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CAPTAIN GINGER'S FAIRY



These little creatures seemed to be coming from every direction

Captain Ginger's Fairy

BY

ISABEL ANDERSON

With Illustrations by H. BOYLSTON DUMMER



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DEDICATED

With love to my Godson, J. C.



CAPTAIN GINGER! What a funny name for a little boy! But this little fellow's really truly name was Jimmy. Out of all his many pet names Captain Ginger was the one he liked best, because it showed that he was a brave little chap, full of life and go.



Mamma said, too, that it just suited his sunny hair, which was exactly the color of ginger.



When he had tantrums, as I am sorry to say he sometimes did, Grandma would call him her tiny red pepper-pot, and Jimmy did not like that at all.



Early in September, after a long, warm summer, Captain Ginger grew pale and tired and just a bit ill. His poor mamma was much worried and called in the family doctor, who looked him over carefully.



"There is nothing serious," he told them

“There is nothing serious,” he told them; “keep him out in the fresh air as much as possible. I think it would do him a great deal of good to sleep out of doors.”



Now Captain Ginger had a dear, old-fashioned grandmother who thought, as all grandmas do, that there was no little boy in the whole world quite like her Jimmy.



She was sure the darling would catch his death of cold on the piazza, and be very lonely, too. She said that she for one hadn't any use for these "new-fangled idees."



The Captain assured her that he was not a bit afraid to sleep out there all alone in the dark. No, not he!



“Just think of all the fairies I’ll see, Granny!” he cried. “The night’s the time when they all come out to play. You told me so yourself. And it won’t be really dark either, for the moon’s lots better’n a lamp.

“Course I won’t be lonely. I’m a big boy now, Granny. Why, I’m four whole years old, you know.”

But the poor old lady would not be comforted.



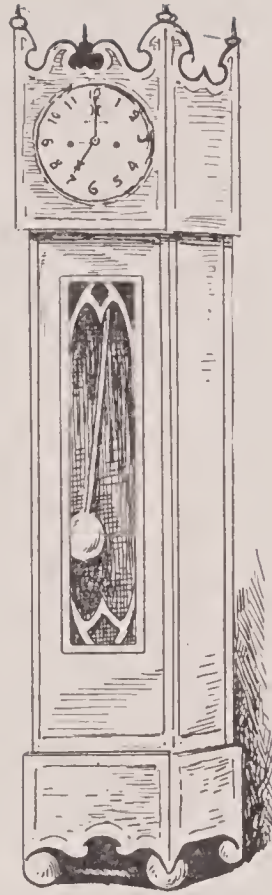
“Course I won’t be lonely, I’m a big boy now, Granny”



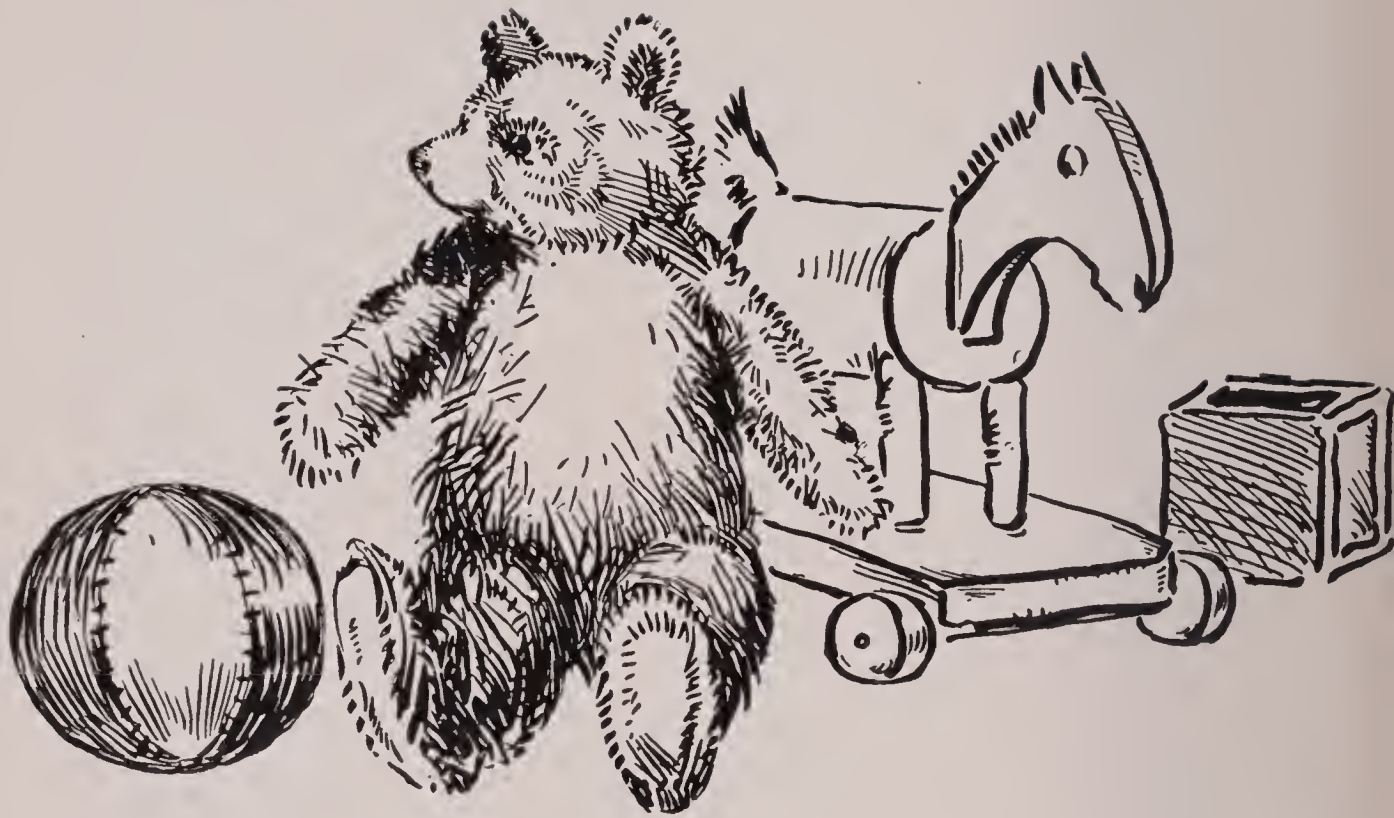
It seemed as though night would never come. For the first time in his life Captain Ginger longed for seven o'clock. It was yet early evening when he commenced coaxing his mamma to put him to bed.



