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Handwritten text, possibly a signature or name, appearing as "L. M. ...".

Mary W Baker.

From Uncle

William

Jan 1. 1866.

1866.



THE
CHILDREN'S HOUR.



F. SUGLAND & SONS PHILA.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
1866.

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T H E

C H I L D R E N ' S H O U R .

BY

E. W. S. AND S. W. M.

Between the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,
That is known as the Children's Hour.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.

1866.

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Yours sincerely,

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1864, by

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District of Pennsylvania.

P R E F A C E .

MANY and many an autumn
Its changing leaves had shed,
Where, thick on hill and valley,
Calm sleep our loyal dead ;
And where the cannon thundered,
And deepest lay the slain,
Tall orchards blushed with fruitage,
And yellow waved the grain.
For fifty harvest summers,
From South to North had swept
In zones of gracious plenty,
Since death one harvest kept,
Which took with hand unsparing
Our bravest and our best,
And left us law and order,
And peace, and hope, and rest.
Beneath a bending willow,
Which was young in sixty-four,
A group of children gathered
About a cottage door.

And in their midst a soldier
Sat, scarred, and bent, and gray,
And told them tales of battles,
And charge, and scout, and fray.

At last a little maiden
Beside him, bending low,
Said, "Grandpapa, in that old time,
So very long ago,
Did they have folk like fairies,
And genii good and true?
Or did they only kill and slay,
And only fighting do?"
"Ah, no!" the soldier answered,
And shook his locks so gray,—
"There was a Genius, grand and good,
In that old fighting day.
He had a greedy hand to get,
And lavish hands to give;
So much he got, so much he gave,
You'd wonder he could live;
For all the good folk in the land
Did try to keep him rich;
But, bless me, 'twas no use at all,—
He might have been a witch,
So fast he made the money fly,—
So quickly through the land

He scattered wide the royal gifts
That filled his craving hand.
By day and night, by field and flood,
Where dying soldiers lay,
He knelt beside their sleepless beds,
To charm their pains away.
Men blessed him in a thousand camps,
From Florida to Maine,
Where'er his loving bounty fell,
As sweet as summer rain ;
For, like God's summer rain, that falls
Where weed or grain may grow,
His tender fingers healed alike
The wounds of friend and foe.
Amid the storm of shot and shell,
And face to face with death,
The wounded soldier, crushed and torn,
Blessed him with dying breath.
Oh! sweetest task, like Christopher
Without a thought of pride,
To bear the Christ of charity
Through battle's reddest tide."

"But, grandpapa," the maiden said,
"He was so very good,
Did he know everything on earth,
As all good genii should?"

“Oh, Birdie,” said the soldier gray,
“He had some books so grand,
Writ full of all the soldiers’ names
That fought throughout the land,
And wives, and fathers, many a one,
Came oft to have a look,
And get some news of those they loved,
All writ in his big book.
The folks at home called him *big* names
You wouldn’t like to spell;
We soldiers called him old *San. Com.*
And liked him mighty well.”
The little maiden laughed aloud,
And shook her shining head:
“There were no fairies in your tale,—
’Twas very short,” she said.

March, 1864.

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THE CHILDREN'S HOUR.

THE CURLY FISH.

ONCE upon a time, there lived in Upper Persia a great king, called, in the language of his realm, El Knobb, or the Mighty. In despite of golden palaces and gardens populous with roses, the Caliph El Knobb was the most unhappy of men, because, with every other blessing, Allah had failed to grant to his old age the kindly gift of children. At last, one fine morning, the Caliph became the happy father of twin princes. Their birth was announced with sound of trumpet and cymbals, and all the wise men of the empire consulted the stars as to the future career of the little strangers. It was wonderful how long it took the Magi to do their small sums in astrology; one would really have concluded that they worked by the day. At last, when the larger part of these wise old men had contracted

severe indigestions with the Caliph's good dinners, a day was fixed; and the Muftis, and Bismillahs, and Bashful Bazooks, and other great folk, came to hear. The throne was placed in the great hall of the palace; and the astrologers, fat with star-gazing, and all the officers and guards, stood up on either side. In the distance were the common folks, who kept up such a wonderful thumping of their heads on the floor, by way of reverence, that it sounded like a regiment of soldiers tumbling down stairs.

At last the gongs sounded, and twelve slaves entered the hall conveying a great shield of gold; upon this stood four huge negroes clad in scarlet, and bearing aloft the ivory cradles of the young princes. On a sudden, the negroes leaped down with great agility, never so much as shaking the precious weights which they carried. The cradles were set at the foot of the throne, and Abou Ben Muff, the chief magician, having bumped his head on the floor many times in token of reverence, began to unroll the decree of the fates.

Abou Ben Muff was an astrologer of wondrous note. He was tall and of goodly frame, and had a beard so long that the middle of its length was tucked into his

slippers, and the ends were carried over the arms of pages who never came nearer him than ten feet. His eyebrows were curled about his ears, and his nose was hooked like the scimitar of Mahomet. Having cleared his throat seven times, Ben Muff began: "O most potent Lord! Knoppiest of Knobby, and scourge of unbelievers! Allah has sent thee children, and lo, we have read their fate in the stars wherewith Allah has sown the furrows of heaven. On the first night of our watch, we saw in the sky signs and wonders. By these, we read that Allah will soon take back his gifts,—thy children will die young."

Then arose a wail and a tumult. The Bashful Bazooks bellowed, and the Caliph swore high Persian, the people groaned, and the two little babies squealed. At last order was restored, and the Caliph arose with a troubled and sorrowful look. "O, Allah!" said he, "so mean a thing as the grass springs, waves green in the wind of summer, and is gathered in its due season. The grain that you send us is fruitful ere it dies; it cannot be that I shall lose my children before they have grown into the ripe fruit of useful deeds. Woe is me! how can these things be? Send me, O Allah, better counsel." With

this the Caliph and all the people bowed down in prayer to Allah. Suddenly a fearful roar of thunder shook the palace; at the far end of the great hall the people swayed to and fro, and at last huddled into groups against the walls. Then were seen in the centre of the hall two majestic giants, clad in flowing robes of cloudy lightness. With steps that sounded like the crash of the doors of paradise when they close against the sinful, and with eyes like flaming sapphires, and heads erect, they strode towards the Caliph's throne. They paused beside the cradles of the young princes, who lay hushed for very fear. All was silent, no one moved. At length, one of the strangers said, "Speak!" and at his voice the walls trembled, and the plumes on the soldiers' casques shook as with the blast of the north wind. "Speak!" echoed the second giant. "You have asked for counsel from Allah, and lo, we are here." With this the Caliph took courage, "Allah, il Allah," said he, "send us thy wisdom. Will my children die in their youth?" "No," said the giants, and with that the two tall figures knelt down beside the princes. Then each drew from his girdle a bright arrow which he laid upon the breast of one of the twins. As the giants rose up their knee-

joints cracked like the sound of breaking palm-trees, and with awful steps they walked together down the hall. In a moment they were gone, no man knew how or where. When the Caliph recovered from his great wonder a little, he went down from his throne, and with a trembling hand, lifted the arrows from the bosoms of the twins. Upon the one which was of silver, he read deeply graven, El Starr. On the other, which was of clear crystal, El Meteor was written. "Lo!" said he, "these be the names which Allah hath given my children, but who shall read the riddle? The arrow of El Meteor is keen and bright, and plumed with golden feathers. The arrow of El Starr is also sharp, but has no feathers on the shaft." "Give me a bow," said a young magician to the Caliph, "I will read the riddle of Allah." "It is well," said the Caliph; "a bow." With that the young man ordered the hall to be cleared, and seizing the plumed and crystal arrow of El Meteor, fitted it to the bow-string. "Most noble Caliph;" said he, as he raised the bow, "I will aim at yonder pillar." Upon this he drew the bow to its utmost arc, and like a line of light the arrow flashed through the parted air, and true of aim struck the pillar fair in the middle; but

with a sudden crash the fragile weapon broke upon the hard wood, and fell in a thousand splinters on the marble floor. "It is well," said the magician, as he placed the arrow El Starr upon the bow, and once more drew the string. With a crooked leap the featherless shaft quitted the string. Whiz! it flew up against the ceiling; bang! it came down upon the gouty toes of the great Abou Ben Muff, and at last with an awkward jump fell at the feet of the Caliph. "I see," said the Caliph, as it fell, "great is Allah. Keen, swift, well-aimed, and fragile. Tough, sharp, aimless, and lucky: such shall my children be, Allah, il Allah." He at once ordered the head magician to be choked with his own long beard, and promoted the wise young soothsayer to the place of head astrologer. The years fled away, men forgot the strange genii, and the royal twins grew up into stately young men.

