is it that this shoemaker, who is so poor, can sing all day? I am rich, I can buy anything I want, and yet I have no wish to sing."

One day he decided to talk to the shoemaker.

"Let's see," he said. "My friend, how much do you earn in a year?"

"Oh, my!" said the shoemaker. "I have never counted it up. I always have plenty of work, and there is always enough food at my house."

"Well, how much do you make a day?"

"Sometimes more, sometimes less."

The rich man, laughing at his simplicity, said to him, "Take these hundred gold coins, my friend. Some day they may be very useful."

The blacksmith, very happy, carried away the bag of money and buried it in his cellar. He had never seen so much money before in all his life.

But he began to be worried. In the daytime all went well. But at night! He dare not sleep for fear of thieves, and if he heard a cat in the yard, he felt sure the cat was someone who was after his money.

At last the poor man could stand it no longer. He ran to the rich man and said to him:

"Give me back my songs and my sleep, and take back your hundred gold coins."

ANSWER THESE

1. What moral do you learn from this story?
2. Why did the shoemaker sing?
3. Why did the shoemaker become worried?
4. Can money always buy happiness?
5. Which would you prefer—poverty and happiness, or riches and worry?
6. What is the secret of happiness? (Think much about this. Talk to your parents, and teachers, and older persons about it.)
7. Do you know a poor, honest, hard-working man? Is he happy?
8. Do you know a very rich man? Is he always happy?