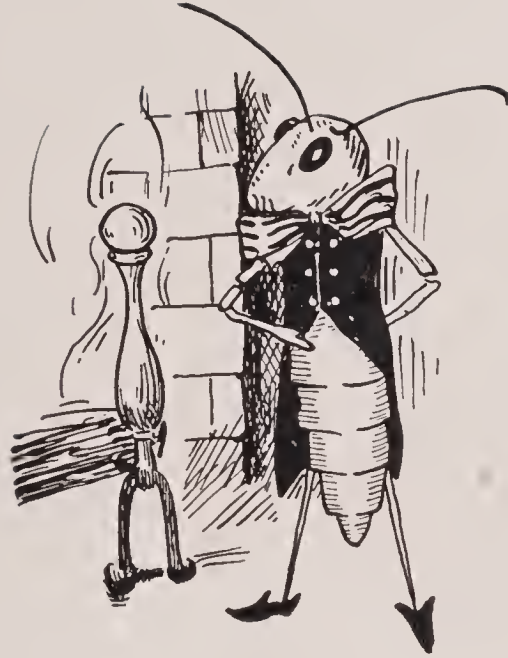
“Mumsy, my crib is a-crying for me—I know it is,” he said; and, like a little pussy cat, he rubbed his head against his mother. “I bet it’s ’zactly bedtime.”



“Why, so it is,” replied Mamma, looking at the big clock in the corner of the nursery. “Pull out your thick flannel nighty from the bottom drawer of my bureau.



“That is right. Now put your toys away, and I will tuck you into your little nest before the moon goes to sleep.”



Captain Ginger was very much excited and tried hard to help his mamma, but his baby fingers would only get in the way.



She caught the little pink tips and kissed them as she lifted him in her arms and bore him through the big window to his crib.



Then Mumsy heard her little boy's prayers and kissed him good-night

Mamma heard her little boy's prayers, kissed him good-night and left him on the veranda, just where she could get a good view of him from her own bedroom window, which was always wide open.



The moon peeped in at him through the woodbine leaves which looked all black against the light, although in the daytime they were as red as red could be. The air was crisp and cool, and all the live things seemed livelier than ever.



Ginger thought they must be giving a concert just to please him. They sang, they whistled and danced about, making all sorts of strange noises.



Captain Ginger had never heard any of these sounds before, so he lay very mousey-quiet with his eyes and ears wide open so that he shouldn't miss a single thing.



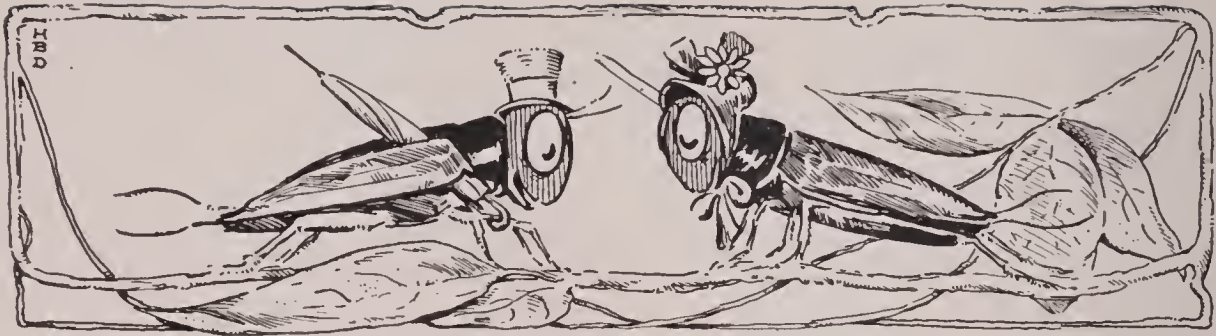
He hoped the fairies would not be long in coming. He supposed they would talk and sing to him.



