

DENTON'S FANCIFUL TALES

BY CLARA A. DENTON



HOMESPUN AND COSY CORNER
STORIES COMBINED



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DENTON'S FANCIFUL TALES





*She was once a dryad belonging to a
beautiful tree*

DENTON'S FANCIFUL TALES

Homespun and Cozy Corner Stories

By CLARA J. DENTON

Author of Runaway Nanny

Robin Red Breast's Home, Real Out of Doors Stories, Etc.



Illustrations by
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and
J. T. COCHRAN

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OTHER
TITLES UNIFORM
WITH THIS BOOK

Robin Red Breast's Home

Mother Brown Earth's
Children

Little Folks From Etiquette
Town



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Bird in the Well.....	To Philadelphia Times
The King, the Eggs and the Chimpanzee.....	To the Call of the South
Little King Who Was Not Clever.....	To Advance
The Ezyspel.....	To Advance
The Feather Trap.....	To Advance
The Selfish Pebble.....	To Christian Work, N. Y.
The Best Fairies.....	To New Magazine
Behind the Walls.....	To New Magazine



BOOK ONE

	Page
THE WANDERING DRYAD	7
THE ENCHANTED PRINCESS.....	18
THE WUZZLE	33
THE MARBLE SPOUT	50
THE GOLDEN LOCKS	66
THE SILENCER	78
THE GNOME KING	93
THE ACCIDENTAL CANDY	101
ALONE IN THE FOREST.....	112
LITTLE SHINER	119



BOOK TWO

Page

THE BIRD IN THE WELL.....	7
THE KING'S EGGS AND CHIM-	
PANZEE.....	19
MR. PHUNNYMAN	31
THE LITTLE KING WHO WAS NOT	
CLEVER	38
THE EZESPEL	80
THE FEATHER TRAP	95
THE SELFISH PEBBLE	106
THE BEST FAIRIES.....	111
BEHIND THE WALLS	120



"Wouldn't they let you be King any longer?"
From story (The Little Shiner)

DENTON'S FANCIFUL TALES



Every tree has within it a guardian spirit called a dryad

THE WANDERING DRYAD



IT IS a strange story, but it was told to me by the wood elves, and therefore I am not responsible for its truth.

Did I ever see the wood elves? No! I have not seen them, but I hear them every time I

go to the forest, and very strange indeed are the stories which they tell to me. Their voices are so low that unless you listen very closely you cannot even hear them, much less understand their talk.

So, the folks that are careless talkers who love nothing so well as the sound of their own voices, whether they really mean anything or not, have but a small chance of hearing any of the wonderful things which the wood elves have to tell.

There is the old Grecian story that every tree has within it a guardian spirit called a dryad. The lives of these dryads are bound up in the lives of their trees, and if anything happens to the tree whereby its life ends, its dryad also dies—they are inseparable. But, once upon

a time, so the wood elves whispered to me, a very strange thing had happened in the forest; a dryad had wandered off and left her tree. Such a thing had never been known before, and the whole forest was distressed about it.

Not only were all the dryads and the hamadryads, the naiads and the nymphs wailing over the lost dryad, but the wood elves, the fairies and the gnomes were grieving and wondering over the strange event.

The king of the forest was more troubled than anyone, because he said, "It has always been supposed that no dryad could escape from her tree, but now that one has gone away, it will not be long, I fear, before every dryad and hamadryad will be running off to see the world. The discontent may even spread to the

naiads and the nereids, the elves and the gnomes, and presently I shall be a king without any kingdom."

In the midst of his sad musings one of the wood elves came running to him with the news that the tree which had been deserted by its dryad was dying. This story threw the poor king into a panic. Were the trees then to depend on the dryads for their lives? Everything seemed turning topsy turvy, and if all the dryads should take it into their heads to run away, and all the trees should die in consequence, what would become of the living things in the forest? More than that, what kind of a place would this old earth be without any trees to beautify and protect it?

As this dreadful thought took possession of the poor king's mind he jumped from his

throne and began running about his palace so wildly that his crown fell off and rolled out of sight under an acorn cup, where it was lost for as much as five minutes, before it was even missed by its owner. There was but one thought in the mind of the king; Something must be done to save that dying tree, just for the sake of example if for nothing more.

When he had finally sent off two wood elves with a message to Mother Nature to come quickly and revive the dying tree, he missed his crown.

Then there was trouble, and by the time the pretty bauble was found and once more safely placed upon his head, the sceptre in his hand and himself back upon his throne in all his royal state, the wood elves came running in with a message from Mother Nature, saying

that she could do nothing with the tree, that “it must die unless the dryad could be restored to its old home therein.”

This message threw the king into a terrible rage. He was not one to believe that “nothing could be done.”

He always expected his folks to discover what was wrong before they gave up the remedy, unreasonable as it might be; in this he was not unlike some people that we know. So he sent the swift little wood elves with this message to Mother Nature: “This tree must be revived. Pour upon it your most refreshing showers, turn upon it the full glory of your finest sunshine, give it your coolest and softest breezes. There is no help to be got from the dryad, she neither can nor may come back; in the first place she is lost; no one knows where she is, besides, since

she has broken the ancient law of the forest, she should not be allowed to come back, even though she wished to do so. She must pay the penalty of her disobedience by wandering henceforth over the wide world without a home.”

The wood elves had no sooner departed than a troop of Brownies came running to the king with this strange tale.

“May it please your majesty,” began the spokesman, “as we were wandering over the world looking for some suffering creature whom we might help, we found a little one sitting upon a stone and weeping her life away. We soon learned her story, she was once a dryad belonging to a beautiful tree in a far-off forest, but she broke away from her tree and started out to see the world, thinking that she

could return when she wished, but she could not find the way back, and now she is lonely and sorrowful for her beautiful home. As we could not tell whence she came we thought it wise to come to your majesty with her story."

The king's brow darkened as he told the Brownies his decision about the dryad.

"But, your majesty," exclaimed the Brownie, "if you could have heard her sobbing and wailing for her lost home, you must have relented. Her cries sounded around the whole earth until the people said, 'Hark, how the wind is blowing!' Oh, your majesty, it was indeed very sad."

The king sat in silence; his was a tender heart, but there was the broken law! Suddenly an idea came over him so forcibly that he sprang to his feet and nearly upset his throne.

“My throne is shaking,” he said with a laugh, as he reached out his sceptre and straightened it again, “but no matter, it is not like a human throne, because if this one gives out, Mother Nature will grow another one for me in a single night.”

When he had settled himself firmly on his seat again he took from his bosom a tiny whistle and blew upon it a long silvery note. In a twinkling the king was surrounded by all the wood-people — fairies, elves, gnomes, brownies, pixies and sprites of all kinds, of which you and I do not even know the names— all standing at attention and waiting to know the king’s commands.

He told them in exact words the story of the dryad and the broken law, of her sorrow and repentance, of her wish to return to the

tree and of its sad, dying state. In closing he said:

“You know how closely we wood people obey laws and how severely we punish those who break them, so, while I am sorry for the dryad, I could think of but one way in which I could let her escape further punishment, and this is what you are to do to help the poor dryad; you are to look for a child, who for a month, a whole month, mind you, obeys every command given to it, when you have found it, bring me the child’s name. When this is done, but not before, I will send the Brownies to escort the dryad back to her tree.”

Then the meeting broke up; the sprites scattered, the king left his throne, took off his crown, for after all that serious thinking his head ached, and stretching himself on a bed of



"The king is still sleeping"

moss, he said to his attendants, “I must have a long nap, let no one disturb me until the messengers return with the name of that child,” and in another moment he was sound asleep.

“But,” said the wood elves in concluding this story, “we are sorry to tell you that the king is still sleeping.”

However, that was a long while ago, and I feel sure that the king must have been wakened by this time. What do you think about it?

THE ENCHANTED PRINCESS



THERE was once upon a time a queen named Agnes who was very unhappy because her son was about to marry a beautiful but ill-tempered princess.

“He cannot be happy with her, I know he cannot,” she would moan to herself in the still hours of the night as she lay awake, brooding over the future.

But one night, after several hours of anxious tossing she fell asleep and a dream so beautiful came to her that when she awoke in the morning a happy smile was on her lips.

She lay quietly thinking for a few minutes and then she said to herself softly; “I’ll try it.”

She crept out of bed and seated herself on the floor.

This was not an easy task, for the swiftly flying years had made her quite stout and not so limber in her joints, but she didn't mean to be overcome by such trifles.

As soon as she was comfortably seated she closed her eyes and said aloud, but very softly;

"Fairy, Fairy Lovelight, with the wand of gold,

Come and do my bidding ere the day grows old."

Then she waited, and in a few moments she heard a soft rustling behind her.

She turned her head and saw in a large chair near by a dimpled, chubby little woman wrapped in a long gray cloak looking at her with kindly eyes.

“So you obeyed my dream children.” Said the little woman.

“Yes,” answered the queen, “of course I did, there was nothing else to do.”

“Umph!” said the little woman crossly; and then she began to grow smaller and smaller, until the queen, fearing she would disappear entirely, threw her arms out toward her and begged;

“Oh, don’t go yet.”

“I am not going,” said the fairy, “I am only growing smaller because I am offended.”

“Oh,” said the queen ready to cry, “I understand and indeed, I don’t wonder that you are offended. It was certainly neither kind nor polite to say what I did, but I am sure you will forgive me when you know how desperate my situation is.”

“I know all about it,” said the little woman, who, being pleased by the queen’s apology, was now rapidly regaining her natural size.

“If I hadn’t known all about it I shouldn’t have taken the trouble to send my dream-sprites to you. I am the fairy Lovelight for whom you were calling. I have always looked after the Oldern family, and now that this trouble for your son, Theobald, was so near at hand, it seemed best for me to interfere.

“Before we go any further, suppose you get up and sit in a chair. I am sure you will be more comfortable, and as I only ordered you to sit on the floor to test your obedience, it is quite useless for you to remain there any longer.”

Although it had been hard for the queen to

sit down on the floor, it was much harder for her to rise from it. She made two or three vain efforts, and finally, as a last resort, caught at the large chair in which the fairy sat, and by its help, after much tugging and groaning managed to stand upright.

She had been so absorbed in her struggles that she had not noticed her visitor, but now, as she turned her eyes that way, she saw, to her great surprise, that the small figure had grown so large that it nearly reached to the ceiling.

At this unexpected transformation the queen stood gazing with wondering eyes at the still rapidly growing form.

Presently her wits returned to her and she turned to flee from the room.

Then the fairy called out, in her soft, silvery voice,

“Come back, come back! you have nothing to fear.”

Slowly the queen returned, keeping her eyes closely on the fairy, however, who now began to dwindle away very fast.

‘You are weak-hearted, indeed,’ she said, “to run from a little thing like that, I was only laughing.”

“Laughing!” exclaimed the queen, in great amazement.

“Yes, you have seen that when I am offended I grow smaller; by the same rule I grow larger when I am pleased or amused. That is my way of both smiling and laughing.”

“Oh,” said the queen, “then I suppose one can tell, by the rate at which you expand, the amount of pleasure you feel?”

“Exactly,” said the fairy, “you really catch the idea very clearly.”

“Then you must have been greatly pleased just now, though I cannot imagine what you found to laugh at.”

“If you could have seen yourself getting up from the floor,” said the fairy, beginning to expand again.

“Oh well, never mind, never mind,” said the queen, much annoyed, and secretly thinking the fairy a very rude person; “we will let that pass. I dare say I was a funny sight, but I’m sure you did not come here simply to see me show my awkwardness. I am certain you can and will help my poor child, Theobald.”

“I will try,” said the fairy, who had, by this time, returned to her natural size, “but it is not

an easy thing to do. The Princess Catherine, whom your son wishes to marry, is enchanted by a wicked fairy. I don't know what would become of the poor mortals if it were not for the law of fairyland that for every evil enchantment placed upon them there exists a counter one that makes it powerless if the person happens to discover it. But if it should be revealed to him or her by anyone, it loses its power. Do you understand?"

"Oh yes," said the queen, "you mean that if you should go to the princess and tell her what to do, she could not be helped by obeying you."

"Yes," said the fairy, "that is it; we must manage matters in some way so that the princess will not only want to do the thing that will

help her, but will carry it out fully, without any advice or command from anyone; and, of course, it remains with you to arouse this desire."

"Oh, I will do anything, anything," promised the queen quickly.

"There is another difficulty," continued the fairy, "if the enchantment is not broken before the close of her twentieth birthday, there is no power that can effect it until her thirtieth birthday."

"Oh," sobbed the queen, "and her birthday is so near!"

"Fortunately," continued the fairy hopefully, "the charm requires but one day in which to work. Now listen, for my time is almost up, and I cannot repeat the directions. This is the

charm that will save the princess: From the time that she is dressed in the morning, until she is undressed at night, she must not spend one idle moment.

It is of no consequence what her work may be, but she must keep at it continually, pausing only for her meals. If she can do this for one whole day between now and the close of her twentieth birthday, her evil temper will be gone, and she will be the most charming princess in the round world. Her character will be as beautiful as her face."

"It sounds very simple," said the queen with a sob, "but I fear it can never be done. You know, of course, that the princess is as idle as though she were dead. She never did a single useful thing in her life."

“I know it, and if she spent some of her energy in work, she wouldn’t have so much to waste in temper. But now my time is up, and you must manage as best you can.”

There was a soft, whizzing sound, a tiny speck of light that went out in a second, and the queen was once more alone.

Then she set her wits to work. She thought and thought, planned and studied, and by and by she had an inspiration.

The next day the court ladies were all summoned to the queen’s presence and she made them this little speech;

“I have invented a new kind of quilt which will be useful to poor people, and I want to begin one right away, so that they may become the fashion before the winter sets in, but I must

have your help. Therefore, I ask you to bring me, tomorrow, as great a variety as possible of small pieces of silk and satin. The one who brings the largest and best collection shall have a ball given in her honor as soon as the quilt is finished."

The queen's next move was to invite the princess to be present on the following day to help her decide on the claims of the various collections.

By this means the princess was present when the queen commenced what she called a "crazy quilt," which had never been heard of before in that land.

As the good queen had hoped, the princess Catherine became infatuated with the beautiful "crazy quilt" and declared her intention to make one "some day."

Then the wise queen told her that if she would work with her she might have the beautiful and novel quilt for her own when it was finished.

It took the princess nearly a whole day to make up her mind, but as every lady at court had begun one of the new-fashioned quilts, she finally decided to start one. She arose one morning so full of thoughts about the silk "crazy quilt" that she could hardly wait to begin it.

The good queen kept close beside her all day, bringing out new shades and suggesting new combinations, fearing every moment that the natural indolence of the princess would assert itself and thus destroy all her hopes.

But the princess worked on and on, scarcely stopping to eat until the clock struck



But the princess worked on and on—

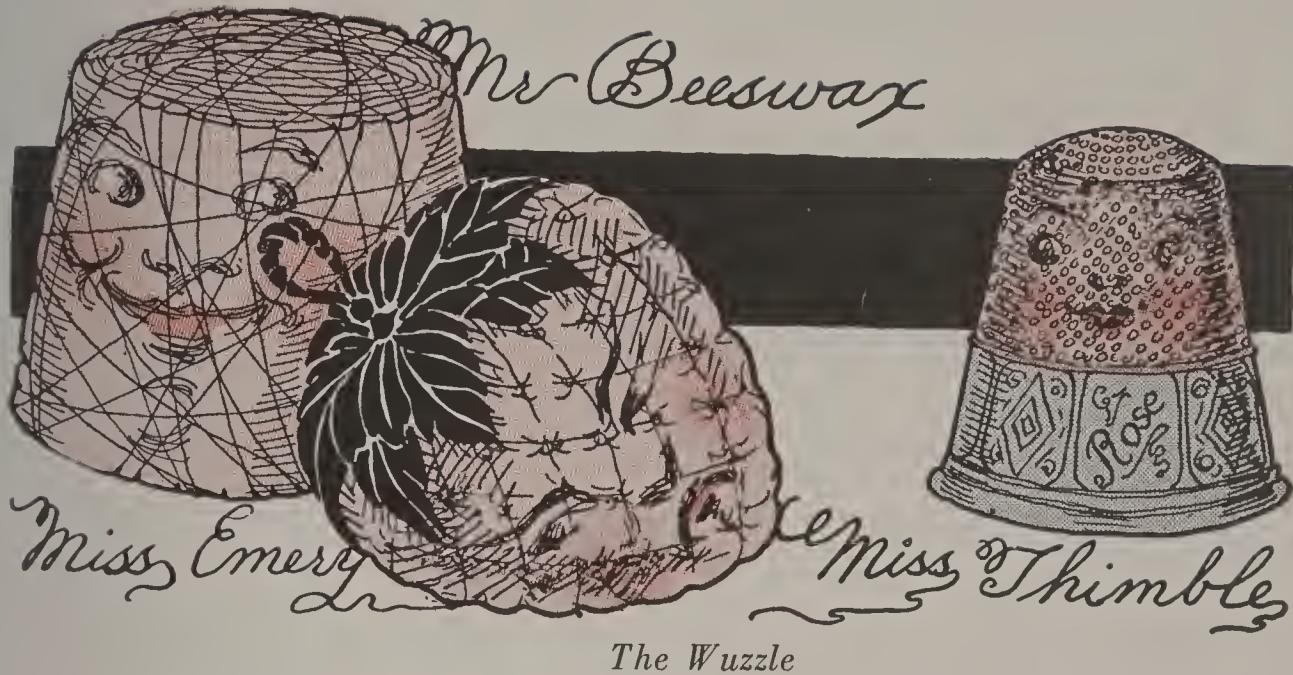
the midnight hour. Then the good queen went to bed with a quiet mind.