They were both tall and strong, but it was El Starr who best knew the Koran, it was El Meteor who threw the lance with most unerring aim.

El Meteor was noted far and wide for his courage in the chase, and for the headlong and thoughtless ardour with which he plunged into danger. His brother, on the other hand, was of a wavering nature, ever doubtful

of success, and therefore ever unsuccessful in his pursuits, yet he was of so kindly a nature that to be with him was an endless lesson in goodness and honor. So gentle was he, indeed, that by some men he was thought to be wanting in courage. Now it so happened that Abou Ben Muff was yet alive, although he had been condemned by the lips of the Caliph himself. When the executioner was about to tie his long beard about his neck the wily old fox gave the long hair a jerk, and the whole huge forest of beard, whiskers, and moustaches came off: "Lo," said he, "it is false; how can I now be strangled with my own beard?" The case was so plain that the astrologer escaped the fate that had awaited him. Very soon he regained his place in the Caliph's favor, and lost no chance of poisoning the Caliph's mind against the young princes, and chiefly against El Starr, who had been heard to assert that Astrology was a humbug, and of no possible value. When the twins were just twenty-one years old, the empire of El Knobb was suddenly invaded by a great army, composed of two populous tribes called the Kurds and Wheys. It seemed that the king of these tribes had a daughter of such marvellous beauty, that the flowers grew ashamed of them-

selves as she passed, and the stars of heaven sung hymns in her praise. From neighbouring kingdoms and from lands beyond the sea great lords and princes came to woo her. Their sails of silk, and their ships with golden cordage, crowded every port in her father's realm, so that men ceased to say Allah, il Allah, and began to swear by the eyes of Elula, the Beautiful. Among her lovers was the young prince El Meteor; every week he visited her father's palace, and urged his suit with all the ardor of his nature; nothing so much angered him as the presence of other suitors. Seventeen of them he slew in single combats; and one fine night he attacked their ships as they lay at anchor, and ruthlessly burned them up, silk sails, golden rigging, sailors, and cooks. Swiftly then he sailed away under cover of the darkness, and the king of the Kurds and Wheys had nothing to do but to growl and smoke his chibouque, for nobody knew who had done it.

Before long, however, El Muff came to know of it, so he tucked up his robe and repaired to the study of the other twin, El Starr. "High and Mighty Prince," said the magician, "I am here to serve you. Do you not know that it was your brother El Meteor who

burned up the ships of the princes who came to woo Elula?" "It is so," said the Prince, for he had thought as much. "And do you not see," continued the stargazer, "that any one who will tell this to the king of Kurd will ruin El Meteor's hopes of the princess?" "It is so," cried El Starr. "Suppose," added the astrologer, "that you were to do this, would it not be a good way to win the princess yourself?" "Ho!" said El Starr, in great wrath, "Begone!" and with this he seized a stick, and pursued Abou Ben Muff until he lost sight of him in the palace gardens.

Shortly after this attempt to make mischief, El Starr warned his brother of the astrologer's wicked plots, and so the affair blew over for a while. When the astrologer found that his efforts to cause evil blood between the twins had failed, he took care to make things as bad as he could by telling the king of Kurd who had burned the ships of his daughters' suitors. Very naturally the king cursed in Kurdish, and El Meteor was forbidden to visit Elula on pain of death. No sooner did El Meteor receive the news, than he raged like an angry hornet, and, calling for his horse, went fiercely away to the chase. The first day he did nothing but vow vengeance; but

on the second, he killed eleven hippopotami, a young dromedary, and four lions, which so comforted him that he returned home in rather a pleasant humor. "Bismillah," said he, as he rode along, "Allah has made an abundance of women; why should we mourn?" Perhaps if the princess had returned his love he would have been less easily pleased.

One fine morning not long after this, the princess Elula walked with her maids on the banks of the river which lay between the land of Kurd, and that of El Knobb. Like a fleet of fairy ships the purple and silver lily flowers floated by thousands on the water. "These be shells that swim," said Elula; "let us wade in and gather them." Her attendants begged her not to do so; but the princess was wilful, and would have it that she must wade into the water without in the least heeding their words, or caring for her clothes, which were every one of them made in Paris. "It is great fun," said the girls who were with her, and so their white feet twinkled clear in the water, and trod on pebbles which actually rolled about in delight. "Isn't it nice?" laughed the girls, and they waded in yet further and further, while seven old ladies whom they had left on shore were seized with

hysterics fearful to see. "Come, come," said Elula, "here be the cities of lilies." Suddenly a cry of fear arose in place of mirth. From beneath a thick grove near by, on the margin of the stream, a black boat shot out into the river. On the bow, a fiery eye glared red on the princess, and in the stern an ugly humped-back dwarf sat in silence. Like a swift javelin thrown by unseen hand, without sail or oar it shot towards the princess; beside her the boat stopped, dashing foam upon her as she stood. "Come! thou art mine," cried the dwarf. "Never! Allah, help me!" screamed the princess. At the name of Allah, the dwarf scowled so darkly that the waves whereon his image fell flashed into a foam of fright. "Allah! Allah!" cried the lady, for she knew that so long as she called on Allah, the dwarf could not touch her. "Allah!" cried she, panting with fear, while the fishes nibbled and kissed her little white toes. "Bosh!" said the dwarf, and on a sudden dashed such a handful of water in her face, that presently she talked nothing but mouthfuls of water, and could cry Allah no longer. Then with a yell, the dwarf seized her by the hands and drew her into his boat. At once the red eye on the prow glared redder,

the boat almost sprung through the water, and the foam was dashed up so high before the cleaving prow, that it hung one constant arch of light above the boat, and fell in crystal drops far astern upon its snowy wake.

No eagle's flight is swifter; on and on, beyond the lilies, around the farthest hill, into the sunset, lost, lost, lost! Before the last ripple broke on the bank, seven and twenty maids of honor fainted. Six old nurses stabbed themselves with their scissors, and all the rest yelled murder in fine contralto voices. Who shall describe the wrath of the King of Kurds! Troops of horsemen swept wildly along the river-banks, swift caiques fled arrowy across its bosom. Every thicket was searched, every house opened, and the newspapers were allowed to print nothing which did not begin with "Lost, strayed, or stolen." All was vain, the court went into mourning; and the maids of honor, having told all that they knew of the matter, were condemned to hold their tongues forever after, on pain of death. Besides this cruel punishment, all the old women in the harem were forbidden to knit from that day forward, and shopping of every kind was positively prohibited. Still the king was unsatisfied, and remembering how

Ben Muff had befriended him, with regard to the matter of the burned ships, he sent for that illustrious old soothsayer. "Good," said Abou Ben Muff, as he read the letter, which was handed to him by a trusty messenger. "I will attend his highness." That night, at a late hour, he wrapped himself in his cloak, and pulling his turban over his brow, stole into the sleeping-chamber of the young prince, El Meteor. With a careful hand the astrologer took the prince's sword from beside his bed, and rolling it in the folds of his cloak, crept silently out of the palace. With rapid steps he gained his horse, which was tied near by, and throwing himself into the saddle, galloped away through the darkness. For six hours he urged his rapid course, until he saw with joy the bright waves of the river shining in the moonlight. In a moment he stood upon the shore. With El Meteor's sword-point he drew a circle on the sand, and, bowing his head, he muttered some mystical words. A fierce rushing sound was heard, a red point of growing light was seen in the distance; near and more near it came, until the red eye of the dwarf's boat glared wildly on the wet sand at the feet of the soothsayer. "It is well," said he, and stepped

into the little vessel. Whiz! and away it flew, the dwarf in silence scowling on the water, his master standing erect and calm upon the prow. Midway on their course, Abou Ben Muff lifted the scimitar of El Meteor, and with a vigorous cast, threw it far away into the channel of the river. The bright rubies on its handle glittered in the soft pale light, and with a graceful curve the trusty weapon sunk into the stream. Before the day was over, Ben Muff presented himself at the throne of the Kurdish king. The king without delay told him of his desire to gain some knowledge as to the wretch who had made away with the princess. "She is gone," said the astrologer; "you will see the maiden no more." "Woe is me!" cried the Kurd; "who is it that has taken from me the joy of my age?" "Who shall say?" answered Ben Muff. "I know not; why should you believe the lying tongues of your harem? Doubtless the maiden is drowned, and, to save their necks from the bow-string, her women have sought to hide her fate." "But what to do?" said the king. "Search the river," said Ben Muff. The king was not very well pleased with the answer; but hiding his cha-

grin, he loaded the astrologer with gifts, and so sent him away rejoicing.