He wondered what they looked like and if they were beautiful—something like his dear mamma when she was dressed for a party with flowers and jewels—or did they have queer shapes?



He couldn't quite make up his mind as to that. So he thought he would lie awake and watch for them.



The woodbine leaves were softly tap-tapping against one another on the trellis and two little creatures somewhere up in a tree seemed to be having a great discussion.

“Katy did!” said one.

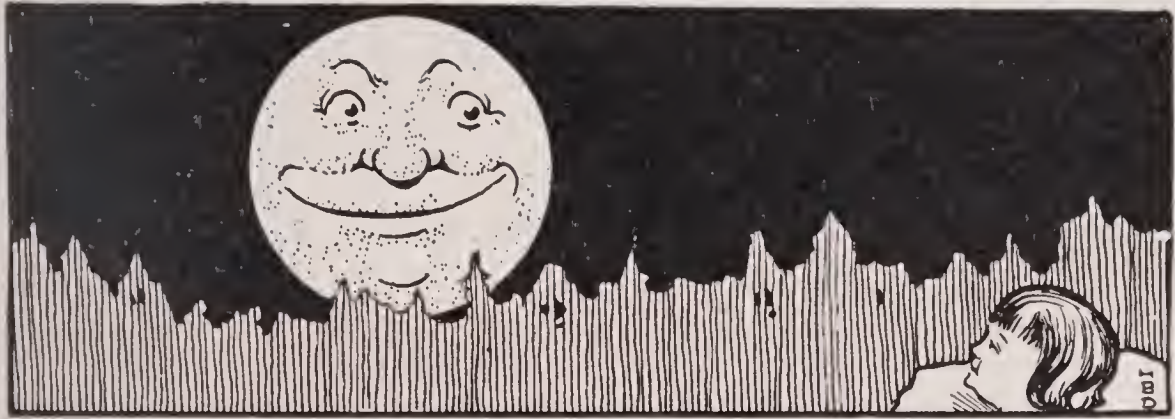
“Katy didn’t! Katy didn’t!” said the other.



They kept repeating it over and over again, till Captain Ginger was quite tired and he dozed off before he intended to.



But what do you suppose? In a very short time he was awakened by a clear little voice piping gayly, “Cheer-up, cheer-up!”



He had never heard anything like this before in his life! The moon was now looking right down at him, and he was sure that the man in the moon was smiling.



The most exciting thing of all was that the little voice was getting nearer and nearer, and in a moment something he thought was a fairy came and sat right on his bed!



“Oh! It must be a singin’ fairy!”
he laughed, as he stretched out his
chubby pink hands to see if he could
catch it.

Instead of the fairy who sang so cheerily he caught something else that gave him just a wee bite on the tip of his thumb. He let it go very quickly, you may be sure.

“That,” thought he, “must be a bad fairy.”