When the quilt was finished the queen sent a herald to proclaim through the land that there should be a week of feasting and rejoicing.

Great merrymaking followed. Everybody was given a holiday; even the poorest wood-cutter in the land took part in the general joy.

Many people wondered why there should be so great a celebration over the introduction of a new-fashioned quilt, even though it were useful to people who wanted to use up bits and scraps of silk.

But queen Agnes kept her own counsel, and no one knew all that the quilt meant to her; for the enchantment was broken, and Catherine ever afterward was both sweet-tempered and industrious.



“THE WUZZLE.”



“CAN you straighten out this wuzzle for me, Millie?” asked grandmother.

“I don’t know what that is,” said Millie.

Her grandmother had lately come to live at Millie’s home, and this was a new word to the little girl.

“Well, that’s a wuzzle,” said grandmother laughing, as she laid in Millie’s hand a soft

little bunch of tangled sewing silk and thread.

"Oh yes, I like to do that," said Millie, and taking some ivory silk-winders, she went out to her hammock.

As she picked away at the ends of the silk, she thought,

"How funny grandmother is, I wonder why she didn't call this a snarl, or a tangle." Then she kept saying the funny word over and over to herself, and finally she began to sing softly to words of her own choosing, which was one of her favorite pastimes;

"I wonder what a wuzzle is,

A wuzzle, wuzzle, wuzzle,

Just a puzzle, puzzle, puzzle,

That is what a wuzzle is."

She picked away patiently at the tangle,

pulling out now and then a long thread which she wound up neatly on an ivory silk winder. It was very quiet work, the hammock swayed gently. A cicada in a tree near by, chirped monotonously, and Millie pretty soon found herself growing sleepy. But she drew herself up, of course she wasn't going to sleep in broad daylight; and she tugged away, still harder, at the tight central knot of the wuzzle.

But suddenly her hands were empty and she looked around anxiously for the wuzzle.

In a moment she saw something on the edge of the hammock directly in front of her that was like, yet very unlike, the wuzzle.

It had arms and legs that were thin and thread-like. Its body was clad in a variegated jacket exactly like the many colored threads in

the tangle. The whole was surmounted by a little round head covered with long hair that stood out in a very disorderly manner, and almost hid a pair of bright black eyes that looked mischievously at Millie.

“O my,” said the little girl in a frightened whisper.

“But I’m not yours,” said a fine soft voice.
“Whose are you then—and who are you too?” asked the astonished Millie.

“Why, don’t you remember, I’m the Wuzzle, I made a pretty good jump didn’t I?” and the funny little thing threw its arms and legs about in great delight.

“But you had no right to jump away from me like that, and I’m sure grandmother wouldn’t like it,” said Millie severely.



"Why, don't you remember, I'm the Wuzzle?"

"Your grandmother, oh, your grandmother," said the Wuzzle, laughing so hard that it nearly lost its balance, "much I care for her."

"But you belong to her," said Millie indignantly.

"Well, I'm sorry to contradict you, my dear, but you're entirely wrong on that point."

"Then to whom do you belong?" asked Millie in much surprise.

"To a princess," said the Wuzzle.

"Really?" exclaimed the delighted Millie, "where is she?"

"That's just what I'd like to know," and Millie was sure there were tears in the bright, black eyes.

"Do tell me about the princess," begged Millie.

“I’ll be glad to,” said the Wuzzle, “for I don’t often have a chance to talk about those happy times.”

“But how do you know she was a princess?”

“The darning-needle told me.”

“O, how lovely!” exclaimed Millie, “and now tell me exactly how she looked.”

“She had long, golden hair and blue eyes, with the sweetest face that was always smiling. She was very good indeed to us, she let us do just as we pleased and also gave us a beautiful house to live in.”

“Us?” interrupted Millie, “were there others there besides yourself?”

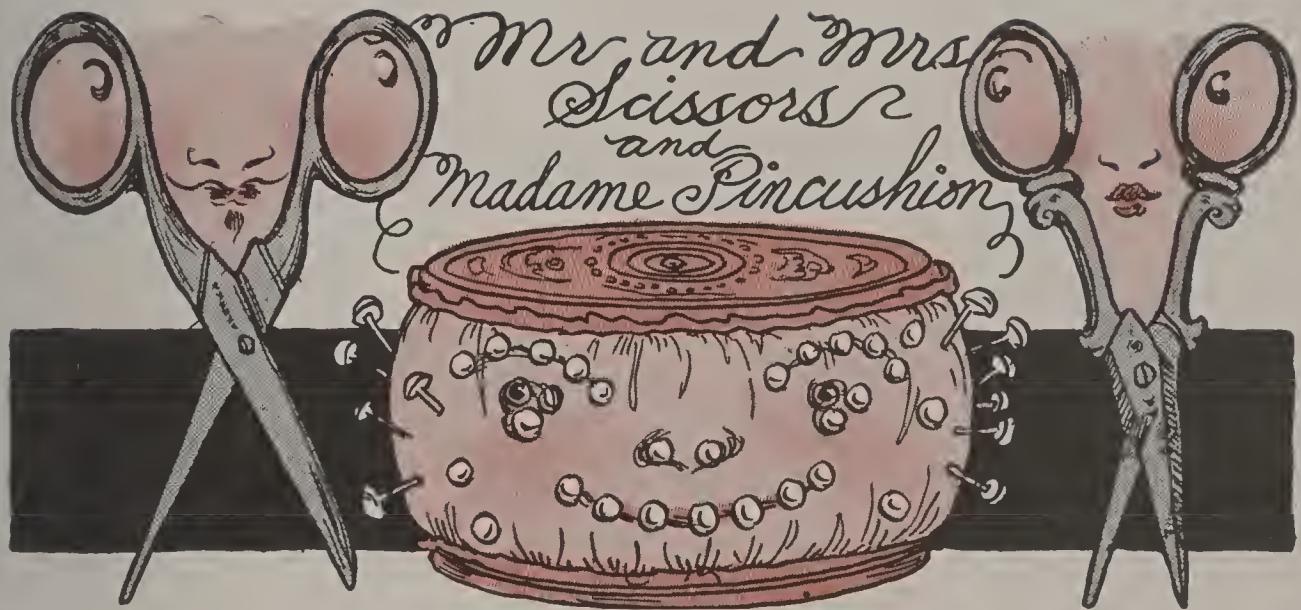
“Yes indeed,” replied the Wuzzle with a long sigh, “a great many, and a very select

company we were too. Oh! but those were delightful times," and the Wuzzle paused, lost in its thoughts of the past.

"But tell me the names of your friends," said Millie, a little impatiently.

"Ah, yes," said the Wuzzle, "pardon me, I forgot myself for the moment. Well, there was Miss Thimble, a high-bred lady, Miss Emery, Madame Pincushion, Mr. and Mrs. Scissors and a very numerous family called the Silks, of whom there were so many that I cannot remember all their names. The Threads and Yarns were also a large family, their manners were not quite so good as the Silks, but they were very worthy people.

"Then there was Mr. Beeswax, he was a great favorite among us, for he kept everything so smooth. I don't believe we could have lived



"A very select company we were"

in the same house with Miss Emery if it had not been for his gentle manners. Another gentleman who was very necessary in our community, although we all feared him a little, was Mr. Tape-line. He kept us all straight, and there is no telling what strange things we might have done had it not been for him.

“Then there was Mr. Stiletto, he was an extremely handsome fellow and quite a favorite, although he had a way of, now and then, saying things that were rather sharp. He was an admirer of the Thread family and they were quite often visiting together. Miss Glovemender, tried very hard to attract his attention, but he had no time for her. Dear me! what very fine times we did have, and no one knows how I long to see my companions again. We were never called upon to work, and as our house

stood in a prominent place, and as it was nearly always left open, that is with the roof turned back, we had a fine chance to see and hear many things in the great world.

“Mrs. Scissors, who was there, a very sharp old lady, declares that the reason the roof to our house was always lifted up was because there was a mirror in it. Do you happen to know what a mirror is?”

“Well, I should think so,” said Millie, a little indignantly.

“Then you will understand what Mrs. Scissors meant, she was very hard to deceive. Sometimes one of the members of the Yarn family would amuse us with a story, but if she told the least thing that was not strictly true, my! how quickly Mrs. Scissors would know it, and she’d cut it all to pieces.

“I must admit that she was right about the mirror, for our mistress, the princess, never came that way without stopping to look in it, but one could hardly blame her, for she certainly made a very beautiful picture,” and closing its tale, with a long sigh, the Wuzzle remained silent for several minutes, evidently dreaming of the charming princess.

“But,” said Millie, when she thought she had borne the silence long enough, “if you were so happy there, why did you come away?”

“I am certain I don’t know,” said the Wuzzle with another sigh, “but one day when we were all having a merry time watching Miss Darning-needle and Mr. Bodkin dance the polka—the canary bird furnished the music—we were suddenly thrown out of our beautiful house, and we all struck the table in a heap together.





Mrs. Scissors, who happened to land on the top of the pile, said it was the princess herself who carried our house off, and that she probably wanted it to put chocolates in, but I never could believe that story. I think it was just some of Mrs. Scissors' merry gossip. But by and by my friends began to be picked up and carried away. One by one I saw my beloved companions depart until I was left entirely alone. It was then that I learned to love the princess so dearly, for having nothing else to do I passed my time in watching her whenever she was in the room.

“But one unlucky day for me, when she was not near, someone picked me up and carried me off, and here I am.”

“Yes,” said Millie sadly, “and that isn’t the worst of it either.”

“Well, I don’t see how anything that is worse can happen to me, now that I have got away from you. Of course if I had stayed with you much longer there wouldn’t have been anything left of me. My! it makes me shiver when I remember how near you came to pulling me to pieces.”

“But,” said Millie very gently, “I shall have to do it after all, for grandmother told me to, and I must obey her, though you can’t imagine how I do dread to do it.”

“O,” said the Wuzzle, winking very hard at Millie, “I think you’ll have to catch me first.”

“That is easy enough,” said Millie, making a swift dash at the Wuzzle, but instead of closing her hand upon it, she rolled out of the hammock and came down upon the grass with a thump.

She jumped up quickly and looked around for the Wuzzle, but it was not to be seen. She went into the house with a very long face.

“Grandmother,” she said, “do you think it can find its way back to the princess?”

Grandmother took off her spectacles and looked at Millie.

“So you have been dreaming about a princess, I saw you were having a nice nap. But where is my silk?”

“It’s gone, grandma, I looked all around in the hammock and everywhere, but I couldn’t find it,” and she sobbed a little.

“O, never mind, my pet,” said grandmother consolingly, “you needn’t care, it wasn’t of much consequence anyway.”

“But—but it was a Wuzzle,” said Millie between her sobs.

Grandmother laughed a little, but added quickly;

“Well, the world is full of Wuzzles, dear, you will probably see many more before you die, though you may not give them exactly that name.”

“But where did you get this one, grandmother?”

“What a queer child you are, I didn’t get it, it made itself from the loose ends of my spools.”

Millie was silent a moment then she said; “Grandmother has my cousin Rose, where you’ve been living, long golden curls and blue eyes?”

“Why, of course she has, you cannot have forgotten how she looks? She’s a very pretty

girl, but a very useless one also, as I have told you before. I am glad you do not live near her."

"I do wish I could find that Wuzzle," said Millie mournfully, as she turned to go out of doors.

This wish, however, was never granted, but if Millie had understood bird language, she would have found out what had become of the Wuzzle.



THE MARBLE SPOUT.



LONG, long, ago, in a far-away land called Mabiseau, a good man named Kyndehart was made king. When he was a very little boy he said to himself that if he ever became king he would help the beggars that always hung about the palace gates.

So, the day after he was crowned, and while the people were still making merry over the great event, a company of workmen came to the palace wall, and began making a hole near the main gate.

To all the questions asked by the curious beggars and passers-by they only answered, “The king has ordered it.”



Soon the "H" appeared beside it

When night came and the men went home, there was a large smooth hole in the palace wall, and the people wondered more and more.

The next morning another set of workmen appeared. They brought with them a large marble spout, which they fastened into the hole with strong white cement.

Then these men also went away, and soon after another man came alone. He carried a

sharp instrument and a mallet, and, after much measuring around the spout, he began to cut into the wall just above it. Then, after a while, the wondering people saw that he had cut the letter “W” in the wall; soon the letter “h” appeared beside it, and by and by the word “When” stood plainly carved on the wall. Then the man went home and left the people more curious than ever as they repeated that one word, “When,” to one another.

Then next day the same things happened. The man worked faithfully, the crowd watched patiently, letter by letter, and word by word. By and by these were the words that stared from the wall;

“When the palace clock strikes twelve.”

Then the people looked at each other and their eyes said, “What will happen then?”

“Then we shall all be killed,” whispered someone hoarsely, “it is the new king.”

The whisper ran through the crowd, and the people were so frightened they forgot to watch the next letter—an “m”—that was forming under the man’s sharp tool.

“Look at the clock,” called someone in a loud voice; for this palace clock, like many others in large towns, struck the noon hour only.

Every pair of eyes turned to the great dial, and in another instant every pair of heels was flying away from the palace wall, for the hands of the clock pointed to half-past eleven, and if they were to be killed at twelve, they had but half an hour left to save their necks.

The man, glad to be alone, worked on steadily, and when, near the close of the day,

he took off his dust-covered apron, these were the words that ran around the marble spout; “When the palace clock strikes twelve, milk will flow from this spout for all the poor people who will come after it. By order of King Kyndehart.

Just as the early dawn was lighting the beautiful hills of Mabiseau, one young beggar, bolder than the rest, came within sight of the palace. He saw no soldiers waiting to kill him and his companions, so he kept on approaching the palace walls, growing bolder with every step. At last he stood near enough to the marble spout to make out the sentence above it. He jumped up and down and hugged himself for joy. He read the words over and over until he knew them by heart, then away he

went to rouse his companions from their troubled slumbers.

Long before the noon hour the beggars gathered around the marble spout in so great a throng that the king, who watched them from the palace windows, groaned as he saw them. Every man, woman and child carried a jug or pitcher, and some carried two. When the king saw the poor wretches going away with the full pitchers, he smiled with pleasure; but, alas! his smiles were short-lived, for, when the flow of milk ceased there was still a large company of beggars standing about, whose pitchers were all empty.

Then he called for his Lord High Chamberlain and ordered that more cows be milked. “But, your majesty,” was the reply, “every cow in the stables has been milked dry.”

“Then,” exclaimed the king in great anger, “go and buy more cows, for these poor wretches must have milk.”

The next day the milk flowed on as if it would never cease, and the king thought;

“Surely there will be no empty pitchers now.”

But, alas! when the last drop had run out of the marble spout, there were still many empty pitchers.

Then the king’s order of the previous day was repeated, and again the milk flowed longer than before; but it was still the same old story—always many hapless beggars standing about with empty pitchers.

As the number of cows grew larger and the quantity of milk greater, the crowds of

beggars seemed to increase also, until it seemed as if the whole land of Mabiseau was clamoring for milk before that marble spout.

Outside the palace gates the people complained because there was not milk enough; inside they complained, because there was no time for anything but milking and feeding cows.

One day the Lord High Chamberlain came to the king with a very grave face and said,

“Your majesty, your milk law must be repealed, for there is not another cow to be bought in all the land of Mabiseau.”

“Have you forgotten,” said the king, “that a law once made in Mabiseau stands forever? We must have more cows, see that the ships are manned and prepared for sea. I, myself

will sail to other countries and return with so many cows that every inhabitant of Mabiseau shall have all the milk he or she wants."

In a few days the fleet sailed away with drums beating and banners flying, while the beggars on shore—for they had been told of the king's mission—cheered themselves hoarse and waved their ragged hats and bonnets until the vessels were out of sight.