Before a week had passed, the humane society of the Kurds and Wheys had raked the river from mountain to sea. Four dead camels were the sole proceeds. Upon this the king sent word to Ben Muff that he was nothing more nor less than a cheat, and only wished he might just lay his hands on him. "Look again," was the only reply the astrologer deigned to make. "Allah, il Allah," said the king, and one hundred thousand men dug a new channel, and for fifty Persian miles they turned the tortured river from its bed. At last a lucky workman found the bright sword of El Meteor. It was sent to the king, "Is this all?" cried he. "We have found," said the officers, "eleven more dead camels, six sheep, plenty of fish, and this scimitar." "We have doubled the national debt," said the king, "and got some dead cattle, and an old blade." With that he drew the sword from its jewelled sheath, and on the blade was written, "I am the slave of the Prince El Meteor."

"By Mahmoud! the star-gazer hath brilliant counsels," said the king; "not content with burning the ships of my guests, this young rascal has stolen my

daughter. So with horse and foot the king of Kurds invaded the hapless land of El Knobb. In vain, the Caliph protested, and El Meteor swore that he had not set eyes on the princess for a year at least.

The king would believe no one, and the astrologer chuckled, while blazing villages marked the path of the invading army.

Meanwhile El Meteor raised a great force, and with his brother went out to do battle with the angry Kurds and Wheys. What between El Meteor's rash courage, and the wavering temper of El Starr, they lost seventeen pitched battles, and their fine army was brought down to a mere handful of men. With these, they retreated into the hills, carrying away with them the old Caliph, and leaving the Kurds in possession of the Capitol.

El Meteor, almost sick with rage, sallied out upon the foe from the mountain fastnesses, now by day, now by night, so that they began to find their conquest no very easy possession.

One day, however, Abou Ben Muff sent early news of a projected sortie to the king of the Kurds. Accordingly, an ambush was laid, and the young princes were surrounded by an overwhelming force. El Starr was as

usual undecided as to what should be done,—at one minute thinking of surrender, at the next wishing to fight to the death. El Meteor cut short the parley by crying his war cry, and plunging headlong on the enemy. Like a great sea that closes over a sinking ship the waves of battle closed upon the brothers. Now up, now down, a thousand crooked scimitars waved and flashed around them. Night came on, and still faint and weary, entrenched behind the growing heap of dead, they fought despairing. At last, it was over, and the quiet little stars throbbed with sweet pity, as they looked down upon the desolate battle-plain. By and bye, a single wounded wretch dragged himself out from the sickening mass of hacked and bleeding men. It was the prince El Starr. “Woe, woe,” wailed the wounded prince, “woe is me, oh, brother!” At a rivulet near by, El Starr slaked his burning thirst; and having cleansed the clotted blood from his many wounds, began to turn over wearily the pile of death. At last the pale face of El Meteor was seen by the prince. He was lying by himself, and on his bosom rested the shattered fragment of a crystal arrow. Sadly El Starr drew the body into a thicket near by, and covering it over with big palm leaves,

took the sword of the dead man, and, leaning on its handle, staggered faintly and mournfully up the mountain pass. The news of his son's death sadly affected the old Caliph, whose followers had all been killed, or else had fled away, saving only El Starr; as for Abou Ben Muff, he had gone over to the invader. The Caliph's grief was disturbed by the sound of the Kurdish drums, and together the father and the son fled away further into the hills. At length they found refuge in the hut of a shepherd, and here in disguise they rested until the wounded prince was restored to health and vigour.

One day the Caliph called his son to his side, and thus addressed him: "It is plain, my son, that until the lost princess be brought back to her father, we cannot hope for safety, and yet less for a return to our much loved home. I am near to death, and would not wish to die an exile. I have long believed that the princess was spirited away by evil genii who dwell on the farther borders of our kingdom, in the land of Al Mudd, or the Marshy. There the sun sits forever on the horizon's verge, and there gigantic cranes wander in search of travellers, across deep morasses rarely tracked by human

feet. But I dread to tell you all the terrors of this fearful land. Have you the courage to seek the lost Elula?" For a moment the prince paused to think, ever doubtful of his own prowess. At last he replied, "I will go, but I fear that I shall not succeed." "My son," said the old Caliph, "doubt is the father of failure, and the grandfather of disgrace. I charge you lay it aside; it has already proved the bane of your life. Now, as a father, I bid you to go." With that, the old man kissed the forehead of El Starr, and placing in his girdle the silvery and plumeless arrow with which the genii had foretold his character, bade him adieu. "I will go to-morrow," said El Starr. "To-night or never," answered the Caliph; "go; and I will await your return in this secure and quiet retreat." With a heavy heart the young prince girded on his brother's sword, and, placing the Koran in his bosom, began to cross the mountain. Twenty days he travelled onward over huge snow-clad hills; many great rivers he crossed, and thus living on berries and roots, at last descended from the hills and stood on the shores of a huge ocean. All was desolate and barren, there was not a human home within sight. Before him lay only a waste of wind-worried waters.

Far away he could just detect a cloudy strip of distant land, the wild and mysterious land of Al Mudd. How was he to reach it? Full of uncertainty, he seized a log from the beach, proceeded to roll it into the water, and then, grasping one end of it, he tried doubtfully the depth of the shelving shore. After wading some distance, the water came up to his neck, and his heart began to fail him.

“Fool that I am!” cried he, “to think of fording the sea.” The doubt came too late, for the wind was blowing from off the land, and the unfortunate young man soon found himself obliged to swim. To his horror the land seemed to recede, and before long, he and the log, his sole hope, were fast drifting across the stormy surf. For eight long hours he held on to the mouldy trunk, and as night fell, and the moon rose, he saw before him the long low line of the enchanted land. Just as the last relics of strength were leaving him, his feet felt the land, and with a cry of joy he welcomed the huge billow that rolled him, crushed and bleeding, upon the sloping beach. How long he lay there, it were hard to say. By and by, however, he awakened, and drawing from his vest a flask of shiraz wine, he drained it to the last drop; and

having thus gained a little strength, got up on his knees, and taking out the Koran, thanked Allah for his saving mercy. Well may they call me "aimless and lucky," said he; and thus saying, arose and began to look about him. It was, in truth, a fearful land. Before him lay one long and wide morass flecked here and there with pools of black and stagnant water, and patches of long rank grasses. Upon the far horizon sat the never-changing sun, an orb of fiery gold that stared through sullen masses of cloud, which now and then trailed long strips of darkness across his scarlet breadth like the iron-barred visor of a Frankish knight. Before the prince all was unutterably silent, behind him the wailing sea sobbed as it climbed unendingly the gradual shore. El Starr mused a little, and tightening his sword-belt, began cautiously to pick his steps over the black and oozy marsh. It was no easy task; at every step he plunged to the knee in the soft slime. As his strength failed, he sunk deeper and deeper, until at last he found himself waist-high and completely exhausted. Just then, a great shadow hid the sun, and looking towards it, he saw a sight which appalled his very soul. A monstrous crane, or stork, some thirty feet high, and

with legs like palm-trees, was bounding over the marsh and rapidly nearing him. Presently, the beast saw him, and with a cry of delight alit beside him.