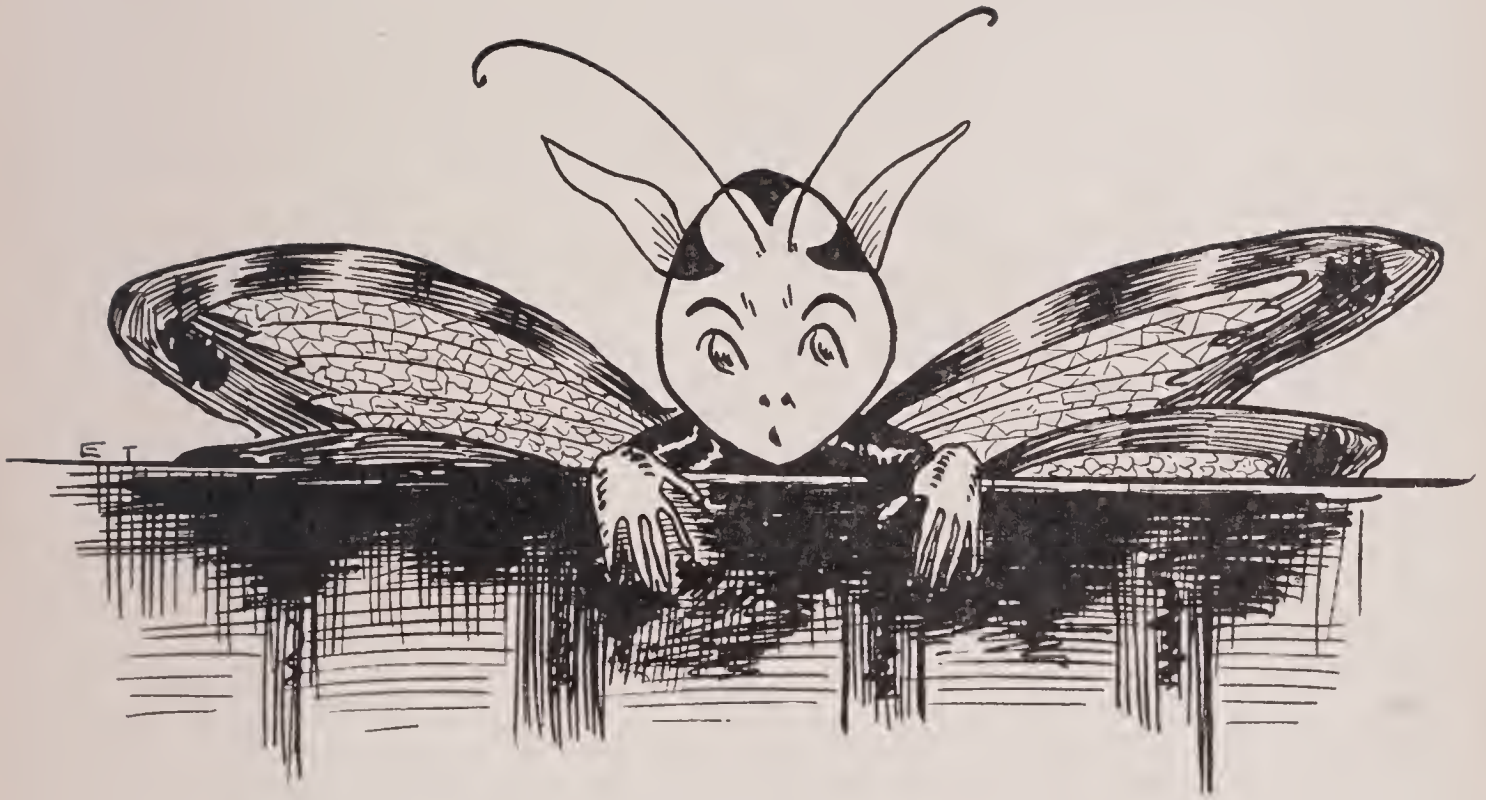
“That,” thought he, “must be a bad fairy”



He could not understand this because dear Grandma had often told him that all little fairies were good. It flew away singing, “Fuzzy-buzzy-wuzzy-wuzz! Fuzzy-buzzy-wuzzy-wuzz!”



At this Captain Ginger was very angry and wanted to cry, but of course he didn't because he was a brave little man.



All of a sudden something gave
a big hop right over his crib and
landed on the railing.

By the light of the moon he made sure that it was a fat, green fairy with bright, beady little eyes. Then he looked about and spied other fairies with tiny waists and dresses of black and yellow, flying in the air with pretty silver and ivory wings.



These little creatures seemed to be sailing from every direction. Faster and faster they came and sat about Captain Ginger on the railing of his little crib.



They seemed to be blowing horns, playing on combs, and beating drums. What a noise they made! It sounded to him like a brass band he had heard in the street one day.



Then for the second time, higher and louder even than the first, Captain Ginger heard that clear, shrill tune, “Cheer-up, cheer-up!” He knew it to be the voice of his singing fairy.