Days dragged into weeks and weeks into months, but the king did not return. The milk still flowed from the spout, and the crowds wrangled and fought over it, sometimes hurting each other in their struggles to be first at the spout.

Murmurings grew louder and louder through the land and the Lord High Chamberlain was half crazed with fear and anxiety.



A wonderful idea came to the Lord High Chamberlain

One day as he sat lost in thought over the terrible state of affairs, a wonderful idea came to him.

"I'll do it," he said, jumping up and walking about his room in great joy.

As soon as it was dark, he wrapped himself in a long cloak, put a mask on his face, and taking a stout stick in his hand, walked away toward the city. Just before midnight he returned, and with him was a bent old man carrying a small tool-box. All that night and the next day until dark the little old man was hidden in the palace. No one saw him, or knew that he was there, except the Lord High Chamberlain.

The next day the palace clock began to strike as usual in its slow measured way, and the people counted the strokes aloud as had become

their custom. When the twelfth peal sounded, the crowd surged forward, for that was the signal for the milk to flow. But lo! there came another clang of the bell, and the clock had struck thirteen, and there was no milk pouring its white sweetness out of the marble spout. Then a great cry arose from the people, but the Lord High Chamberlain quickly mounted the top of the wall and spoke to them thus;

“You know, my friends, the people of Mabiseau always obey the laws even to the last letter. As soon as the clock strikes twelve again, you will find the milk coming out of the spout as usual; but meanwhile, go to your homes and wait quietly until it is time for the clock to strike again.”

So the people obeyed and went home quietly, but returned the following day and

waited before the marble spout. This they did many days, but the clock still continued striking thirteen, and the king was still unheard from.

Then the Lord High Chamberlain, watching always from his palace windows, saw with joy that the crowd of beggars daily grew smaller.

He sent trusty messengers to inquire into the matter and learned that the beggars had found work and therefore no longer needed the gift of milk. So the cows were taken from the stables and driven away, a few at a time, into the country and given to poor men with families. At last there were only two blind, old beggars left at the gate, and these the Lord High Chamberlain sent into the country to be cared for as long as they lived.

But one day, amid the sweet peace and contentment which now reigned throughout Mabi-seau, a messenger came running to the Lord High Chamberlain, saying,

"The king and his fleet are sailing into the bay." The poor man's heart was full of misgivings. "Now," he said, "all my work will be undone." Nevertheless, he put on his robes of state and, accompanied by the whole court, went forth in great pomp to meet the king.

When they approached the shore, the Lord High Chamberlain nearly wept with fear for he expected the air would be rent with the bellowing of cows and the bleating of calves. But he heard instead the beating of drums and the blaring of trumpets. When at last the king's ship touched the pier and he walked down the plank the Lord High Chamberlain



In one hand an ax, in the other a saw and hammer

saw that he carried in one hand an ax, in the other a saw and a hammer.

When the king had embraced the Lord High Chamberlain he turned to his court and said,

“I have learned much since I left you. I have been to a country where no man is given

anything unless he is sick, or aged, where every man must work for what he has. My ships are loaded with saws, hammers and axes, which I will sell to my people, and I have brought men with me who will teach them how to use them."

When the Lord High Chamberlain and the king were alone in the king's private rooms, the Lord High Chamberlain told him the story of the clock.

The king looked at him with a twinkle in his eye.

"Ah," he said, "thine is a wise head! and thirteen is a lucky number for the people of this land."

But did they leave the marble spout there always? and did the clock go on striking thirteen forever? you ask. Well, "maybe so."



The Giant knocked over houses

THE GOLDEN LOCKS



A GREAT many years ago, long before even your great-grandparents were born, there was situated in one of the most beautiful corners of the earth a country called Heartland.

It had once been governed by a wise and good fairy king, and he had placed a strange enchantment upon the people.



Golden hair that was wonderful in its brightness

By this enchantment every person cast a shadow, not according to his, or her, size, but in proportion to the amount of selfishness in his or her heart.

So, if anyone could have been found whose heart was absolutely unselfish, that person would have been entirely without a shadow.

This, therefore, was the great aim of everyone in Heartland—to become so full of love for others that they would be known by all the world as “the person without a shadow.”

But, as you will see, this very aspiration savored of selfishness and so stood in the way of its own accomplishment.

Thus, no one ever quite reached the desired point, for the people of Heartland were just like the people of today, who find it im-

possible to say of any action, “There is no self here.”

There was one maiden, however, whose shadow was merely a rim of white light, for she had come very near to absolute self-forgetfulness.

This maiden, whose name was Stella, was very beautiful, and she was also crowned by golden hair that was wonderful in its brightness and abundance.

When she let it fall about her in its shining waves, it made the darkness radiant, for the light from it was like the light of a thousand blazing lamps.

Stella was proud of her hair, far too proud, she well knew, and she tried with all her might to forget its beauty, but she could not.

Sometimes, when she combed it, she would

sit for hours, gazing at its wondrous shining, thus forgetting the other and more important duties.

Then, a chance glance over her shoulder would show her that her shadow had grown larger and darker, and she would quickly put up her hair, while sorrow would take the place of pride in her heart.

In another corner of the earth, far away from Heartland, lived a big, bad, black ogre.

He had long been the terror of his own land, for I cannot begin to tell you of all the wicked deeds he had done.

But one day he felt a sudden contempt for his native country, and decided that he would journey abroad.

“I will travel and conquer the whole world, for wherever I go men flee from before me,” he said to himself.

And he spoke the truth.

So he journeyed far and wide, spreading death and desolation in his path.

One day he came to the borders of Heart-land.

He knew nothing of the strange law that governed this country, so he went on, full of confidence in himself, and happily crossed the boundary line.

But alas! as he was very big, and also cared for no one in all the world but himself, darkness immediately reigned for miles around.

So black was this sudden shadow that even the ogre could not see where he went.

But he kept on in his blind gropings, often knocking against houses and hurting himself, as well as other people.

Sometimes, indeed, when the houses were small, he would upset them entirely.

Little he cared for the hurts of others, however, as day after day went on, and by reason of the continued darkness, he met with many unpleasant accidents, he began to grow angry.

Then the howls of rage that he set up shook the very hills that were miles away.

Of course the poor people of Heartland were full of fear at the presence of this terrible creature, but there was no way to capture him, on account of the darkness that surrounded him. Thus, you see, his very wickedness protected him.

But one day the ruler of Heartland felt a new and bright idea tingling through his brain.

“We will send for Stella,” he said to himself.

So a carriage was sent to Stella’s house and she was asked to visit the ruler in his palace.

As soon as she came into his presence he said to her,

“I want to send a band of strong men to capture the wicked ogre. I might also send torch bearers, but you know very well that their flames are mere flickers when compared with the flames from your golden locks. If you will walk near the head of the column, with your bright hair hanging like a robe about you, all will be as light as day and they will have no trouble in finding the ogre, and having found him they will soon destroy him, for I will send brave and strong men.”

When the ruler paused, Stella was silent and stood before him with downcast eyes.

Seeing her hesitation he hastened to say; “You need have no fear, no harm will come to you.”

Then Stella looked up and a brave look passed over her face.

“It is not that,” she said, “I know I shall be safe; but it is enough, I will go with your men.”

Then everything was carefully prepared and Stella, at the head of the column, with her glorious hair falling about her like a garment of sunshine, walked serenely forward, while in the distance they heard the howls of the ogre.

Nearer and nearer they came to him, while he, seeing the approach of the wonderful light, thought the day was breaking at last,

and he stood still, waiting for its coming, that he might once more walk in peace and safety.

But the light grew brighter so rapidly that, when Stella and the men came nearer, his long shrouded eyes were blinded by the sudden blaze of glory.

He heard, however, the tramp of many feet, and so, suspecting that an army had come to capture him or kill him, he was filled with a mad rage.

He knew that he must protect himself, but as he could see but dimly, he threw out his mighty arms toward the spot whence the light seemed to radiate.

Instantly a dozen men sprang forward with their axes.

But they were not quick enough, for his huge hand had caught Stella's golden hair, and

with one powerful wrench, as if his hand had been a mighty pair of sharp scissors, the flowing locks were severed.

Like a flash the men sprang at the wretched ogre, and in a few moments he was beyond harming anyone ever again.

Then these brave men began to look around for Stella.

They found her sitting unharmed beneath a tree, her beautiful face radiant with smiles.

“It is gone,” she said, putting her hand to her head, where the short hair was like a halo, “and I am glad, I loved it too well. I was very near refusing to come with you, because I feared my golden locks would be rumpled or soiled, but it is gone and my country is saved from the wicked ogre.”

Then she arose, and lo! those who stood near her saw that her slight form cast not even the faintest shadow.

But she, thinking only of her country and its glad deliverance, knew not that she had reached the height of honor in Heartland, but walked away, unattended, to her humble home.

The men buried the ogre at once, and each one of them took a lock of the golden hair that lay strewn over the ground, and bore it ever about him as a talisman.

But the maiden never either asked or heard what became of it.

It is said that this ogre was the last of his race, and so we may thank Stella of the "golden locks" that we need no longer fear these strange and terrible beings.



He tried to get it off, but he couldn't move it

THE SILENCER



JOHNNIE READ was lonesome. His mother had gone to market, saying to him as she left the house,

“Now, be a good boy, Johnnie, and stay with Bridget.”

But how could he stay with her when she said, "Please go away, you talk so much that you stop my work."

"It's not right for you to always say that, Bridget," corrected Johnnie, in his most dignified manner, "in the first place I couldn't do it, and in the second place there are your two arms kneading bread as hard as ever they can."

"Well, go away and talk to someone else," said Bridget impatiently.

"That's just what I'll do," said Johnnie to himself, as he went sulkily out of doors, "I'll go off and hunt up some one to talk to."

He stood a moment on the sidewalk looking up and down the street. "I'll go to the park," he said at last, "there are always lots of men sitting on the benches, and they look really lonesome sometimes. I expect most any of them

will be glad to have me talk to them."

After this very wise decision he set out for the park. It was quite near, but as he was very anxious to find someone to talk to, he ran along as fast as he could. In less than three minutes, he had turned the corner, crossed the street and was walking under the beautiful trees of the park, looking around for the men who were usually lolling on the benches. But it was quite early in the morning and not a person was to be seen.

So Johnnie walked on and on. It was very cool and pleasant there and the birds sang so delightfully, that he almost forgot why he had run away. By and by he came to a beautiful grotto built around a drinking fountain. Then all at once he was very thirsty, but the fountain was beyond his reach.

"I'll rest on this rustic seat opposite," he thought, "and wait until someone bigger than I am comes along. Then I'll ask him to help me get a drink."

The rustic chair was very comfortable, and Johnnie had walked a long distance, but suddenly he forgot all about his thirst, for right in front of him he saw a little red door in the grotto, and on it was a sign in big black letters, which said,

"TALKING BY THE YARD. ORDERS FILLED ON SHORT NOTICE."

"Oho!" said Johnnie, jumping quickly out of the chair. "That's the place for me, and, of course, they'll pay anyone to do talking for them. How jolly! my, but I'm glad I happened around here!"

He ran across the graveled driveway and

knocked boldly on the little red door. In a minute it flew open, and there stood a short, fat old man with a funny face.

"Well," he said quickly, "how many yards do you want to buy, and what must they be about?"

"I don't want to buy," said Johnnie, quickly, "but I like to talk, and I thought if you had many orders I could help you fill them."

"So!" said the old man, looking a little funnier than before, "come in."

Johnnie went into a dark little room, and the man said,

"Well, now what can you talk about?"

"Oh, most anything," said Johnnie, proudly. Then he suddenly remembered that men always fixed prices before they began to



He knocked boldly on the little door

work, so he said in a very grave and business-like manner,

“What do you pay a yard for talk?”

At this the little fat man burst into a merry fit of laughter, and Johnnie stood staring at him wondering what there was so funny in that simple question. At last the old man stopped his laughing.

“Well, my little fellow,” he said, trying hard to maintain a serious look, though his face was still puckered in many wrinkles of fun, “we pay one cent for a hundred yards.”

“Oh,” said Johnnie, looking thoughtful, “that isn’t much.”

“Of course not,” was the answer, “haven’t you ever heard that talk is cheap?”

Johnnie admitted quite humbly that he had heard something of that kind.

“Well, do you suppose you can get rich at that price, one cent a hundred yards?”

“I don’t know, but I’ll try,” was Johnnie’s brave reply. “I like to talk better than anything else, and I can do a lot of it in a minute.”

“All right,” said the man, “but wait until I fix the lingnicator,” and he placed a queer looking machine very close to Johnnie’s face.

“What’s that?” said the little boy, in a scared voice, although he couldn’t have told which frightened him most, the long formidable name of the machine, or the machine itself, for it was a queer-looking thing. It had a big, black funnel on top of it, and the man by turning some screws, lowered this funnel, until it was just on a level with Johnnie’s mouth.

“Now,” he said, “the sound waves from your voice will run down this funnel and set in

motion a little wheel, which sets in motion a larger wheel. Around the large wheel is a yard of tape, when it is unwound the wheel takes it up and winds it on again. Each time the tape is wound and unwound the hands in front of the machine register two. When it counts up to a hundred, that means you have talked a hundred yards, and then a little bell will ring, so now, talk away!"

Johnnie talked as fast as his little red tongue could fly, and pretty soon he heard the faint ting-a-ling of the bell.

"Good," he said to himself, "and of course the faster I talk, the faster the sound waves will come, and the faster the two wheels will turn, winding and unwinding the yard of tape, and the sooner the little bell will go ting-a-ling."

So he set his tongue flying, and was just

thinking that the bell ought to ring again pretty soon, when suddenly he felt something soft pressed firmly against his jaws, and he couldn't utter a word. He put his hands to his face and found a vise-like thing holding his jaws together. He tried to get it off, but he couldn't move it. He turned around and there stood the little man laughing at him.

"Do you like it?" he asked.

Johnnie shook his head and motioned to him to take it off.

"Do you see that sign up there?" asked the man, pointing to the wall.

Johnnie looked and read in big black letters these words,

"SILENCERS FOR SALE, WARRANTED TO STICK."

"You see," said the keeper of the "talk

shop," "I sell those things to put on people who talk without saying anything. Now, you have talked nearly two hundred yards and you haven't said anything. When I buy talk, I buy the kind that has something in besides noise and a lot of words."

Johnnie looked as if he were going to cry and he put his hands on the silencer and tried to get it off.

"Oh, you needn't try that sort of thing," said the little man, "don't you see what the sign says, 'Warranted to stick?' It fastens in a secret way, and no one can possibly get it unfastened, unless he knows the trick."

Two big tears stood in Johnnie's eyes, and he motioned as fast as he could to have the silencer taken off, but the man frowned harder than ever.

"You say you like to talk, what for? Just to hear the sound of your own voice? The silencer is to quiet that kind of people. I invented it myself when I had a relative living with me who talked from morning until night about nothing. So I used to clap this on his jaws when I couldn't stand it any longer and then we'd have peace for a while. Oh, I tell you, the 'silencers' are great things. I sell more of them than I do of the talk, because I find that there are ten people who can gabble, gabble all day long where there is one who can keep silent."

As the little man paused Johnnie again made wild motions to have the silencer removed.

"Well," the man said, "before I unfasten the thing you must make two promises."

Johnnie was by this time ready to promise anything, so he nodded with all his might.

“First, you must never, on any account, talk, unless you have something to say, do you promise that?”

Johnnie nodded as hard as before.

“Secondly, you must keep silent four times as much as you talk.”

Johnnie looked bewildered.

“That is, if you talk fifteen minutes you must keep silent an hour. If you talk five minutes, you must be silent twenty, understand?”

Johnnie nodded slowly.

“Now, if you are ready to promise that, I’ll take the silencer off.”

Johnnie didn’t nod; the latter promise seemed a pretty hard one to make. He thought

of all the long silent minutes, and it did not please him; he did so like to talk.

"Oh, well," said the little man, turning away, "I see you don't want—"

Johnnie began to be scared; he thought the old man was going away, and would leave him with that horrible thing gripping at his jaws. He tried to cry out, to say that he would promise anything that was required, if the man would only let him go.

"Hello there! is that you, Johnnie Read? What are you doing here at this time of day?"

Johnnie gave a great jump, and there right beside him on the graveled way, was a horse and buggy, and in the buggy was Mr. Jones, who lived next door to Johnnie.

"Been taking a nap in the shade?" asked Mr. Jones kindly, "Well jump into the

buggy, I'll give you a little ride and then take you home."

"I think I'd like a drink first, if you please, Mr. Jones."

"All right, I'll have one too, and so will the pony," said Mr. Jones, climbing out of the buggy.

While Johnnie was drinking he looked over the rim of the cup at the grotto, but though he searched the stones carefully, there was no trace of the little red door.

