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## The Seven Brothers

Here is a story that happened once upon a time. A man had seven sons who owned seven horses, seven guns, and seven pistols for hunting. Their mother was about to increase the family. They said to their father: "If we have a little sister we shall remain. If we have a little brother we shall go." The woman had a little boy. They asked, "Which is it?"

"A boy."

They mounted their horses and departed, taking provisions with them. They arrived at a tree, divided their bread, and ate it. The next day they started and travelled as far as a place where they found a well, from which they drew water. The older one said, "Come, let us put the young one in the well." They united against him, put him in, and departed, leaving him there. They came to a city.

The young man remained some time in the well where they had put him, until one day a caravan passing that way stopped to draw water. While the people were drinking they heard something moving at the bottom of the well. "Wait a moment," they said; they let down a rope, the young man caught it and climbed up. He was as black as a negro. The people took him away and sold him to a man who conducted him to his house. He stayed there a month and became white as snow. The wife of the man said:

"Come, let us go away together."

"Never!" he answered.

At evening the man returned and asked, "What is the negro doing?"

"Sell him," said the woman.

He said, "You are free. Go where you please."

The young man went away and came to a city where there was a fountain inhabited by a serpent. They couldn't draw water from this fountain without his eating a woman. This day it was the turn of the King's daughter to be eaten. The young man asked her:

"Why do you weep?"

"Because it is my turn to be devoured to-day."

The stranger answered, "Courage, I will kill the serpent, if it please God."

The young girl entered the fountain. The serpent darted toward her, but as soon as he showed his head the young man struck it with his stick and made it fly away. He did the same to the next head until the serpent was dead. All the people of the city came to draw water. The King said:

"Who has done this?"

"It is he," they cried, "the stranger who arrived yesterday." The King gave him his daughter and named him his lieutenant. The wedding-feast lasted seven days. My story is finished before my resources are exhausted.