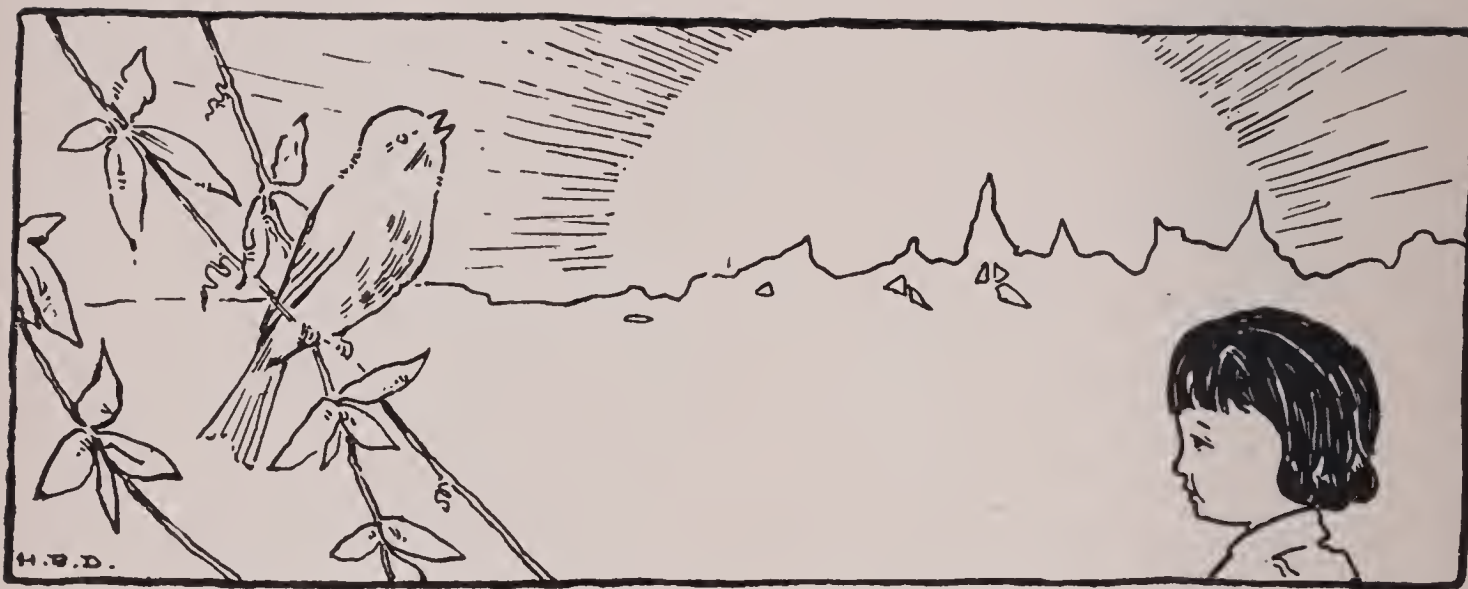


It was humming a bright, happy little song. This must surely be a good fairy, and he hoped that it would never stop singing.



Ginger felt so sorry and hoped nothing had happened to this good fairy

But very soon something long and blue whizzed by, darted right into the midst of the musicians, and scared them so that they all flew off in every direction as fast as they could go, and the pretty song wasn't heard any more. Ginger felt so sorry, and hoped nothing had happened to this good fairy.



The next thing that he knew the rosy sun was looking through the woodbine and kissing his eyes so that he could hardly see. He sat up, and what do you think was the first—the very first—thing he saw? You could never guess. It was the singing fairy!



Ginger would not have known that it was a fairy at all, because it was all black and shiny, but it began to sing its same merry, little song.



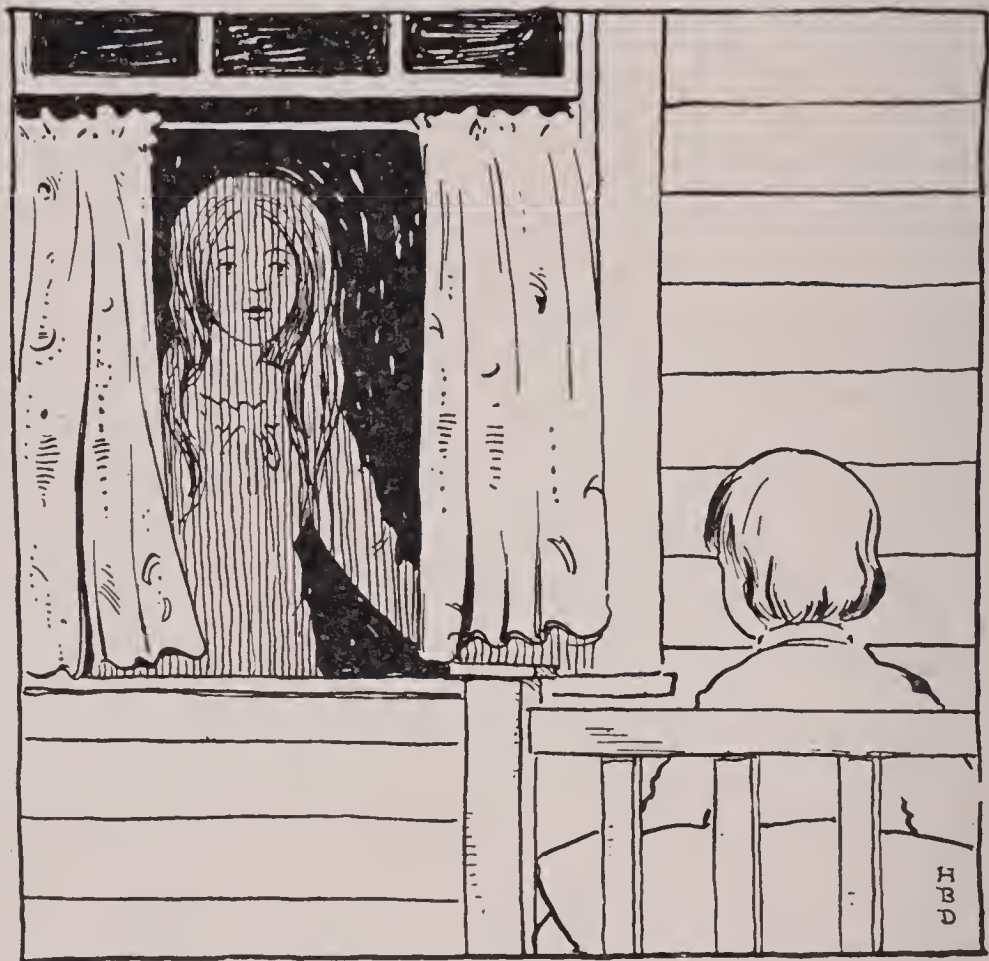
There was no tiny voice anywhere singing, “Fuzzy-buzzy-wuzzy-wuzz! Fuzzy-buzzy-wuzzy-wuzz!” and no long blue fairy darting wildly about, so Captain Ginger stretched out his hand and captured the wriggling little creature.