"'Twas just a dream," he said to himself bravely, "I'm not afraid of his old silencer."

But all the same, it set him to thinking. He wondered if the little old man wasn't right, and, after that day, people said, "What a nice, quiet boy Johnnie Read is! he doesn't say much, but when he does talk he always talks sensibly."



THE GNOME KING



THE king of the gnomes was dead, and great indeed was the sorrow throughout Gnomeland, for there was no one to take his place.

Gnomeland was a deep, mossy dell, where

a stream of clear, cold water trickled all day long.

It was a law among the gnomes that when a king died another could not be crowned until the clover was in blossom, for every gnome who longed for the crown, was forced to go skipping over the nearest field of clover, touching every blossom with his feet. As soon as one of the gnomes succeeded in doing this without making a single one of the blossoms bend down, that gnome was immediately carried away by the judges who were with him, and proclaimed king.

But although the latest king had died in early spring-time and the clover was now in full bloom, a new king had not yet been crowned.

The gnomes everywhere were complaining

because they had no king, and the prime minister was growing very tired of bearing all the burden of the government, without either receiving the salary or the honor belonging thereto. Meanwhile, time was speeding away, the clover daily grew riper, and soon the time for the trials would be over, for those dreadful creatures called man would come with their noise and destruction, and cut down the fragrant red blossoms.

So, the prime minister grew daily more and more anxious, for he was very unwilling to go on governing Gnomeland for another whole year.

By and by the bumble-bee came flying to the gates of Gnomeland with this message;

“In two days the clover is to be cut. If you do not choose your king before then, you will

never have him for the Brownies have heard of your trouble and they are coming to take possession of this mossy dell and to drive you deep into the center of the earth, where you belong."

There was one gnome more swift and agile than the others, and he wanted very much to be king. But, even he, in going over the clover several times, had failed to win the crown.

It was true, at his third attempt, only one clover blossom had bent beneath his weight, but even that slight movement destroyed his chance of being king.

This gnome had a loving little sister who was greatly grieved at her brother's failure, and when she heard the bumble-bee's message she set her wits at work to help her brother.

As soon as the sun was down—for gnomes cannot leave home until then—she set out to



He wanted very much to be king

visit her great-great-grandmother, who lived in an old acorn cup by herself, and who was very, very wise.

The little sister told the sad story of her brother's failure and disappointment, and begged that something might be done to help him step lightly enough on the clover blossoms.

"If you will let me live in the palace when your brother is made king and give me two drops of honey every day for my dinner I will help you," said the great-great-grandmother gnome.

Of course the promise was quickly given, and then, this wonderful secret was whispered to the little sister.

"If you can catch the first tear shed by a mortal babe, bring it quickly and rub it on your brother's feet. He then need have no fear

of shaking the clover blossoms, they will not feel his weight."

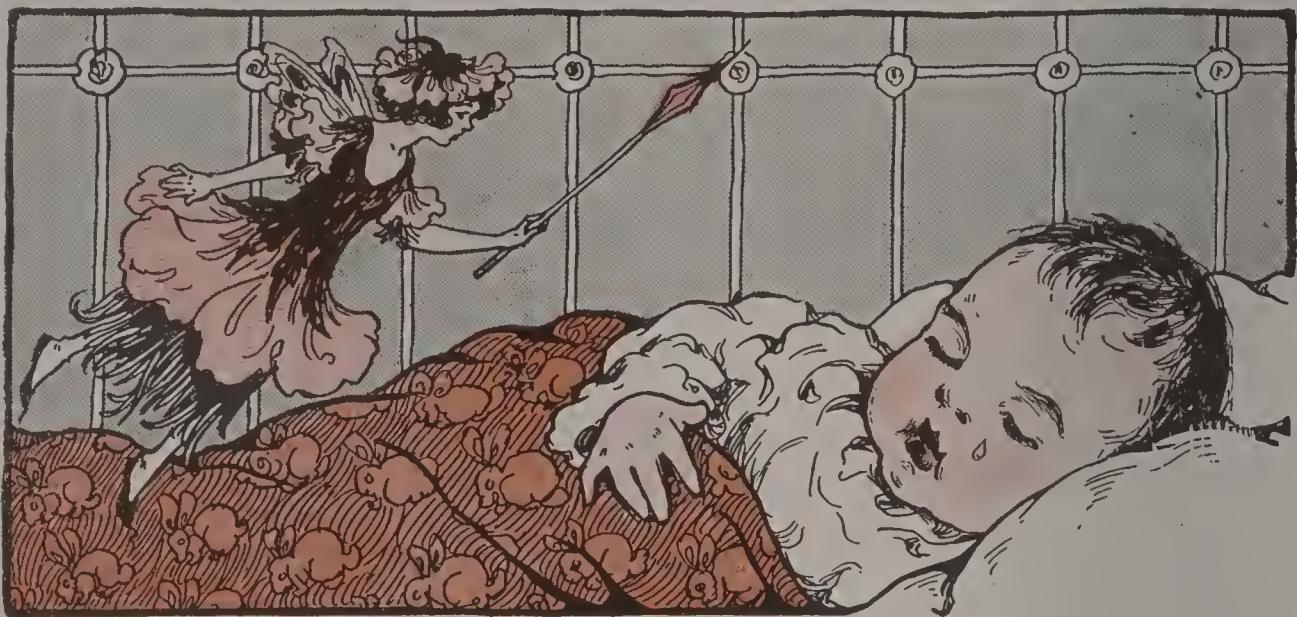
Away sped the little sister gnome to the home of mortals, listening at every door for the sound of a baby's cry, but wherever she went, for many long hours, the babies were peacefully sleeping.

Her heart was heavy, and she was beginning to despair, but as she was about to turn away from a door at which she had long been listening she heard that eagerly-wished-for sound, a faint and plaintive wail.

In a moment she had sailed through the key-hole and was hovering over the baby's head.

Then she heard the baby's father say impatiently;

"That child is cross." "No, no." said the mother gently, "he feels bad somewhere, poor



The little sister gnome caught it up so quickly

little darling; see, here is a tear, the first one he has ever shed."

She took her handkerchief to wipe the tear away, but the little sister gnome caught it up so quickly on the end of the invisible spear she had brought with her that the mother thought her own hand had wiped it off.

The next night a new king was crowned in Gnomeland, and the great-great-grandmother gnome had all the honey she could eat until she died, and was buried in her acorn cup deep, deep in the center of the earth.

THE ACCIDENTAL CANDY



ONCE upon a time there was a beautiful little princess who loved to cook. Mother Queen and Father King thought she was very foolish to go pottering around at work of that kind.

“Princesses don’t need to cook,” said the Queen.

“But there might be a revolution some day,” replied the Princess, “and then I should no longer be a Princess, so it would be very nice to know how to cook. I might earn a living that way for you and Father King.”

Then the King who had laid off his crown, and was dozing in his easy chair, woke up suddenly.

"What nonsense you are talking!" he said half angrily, " there can never be a revolution here, my people are too loyal; besides, if there should such a thing happen, I have plenty of diamonds laid away," and he winked his left eye slyly at the Queen, which was quite undignified, especially in a King.

However, in spite of all their talk, the little Princess kept on going to the kitchen. She bothered the servants a good deal, of course, but they were afraid to be cross to her, for who would dare to scold a Princess, but they did scold about her a great deal to the royal head cook, who was a man.

So, one day, when the Princess had spent the whole forenoon in the kitchen, and turned out the electric lights twice when they wanted them burning, and filled every pan and basin

and dish with her messes, the royal head cook went to the King, and said that, unless the Princess was kept out of the kitchen he should leave “without warning.”

So the law was laid down and the poor little Princess had to submit. She cried one whole day about it, and then she suddenly had an idea that gave her much comfort.

“I will go into the palace library,” she said to herself, “and I will hunt up all the old cookbooks and learn all the nice recipes, then if there should come a revolution, I can try them. Father’s diamonds may be stolen, but no one can steal away what I put into my head.”

So this sensible little Princess now hung around the library just as she had hung around the kitchen, and the whole court was happy over the change, for no one wanted to lose the

royal head cook.

One day, as the Princess was studying a velvet-bound cook-book, she came upon a candy recipe which caught her fancy at once.

"I can almost taste that," she said as she smacked her lips. Then she could think of nothing else but her desire to make it. She dropped the book on the floor, and said to herself, over and over, "Oh, if I only could make that!"

All sorts of schemes went through her head. She thought of selling all her toys, her dogs, her ponies and her clothes and taking the money to buy a little kitchen all of her own. But who would buy her things? The people who would be glad to own them, hadn't the money, and the people who had the money wouldn't want her old things, nor the pets

and animals that were spoiled by her indulgence.

She couldn't go out and rent someone's kitchen, for she was never allowed to go outdoors without the royal head-nurse; and the royal head-nurse always took her two assistants, and each of the two assistants took her two second assistants, and each of the two second assistants took her two pages, and each of the two pages took two lackeys and each of the two lackeys took two "buttons," and each of the two "buttons" took two runners. So how could she wander around through the town with all this train stopping at all the houses to ask, "Have you a kitchen for rent?" But, at last, as a reward for all her thinking, a daring plan came into her mind.

Early the next morning, long before a soul

in the palace was awake, the Princess slipped out of her elegant bed, and, feeling around in the dark, found some of her clothes and got into them as best she could. As she had never dressed herself before in her life, she didn't make a very neat job of it, but that didn't trouble her at all. Then, still in the dark, she hurried down to the kitchen—she knew the way so well.

When she was safely in the dear, delightful room, she turned on the electric lights. She knew more about them than she did about dressing herself. The first thing that caught her eye was a sauce-pan standing on the range, and into this she quickly put the stuff for her candy. When it was all cooked she turned it out on a buttered plate, and then put it in the refrigerator to cool. In a few minutes she took it out and broke off a little piece to eat.



The princess in the library

But, lo! it tasted of chocolate. Now the Princess liked chocolate very much, but she knew she hadn't put any into that candy. She caught up the empty saucepan and looked at it sharply, then she understood. The chocolate for the royal supper the night before had been cooked in that saucepan, and the lazy dishwasher had neglected it and left it standing on the range with the dregs of the chocolate in it.

"Why, it's chocolate candy!" she said to herself, "and none of the books tell about that. I've made a—what is it? Oh I know—a discovery. How fine that is, a discovery by a Princess! But I'll put it back in the refrigerator to get a little harder, then I'll carry it upstairs."

Just as she closed the door of the refrigerator, she heard a footfall on the back stairs. She knew that step, it was the royal head-cook!

Like a flash she went out of the kitchen, but in spite of her quickness, as the royal head-cook came in at the other door he caught a glimpse of her flying white skirts.

“Umph!” he said, “disobeyed the royal command! what kind of a mess has she been making now, I wonder.”

Then he sniffed and sniffed the fragrant air of the room, took up the saucepan and sniffed at that, and finally he opened the door of the refrigerator, then he stopped sniffing and began eating.

“Ah!” he thought, “if I could make such candy as that, I shouldn’t need to work any more, even for a king. I wonder if she’ll tell me how she made it. But,—ah! I know a better way. I’ll take it to my friend the chemist, and he will tell me exactly what is in it. Then, when I put it on the market, the Princess will

never dare tell all she knows about it," and he chuckled softly.

It was not long before everyone was buying and praising the new chocolate candy, and the royal head-cook was no longer a cook, but was rich and famous. He was so false and deceitful that he even allowed the king to knight him for the discovery of chocolate candy.

The poor little princess knew it was her discovery, but she hadn't been taught as you have that half the sting is taken from wrong-doing when we "own up." So she kept still and let the bad cook have all the glory. That was the price she paid for her disobedience.

So just how chocolate candy was discovered has never been revealed until now, and you must remember it is a great secret.

How did I find out about it?

Oh! that's another and still greater secret, and one that I cannot reveal even to you.



A deer looked from the thicket



A beautiful bird on a low limb

ALONE IN THE FOREST



THE way through the woods was long and lonely, besides the young man, who was all alone in the world, was very hungry.

"I have a gun on my shoulder, and some matches in my pocket," was his thought, "and if I see a creature that is good to eat, I will surely shoot it and have a good meal."

Presently, as if in answer to this decision, a large and beautiful bird lit on a low limb a few yards ahead of him. He brought his gun off his shoulder and took aim at the bird, but it sat quite still and seemed to have no thought of danger.

"You are too beautiful to shoot," said the young man aloud. Then he lifted the gun to his shoulder again and stood staring at the bird until, after a few minutes, it flew away.

"I shall surely pass out of the woods before long, and then I may come to a farmhouse where I can buy a good meal," said the young man to himself, consolingly.

He went on a little while, but the woods seemed to grow deeper and thicker, while his hunger every moment grew sharper. Presently a large hare sat up directly in front of him and seemed to ask what he was doing there in the woods.

“Ah!” thought the young man, smacking his lips, “how good you would taste roasted,” and he brought his gun from his shoulder again. As he was about to take aim he saw the rabbit’s mate draw near and she was followed by some little ones.

“If I shoot you,” he said aloud, “then all these others will be lonely.” For the second time he returned his gun to his shoulder and continued his solitary walk, wondering more and more, how much longer he could endure his hunger.

He tried to whistle and then to sing hoping thereby to forget his misery, but it was no use, his dry throat and lips could make no sound. After he had walked on thus silently for a long time, he suddenly saw a pair of large dark eyes gazing at him from a thicket. He stood still for the eyes seemed human, then he noticed the antlers above the eyes and his heart lightened.

"It's a fine fat deer," he thought and he took down his gun. But as he took aim at the animal's forehead, he noticed how sad were the eyes.

"I wonder if you are as sad as I?" was his half spoken thought. "Perhaps you have never been happy, then I must let you live until you have tasted all the joys which a deer's life can give."

So, for the third time, he put up his gun.

It then occurred to him that the day must be drawing near its end.

“I am so tired that I can no longer hurry, and I fear night will overtake me in these deep woods unless I do hurry, so perhaps my best move will be to lie down and rest; when I awake I can go on swiftly, for I am indeed afraid to spend the night in this wild place.”

So as he came at that moment to a smooth, grassy place he lay down with his head pillowled on his arm, and was soon sound asleep.

He knew not how long he slept, but suddenly felt wide awake, for there, directly in front of him, was the beautiful bird that he had seen on the limb.

“You spared my life,” piped the bird, “now make a wish.”

“I wish,” he returned, with the thought of

the black forest in his mind, “for a brave and fearless heart.”

“It is yours,” sang the bird, and spreading its wings it left him.

In another moment the young man saw the hare looking at him.

“You spared my life this afternoon,” said the hare, “what do you wish for most?”

Then the young man, thinking of his lonely life, replied quickly, “I wish for the love of every one whom I love.”

“You have it,” said the hare and he hopped away to the bushes.

The young man had no time to think about the wonderful granting of these two wishes, for at that moment the big, brown deer was bending over him.

“You spared my life,” it cried softly, “now whatever you wish shall be granted.”

Then the young man, noticing the deer's sad eyes answered at once,

"I wish for a merry heart for you and me."

The deer looked at him and the young man was sure that he saw a joyful light in its eyes ere it turned and ran away.

Then the young man sat up and saw to his great surprise a bush quite near, full of ripe fruit, and just behind him he caught the tinkle of a spring.

He ate and drank his fill, and then went joyfully on his way, saying to himself, "I care not whether or not I come out of the woods, since I am never to fear any more, am always to be merry, and when I do meet some people I love they are sure to love me."

So he sang as he trudged along. However, he did come out of the woods very soon, and for the rest of his life he was never afraid, or lonely, or sad.



How I wish you would buy more dishes

LITTLE SHINER



FAR away in the beautiful land of Autobee
there lives a dear little girl who loves to
wash dishes. Indeed she often says to her
mother,

“Oh, how I wish you would buy more dishes, so that I could have lots and lots of them to wash.”

Tell you her name, and her street and number?

No indeed, for, if I should, I know exactly what would happen, everyone would take a trip to Autobee, and some lucky person would pick up this dear child and carry her off and then what would become of her mother’s dishes? I am afraid they would go unwashed a good many times. So instead of telling you her name I will tell you the pretty nickname given to her by her big brother, and of which she is very proud. It is “Little Shiner,” because, said he, “she makes the dishes shine so.”

One morning when she was at work as usual she was astonished to hear a soft voice saying,

“Take care! take care!”

She looked all around, no one was in the kitchen but herself, and the doors and windows were all closed.

“How queer!” she said to herself.

Then in a minute or so, she heard the soft voice again saying,

“Take care! take care!”

“Why, it seems to come from the dishpan,” she said. She looked down at the beautiful china pitcher which she was washing.

“This pitcher has a bad crack in its side,” she said half-aloud.

Then straightway she heard the soft voice again,

“Take care! take care!”