“Well,” thought El Starr, “I had better put a good face on it;” so he cried out, “Halloo, there, stranger; help a poor fellow.” “Boo!” said the stork, “you are in a fix: come, clean yourself, I want to eat you;” and at this he hooked the prince’s neck betwixt two of his toes, and flirtd him out on the mud with a great chiplunck, like the sound of a cork coming out of a bottle. “You are thin,” said the stork, as he rolled El Starr over with his foot. “Too thin to eat, I hope,” said the prince. “I have eaten worse,” said the stork. “Come, undress; I’ve no notion of digesting your clothes; hurry yourself, I am almost starved.” “You can’t eat me without salt,” cried El Starr, in perfect despair. At this moment the stork saw a man riding calmly over the morass. “Look,” said he, “there comes the magician.” “Who?” asked the prince. “Some folks call him Ben Muff,” said the bird. “He will turn you into a sheep, if he catches you.” “Eat me, then,” cried the prince, “and be done with it.” But the rider approached so rapidly, that the bird had no time for his meal; so he said, “I’ll save you

up a little;" and bending down, seized El Starr, and whipping him under his wing, shut it down again upon his prisoner.

El Starr was almost smothered; but managing to separate the feathers a little, he peeped through, and saw that the horseman was indeed our old friend Ben Muff. He drew rein at a short distance, and thus addressed the stork:—

"Well, my pet, how are you?" "Hungry!" said the bird, with a voice like that of a bull. "What's the matter with your left wing?" "I've an indigestion," answered the stork. "I ate three babies this morning; they have disagreed with me." "I always told you," said Ben Muff, "you didn't chew your food enough; go to the castle now, I have a mufti there for your supper." "Good," said the bird, and instantly began to bound over the wet ground, with steps that measured twenty feet at the very least. After running thus for some hours, the stork came near a great flock of similar birds, who hailed him from a bit of dry ground near by. Our friend, the stork, flapped his vast wings by way of greeting, and in consequence, El Starr turned two somersets in mid air, and fell plump into a hospitable bed of mud,

which thus broke his fall. Finding himself so happily forgotten, he wriggled into the marsh, and leaving his nose exposed, he covered one eye with a knot of grass, and awaited the result. After a little the stork came back, and took a good look for his lost dinner. Alas! it was gone, and the disappointed bird was forced to give up the search. Pretty soon he and his companions went away over the marsh with gigantic steps, and El Starr slowly crawled out of the mud, and on to the dry land which the birds had deserted. He soon saw that he was upon the only high spot of earth within view; it was not over a mile in breadth, and arose like an island above the dead level of the marshes. At the centre it was nearly as high as the mountains of Ming. About two-thirds of the way down, a rapid stream ran around the hill. It had no end and no beginning, and yet with the force of a torrent it constantly rushed onward through its broad and pebbly channel. El Starr soon climbed up to its shore, and, after some labour, succeeded in cleansing his face and clothes. Then seizing his scimitar, he plunged into the rapid current; so swift it was, that although but narrow, the prince floated a good half mile around the hill before he could gain the opposite

side. The bank was covered with a dense thicket of thornless roses, whose odours were so strong that El Starr became faint, and being moreover very weary, fell fast asleep. When he awoke it was night; but the red sun still sat on the horizon angry and crimson. Through the bushes he saw lights flashing, and heard such an awful meowing and mewing as never before was heard. Very cautiously El Starr dragged himself through the bushes, and thus coming nearer to the blaze, beheld a most singular sight. The mountain was belted round with a circle of huge watch-fires; about them were seated or lying innumerable cats, not one of them less than four feet high. Their eyes flashed in the red fire-light, and the most of them were hungrily gnawing the bones of rats and mice scarcely smaller than themselves. By and by, the cats fell asleep one by one, and none were left awake, save a solitary guard, who meowed frightfully at intervals. Seizing his chance, El Starr dragged himself across the line, and leaving the cats behind him, ascended the mountain with rapid steps. The road, for such there was, lay over a green and grassy slope which was strewn with human bones. Here and there, he saw sheep with long fleece of floss silk. These regarded him

with a curious blank look, and now and then an old ram would try to drive him back.

The prince finding no greater hinderance, continued his march, and at last gained the summit of the mountain. By the dim light he saw before him a small plain, jewelled with a thousand pleasant flowers, and crossed in every direction by little streams whose softly flowing waters sang forever the most bewitching melodies. In the centre of this wonderful garden arose a little palace of crusted gold. It was built in the Moorish style, with moon-like arches, and numberless columns of porphyry and jasper. It was so wonderfully beautiful that the prince forgot his ordinary caution, and instantly advanced to the portal. To his astonishment the vast ebony doors flew open before him, and with a thunder crash closed behind him. He now found himself in a hall of black marble, lighted with a multitude of alabaster lamps. Perceiving no one, the prince walked on in no little awe, until he came to a door at the farthest end. It did not open like the other, and El Starr found himself a captive. In vain he ran to and fro; in vain his hands sought for some bolt or secret spring. It was only too plain; El Starr, the aimless, had gotten in; El

Starr, the aimless, could not get out. At last, weary with useless trials, he sat down at the foot of a pillar, and awaited his certain fate. Before very long the young man heard a noise, and, leaping to his feet, hid himself behind a pillar. A light footfall was now heard, and a lady of the most ravishing loveliness walked by the hidden prince. The damsel was so exquisite, that the prince again forgot himself, and, springing forward, fell upon his knees at her feet. The lady started back in dismay; but observing the manly and noble features of El Starr, she subdued her terror, and thus addressed him:—

“Wretched mortal, if such you be, fly I implore you from this haunt of evil.” “An hour past,” said El Starr, “and I would willingly have gone; now I would wish to live here were it the palace of Eblis.” “Who are you?” inquired the lady, not disliking the compliment. “I am the prince El Starr,” he returned; “hitherto men have called me the aimless, henceforth may they name me the blest of Allah; for surely having seen you, none other can be compared to me.” “Are you, in truth, that same El Starr whom my cruel tyrant Abou Ben Muff, so earnestly hates? fly, I pray you, or death is your fate.

I am called Elula;" and with this she turned her eyes so pleadingly upon the prince, that his whole soul melted in the sunlight of her glance. "Come!" cried he, "let us fly together. It is you I have come to seek." "Fly!" said the princess; "would it were possible! yet is there one resource. Here is an amulet; it was given to me by my father; useless in the hand of a woman, it is all powerful in the hand of a man, if he but possess my love." "Oh!" groaned the prince; "give it to me." "Ah!" said the lady; "so noble a face can but foretell a noble soul; I will give it to you. Men have called you 'the aimless,' 'the wavering,'—know that this little gift will always enable you to avoid failure. Whenever a difficulty presents itself, place this upon your hand;" so saying, she held out a little fish made of thin leaf like tissue. "Let us question it;" and she laid it upon the open hand of the wondering prince. "Now," said she, "Curly fish, curly fish, shall we get out?" Instantly, the little animal began to curl up into the oddest possible shapes, twisting and writhing until it fell on the floor. "We shall," said the princess. "Good!" quoth El Starr; and no sooner did success appear no longer doubtful, than a thousand schemes flashed

through his mind. "I see," he cried. "Come, the door at the inner end will open to you; come," and seizing her hand, he walked boldly up to the portal by which she had entered. "Open," said Elula, and it opened; a lofty room with many windows appeared. El Starr immediately opened one of these, and bidding Elula to return to the marble hall, he kissed her cheek, and leaped bravely full forty feet to the ground. Stunned but undaunted, he soon reached the lofty door by which he had entered the palace. "Open at once," he cried; and, as before, the huge doors swung sullenly apart. Through this avenue of safety the nimble Elula bounded with a cry of delight. "So far, so good," said the prince, and he placed the magical leaf-fish on his palm. "Shall I kill the cats, curly fish?" As before, the amulet wriggled, and twisted, and squirmed, and twirled, and at last fell on the ground. Upon this, they began to descend the mountain. It was now broad day, and before long they saw the cats, who were greedily eating their breakfast. The prince and his sweetheart crept up as near to them as was possible, when suddenly El Starr drew his scimitar, and carrying the lady, sprang right in among the lordly pussies. "Meyou, ow, ow," said the biggest, as

El Starr chopped off his tail. Now, in an instant, the lovers had reached the far side of the cat-camp, and pursued by ten thousand grimalkins, fled wildly down the hill. On they came, galloping down, with their backs gathered up into humps like those of the round-shouldered dromedaries of Abyssinia. "Allah, save us!" said the princess, faintly, as they saw the swift stream which El Starr had crossed, when climbing the hill. Never pausing, save to watch a moment the curly fish wriggle assent, without a doubt, El Starr seized Elula in his arms, and with a tremendous bound leaped some dozen feet beyond, and over the raging water. "O!" said the princess, as they rolled on the grass. "Ha, ha!" laughed El Starr. The cats smelt the water, and would not go in—everybody knows that cats are very averse to water. Leaving the baffled cats, and the roaring stream behind them, El Starr and Elula peacefully descended to the edge of the marshy plain. "Now," said the prince, "how shall we get over?" "Positively," said Elula, "I can't walk, I've only my thin shoes. Let us ask curly fish, whether we must try it." The fish was put upon El Starr's open hand, and being questioned, instantly doubled himself into a small bundle.