“See, Mumsy, come quick, I’ve got her!” he shouted

Then he called aloud to his mother.

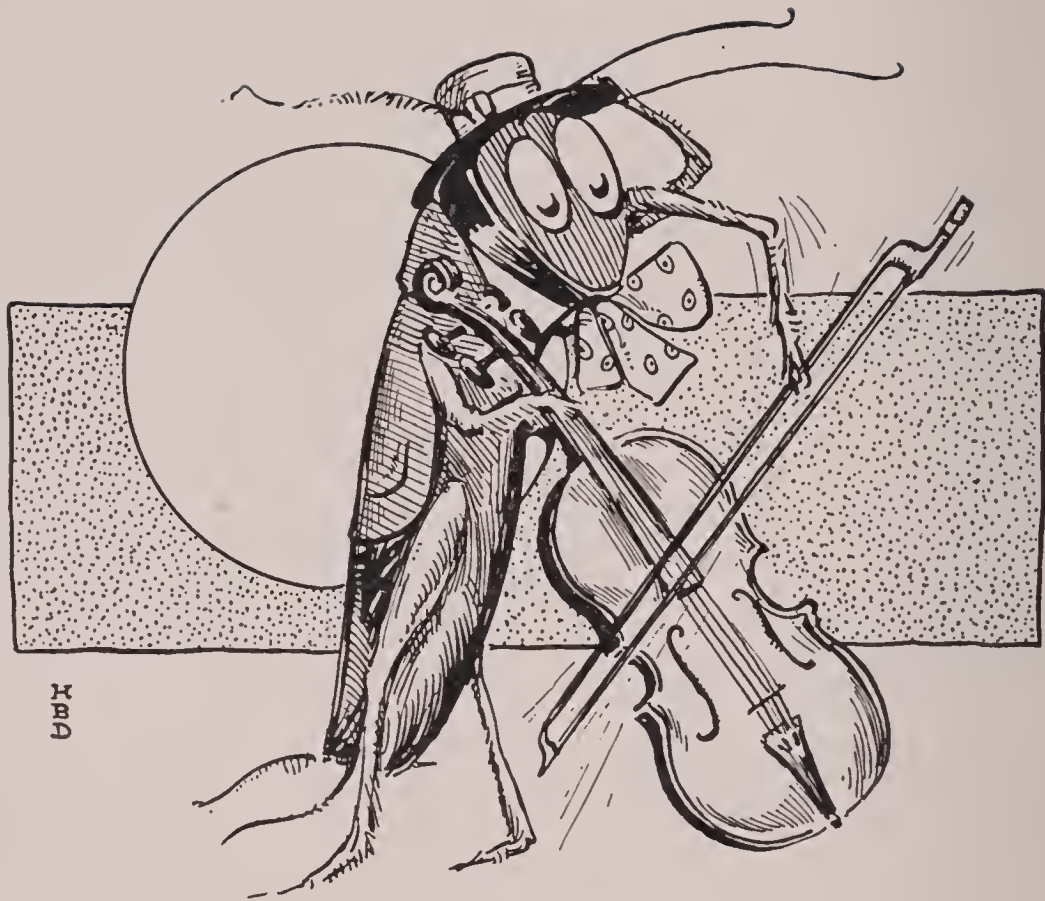
“See, Mumsy, come quick, I’ve got her!” he shouted. “I b’lieve it’s a real fairy this time; she’s a black, singing fairy; she’s a darky like old Dinah!”



His mother was awakened from a sound sleep, and she called back, “What on earth is the matter, child?”



“It’s tickling me!” he yelled gleefully. “I’ve got her all right, but you’d better come quick!” So Mother came to the rescue and unlocked Ginger’s fingers, and out hopped a dear little cricket!