“Oh it’s you is it, telling me to take care?” she said to the pitcher. “Every time I wash the dishes mother says to be careful of the pink china pitcher, so you needn’t be afraid that I’m going to break you.”

“Of course not,” retorted the pitcher scornfully. “If you were to knock me onto the floor this very minute and break me into a thousand pieces you’d say I broke myself. That’s the way with you humans, you never want to be blamed for the bad things you do, yet you want praise for all your good deeds. That sort of shirking is all right for kings and queens, but it will not do for everyday common people like you.”

“Umph,” said Little Shiner, “what do you mean by talking about kings and queens? I

don't believe you ever saw either one in your life."

"Did not? Well now, let me tell you, I was a king myself once."

"Oh dear me," said Little Shiner, "how very funny!" and she began to laugh heartily. "I don't believe you know what you are talking about."

"Indeed I do," said the pitcher firmly, "for I tell you I was the king of the sideboard, until I got this ugly crack in my side."

Little Shiner took the pitcher very carefully in her hand as she asked,

"Wouldn't they let you be king any longer just because you got hurt? That isn't fair."

"No, but your mother said I was only a poor old cracked thing now, and I might as well be

used as long as I lasted, so I haven't been near the sideboard for weeks and weeks. I am stuck off in the pantry or the refrigerator, and even when I get into the dining room, the coffee-urn, or some such high-headed thing is put right between me and the sideboard."

"Well," said Little Shiner sympathetically, "I am very sorry indeed for you, and maybe I can get you put back on the sideboard. Do you think they would let you be king again, if I should?"

"Of course, they couldn't help themselves, but your mother will never let me be put back on the sideboard as long as I have this crack, and it cannot be mended."

"How do you know she won't? I think she will if I ask her. I guess you don't know more about my mother than I do."

"No, no," said the little pitcher with a side-splitting sigh, "I seem to feel the crack in my side widening now, and as soon as I am unable to hold cream I know I shall come to the rubbish heap."

Little Shiner took the pitcher up, washed and dried it carefully, then carried it to the dining room and stood it on the sideboard. She looked at it a moment, and it seemed to her that the flowers on its side were nodding at her.

When she had finished her dishes she went to her mother.

"Mother," she said, "please do not use the pink china pitcher any more, it is cracked so badly that every time I wash it, I am afraid it will come to pieces."

"What is it good for, little daughter, if we cannot use it?"

"It is so beautiful, and isn't it nice to have some things around that are just pretty to look at, even though they are not useful?"

"Perhaps," said the mother with a smile.

So now the pink china pitcher stays on the sideboard, but, would you believe it, it has never spoken to little Shiner since that day.

I call that ingratitude, don't you?



COZY-CORNER TALES



ILLUSTRATED BY J. T. COCHRAN

BOOK TWO



Shut in Behind the Walls

COZY CORNER STORIES



THE BIRD IN THE WELL

ONCE upon a time, in a certain town in a far-away land, there was a deep well, of which it was said that at long intervals of time, a beautiful bird flew from it and bestowed a wish upon the person who drew the first bucket of water in the morning.

Of course, there were plenty of people who declared that this was only a cunning device to coax the lazy villagers out of their beds, and as time went on, this belief grew stronger and stronger, until at last the only people who had any faith left in the tradition were the very old and the very young.

Among those who believed that the beautiful bird was still waiting in the well's cool dark depths was little Marion Lee, the wildest and naughtiest child in the town. In school she was always at the foot of her class; at home her work was never done, and her poor aunt with whom she lived, and who understood little about children, was driven almost wild by Marion's naughty pranks.

In short, there was not a place in all the

town where Marion's coming was welcomed, or her going mourned. The child, like many older people, blamed everyone but herself for the ill-will shown her, and so she grew to long, with all her heart, for the bird in the well to come and grant her just one wish. On this wish she pondered day and night, and often when she had been having an especially unhappy time, she would say it over and over to herself:

“I want to be handsomer, richer and smarter than anyone else in this whole town.”

It was one of Marion's duties to go every morning to this well after water, and as she always rose early, because her aunt made her go to bed almost as soon as the sun did. She might easily have been first at the well every morning, but she was a sad loiterer, and stopped to pluck

every flower that she saw, and to examine every curious insect that crossed her path. She always found when she came to the well, that someone else had been there before her. But she would console herself when she found that the beautiful bird had not appeared and would promise herself to be first on the morrow.

So it went on through many morrows, until at last, there came an unusually dark day for even Marion Lee, she had been saucy, mischievous and disobedient, and at last her aunt sent her off to bed with a soundly boxed pair of ears. The poor child's sleep was neither sound nor sweet that night, and she was out of bed and on her way to the well while a few faint morning stars were still shining.

Her heart was so heavy that she had no eyes

for the dew-drops on the grass, or the flowers by the way-side. A merry cat-bird caroled to her from a tree nearby, but she did not, as she would once have done, stand entranced beneath him, and listen to his song. A gay butterfly fluttered from a weed, shaken by her skirt, but she did not even glance at it.

There was but one thought present with her, and nothing could allure her from her purpose to be first at the well, and she said to herself as she ran along swinging her pail angrily:

“If I can only get my one wish I will pay off finely all these bad, bad people.”

When she came near the well she saw that no one else was there, and as there was no water dripping from the edges of the brown old bucket, it was evident that it had been dry for many hours.

At last she was first at the well! She pressed forward joyfully, and, out of pure curiosity, lifted her eyes to see if anyone else were coming. Down the slope, just a few yards away, was a little girl about her own size, toiling painfully along on a crutch. Marion dropped to her side the hand she was about to lay on the old windlass, and watched the child's slow progress.

The child's eyes were cast down and she did not see Marion until she had almost reached the well, then she looked up, gave a little cry of disappointment, and dropped upon the ground weeping bitterly.

"Come," cried Marion, running toward her and picking up her crutch, "don't cry, I haven't touched the windlass yet. Hurry, for I see some people coming, get up and take hold of the windlass."

“Oh,” said the child, still sobbing, “but I wasn’t here first; it belongs to you, and I did want the bird to come and give me my wish. I do so much want my lame foot cured.”

“No matter about me,” said Marion, “though I have lots of trouble, I’m not lame, and I can run faster some other morning.”

“But if the bird comes to me this morning, it will be a long time, maybe, before it will come again,” objected the child, as she pulled herself up by Marion’s hand.

“No matter,” cried Marion, “here, put your hand on the windlass,” and she took the slim little hand and laid it on the well-worn handle. Down, down into the mysterious depths went the bucket, and the two children stood with eager faces waiting for it to fill, then the rope

straightened, and the lame girl, steadyng herself on her crutch, began to turn the heavy windlass.

Suddenly there was a swish, and something alive and shining darted out of the well and dropped on Marion's shoulder; she heard a few whispered words, there came again that mysterious swish, and she turned around to find the lame child gazing at the sky with a smiling face.

"So beautiful, so beautiful!" she whispered, as she clasped and unclasped her trembling hands. "It flew up there, but it came to you and not to me, and neither of us had time to wish."

Marion was silent, she was thinking of the words whispered in her ear:

"You have sacrificed yourself for another, and now, as long as you live, every human being



Suddenly There Was a Swish

you meet shall speak kindly to you. This is my gift to you."

When she reached home her aunt was standing in the doorway. She smiled at Marion when she came through the gateway and said tenderly,

"You dear child, to go so early after the water. And now, will you feed the chickens for auntie?"

Marion could hardly believe her ears, but she ran to get the meal-pan and the chickens were fed in a very few minutes. As she was returning to the house, a man passed by whose cows she had clubbed and chased only the day before.

"Good morning, Marion," he said kindly, "what a smart little girl you are to be out so early! You must come over to see my Jennie today."

Marion could hardly move or speak, she was so astonished, but she gave the man a bright smile, which caused him to say:

“What a beautiful child that Marion Lee is, after all.”

When she reached the school house it was just the same ; the children came running to meet her, and the teacher said, as she came into the schoolroom :

“Ah, here is my dear little Marion, she’s going to have perfect lessons today, I know by the look in her eyes.”

“The whole world is changed,” said Marion to herself.

And, of course, as you will readily imagine, Marion changed too, for how could she be cross, and idle and stupid, when everyone was telling

her how kind, and studious and bright she was.

So, in her heart, she thanked the bird in the well that instead of granting her selfish and wicked wish, it had given her this other and far greater gift.





One of the King's Spies

THE KING, THE EGGS AND CHIMPANZEES

ONCE upon a time a wicked king reigned over the land of Nowa. It was a well-known fact that if any of his servants displeased him ever so slightly, off went the offender's head. So the only way in which this bad king could get

people to keep his palace in order was by sending armed men out to bring him anyone of whose good work he chanced to hear. For this reason, people in that land who were skillful in any line took great pains to keep the fact quiet, instead of having it put in the papers as is the fashion everywhere these days. But the king kept spies out all over the land, so by this means he found out very quickly whenever anyone excelled in any art or industry.

He had secured his cook in this very way. His spies had brought him word that there was in a certain part of his kingdom a man cook who made the best cream pies in the world. That was enough, and the cook had to come to the palace kitchen much against his will. He had tried so hard to keep the fame of his pies from spreading abroad, but a thing like that, "the

best cream pies in the world," was bound to be known, sooner or later.

Matters went along very smoothly for a while and the cook was beginning to feel quite secure in his position, when, one morning, the king ordered soft-boiled eggs for his breakfast. They were sent up to the king's room, for he was as lazy as he was wicked, and he had never been known to leave his bed until high noon. The attendant arranged the liberal breakfast while the king looked on smiling until the shell of the first egg was broken, then how he did rage! True, the egg was soft, but it was not soft enough. The second egg was broken and it was just like the first one. Then the king sent one of his pages in great haste to summon the cook. When the cook came into the king's presence

his teeth chattered so hard that the sound was almost like hail stones falling on the roof.

As soon as the king saw the cook, he called out fiercely:

“Take that egg and boil it soft!”

“But, your majesty,” pleaded the trembling cook, “don’t you know—”

“I know,” roared the king, angrier than ever, “that if you don’t get that egg soft enough to suit me within half an hour, off goes your head.”

“But—it’s s-o-s-soft now,” stammered the cook.

“I want it softer, do you hear? Boil it soft, and then boil it softer, and now be off.”

The king, you see, didn’t know anything about cooking eggs, because they didn’t teach



"But, Your Majesty—" Pleaded the Cook

domestic science in the schools of Nowa. If they had, although the king had never gone to school when he could possibly think of anywhere else to go, he might have learned enough knowledge to understand that cooking eggs was quite different from cooking potatoes.

The frightened cook had stumbled out of the king's presence so hurriedly that he had left the unbroken egg lying on the king's plate, so a page was ordered to carry it down to the kitchen and to stay there and see that the cook didn't boil any other egg but that very one. When this message was duly delivered, the cook dropped into a chair and holding his face in his hands he sobbed out, "I am just as good as dead, and what will become of my wife and seven children?"

The page who was a kind-hearted lad, said, "Come, come, don't despair."



"What will become of my wife and seven children?"

"I see you don't know any more about cooking than the king does, if you think there is any way out of this trouble," said the cook between his sobs.

Then the page threw the egg, which he still carried, into the fire, and said:

"I see a whole basket full of eggs exactly like this one on the table, come cheer up and cook one 'just right' for the king."

“Ah, but still you don’t understand,” was the cook’s mournful response, “I cooked those eggs by that little minute glass on the table, I have no other rule to go by, so there is no hope,” and again his loud sobbing was heard.

“But listen,” exclaimed the page, “I have a plan, my grandmother is a cook over in the country next to this. She always has things just right, but don’t let the king hear of it. I’ll put on my wings and fly over there. She will give me her rule for cooking eggs just soft enough, and I’ll be back in a hurry, the king will not miss me, for he told me to stay here and watch you cook the egg, and I mean to do it. So cheer up and have some water very hot by the time I come back again.”

Then the cook with a new hope in his heart,

wiped his eyes, mended the fire and put some water on to boil. By the time the water was hot the page rushed into the kitchen and without waiting to be questioned he said:

“Put the eggs into boiling water, then count this way, not too fast, you know, one chimpanzee, two chimpanzees, three chimpanzees, four chimpanzees, five chimpanzees up to one hundred and eighty, then take the egg out and send it quickly to the king.”

The cook followed his instructions and he was so delighted with the prospect of his success that he soon began to count aloud, the kitchen window was open and, it so happened that just as he said “ninety-eight chimpanzees. ninety-nine chimpanzees, one hundred chimpanzees, one of the king’s spies passed the window and heard the words. Without waiting for

a moment's investigation he rushed in upon the king exclaiming:

“O, your majesty, there are one hundred chimpanzees down in the kitchen this very minute!”

“What if there are?” roared the king impatiently, “what are chimpanzees anyway, are they good to eat?”

“They are immense monkeys,” was the reply.

“What,” shrieked the king, “do you mean those hideous creatures of which I have seen pictures and which I have always called chimpunzees?”

“Chimpunzees or chimpanzees,” retorted the spy impatiently, “there are a hundred of them in the kitchen this moment, for I heard the

cook counting them. He no doubt intends bringing them up here to destroy your majesty."

"Chimpanzees, chimpanzees, chimpanzees!" screamed the king louder and louder, running wildly around the room. And just as he said it for the twentieth time he tumbled over in a fit, and in a few moments he was dead.

The king and spy were alone in the room so no one knew about the chimpanzees but the spy, and he was too frightened to tell of his part in the king's death, so when the doctors gave the cause of it a long medical name there was no one to dispute them. The spy had to leave the palace at once, for the good queen who succeeded the wicked king, had no use for such creatures. So for the rest of his life the spy was never perfectly happy, because one question was forever tan-

talizing him, "What ever became of all those chimpanzees in the kitchen of the palace?"

You see, if he had only delayed his tale-bearing just long enough to gaze in at the kitchen window what a lot of trouble might have been saved all around.

How about the egg? O, that was done "just right," the cook ate it for his dinner, it was so good, and he was such a kind, forgiving fellow that he was really sorry the king was not there to eat it himself.





To see the hat go sailing

MR. PHUNNYMAN

Once there was a little boy who laughed so seldom, and cried so often that he had been given the nickname of “Dumps.”

Of course I know that this is not at all a pretty name, but he so richly deserved it that it clung to him, and after a while, even his mother almost forgot he had any other name.

But, one day something happened to him. He was lying in the hammock under the beautiful elm tree, screaming with all his might, when

he suddenly saw a little, old man sitting at the foot of the hammock.

“Hallo,” said the little, old man, “do you know me?”

Then this naughty little boy stopped screeching long enough to say, “No, and I don’t know that I want to,” and then he began screeching again harder than ever.

At this, the queer visitor twisted up his funny, little, fat face and laughed so loudly that “Dumps” stopped crying, in sheer surprise.

“You’re not a bad looking chap when your face is straight,” said the old man.

This seemed to remind “Dumps” of his wrongs, for the screeching at once began again. Then the laughing began also.

“What are you laughing at?” asked

"Dumps," "I'm sure I don't see anything funny."

"I'm laughing," was the answer, "because laughing is better than crying any day, besides it's the funniest thing I ever saw to see a great big boy like you lie right here in the hammock, and hold out his cookie, so that a smart dog could come along and gobble it up. Ho, ho, ho! funniest thing I ever saw, dog smarter than a boy who goes to school and reads in the third reader," and the little, old man doubled himself all up with laughter.

Now this was the very thing about which "Dumps" had been crying, but the little old man twisted his face into such funny wrinkles, and doubled his fat little body into such odd shapes, that before "Dumps" knew it he was laughing with all his might.

“There now, that is better. You see I am Mr. Phunnyman, and I teach people that laughing is better than crying. After I have made a visit to anyone, he or she can always see the funny side of things.”

“But,” said “Dumps” almost ready to cry again, “suppose there is no funny side?”

“Of course I have no power over things of that kind, but I tell you, my boy, their number is very small, what is more, the habit of laughing at the small troubles of life will help you to bear the large ones.”

“Dumps” was sitting up in the hammock watching the old man very eagerly, and just at this moment, the May breeze caught up his straw hat, mistaking it no doubt for some sort of gigantic apple blossom, and away it went over the fence and far down the road.

At any other time, how “Dumps” would

have screamed over this, but the little man laughed to see the hat go sailing and whirling away, and so "Dumps" began to laugh too.

"There," said the little man checking himself, "Now you'll do, you have laughed twice within five minutes, and I don't believe you will ever bawl again like a great calf, but if you ever should forget yourself, I'll come again, and then I shall keep you laughing three days and three nights, without giving you time to either eat or sleep, so look out," and turning a somersault the queer little visitor landed on the ground.

Dumps made a quick jump to catch him, but he was gone, and the only thing that was left to remind him that Mr. Phunnyman had been there, was his own straw hat lying beside the road several rods away.