“Fishy, we shall certainly sink,” said the prince; but the more he doubted, the more the fish wriggled, so the lovers at once advanced towards the marsh. As they turned about the corner of a dense thicket, Elula suddenly seized the prince, and drawing him back, pointed silently towards the sleeping figure of a fat old man, who was snoring away like a live organ with a cold in its head. It was the magician Ben Muff, who, having finished his two bottles of shiraz wine, was dozing off their effects in the warm and pleasant sunshine on the grassy hillside. No sooner did El Starr behold his enemy, than he grasped his sword, determined to finish him, in the most effectual manner. “No, no,” whispered Elula, hastily; “steel cannot harm him. He himself has told me that until he is eaten alive, death cannot approach him; therefore do not go near him: let us rather fly before he awakens.” “By my father’s beard,” said El Starr, “if I leave him thus, may love desert me!” After a few moments of deep thought, the prince exclaimed, “I have it! do you hide in yonder thicket, and if I perish in my folly, you must wait until nightfall, and then try to make your escape.” “Kiss me, then,” said Elula; and he did. She sat down in the midst of

the thickly clustered roses. El Starr now rolled up his sleeves, and selecting a bunch of ripe alderberries, crept silently alongside of Abou Ben Muff. With great care he squeezed the purple juice of the alders into his own palm, and with a knot of silk-grass painted the face of the astrologer. Often El Starr paused to see if Ben Muff still slept; but as he showed no sign of awakening, the prince soon succeeded in staining his face of a very fine purplish red. Next he removed his own cloak, and with it covered over the body and legs of the drunken old magician. Still he slept on, and finally El Starr possessed himself of the sleeper's cloak, and rapidly retreated to a clump of palms where the horse of Abou Ben Muff was quietly grazing. "Quick!" cried the prince, and as he spoke, threw himself into the saddle. Then he touched the steed with his heel; and with a fierce and violent plunge, the animal snorted and set off over the morass with the speed of the simoon. "Good," said the prince. In the distance were three of the huge storks who dwelt on the marshes. Towards these the prince rode with all possible speed. As soon as they saw him, the monstrous beasts flapped their wings and shouted aloud. The prince gathered the magician's red cloak about him, so

as to hide the lower part of his face, and thus prepared, drew rein beside the birds. "Well," said he, "how are you, my pets?" "Hungry!" said all three at once; "What's for dinner?" "Not much," said El Starr; "only a black fellow, who has fallen asleep at the foot of the hill just below the palm-trees." "Great is Abou Ben Muff," said the storks, and without delay, they began to bound over the soft ground with awful leaps, and outstretched necks. The prince followed as fast as he could; he was just in time to see one of the storks pick up Abou Ben Muff, and with a dextrous chuck, pitch him head foremost down his throat. "Murder!" cried the magician, as he went down with a gulp. "Murder! help! it's a mistake." "Really," said the bird, "you ought to have spoken before; bless me, how fat you are, ough!" By this time Elula was mounted safely behind the prince. "Look!" she screamed. Well he might. As the bird bolted the last of Abou Ben Muff a noise like a great wind was heard, huge columns of dust arose, the ground shook, and in an instant marsh and ocean, hill and palace, storks and cats were gone. A bright yellow sun looked down from the upper sky, and before them lay waving corn-fields, orchards of olives,

and fig-trees, festooned with vines, neat villages, and pleasant little merry streams. As the lovers rode along by cottage and palace, they saw no human face. The white milk-pans hung upon the fences as the good wife had left them, the churn stood in the door-way, and the very ovens stood half-open with their smouldering fires yet lazily smoking. "This land, the magician enchanted," said Elula. On they rode, over the distant mountains by lake, stream, and village, until at last they entered the kingdom of El Knobb; and so El Starr brought back to the King of Kurds the daughter whom the dwarf had stolen.

Let us pass over the rejoicings. "I have given your father his kingdom again," said the King of the Kurds one day to El Starr, as they sat over their pipes; "what will you have for yourself?" El Starr kept silent. "Well, well," said the king, "I see;" and so he married the princess to El Starr; and men ceased to call him the aimless, and thenceforth he was ever known as El Starr the Lucky.

One day when the prince was walking with his wife, he began to talk about the curly fish. "Let us question it," said she, with a wicked twinkle in her eyes. "Good!"

said El Starr, and he put the fish on his hand. "Does she love me?" said he. The fish actually jumped. "Can he jump over the moon?" asked Elula. "What!" exclaimed El Starr, for the fish still curled his back up. "Nonsense, my dear, the thing is a humbug." "Ah!" said the princess. "I begin to suspect," said he. "Do you, my dear?" added the lady. "I desire," said the prince, who felt rather small — "I desire, that the subject may never be spoken of again."

And as the years fled away, there grew golden-feathered plumage on the silver arrow of El Starr, the prince.

BUN, THE SQUIRREL.

THERE once was a squirrel, whose name was Bun,
Very far he could leap, very fast he could run,
He could go to the top of the tallest trees,
And dance up there with the greatest ease ;
And extremely well this squirrel knew
The places where acorns and chestnuts grew.
A hickory-nut he could crack and pick,
You could not have done it half so quick ;
And he did it, too, so very well
That nothing was left but the empty shell.
He had a nest in a great high tree,
Which he thought no boys could climb to see ;
And there he lived all the winter through
With chestnuts and acorns not a few ;
But as soon as the summer sun came out,
You might see him playing all about,
Leaping along from tree to tree
As merry as ever a squirrel could be ;

And if you *had* seen him, I'm sure that you
Would have wanted to be a squirrel too.
But once he met with a dreadful mishap,—
One day on his tree he heard a rap,
And then another, and more, and more,
Till he wondered who knocked so loud at his door;
He listened a while, and at last he thought
He'd go out and see; but he found himself caught
In a great long bag, and held so tight
That he feared he should have been smothered quite;
And then he heard the voice of a boy
Call out to his brother, in tones of joy,
"Oh! Tommy, come here, see! I've caught one;
'Tis a beautiful fellow: what splendid fun!"
It might be fine fun for gay little Dick,
But was not for Bun; he ran very quick
Up and down the bag, and all about,
Trying to find a place to get out;
But Dicky held him so very fast
He was forced to give it up at last.
Then the two little fellows went home in great glee,
That their brother and sisters the squirrel might see;

And when from his bag Dick took him out
The children all set up a joyful shout.
“What a lovely squirrel! what bright black eyes,
Only see how cunning he looks, and wise,
And how soft his fur is, just feel with your hand.”
Poor Bun trembled so he could hardly stand,
He longed to hide somewhere; but Tommy, to check
Such a notion, had tied a long string round his neck.
Then Dick from the children took him away,
And said he must go in his box and stay:
This box was made like a house with a door,
To go in at behind, and a window before;
'Twas a nice little house, but our poor little Bun
Thought a hole in a tree was a much better one;
For the fine painted door, and the roof of bright tin
Only served to keep Bunny shut hopelessly in.
He lived in this prison for weeks two or three;
But a bright, merry squirrel, no longer was he.
The children spent many an hour with their pet,
But all Bunny thought of was, how he might get
Outside of his box, and away to the wood;
For, although Dick and Tom gave him everything good

That squirrels can eat, not a pin did he care
For walnuts and shellbarks, while fastened up there.
But Dick came to bring him his breakfast one day,—
He gave him some chestnuts and hurried away,
And, (how it could happen I scarcely can tell,)
He neglected to fasten the door very well :
So Bunny, in peeping and turning about,
Spied the door open, and softly slipped out ;
Down from the table he quietly dropped,
Out of the window, and never he stopped
Till he reached the top branch of a splendid oak-tree,—
Then a bright merry squirrel again was he.
Oh, dear, how he capered and leapt, and what fun
He thought it to bask in the warm morning sun ;
To chase the soft shadows, the waving leaves threw
On the branches gray, and to sip the dew
Which hangs on the sharp-pointed blades of grass,
For squirrels and birdies to drink as they pass.
And now he lives as he used before ;
But if any one happens to knock at his door,
No matter how loud, I am certain that he
Will not step out to ask what the matter can be.