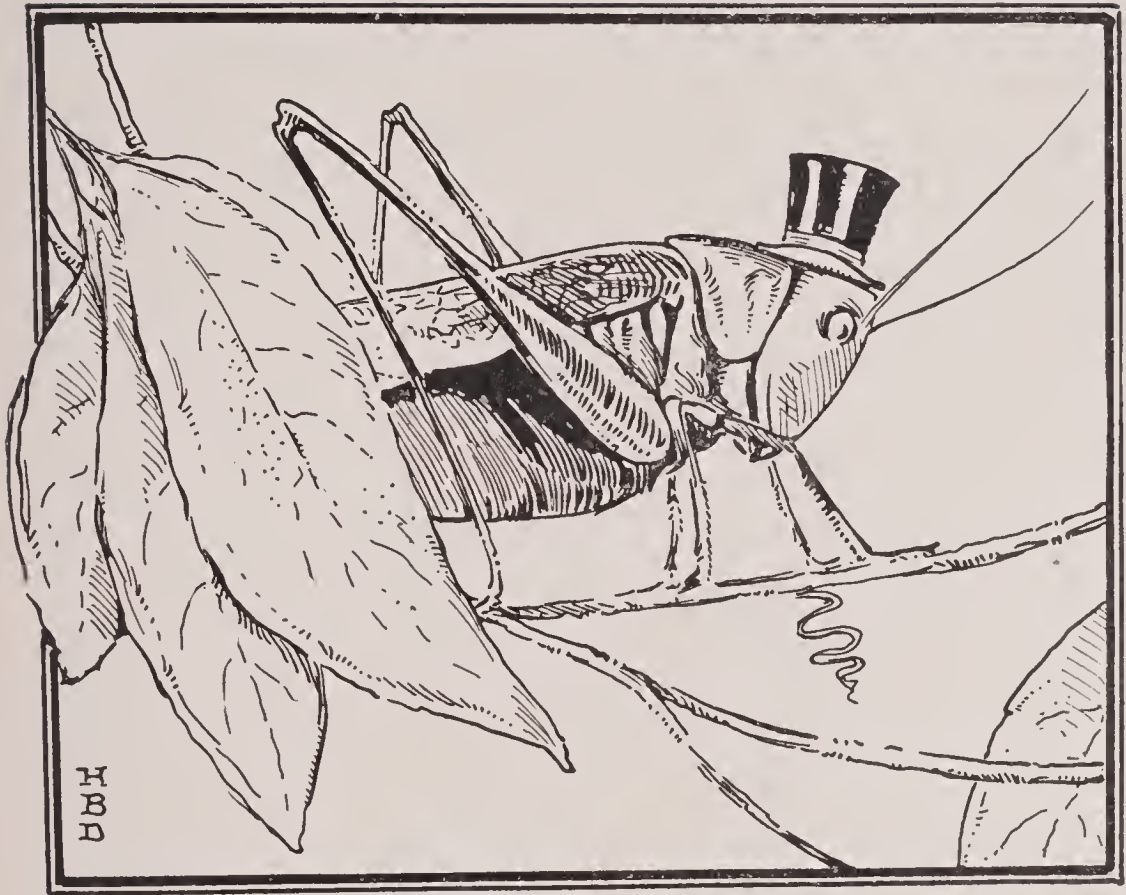
“No wonder you thought it was a singing fairy, kidlet,” she smiled. “Look at his little veined wings; he makes his music with them, just as though they were fiddles.



“When he lifts them and scrapes them against his sides you hear the cheerful sound you like so much.”



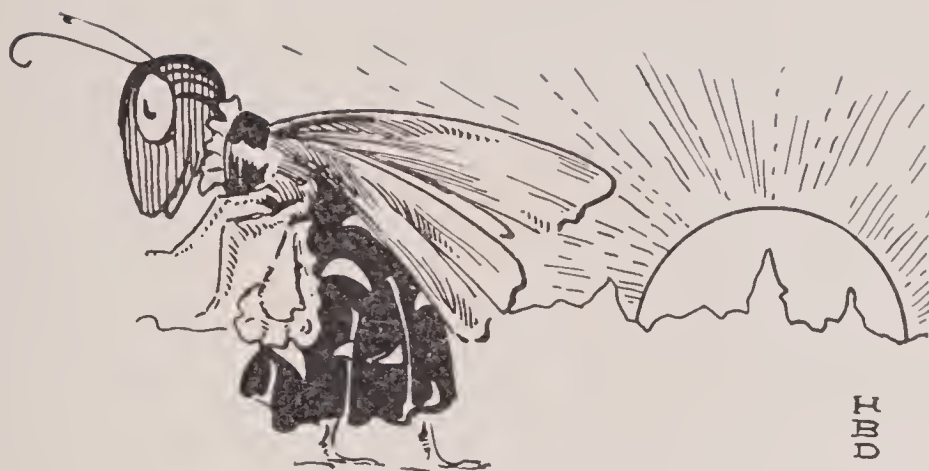
“I wish it were a fairy. I b’lieve I could keep it in the nursery, and have it to play with,” said the little boy regretfully. Do you think he would be frightened of Teddy?