“How he did laugh to see it go,” said “Dumps” to himself, and he laughed aloud again, as he thought about it while going down the road after it. When he came back to the house his mother sat on the porch, and he told her at once about Mr. Phunnyman.

“It was a dream,” his mother said, “you cried yourself to sleep over losing your cookie and then you dreamed it.”

“No, no,” insisted the boy, “I saw him just as plainly as I see you this minute.”

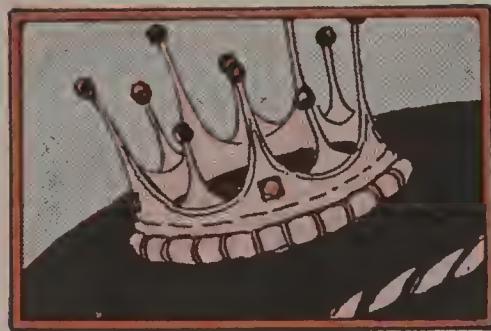
To this opinion he clung firmly, and the family found it impossible to talk him out of the notion. But whether it was a dream or not, from that summer day, he never again cried out aloud, no matter what happened.

“It is just as easy,” he told his sister, “when



“‘Mr. Phunnyman, Mr. Phunnyman,’ as fast as I can—”

you make up your mind to it. I don’t want to laugh three days on a stretch, without either eating or sleeping, so whenever I feel like screaming I just say ‘Mr. Phunnyman, Mr. Phunnyman,’ as fast as I can, and then I don’t scream.” So, “Dumps” lost his ugly nickname.



THE LITTLE KING WHO WAS NOT CLEVER

IN a long ago time, in a far-away land, a little child was made king. He did not like the pomp and ceremony, indeed, when he was put into the great coronation chair, and the heavy jeweled crown was placed on his head he put up his pretty red lips and would have cried outright if the Lord High Chamberlain had not whispered a few comforting words in his ear.

When all the fuss and display were over, things were a little easier for the small king. To be sure, there were lessons to be learned, and many tiresome court rules to be followed every day. But whenever the child king rebelled, the Lord High Chamberlain would say to him with a sly twinkle in his eye,

“Perhaps you would like to be crowned again.”

Then the poor poor boy would give up and be as good and obedient as anyone could wish.

Of course so young a king cannot govern a country, so they appointed what is called a “King Regent,” who was to govern until the real king was twenty-one years old. The man who was made king regent was uncle to the boy king, and if it had not been for this one small person, he would have been ruler of the king-

dom all his life, instead of only a few short years, so, for this reason, I am sorry to say, the king regent did not love the boy king. In fact, he had tried to keep people from crowning the king by telling, far and wide, that he was a poor little idiot. But the Lord High Chamberlain was a very good man, and he took great pains to contradict the stories told by the king regent, and thus he succeeded in quieting the people, so that they were both willing and glad to have him crowned.

Now, the truth about the little king was that, although he was by no means an idiot, he was not at all a clever child. But the Lord High Chamberlain, who knew the history of the world, was well aware of the fact that kings and queens are not always clever people. "They

often have very poor minds," he said to himself. So he believed this little boy would do very well for a king, if carefully brought up and properly educated.

One day, when his visit to the king's chambers lasted longer than usual, he discovered a fact that had long been known to the immediate attendants, the king could not tell his left hand from his right! The Lord High Chamberlain spent nearly an hour trying to teach him the difference between his right and left hand. He worked with him patiently, until at last, the king became very angry and exclaimed,

"What is the use of being king if I must bother to know my right hand from my left just like other people?"

Then a great fear struck the heart of the

Lord High Chamberlain. He called the attendants aside and said to them,

“Keep this matter very quiet, if the regent finds out that the king can not tell his right hand from his left hand, he will publish the fact abroad as a proof that the poor little king is not bright.”

So they promised secrecy, and the Lord High Chamberlain went away alone to think the matter over. The next day he had a long interview with the king regent. No one ever found out all that was said at this interview, but the Lord High Chamberlain was a very keen man, and very skillful in bending other people to his will.

The following day things began to happen. You understand, of course, that those old

days were very different from the days in which we are now living.

There were no railroads, no telephones, or telegrams, no typewriters, and no air-ships or radio messages. So that news was carried around the world very seldom, but when it did have to go, which was sometimes the case, it was transported very slowly and laboriously.

However, there were many scribes in the palace, and very early the next morning they were all hard at work with strong quill pens, copying on heavy paper these words,

“The King Regent announces, with the authority of the Lord High Chamberlain, the prime minister and other members of the royal cabinet, that to every man, woman and child who can show themselves to be ambi-dextrous,

that is, to be able to use the left hand for all purposes, as well as the right one, an annual pension of one hundred golden ducats will be paid. There is also offered by the same high authorities, a prize of one thousand ducats for the invention of any sort of handcovering which will fit either hand with equal ease."

When as many of these proclamations were copied as the Lord High Chamberlain thought necessary there was a great commotion in the palace yard. The horses were brought out and made ready, with many fine trappings, for mounting by the king's heralds to carry these two proclamations to every corner of the kingdom.

As the company of Heralds went galloping out of the palace yard, blowing their trumpets



As the Lord High Chamberlain thought necessary—

with all their might and main, the Lord High Chamberlain looked after them with a happy light in his eyes.

“Now,” he thought wisely, “in case the little king’s defect is discovered it will not be at all noticeable, since there will be hundreds of others in the same situation. If he should be able after a while to overcome his helplessness then we can revoke the pensions, meanwhile it will do no harm, but may be a great help to some poor people.”

So the days went by, until one morning, some two or three months after the proclamation of the pensions and the prize, a tall, motherly, middle-aged woman rang at the palace gate and asked to see the “great head-keeper of the royal household appurtenances.”

She was given a seat in the hall, for she had a long time to wait, the doorkeeper had to tell the page, and the page had to tell the messenger boy, and the messenger boy had to tell the keeper of the royal halls, and the keeper of the royal halls had to tell the keeper of the royal rooms, and the keeper of the royal rooms had to tell the assistant keeper of the royal household appurtenances, and the assistant keeper of the royal household appurtenances had to tell the great head keeper of the royal household appurtenances, himself.

So, when word came, at last, to the waiting woman that the great dignitary would see her, she had to be passed along by all these people just like an advertising card. She was very tired when she at last came into the presence of

the great head keeper of the royal household appurtenances, but she found her tongue at once, and told him that she wanted to be hired to assist in caring for the royal household appurtenances. He said, at first, that he didn't need any more help, but when he looked her over more carefully he was so much pleased with her general appearance that he began to consider the matter, and asked to see her testimonials, if she had any. These were so excellent that he finally hired her on the spot.

A few days after this, as the new helper, who called herself Mother Margaret, was passing through the hall, she heard loud cries and screams in the kitchen. She ran there with all speed and found the head master of the royal bath dancing around on one foot and holding

up the other, which was steaming and dripping with water. There were several servants in the room, but each one was poring over a big book of court rules, in order to find out whose business it was to help the head-master of the royal bath in case of accident. Mother Margaret paid no attention to them, but quickly bade the head-master of the royal bath sit in the nearest chair. He did so, and when Mother Margaret had, very tenderly and skillfully, drawn off the embroidered slipper and the dainty silk sock, she applied a simple remedy to the hurt foot which at once stopped the pain. She then bound it up in soft cloths and, bidding the head-master of the royal bath lean on her shoulder, she led him up stairs to his own cozy room.

While all this was going on the servants in

the kitchen had their noses buried so deeply in the big books of court rules that they were practically deaf and blind to their surroundings.

When they, at last, had succeeded in figuring the thing all out and sent, by the proper servant for the proper nurse, and they had arrived in the proper carriages, drawn by the proper horses, the head master of the royal bath was asleep with his foot on a satin cushion.

From that hour the head master of the royal bath and good Mother Margaret were firm friends. One day she told him in confidence that she had come to the palace to work, because she hoped to get a chance to talk to the Lord High Chamberlain, “But,” she added, with almost a sob, “as yet, I have not even seen him.”

“And why do you wish to talk with him, good Mother Margaret?” asked the head master of the royal bath.

“Because,” was the reply, “I have heard that he is the most powerful man in the kingdom.”

“Ah,” he said, “I perceive you have some favor to ask of him?”

“Yes,” was the answer, “you have guessed right. My son is the proprietor of the largest glove factory in the kingdom, and has been very prosperous. But when the prize was offered for the invention of a covering which will fit either hand, my son’s foreman invented a thing called a ‘mitten.’ It has no fingers, only a thumb, so that it can be worn either side up, and I must admit is both comfortable and convenient. The

man has a large factory of his own and is making mittens in vast quantities, consequently there is no more sale for gloves, and my son is nearly bankrupt. If I could see the Lord High Chamberlain, perhaps I could induce him to forbid the manufacture of mittens. The inventor of them has had the prize money and it seems to me that he ought to be satisfied with that. If the mittens are no longer manufactured, my son's business will return to him and all will be well with us."

The head master of the royal bath at this shook his head and looked very grave.

"It is no use for you to hope for that, dear Mother Margaret," he said sadly. "I may as well tell you at once, frankly that nothing you, or anyone else, could possibly say to the Lord

High Chamberlain would induce him to repeal the law of pensions for ambi-dextrous people, or to forbid the manufacture of the mittens which will fit either hand, the whole of that right and left hand business is very dear to him, and he is prouder of it than he is of being Lord High Chamberlain.

“Well, I must say, he shows very poor taste,” exclaimed Mother Margaret scornfully.

The head Master of the Royal Wardrobe sat for a few moments in a deep brown study, and seemed to be weighing some important matter very carefully, then he said with a bright and winning smile,

“Mother Margaret, I’ll tell you about the whole of this queer business, of course it is a state secret but I know I can rely upon you not to betray it.”

“Yes indeed,” said Mother Margaret, “because even if I were not disposed to be true and honest with you, it would be for my own interest to keep quiet about it, therefore please go on and let me know all about the matter.”

Then he told her of the little king’s difficulty which had caused the sending out of the queer proclamation, and he closed with these words,

“So you see, good Mother Margaret, the only one who can help you is the little king himself. If you could, in some way, I don’t know how, but that you’ll have to manage for yourself, cause him to acquire the little trick which all the rest of us have failed to teach, we should probably hear no more about this foolish ‘ambidexterity,’ the craze for mittens would be

over, gloves would again be fashionable, and so your son's business would again be prosperous."

"But," said Mother Margaret, with something very like a sob, "how can I hope to teach the king which is his right hand when I never even see him?"

"Well!" said the head Master of the Royal Wardrobe, "that is the easiest thing in the world to arrange. I hereby and now make you mistress of the royal ambrosials. This, in plain English, means that you are to look after the king's hair. We give it this high-sounding name, because the king's hair is supposed to be sweet like ambrosia, do you understand?"

Mother Margaret nodded and said,

"Yes, indeed, I like that!"

“So you see, looking after the king’s hair will bring you often in his company alone, and give you every opportunity to instruct him.”

“But,” said the good woman, trembling with joy at this great and unlooked for good fortune, “how am I to teach the king this important piece of knowledge, when he hears so much talk about ambidexterity?”

“Never mind!” said the head Master of the Royal Wardrobe with a hearty laugh, “He knows nothing about all that, don’t you understand that is just to blind the king regent, who is always setting up the members of the royal household to spy upon the personal habits of the little king. The Lord High Chamberlain thought that if everybody in the whole kingdom used the left hand as well as the right, no one

would notice the king's inability to distinguish between the two. You see, the king regent is doing his best to show that the king is feeble-minded, while the Lord High Chamberlain is doing his best to prove that he is not. And all the royal household, with one or two exceptions, is working against the king regent. So you will see, dear Mother Margaret, that you are helping along a good cause. If you can manage to be alone with the king a little while every day no one will know of your attempts, and, even if you are successful, it must be attributed to the little king's own cleverness."

Good Mother Margaret began her new duties at once, and the poor little king, who had neither mother, sister, aunt nor grandmother, and whose attendants were all men, was sur-

prised and delighted to find how tender and loving a woman's hands could be. It soon came to be a common saying about the palace that no one could do things to suit the king so well as the mistress of the Royal Ambrosials. So the days wore on, and every hour the king was growing more and more fond of good Mother Margaret.

At last one day when they were alone together, she tried to teach him the long-desired accomplishment, the lack of which had caused so many wide-spread changes and brought, to her family, at least, such sad results. But all in vain, the child tried hard to grasp the impossible fact that one of his hands was right and the other, as he expressed it, "all wrong."

Perhaps you can understand how sorry

Mother Margaret felt. She used every device she had ever heard of, yet it seemed impossible for the child king to remember just which one of his little fat hands was the right one.

“What shall I do? What shall I do?” she said to herself over and over again. “If I cannot make him see the difference between his left hand and his right one I may as well return to my home. After all, I can see that it was a wild and foolish scheme for me to think that I could come here and have any influence on the Lord High Chamberlain. If it hadn’t been for the wonderful stories I had heard of his kindness and sympathy I never should have had the courage to make the attempt.”

While she was indulging in these sad and useless reflections, her eyes were on the little

king and his incessant motions, for he was a busy little fellow. He was continually running back and forth, in and out of the adjoining room, where all his playthings were kept. On either side of the door was a large statue, one was that of a sailor in uniform, the other a soldier, also in uniform. The statues were painted appropriately and were very striking in appearance. Suddenly the thought came to her, "Why not make use of the king's restlessness to help him learn this difficult lesson?" Her thoughts of failure flew away, and she said to herself, "I will try once more." Then she called the little king to her and said,

"Now, when you go into your playroom from this room, your right hand is the one next to the sailor, when you come back to this

room your right hand will be next to the soldier."

"Oh!" he said, with a shout of joy, "it's just like a funny game, it will be the same hand all the time."

"Yes," she said, "so it will, now run into the playroom and when you go through the door hold up your right hand." This was done at once. "Now," she ordered, "come back to me and hold up your right hand again." He repeated the action promptly, laughing heartily, and Mother Margaret continued sending him back and forth, and great indeed was his enjoyment of the pastime, because, as he said, "It was the right hand every time."

Mother Margaret drew a long sigh of relief, her troubles seemed over.

While the merry game was still going on the Lord High Chamberlain was ushered in and the child ran up to him at once, they were very fond of each other, and held out his right hand. The Lord High Chamberlain gathered him up in his arms at once and hugged him for very joy.

“Why, the thing is done,” he said, “how ever did you manage it, Mother Margaret?”

“Kindness and perseverance,” the good woman said modestly.

The very next morning the heralds were sent out with a new proclamation which read in this wise,

“Since no one has yet been able to show that he has become perfectly ambidextrous, and as there seems to be a danger that many chil-



"Your right hand is next to the sailor—"

dren, through these efforts, may become left-handed, and as one so affected is bound to be handicapped all through life, the offer pertaining to ambidexterity is hereby revoked."

When Mother Margaret was told about this proclamation she was very happy indeed and she decided that, after waiting a week or two, to be sure that the little king would not forget all about the distinction between his right hand and his left, she would try to persuade the Lord High Chamberlain, whom she now saw every day, to forbid the manufacture of the mittens.

For a few days everything went on finely, the little king made no mistakes about his right hand and seemed never to tire of playing what he called his "soldier and sailor game."

Then, one day, three women came in, laden with brooms, dust-pans, mops, dust-cloths, etc.

Mother Margaret knew their errand instantly, and taking the little king by the hand, they went into the garden to spend the time of house cleaning.

They were gone two or three hours, and when they returned to the rooms everything was beautifully sweet and clean. A new book was lying on one of the tables, and for a long time, the king was very happy over its pictures, then he picked it up and carried it into the playroom to put it with his other books, for although he was a king, he had been taught to keep things in their proper places, a rule which kings need quite as much as common people. It was large and he was obliged to carry it with both hands.

When he returned he was trundling a little wagon and was pulling it with his left hand.

“Oh!” exclaimed Mother Margaret, “what is your majesty doing? Is that your right hand?”

The little fellow looked up bewildered, and then cried out, with a burst of tears,

“I don’t know, they’ve taken away my soldier and my sailor.”

Can you imagine Mother Margaret’s feelings? She was almost ready to weep with the broken-hearted little king. But, instead, she controlled her feelings, took him up in her arms and soothed him with loving words. Soon his sobs ceased and he went to sleep with his head on her comfortable bosom. She was still holding him when the nurse came in with a bowl of

bread and milk for his supper, who when she saw the king's position, set down the milk, tenderly undressed him, put on his long silk night-robe, laid him in his downy bed behind his pink silk embroidered curtains, and left him sound asleep.

But sad Mother Margaret! There was no joy for her, her problem again faced her, and all the night long she heard all the palace clocks striking the hours. Then suddenly, just as the dawn shone faintly through the East window a new thought came to her. She sat straight up in bed and said half aloud, "Why, of course, how stupid of me not to think of that long ago."