THE BIRD AND THE MOUSE.

THE little bird said to the field-mouse,
“Come up here and play with me ;
You don’t know how pretty the world looks
From out of a high green tree.”

But the field-mouse replied to the birdie,
“I haven’t a doubt it is nice ;
But if I should fall from the branches,
I should dash out my brains in a trice.”

“Oh, don’t be afraid,” said the birdie,
“You can sit here quite safe in our nest,
My father will treat you politely,
His name it is Robin Redbreast.

“My mother is careful and gentle,
She’ll see that you come to no harm,
And let you creep under her feathers
If you don’t feel sufficiently warm.

“You can show me your coat of fine velvet,
And I'll show you my pretty new wings;
My father's songs, too, are so splendid,
I should like you to hear how he sings.”

But the field-mouse still made the same answer :

“You're kind, but I really can't come ;
Here's this big grain of corn I must carry
To my six little children at home.

“We live under the root of a wheat-stalk,
And have not a very fine view ;
But our house is quite cool in the summer,
And warm in the winter-time too.

“I have to take care of my children,
And stow all my harvest away ;
And so you may see, little birdie,
I cannot have much time to play.

“And if I should pay *you* a visit
Who have those fine songs and fine wings,
I fear I should often be wishing
That *I* could get such pretty things.”

So the field-mouse took up her great corn-grain,
And quietly trudged off alone ;
When next she passed under those branches,
The pretty young robins had flown.

THE WOLF THAT WANTED A DOCTOR.

ONCE upon a time, there was a wolf who was growing old. He had very bad teeth, and was fond of eating young lambs. One day when he could get no more tender food, he met a big ram, and, being hungry, gobbled him up so greedily that one of his hard horns broke the wolf's front tooth off, and gave him a dreadful aching, day and night. This made him so cross that he bit off the tails and ears of all the young wolves, until one of them said to him: "Papa, why do you not go to the doctor and get cured." "Dear me, child," said the wolf, "that's a good idea;" and so saying, he started off. Presently, he met a great dog, whose business it was to guard the sheep. "Good-morning, sir," said the wolf; "do you know where a doctor lives?"

"Yes," said the dog, "a good wolf-doctor lives yonder in that house; bow-wow and good-morning, I must see after my sheep," and away he trotted. The wolf was

not fond of houses; but his tooth hurt him, and he walked up to the door, holding his handkerchief to his face.

There were two little girls at the door who saw the wolf, and ran in crying aloud, "Father! father! here's a wolf." Then the farmer who lived there, seized his gun, and, coming to the door, fired at the wolf; but luckily for the wolf did not hurt him. The farmer's gun was full of pills, but not the kind to cure toothache. "I don't like that doctor's medicine," said the wolf; and so saying, he ran away howling.

By and bye, he met a monkey, who no sooner saw his bloody, fierce face, than he climbed up a tree as high as he could get. "Come down," said the wolf, "and show me where a doctor lives." But the monkey only climbed up higher, for he was very much scared. Unluckily he climbed so high, that he got on a small branch which was too weak to bear his weight, and down he tumbled head over heels. No sooner had he reached the ground, than the wolf ran to him, and putting one foot on him, said sternly: "Show me where a doctor lives, or I will kill you." "Sir," said the monkey, "you have only to cross the bridge, and take two turns to the left, and nine

turns to the right, and seven to the left, and there you will find Dr. Duck, who is the best little quack in all the country." "Just so," said the wolf; "get up and show me the way, and look sharp, too, how you go, or I will eat you before you can say boo."

"How can I get up, if my leg be broken," answered the monkey. "Get on my back," cried the wolf, "and that quickly."

So the monkey climbed up on his back slowly, as though he was hurt, and the wolf galloped off with great speed. Presently, the monkey tumbled off and tried to run away; but the wolf was too quick for him, and gave him such a nip that he was glad to get on his back again in a mighty great hurry. "I shall surely be eaten," said the monkey to himself; and just then they came to a muddy place where the wolf had to go slowly, which gave the monkey time to think. So he said to the wolf, "did ever you try a mud-poultice for your toothache; my grandmother says it is a first-rate cure." "How do you use it," said the wolf. "Oh, that is easy," answered the monkey; and thus saying, he leaned over, and taking two handfuls of mud quickly plastered it right on to the two eyes of the wolf. While he was

jumping about half-blind, the monkey leaped off and climbed a tree.

“You, rascal,” said the wolf, “come down.” “No, sir,” cried the monkey, “not this time. Do you like my grandmother’s poultice for spectacles.” “Bother, your grandmother,” said the wolf, and started off once more to find a doctor. After a long journey he met a pig. “Piggy-wiggy, my friend,” said the wolf, “get on my back, and show me where the doctor lives.” “Just over there,” replied the piggy, who was so much afraid that he shook all over. “Get on my back,” said the wolf. “I don’t know how to ride,” said piggy. “If you don’t go on top of me, you shall go inside of me,” said the wolf, fiercely; “some people like a stage better than horseback,” and at once swallowed the pig all but his tail, which stuck out of the wolf’s mouth and made him feel very uncomfortable, and much more ugly. About a mile further on, he came to a little pond, and on the far side he saw a sign with the words—

DR. DUCK, SURGEON.

“Halloo!” cried the wolf. “Doctor, doctor, come over here and cure me of my toothache, and I will give you

a bag of gold. When the doctor heard this, he came out to the door, and began to laugh. "Ha, ha!" says he, "here is a wolf with two tails and a toothache. What gave you a toothache?" "Oh," said the wolf, "I broke my tooth cracking nuts for my neighbour, the squirrel." Come over, quickly." "No, sir," answered the Duck, "I won't doctor you—I don't like patients with two tails—your disease may be catching." This made the wolf angry, and he ran away, saying: "I will eat you up some day if I die for it." In a few moments he met a long snake, who was one of his friends. When the snake heard his story, he said, "I will help you." So they waited all night, and early in the morning, they went to the pond where the doctor lived. Then the wolf took the end of the snake's tail and tied it to the pig's tail, which stuck out of his own mouth, and afterwards the snake swam under the water to the middle of the pond and lay quiet. "Halloo, Doctor Duck!" cried the wolf, "come out here and help me." But the Doctor Duck only looked from a window and laughed. "Here's nine worms for you, and a frog," cried the wolf; "if you will only swim out a *little* way, and tell me what to do." Now the Duck thought it would be no

harm to go just a *little* way, so he swam towards the wolf; but not very near. "Come nearer," said the wolf, "I am old and deaf." So then the Duck came a little closer, but presently, he cried aloud: "Murder! what's that, I have cramp in my toes." For just then the snake, who had waited so quietly, came up from the bottom of the pond and seized the Duck by the leg, and then the wolf ran and pulled the snake's tail, and the snake's head held on to the duck, and the poor Doctor Duck was dragged to the land, where the wolf seized him. "Now, sir," cried the wolf, "Tell me how to cure my toothache, or I will eat you." "Nothing will cure you," answered the Duck, "but a young chicken four days old." "Very good," said the wolf, "get me one, for I fear to go near to the barn-yards." "Well," said Doctor Duck, "let me go to get one." "If you let him go he will never come back," cried the snake. "Yes," said the wolf, "that is true;" and with that he bit off the Duck's leg, saying, "I will keep your leg here for you till you come back with the chick, and then you shall have your leg again." "Oh, dear," moaned the Duck, and limped away on one leg. When he got to the barn-yard he got behind a hedge and tried to cluck