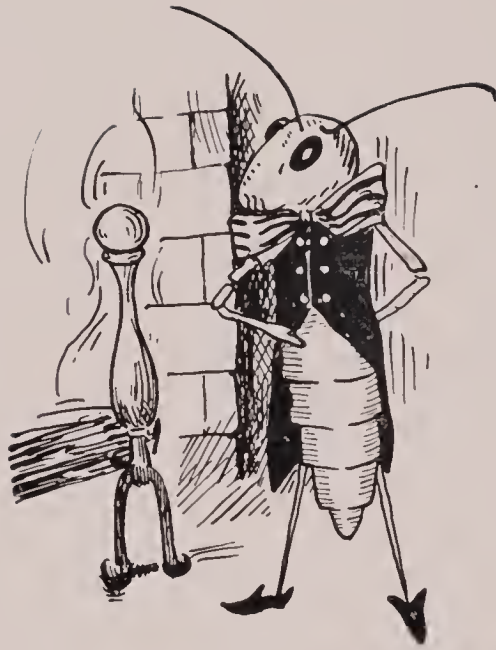
Then he began to tell his mother about all the fairies he had seen, the naughty one that bit him and the fat, green one that had beady black eyes and gave such a big hop.



“That was a grasshopper, kidlet, but the one that bit you must have been a mosquito. I believe the little people with the small waists, dressed in black and yellow, with silver ivory wings, were wasps or flies.



“They are all insects, and some of them are good and some are bad. Now crickets make fine pets, Ginger. In countries where they are not so common, people put them in cages, and sell them in the market-place for pets.”



“If we leave this little fellow outdoors he will die of cold when the winter comes. How would you like to keep him on the nursery hearth?”

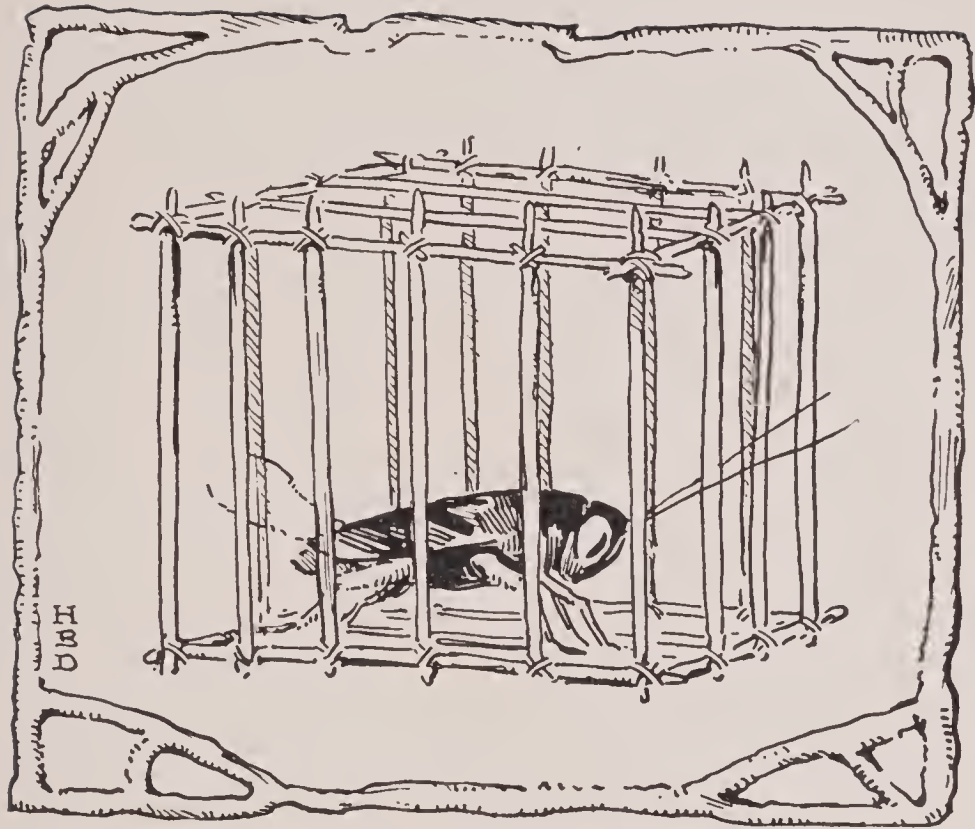


“Oh, I’d like to ever ’n’ ever so much, Mumsey! If I feed him, will he sing for me?”

“Surely. Crickets live on plants, unless they get very hungry in the autumn, and then the little cannibals eat one another.”



“I’ll get up this very minute, and make a cage for my singing fairy,” declared Ginger, sticking one foot over the edge of his crib.



“I’ll make a cage out of toothpicks for him, and love him very hard, and then maybe he will sing for me often.”

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After he was all dressed he turned to his mother for his good-morning kiss, and whispered, "Please, Mumsey, I'd like to sleep out every night. And how soon may I go to bed again?"





“Please Mumsy, I’d like to sleep out of doors every night”

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