Then she dropped her head down on the pillow again, and in two minutes was sound asleep.

When she awoke the sun was streaming in the east windows, glorifying the beautiful furnishings of her bedroom.

She was out of bed with a bound, and going to her dresser drawer she took out a little old box, worn and battered with long years of use, handling this box with careful fingers of love, she drew out a small gold ring, which she slipped on her little finger as far as the first joint.

“It will just about fit him, I think, but can I do it? Can I give this ring, which has been my dearest and best treasure for so many years, to him who has everything? To him who, if he so wished, might cover his fingers with the choicest and best rings in the land?”

Over and over again these thoughts went quickly through her mind, while she was making her usual morning toilet.

As soon as Mother Margaret was again alone with the child king, she said to him, in her most loving tone,

“Your majesty, I would like to give you something to remember me by, if you will wear it.”

“I will wear anything you will give me,” he replied, cuddling up to her lovingly, “but I don’t need anything to make me remember you, for I’m sure I’ll never forget you, if I live to be an old, old man, as old as the Lord High Chamberlain.”

(He, by the way, was about forty years of age.)

Then Mother Margaret took from her bosom, a little roll of white paper and brought out of it a shining gold ring. This she slipped

on the ring finger of the king's right hand, and it fitted as if it had been made for that very place.

"Oh, how pretty!" exclaimed the king, "where did you get it? I didn't know you had been to the city to buy anything."

"I haven't," said Mother Margaret, "it is a ring which my beloved father gave to me when I was no bigger than you, and I have kept it all these years, I think I must have been saving it for you."

"It's so pretty!" said the little fellow, spreading out his chubby fingers and gazing at the ring admiringly.

"And you must never take it off," said Mother Margaret, "if you should, it might get lost and that would be dreadful."

Then a new thought came to her and she said,

“I will wish it on to you,” she drew it off, and slipped it back on his finger, saying as she did so,

“I wish your majesty may grow up to be the wisest king in the world, who will do so many kind things for his subjects that they will love him more than any king was ever loved before. “Now,” she added, very seriously, “you must not take the ring off, nor allow any one else to do so, if you do, the wish will never come true.”

The little king looked at the ring a long time and seemed to be thinking the matter over very seriously, then he surprised good Mother Margaret by saying suddenly,

“Why, it is on my right hand, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” replied the good woman, almost speechless with joy, “it is, but how did you know?”

“I can’t tell,” said the king, “but I just know, and now, I never can forget again, can I?” he added.

“I don’t see how you can,” was Mother Margaret’s joyful answer.

His majesty was so happy in the possession of the ring that he seemed to forget all about the absence of the soldier and the sailor, and when they were brought back later in the day by the women who had taken them away to wash them, he did not even notice their return.

When the Lord High Chamberlain ap-

peared late in the afternoon, according to his custom, the little king ran up to him and held out his right hand.

"Oh," he was asked, "why does your majesty give me that hand?"

"Because," said the boy, laughing, "it is the right hand, the other is the wrong one, and so it is left over hanging at my side."

"Oh!" exclaimed the Lord High Chamberlain, shouting and laughing for joy, "talk about 'non compos mentis,' nothing of that here."

Good Mother Margaret did not understand at all what he meant, but she felt sure it must be something good, so she laughed with him.

Then he asked, "Where did you get your pretty ring?"

“Mother Margaret gave it to me,” was the answer, “so that I will always remember her, and it was her’s when she was little like me, and it must not be taken off because it was wished on with a great big wish.”

“Ah!” said the Lord High Chamberlain, looking at Mother Margaret with an understanding smile, “I think it will be very fitting for you to give Mother Margaret a ring, what do you think about it?”

“I should love that,” he answered, jumping up and down.

“Very well, I will bring you one in the morning and you can put it on her finger yourself.”

“And will she wear it on her right hand?” asked the king eagerly.

"I think she will, if you ask her to," returned the Lord High Chamberlain, as he looked at Mother Margaret with a twinkle in his eye and walked out of the room.

Mother Margaret, however, did not intend to let the Lord High Chamberlain escape in that way, so she immediately followed into the corridor and called out anxiously,

"Oh, sir, please let me speak to you just a few moments!"

"Yes, yes," he replied, turning around and retracing his steps, "talk to me just as long as you want to, I never can tell you how grateful I feel to you, for you have saved us a world of trouble. If you have any request to make, let me know it and, I can truthfully say to you that it is granted even before you ask it."

Then Mother Margaret told him freely all her troubles, and also gave him her reasons for coming to the palace to work.

When she had finished her story he shook his head very gravely as he said,

“No, I do not think it would be right to stop the man making mittens, doubtless there will be always people who will want mittens instead of gloves, and since he has started the fashion, I think he should be allowed to continue their manufacture. But this is what I will do for you, send word to your son to meet me here tomorrow morning at ten o’clock, I will find out exactly the sort of work he likes best and I will see that he has just what he wants to do right here in the palace, at a good round

salary, for the rest of his life. And now, dear Mother Margaret, there is one thing I must ask of you, tell me, if you will, how you happened to think of so simple a way of teaching the king to know his right hand, after everybody else had failed?"

"I have always thought," said the good woman modestly, "that one can teach almost anything to almost any child if one has love, patience and perseverance, enough ideas, plans and methods will come, if one is struggling faithfully toward the right way."

"You are right," said the Lord High Chamberlain firmly, "and you are hereby created Great Royal Advisor for the rest of your natural life."

The next day, Mother Margaret's son came to her with the joyful news that he had been made head master of the Royal Outside Apparel. An elegant mansion was at once prepared for him not far from the palace gates, and as soon as it could be accomplished, he and his whole family took up their residence therein and were apparently as happy as any family could be.

Good Mother Margaret, however, continued to live in the palace, beloved and respected by everybody, fulfilling her post as Royal Advisor, until she died a natural death at the ripe age of ninety years.

What became of the little gold ring? When the king outgrew it, he had it fastened to

his watch-chain and he wore it constantly as long as he lived.

I am sure you will be glad to know that good Mother Margaret's wish for him came true in every particular.



THE EZESPEL



THEY were twenty-six beautiful children and they lived together in a delightful place where they were all very happy. Nothing ever went wrong with them, for although their mother had made some very strict rules, they had learned obedience, and consequently, everything went on finely. Their mother was kind and always reasonably indulgent. In fact, it was one of her favorite sayings that she believed in letting the children have just as good

a time as they possibly could without injuring themselves, or anyone else. So, you may be sure, there were always merry times in that comfortable and beautiful home.

But, one day, a queer thing happened. An elegant automobile with polished sides, shining glass windows, glittering silver mountings and a uniformed chauffeur, drew up in front of the house. The children were playing happily on the lawn, but the sight of this beautiful car drove all thoughts of their play out of their heads, and they ran to the edge of the sidewalk in order to get a closer view of the outfit and also to see what would happen next.

In a few moments a stately gentleman, wearing a shining broadcloth suit, a glossy top hat, and carrying a gold-headed cane,

opened the door of the car and stepped out upon the stone sidewalk among the children. He was such an imposing looking gentleman that the children immediately stepped shyly away from him, although they watched him with most observant eyes.

He didn't seem to mind their backing away from him, on the contrary, he followed them up, and as they did not continue their retreat, as soon as he was well among them he took off his top hat, made a very graceful bow and said,

“Dear children, I don't suppose you have ever heard of me, but I am Professor Phonetico and I belong to the big college near here, which you pass whenever you are out for a walk. Do you remember seeing that college?”

“Oh, yes, yes!” came the loud and cheerful shout from twenty-six lusty throats.

“Yes,” added one of the older children, “and mother said we must always run past there just as fast as ever we can go.”

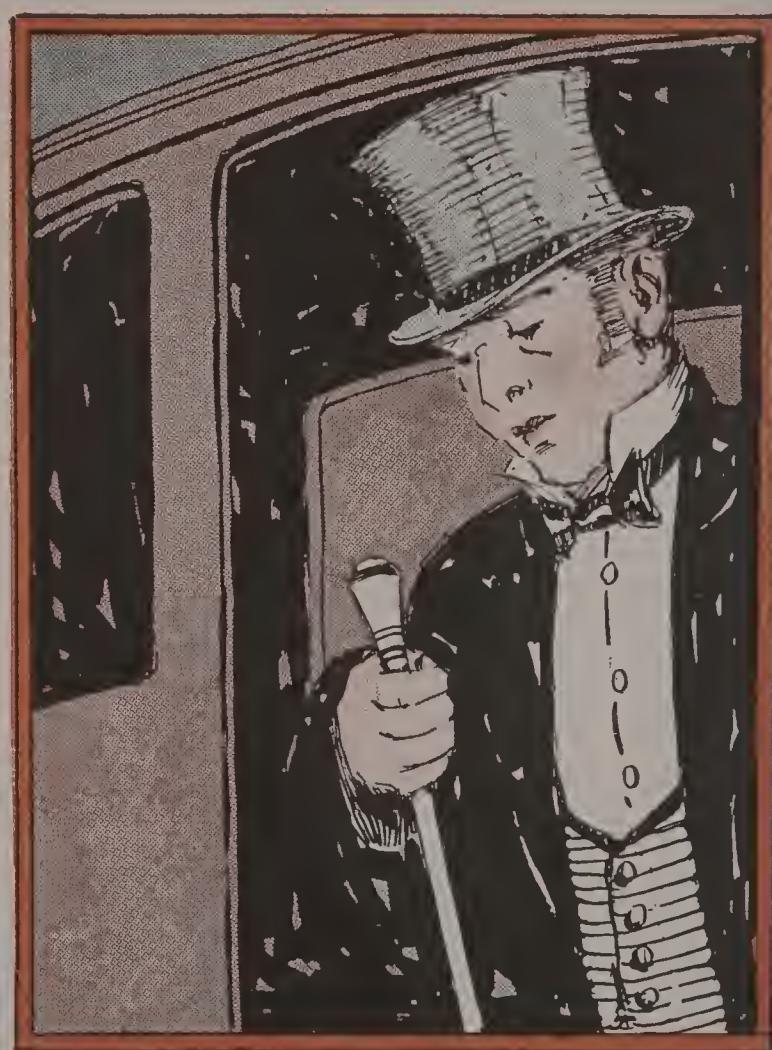
“Where is your excellent mother?” asked the stately gentleman very politely.

It was quite unnecessary for the professor to ask that question, because he had seen her pass the college door before he had set out to visit her home.

“She has gone out to visit fairy Common-sense,” said another one of the children, “do you happen to know her?”

“Not at all,” was the answer, “I don’t take any stocks in fairies.”

“Oh, but you don’t have to,” said another



He was such an imposing looking gentleman—

child, "they don't wear stockings, at least I think they don't," she corrected, "mother has told us a lot about fairy Commonsense, but she never said anything about any stockings."

"Your mother is very intimate with fairy Commonsense, I suppose?"

"Yes, yes, yes," they all shouted in unison again.

"Does she ever come here to visit you?" was the next question asked.

There was another chorus of "yes," and when the sound had died away, a little voice piped up,

"Mother lets her come when we are all asleep."

"When you are asleep! why is that?" asked the professor.

"Mother doesn't allow visitors when we are awake," explained another child.

"Oho! she doesn't, eh?" exclaimed the professor, with an uproarious laugh. "Well, now, I tell you what I will do, jump into the car with me and I will take you all for a beautiful ride through the woods, were you ever in the woods?"

"No, no, no!" shouted the twenty-six voices.

"Then you shall have the treat of your lives, jump into the car, hurry up now, we must get away before your mother returns, because if we don't, perhaps she will not let you go."

Now, if any one of these children had taken a moment's thought they would have known that their mother would not have al-

lowed them to go off in that way with a perfect stranger, but the thought of a long drive into the beautiful green woods, where the birds were singing and the flowers were blooming, had driven all thoughts of obedience out of their heedless little heads. So, they at once began to climb into the car.

But even before they were all inside, mother Alphabet was coming down the street, sprinting in a manner most remarkable for an old lady of her age. Her bonnet was very crooked and her shawl was slipping from her shoulders, but she cared nothing for these things, for she knew the automobile the moment she saw it, and she felt she must get her children out of it at once.

The professor saw her coming, and he

whistled to his chauffeur, who had strayed down the street, while his employer was talking to the children.

The professor's whistle was so sharp that the chauffeur knew the matter was urgent, and a race was on at once between the chauffeur and old mother Alphabet.

Mother Alphabet was on the ground first. "Children!" she called firmly, "what are you doing in that dreadful place? Get out of it this minute!"

As they, like the good obedient children they were, began scrambling out of the car, she exclaimed,

"Didn't you read the name on his old machine? That's the way he writes 'Easy Spell,' but it means the same dreadful thing

after all, and you ought to be ashamed to be found within a hundred miles of it. Run into the house now and shut the door."

The chauffeur had arrived by this time and, at a commanding motion from the professor, he jumped to the wheel, but just as he placed his hand on it, before he could give it even one turn, the last one of Mother Alphabet's children bounded out of the car.

Then the professor's voice took on as much kindness as he could put into its tones.

"Oh, Mother Alphabet, do please leave me a few of your children, you have so many and I am very lonely."

"No," said the mother angrily, "I need them all, every one has his, or her work to do, so you needn't waste your time standing around here."

By this time the children were well on their way toward the house. They were very sure that their mother knew what was best for them. So they did not even stop to look around at the professor and his beautiful machine.

“But, I think,” said the professor, that you might, at least leave me ‘R’, he is such a rough fellow at best, and is every day becoming more and more unfashionable.”

But the mother only shook her head and called out loudly,

“Hurry along into the house ‘R,’ I need you if no one else does.”

“But there is ‘Q,’ ” coaxed the man, “he is of very little use, always has to have ‘U’ tagging around after him. I don’t see why you can’t make ‘K’ do the work for him, then you’ll hardly know that he is gone.”

But “Q,” in spite of his twisted foot, was already half way up the marble steps.

“You don’t know what you are talking about,” said old Mother Alphabet angrily, “make ‘K’ do the work of ‘Q,’ indeed! It never could be done successfully.”

“Well, then,” the professor went on, still more coaxingly than before, “If you will not do anything else give me ‘P’ and ‘H,’ their work can always be done so much better and more easily by ‘F.’ People are beginning to find this out the world over, and ‘P’ and ‘H’ have both fallen into sad disrepute.” But as he looked up at this moment, he saw that all the children were safely in the house and the door was shut.

"I never saw such selfishness like yours," growled the professor, now very angry. "If you are determined not to let me have any others, you can surely recall 'S' and 'Z,' I can't see what you want of children who do all their work in the same way. You certainly don't pretend that you need 'C' and 'K' and 'S' and 'Z'? Why it's ridiculous, just think of it a minute and you'll see how foolish you are."

Then the mother fell into a rage.

"Clear out," she said, "with your old automobile, don't you suppose I know its name?"

"Of course you do, since the name is up there in very plain letters, I'm sure I'm not ashamed of it, that's the way to spell, the idea of using 'A' to help 'E', 'E' doesn't need any

help, and why should you put two ‘L’s where one will do?” You have no idea how popular I am, everyone likes me but you, and people chase after me, crying out,

“Come give me a ride Professor Phonetico in your beautiful car, had you stayed away a few minutes longer I would have had all of your beautiful children in it and carried off where you never would have seen them again.”

“You will drive me crazy yet,” cried poor Mother Alphabet, “and now, you’d better be off, for I tell you, if you don’t go, I’ll have Fairy Commonsense here in a minute, and she’ll . . .”

But she didn’t get a chance to tell him what would happen, for he was so frightened

by the fairy's name that he was in the car and rolling off down the street in a hurry. Then Mother Alphabet straightened her hat, took her shawl from the ground and went slowly up the steps of her home with a smile of satisfaction.





The Goose and the Gander

THE FEATHER TRAP

ONE bright spring morning, farmer Wiseman and his young son came into the poultry yard immediately after breakfast, and it was soon apparent to every living creature in the yard that something unusual was going on.

The bantam rooster who was wise as well as inquisitive, and who never lost an opportunity to acquire information, took his place on a

fence nearby and watched and listened. He saw the farmer and his son set a tall pole firmly in the ground, then, by the aid of a ladder, the farmer climbed up and put a dangerous looking steel trap on top of the pole. He covered the trap with a large heap of feathers, and on top of these he tied several chicken wings. Then the bantam rooster heard the farmer say,

“I have often caught owls this way, and I’m sure I can catch that thieving hawk that has been visiting all the poultry yards around here.”

Then the bantam rooster crowed as loud as his small throat would let him.

“It can’t be done, it can’t be done, hawks are not owls, it can’t be done, it can’t be done! you’ll see, you’ll see!”