like a hen, but it was a poor attempt, and the chicks did not come. While the Duck was trying, he heard a fox laughing at him; so he turned and said, "Why do you laugh at me?" "I am laughing at your fine voice," answered the Fox. "What are you trying to do?" "I wish to catch a chick," said the Duck, "to cure the wolf of a toothache; but I much fear he will eat me after all." "Oh, I will help you," said the fox, for he was just then in a good humour. "I am glad," cried Doctor Duck, "and what a pity to have to give a poor little woolly chick to that wicked wolf; but I suppose I must, for he has bitten my leg off and will not give it to me until he gets a chick." "A good joke," cried foxy; "but we will fix him; you have only to follow my advice and all will be well." So saying, he went to his house and brought out a clock. "Now," said the fox, "I will show you how to catch chicks, and you shall cure me of the gout when I eat too much." Then the fox wound up the clock and covered it with leaves, while he and the Duck hid close by. When the clock began to tick it made a sound like cluck, cluck, just such as an old hen makes. No sooner did the chicks hear it than they

came through the hedge, and the fox seized one of them, and ran away followed by the Duck. Soon they came to the pond, and there sat the wolf very grim with his handkerchief tied around his sore face. Now on the way, the fox had told the Doctor Duck what to do. When the wolf saw them, he said to the Duck, "you are very slow." "That's because I have only one leg," said the Duck, "and because I had to bring Dr. Fox to talk over your case." So the fox felt the wolf's pulse, and took hold of the pig's tail which still stuck out of his mouth. "It is very tight," said he. "Yes," answered the wolf, "I wish it was not. You have no idea how uncomfortable it is; but quick, where's the chick?" "Here," said the Duck. "I'll hold your head," said the fox, very tenderly; and so saying, he took hold of the pig tail. "Open your mouth and shut your eyes, Mr. Wolf," cried the Duck, "that I may pass the chick down your throat." So the wolf shut his eyes, and as quick as could be the fox tied the pig tail fast to the root of a tree, and the Duck seized his leg and the chick, and ran off with the fox, leaving the wolf tied so fast that he *never, never* got away.

And then the Duck sewed his leg on, for he was a clever doctor. And the fox took the chick home to its mother, which was the best thing I ever heard of him, and grew to be a good fox, and never stole any more; and at last went away and became a chaplain in the army.

LITTLE BOBBY REDBREAST.

ONCE on a time, in a beautiful wood,
With a great many trees, a fine chestnut-tree stood;
So tall that it seemed to a childish eye,
Only a step from its top to the sky.
In this tree a fine robin had built his nest,
A beautiful fellow, with bright red breast;
And such a song as this robin could sing—
Its music made all the old branches ring!
He would sing this song, so loud and clear,
To his sweet little mate who sat listening near;
And when it was finished, away flew he
To hunt up a fine fat fly for her tea.
His little wife sat on the nest all day,
You could not have driven her far away;
And what do you think she had in there,
Hidden so close with tender care?

They were dear little eggs, one, two, three, four,
There would not have been any room for more ;
And she loved to keep them free from harm,
And cover them up so nice and warm.
She stayed there quietly day after day,
Till two or three weeks had passed away,
And then in the nest was the greatest rout,
The eggs were broken, the birds were out.
With their little red throats all open wide
For something to eat every one of them cried,
Giving their father, and mother too,
Plenty of work beside singing to do.
The parents were proud of their little brood,
They were all very pretty and all very good,
Except one named Bob, who was not inclined
His father and mother always to mind.
He thought, though he did not like to say,
That he knew what was best, much better than they ;
The father had promised, when stronger they grew,
He would teach them to fly, and to hop about too,
And they thought *that* would be such a very fine thing,
They could scarcely wait till 'twas time to take wing.

Day after day when the sun arose
The very same question they'd all propose :
"Papa, don't you think we are strong enough yet?"
And the very same answer they'd always get :
"Oh, no, I don't think it would do at all ;
You're too little to fly, you would certainly fall."
So off he would hasten their breakfast to bring,
And then, to amuse them, a song he would sing.
Little Bob often poked his head out of the nest,
And thought he would go, and not wait for the rest ;
But when he looked down, he felt so much afraid,
That his head grew quite giddy, and so there he laid.
At last they were glad, one fine morning, to hear
Their father observe to their mother, "my dear,
It is time we were teaching our young ones to fly,
And, if you are willing, to-day they may try."
So out of the nest they were taken now,
And taught how to hop from bough to bough,
Till, after great care and some tumbles, they found
They all had quite safely come down to the ground.
It would take me a great deal too long to say
What wonderful things they saw on that day ;

Their father at last thought it time to go home,
Then Bob said to himself, "They won't get *me* to come;
There are so many things down here to see,
I am not going back to that old high tree."
So when no one was thinking where he had gone,
He crept off, and nestled behind a great stone,
And his father and mother called out in vain,
"Bob! Bobby;" -but Bob would not answer again.
So they gathered together all the rest,
And flew, quite sorrowful, back to their nest,
Fearing the cat, or the setter-pup,
Had caught little Bobby, and eaten him up.
As soon as Bob found himself all alone,
He hopped briskly up to the top of the stone;
And, looking around for awhile at his ease,
Thought, "how splendid this is; I can do as I please."
But just as poor Bob to himself had said that,
He was covered all up by a great straw-hat,
And suddenly felt himself raised in the air,
And carried along, he didn't know where;
At last on a table he softly was set,
And heard Willy say, "I have brought you a pet,

Dear sister Nell; I was sorry you cried
So much, when your yellow canary-bird died;
And now here's a robin, just out of the nest,
He will soon learn to sing, and he'll have a red breast;
So take him, and hold him just so in your hand,
While I run for the cage, with some water and sand." .
So poor little Bob, in a great fright and rage,
Was put very carefully into the cage,
And sorry enough did he feel that night,
That he had not done what he knew was right.
At first master Bob would not eat a thing
Of all that Willy and Nelly could bring;
But after awhile he grew quite tame,
And when Willie called him, he always came,
And perched on his finger or Nell's to be fed
With blue cedar-berries, and crumbs of white-bread.
He lived all his life with Willy and Nell;
But though they loved him and treated him well,
He often wished he could fly in the wood,
As he might have done, had he only been good.

TO-MORROW'LL BE CHRISTMAS.

“To-MORROW'LL be Christmas!” cried Charley, with joy,
“To-morrow'll be Christmas, I've been a good boy;
 And I'll have a small spade, and a rake,
A sword with a sheath, and a new painted gun,
A fiddle and bow, and a trumpet and drum,
 And oh! what a noise I will make.”

“Yes, to-night's Christmas eve,” answered sweet little Fan,
“I shall keep my eyes open as long as I can,
 When we are all put in bed;
That good old St. Nick, I'm determined to see,
When he comes down the chimney with something for me,
 And a pack filled as high as his head.”

“And *I'll* see him sister,” said dear little May;
“As quiet as two little mice we will stay,
 And we'll ask Ann to leave us the light;

We will be covered up, and pretend we're asleep,
But from under the curtains we slyly will peep,
And we won't even wink all the night."

St. Nicholas heard them, and laughed in his sleeve ;
"Ho, neighbours," said he, "do you think I'll believe
In such little pussies as you ?
I send Morpheus to take watching girls by surprise,
He'll sprinkle some poppy-juice over your eyes,
And then we'll see what you will do."

Now soon in their cribs they were tucked, and both tried
To lie very quiet, with eyes open wide,
For fear that asleep they should drop ;
But the poppy-juice soon made them wink very fast,—
They both slept as sound as a top.

And then down the chimney St. Nicholas flew,
A glance round the chamber he hastily threw,
And walked up to each little bed :
"They are good little damsels as ever I've seen,
Although in a great many nurseries I've been,
And I'll give them nice play-things," he said.

So back to the chimney he went in great haste,
Where the stockings on each side were carefully placed,
 And filled them as full as he could ;
A great big round orange he put in each toe,
And all up the foot and the leg did he stow
 Cakes and candies both pretty and good.