Crowed as loud as his small throat would let him

But the farmer went on with his work, and the bantam rooster grew so excited that he hopped off from the fence and flew right into the midst of some geese, who were paddling about in a little pool under the poultry yard pump.

“Did you hear that?” he asked, “that man over there thinks he can catch a hawk as easily as he can an owl.”

“Why, even a goose knows better than that,” said the old gander.

Then the story went the rounds, carried eagerly from bill to bill.

“That man thinks he can catch a hawk as easily as he can an owl.” Such a crowing, and a cackling and a quacking as there was.

“What ails the fowls?” said farmer Wise-

man, “anyone would suppose the hawk was after them.”

“Dear me,” said the brown leghorn hen, “I’m glad I’m not a human, I believe I’d rather end my days in a pie than to know as little as a man.”

“Yes,” said the bantam hen, “anyone would think that a creature as big as a man would know everything, but size doesn’t count for much, it seems, for even I know that a hawk can’t be fooled that way, and I’m the smallest thing in the poultry yard except the baby chicks.”

“No indeed,” said a big, fat duck, “the hawk can see with one eye, that there’s nothing alive under all those feathers. An owl wouldn’t know, of course, for he is half blind in the day-time.”

“What’s the matter here?” asked a robin, who at this moment alighted on one of the pickets which surrounded the poultry yard. You’re making a great racket about something, and I was almost afraid to stop here a moment on my way to my nest.”

A pert young Wyandotte pullet told the story of the trap, and ended by asking, “Did you ever know anyone so foolish as a human?”

“See here,” chirped the robin, “you fowls think yourselves very wise, but there is one thing you haven’t found out yet, and that is that humans are not all alike. My nest is in that big elm near the house porch, and yesterday, I heard them talking about the feather trap. A young lady was there, who said she had read and studied about birds a great deal, and that



"What's the matter here?" asked a robin

she knew the hawk wouldn't come near the trap. But the man said he guessed he knew more about such things than a girl, so he went on and made the trap this morning."

The fowls all said they wished that they could see that young lady, and they asked the robin so many questions about her that he took to his wings to get away from them.

The days went on and the feather trap still held its high place on top of the pole, as undisturbed as if it had been a hard and lonely rock on a high mountain.

The fowls had quite forgotten their excitement over the folly of Mr. Wiseman. They saw the hawk, it is true, frequently sailing over the poultry yard, but as the old mother hens were pretty watchful and called their broods together

whenever they saw those wide-spread gray wings poised above them, nothing happened.

Outside of the poultry yard, quite on the other side of the farm-yard, was a small flock of turkeys, among which were some tender baby "turks." The fowls often heard commotions in that part of the farm-yard, but were quite unable to tell exactly what was going on. The farmer's wife, however, knew all about it, and one day she said to her husband, "You must do something about that hawk, he has begun carrying off my little turkeys now, and I just can't stand that."

So the farmer had to shoot the hawk the next time he made his appearance. Then he took the trap down and hung it up in the barn, but being a man who could never change his

mind, he still thought he could have caught the hawk if he had been given time enough.

The fowls, of course, heard the gun go off, and were all very much excited about it. While they were crowing, and cackling, and quacking about it all, the old family cat, who was always sneaking outside the poultry yard fence, brought the news that the hawk was dead, and for a little while after that news was received, if you had been in the poultry yard, you couldn't have heard yourself think.

The next time the robin took up his post on the picket fence of the poultry yard, to sing his evening song, the bantam rooster asked, with his very best crow,

“Did the man own up that the girl knew more about birds than he did?”

"Well, I didn't hear about that," chirped the robin, "but whether he did or not, he has probably found out this much, that some birds, as well as some humans, are much wiser than others."





"Nonsense," laughed the pebble

THE SELFISH PEBBLE

"YOU are only a grain of sand," said the pebble scornfully.

"But I was once a pebble," was the answer, "and as I am, you will one day be."

"Nonsense," laughed the pebble, pressing hard against the tiny white grain, "My beauti-

ful rounded sides, so hard and smooth can never fall to pieces and become like you tiny and worthless things.” Then the grains of sand all came together, and flowing about the boastful pebble, covered him up from all eyes.

But he was content. He had been tossing about in the salt water ever since he could remember, and he was glad to rest.

“Who knows what I may become, if I lie here long enough? Perhaps a ruby, perhaps a diamond, and then I shall be taken out to decorate the crown of a queen and shall see all the wonderful things that are in this great and busy world.”

So he waited, quietly content, thinking that someday all his aspirations and ambitions would be satisfied.

By and by the tide came in, it washed over his resting place, stirring up the sand, and the pebble feared he should again be carried out to sea, that dreadful sea, which he hated with all the hatred of his hard, pebble heart.

But the grains of sand, the tiny, white grains of sand kept him safe. True they pushed him about a little and rubbed against his sides more than was pleasant, but even that, he thought, was far better than to be tossed into the water again, and to lie there, perhaps, for untold ages. Here, at least there was one chance in a thousand for something better some day, but there, in the cold, unpitying water, nothing could happen. So, the little pebble nestled closer and closer among the sheltering grains of sand, thinking the while, "You are

useless, disagreeable little things generally, yet now I am very glad of your protection."

Thus time passed, days all alike, monotonous even to a pebble, nothing but the sand, sand everywhere.

One day the pebble heard voices, and soon he heard these words,

"Mamma, may I take home a box-full of this beautiful, white sand? I will keep it in one corner of the nursery, and never scatter it about. It will be lovely to play with when the snow is on the ground. Please say yes, mother."

A consent was given, and then the pebble felt that he was being gently lifted up with the grains of sand, how his heart rejoiced.

"Ah!" he said to himself, "at last I am to see the world, but it is very humiliating to be

with these common grains of sand, and now that I am going into the great world and shall see human beings, living always in their wonderful company, I shall work away from this miserable, common sand just as soon as I possibly can."

Had he not been so wrapped in his own selfish plans, he would have understood that it was the sand which was wanted and not the hard, little pebble.

Then suddenly the childish voice exclaimed,

"Oh, here's a pebble! I don't want any horrid little pebbles in my beautiful white sand."

So, she picked it out with her dainty fingers and threw it as far as she could into the ocean.

THE BEST FAIRIES



ONCE UPON A TIME, a beautiful little fairy said to herself, "Now I'll run around among real children, granting to each one of them one wish and one only, but they will have it almost as soon as it is made. But before I go, I must have a handsome new costume, because, who knows there might now and then be found a pair of human eyes that can see fairies. I have heard of such things, although I have never believed it."

So she found a cobweb, which was spangled all over most beautifully with dew-

drops, and out of it she fashioned, with a thorn from a rosebush and a thread stolen from a silk worm a gown which set all fairydom to talking about her cleverness. Then she made herself a cape out of a mushroom, with its pink lining, a hat from a clover blossom, and with a pair of buttercup shoes on her feet, away she flew to a place where a dozen children were playing on a wide, smooth lawn in front of a handsome house.

While they were shouting at their play, a big rosy cheeked boy came out of the house and cried out,

“Oh, I’ve had the finest piece of pie you ever tasted! My! I wish I had a whole house made out of such pie!”

Suddenly, right there before them all stood

a beautiful little house made of the loveliest flaky pie-crust, and dotted all over with big, luscious raisins. For it seemed, that he had been eating raisin pie.

The boy ran up to the house at once and took a generous bite out of the big front door.

When the other children saw what he had done, they thought they too might as well have some pie, so they, one and all ran at the pretty little house and began taking generous bites therefrom. The boy kept telling them all the while to “go away and let his pie-house alone,” and at the same time, trying, now and then, to get a bite for himself. But they paid no attention to his commands, and as they were all so busy filling themselves with pie, other children, coming along the sidewalk, saw what was

going on there on the lawn, and as all children love pie, they ran up to get a few mouthfuls too. So, before the poor boy really knew what was going on his pie was entirely gone, and he had only had three or four mouthfuls of it himself. What did he do then? Just what you would have done I presume, he sat down under a tree and wept great, big tears, just as fast as they could come down out of his eyes. The other children, now that the pie was gone, all ran away, except one little girl, she came up to console him, and she said kindly.

“How did you get your pie-house, little boy?”

“Oh,” he said, “I just wished I had a whole house made out of pie and there it was.”

“How fine!” said the little girl, “now I’ll

wish for a house made out of diamonds and gold, no one can eat that up."

And there, in a twinkling, stood a house, not a very large one, to be sure, but a house all the same, made out of diamonds and gold.

Oh, how happy she was! She ran all around it looking it over, peeping in the windows and doors, because it was too small for her to enter.

"I am going home to tell my father," she said, "so he'll come and take it home for me. You stop crying now and come here near my house and watch it so that no one can come and take it away."

But the boy wouldn't stop crying long enough to even listen to her, so she stopped talking to him, after a while, and ran off to her own home, hoping no one would see the little

house until she returned with her father. But when she reached her own home there was no one there but the servants and, as she was a little girl who loved to tell big stories, no one would believe a word she said. She feared to stay too long away from the house made out of diamonds and gold, so she ran back again.

As she went along she formed a plan to offer the first man she saw a handful of diamonds out of the roof to get the house safely under the shelter of her own home.

“For,” she said, “the house will never be out in the rain, so it will not matter if there is a hole in the roof.”

But what do you think happened?

When she came back to the lawn where the house had stood, she saw two men in the



She saw two men in the distance carrying the house away

distance carrying the house away between them. She ran after them and called to them as loudly as she could, but her little voice was so weak that it could not be heard above the city noise, and her little legs were so short that they could not make any headway against the men's long legs, and they were soon entirely out of her sight.

Then, she too, began to cry. She ran back to the spot where the boy was crying under the tree and sat down and cried with him, great big hot tears, coming down so fast one wondered where they all came from.

I have heard it said that their united tears made a river so wide and so deep that they floated away on it, and as they had neither a boat nor a life-preserver, you will not think it

strange that they have not been heard from since.

Of course, the fairy having gotten them into this trouble, ought to have gone after them and brought them back safely to their respective homes, but she was already far away, granting other foolish wishes to other foolish children and, no doubt, bringing them also tears and trouble.

So, I have about made up my mind, and I think you will agree with me, that it is the safest plan to let all fairies alone, except those two, which we know so well, and which are known as Hard Work and Common Sense.

If we make good strong friends of these two, they will never bring such troubles upon us as came to this unhappy boy and girl.



Increased so in size—

BEHIND THE WALLS

THERE was once a strange and wonderful place, called “Heartland.”

It was made beautiful in the beginning, but it did not remain so long, for its keeper, whose name was Huma, foolishly admitted within its borders some disagreeable young creatures. These creatures increased so in size



A wonderful One in shining robes—

and numbers that the whole of the once fair Heartland was overrun with them.

To tell you all their names would more than fill this page, so I'll write down only a few of them, "Malice," "Envy," "Jealousy," "Selfishness," and "Backbiting." If you have ever heard of these bad, black creatures, you will understand that this Heartland, where they dwelt in company with many other ill-looking beings, was not a lovely place even to think about.

Huma, however, was very fond of these ugly things, but as he knew the whole world would despise him if it found out that he kept them in Heartland, he built a high and tight wall all about the place, so that none of the creatures could escape. The name of the wall

was ‘Self-Restraint,’ and there were several little gates in the wall called “Caution,” and now and then Huma would open one of these gates and let some of the hideous black things come forth for his own amusement, then people would shudder and say,

“How can he keep so vile a thing near him?” little suspecting that there were a multitude of similar creatures, shut in behind the high walls of Self-Restraint.

Now and then a wonderful One in shining robes came to Huma and said in soft pleading whispers,

“Let the heavenly sunshine into Heartland, then you will not need this high wall of Self-Restraint, which is but a poor thing at best, and must, sooner or later, give way.”

But Huma only shook his head in answer to these appeals, and drove the bright one away. So, at last, after very many of these unkind receptions, the shining one came no more to Huma.

So time went on, but one day, Old Age passed that way.

Now, old age is ruthless, so he laid his sceptre on the walls of Self-Restraint and they went down like walls of paper, then lo! all the black and evil things of Heartland were exposed to the gaze of the world.

Then the beholders said,
“Poor man, we must overlook all the mean things he says and does, because he is so old. It was not so when he was young,” alas! they could not see that these hideous things could

not have showed thus in his old age, had they not been fostered and cherished during the years of his youth and early manhood.

Even at this late day, if Huma had called to the Shining One for help, all these evil creatures, although grown so large and lusty, would have been driven out.

But Huma did not want to be rid of them, no indeed, he loved them dearly, loved them with all his might.

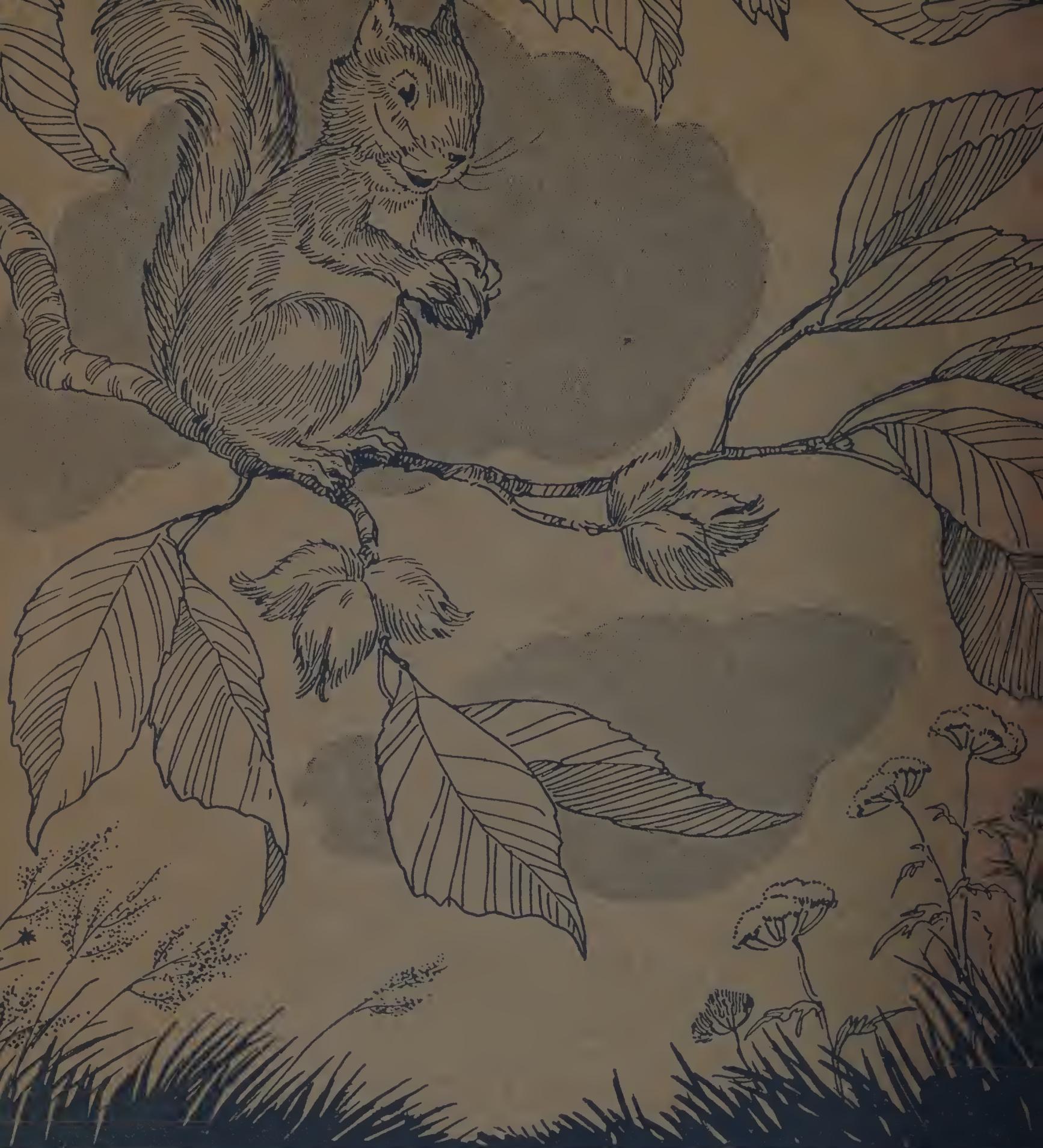
But alas! and alas! now that his dearest companions were thus exposed to the gaze of men, there was not in the whole wide world a single being, not even a dog, who loved him, and people looking on, being only superficial observers, at the best, said,

“How unlovely is old age!”



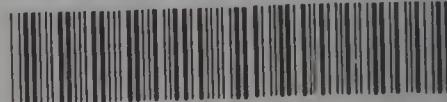
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