From his pack he brought out a great heap of nice toys,
Such trumpets and tops, whips, and books for the boys,
 And dolls, both for Fanny and May ;
Such dear little tables, and sofas, and chairs,
Such kettles, and gridirons, and small kitchen wares,
 'Twas enough to make grandmamma play.

Round the tops of the stockings he hung them with care,
And very quick, too, for he'd no time to spare,
 He had so much business to do ;
To every good child he'd a visit to pay,
And a stocking to fill up before break of day,
 And many good children he knew.

When just at the chimney, he turned round once more,
(For he didn't go out like most folks, by the door,)
 And gave a queer shake of his head ;

“So you thought to outwit me ; well, you may be proud
When you do *that*, my chicks ;” and he laughed out so loud
That Fanny sat straight up in bed.

Off he went, but she just caught a glimpse of his foot,
So neatly encased in its little fur boot,
And heard the bells ring on the roof :
As quick as a mouse to the window she ran,
As she heard the gay voice of the little old man,
And the pattering of each little hoof.

She heard his whip crack, and she just saw him go
O'er the tops of the houses all covered with snow,
Which gleamed in the moon's brilliant light ;
She saw the bright glancing of silver-shod feet,
From his six little reindeer, so handsome and fleet,
And then they were all out of sight.

Fan stood looking out till Jack Frost pinched her toes,
Then up to the chimney she hastily goes,
At the stockings to take a sly peep ;
They were fat, and she longed to examine the toys,
But that would not be fair, so to bed without noise
She crept, and was soon fast asleep.

But when she told Charlie and May what she'd seen,
Charlie laughed, which Fan thought was exceedingly mean,
 And said she had dreamed this fine sight;
But she was not persuaded by all he could say,
But believed in her heart, and believes to this day;
 That she saw old St. Nick on that night.

OLD WINE IN A NEW BOTTLE.

ONCE upon a time, there was a white elephant named Ba Ba. He was washed all over with cream every day, and had nine cows all for his own use, because white elephants are rare. This one, you must know, was the Caliph's elephant, and was a great pet with everybody.

There also lived in the town a little tailor who had a witch for a wife, and, as the tailor was very lazy, she made him a gold needle which did any kind of work you put it to. All you had to do was to put the needle on the cloth, and at once it would dance to and fro, and through and through until the work was done in the very nicest way. To be sure it was hard to make it cease, for it was such a busy little one-eyed fellow that to stop it you had to seize hold of the thread and drop the needle in a little iron box, and even then it could be heard hopping about inside; but it could not sew the iron, you know.

This needle brought much custom to the tailor, be-

cause it did the work so well ; for no one liked the tailor, who was a cross fellow, and beat his little children twice a day. And, indeed, but for his needle, no one would have given him work to do at all, though I ought to say that folks thought he himself did the sewing. But he never did do any at all. He liked to sit in his window with his legs crossed, and make believe to sew, while he smoked a long pipe. Meanwhile he would put the cloth to be made up on a shelf below his seat, and would place the needle on it, and would laugh to see how merrily it moved, and how neatly it made the stitches and the button holes. He had to be very quick when the sewing was done, because if he did not seize the needle ever so cleverly it would sew the coat all up into such a heap that no one could get the stitches out again.

One sunny day the tailor was at the window when Ba Ba came by and put his trunk up to ask for an apple, but this crusty tailor only put his hot pipe bowl to Ba Ba's trunk and burned it, which made the elephant roar and shake his trunk, while the tailor laughed at his pain.

Next day Ba Ba came by again and put out his trunk as usual, for he did not think any one would be willing

to hurt him. This time the tailor had the smart little gold needle in his hand, and was about to put it away, for it had just done sewing a red coat for the Caliph. But first, he thought, I will give Ba Ba a little prick with it, and then he will dance with pain. So he stuck Ba Ba's white trunk with the needle, which made him give a loud cry and jerk away his trunk so quickly that the needle stayed fast in his skin. "Oh! dear," cried the tailor, "what shall I do?" for he did not dare to tell that he had played ugly tricks on the white elephant, which was the Caliph's pet. Meanwhile Ba Ba howled and ran away in great pain, because the busy little needle kept sewing away at the inside of his trunk. Just fancy what pain it must be to have a needle sewing away inside of you, making clever little button holes and coats, and lots of things to wear, out of your flesh.

Ba Ba felt as if he had a toothache, and he was so angry that next day he filled his trunk full of nasty, muddy water, and, as he came by the tailor's shop, squirted a great bucketful at least, all over that wicked tailor, and his wife, and his nine children, and his dinner, and the cat, and, worse than all, over the red coat, which was ready for the Caliph to wear. "Now," said the

tailor, "we shall all be killed and also beaten, because the Caliph's coat is spoiled." "Let the needle make another," cried his wife. But the tailor had to tell her how he had lost the needle, and this made her angry enough, because she had been nine years making the gold needle, and could not make needles like that in a day, just when they were wanted. At last she gave her husband some good advice as to what he should do. She told him to take the coat to the Caliph and tell him that Ba Ba had squirted muddy water on it; "and then," said she, "we will ask the Caliph to cut off Ba Ba's trunk; and, when it is off, we will go and get it at night, and find the needle inside of it,—so Ba Ba will be made to suffer, and we shall escape being beaten." The tailor liked this advice so well that he took the coat, and, with his wife and children all over mud, went to the court of the Caliph. When they came in the Caliph laughed to see such a funny-looking party; but when he saw his coat, and heard the tailor's story, he was very angry, and cried aloud, "Bring Ba Ba." Now Ba Ba was very sick, because of that cruel little needle, which never ceased sewing the inside of his trunk, and, indeed, it hurt him so that

he had to carry his trunk in a great silk sling, and had no comfort, day or night.

When Ba Ba came in sight, the Caliph said to the tailor, "What shall be done to the white elephant, because he spoiled my new coat?"

"Cut off his trunk," cried the tailor's wife, "and then he will not be able to play such nasty tricks any more."

"It is just," said the Caliph. "Cut off Ba Ba's trunk and bury it."

So soon as Ba Ba heard this sad news, and saw the soldiers come towards him, he moaned in a piteous way, and ran and put the end of his trunk in the lap of the Caliph's daughter, who was a kind-hearted princess, and was very fond of white elephants.

She was so sorry for Ba Ba that she begged her father not to harm him. So the Caliph said, "It does not matter much. We will wait."

Now the princess saw that Ba Ba was sick, so she had him put in a great garden of roses, and fed him with lumps of sugar and lady apples every day. But the needle still kept on sticking him, so that at last he fell ill and lay down and could not get up at all, on account of the pain. Then the princess tried all the

elephant doctors; but one said he had hysterics, and another said he was too fat, and one said he was in love. All the other doctors said he had a bad cold in his head, and must have a mustard plaster on his nose, and take a tubful of Castor oil. But not one of them did him any good, and therefore the princess made a man cry aloud in the streets for a magic doctor to cure her dear Ba Ba.

So soon as the tailor's witch wife heard this she told her husband to put on a tall hat, and a big beard, and a wig, so that no one would know him, and to go to the princess's palace, reading a big book all the while he walked through the streets. When the princess saw him she said, "What a wise magic doctor. He does not wish to waste his time even when he walks." So she took him to the garden and told him he should have a great stocking full of gold if he cured Ba Ba. But the tailor was afraid to go near to the elephant in the daytime; therefore he said to the princess, "I must not lose time. At night I will cure Ba Ba." So he walked up and down, as though he were reading, but really he could not read at all. When night came he went quietly to Ba Ba and said, "I see you have a thorn in your trunk." This made Ba Ba trust him and say to himself, "This doctor knows a thing or two."

“I will cut it out,” said the tailor; “but you must keep very still.”

Ba Ba nodded his head, as much as to say yes. At this the tailor was very full of joy; for, thinks he, I shall soon have my needle once more. So he took hold of Ba Ba's sore trunk and made ready a little knife to cut out the needle. But all of a sudden he gave a loud cry of pain; for what do you think happened? Why the needle was sewing away so fiercely that it sewed the tailor's thumbs fast to the elephant's trunk; and then, before you could turn around, it sewed all his fingers fast, and then his coat. This caused Ba Ba to roar with pain; and, as for the tailor, he howled at the top of his voice, and pulled to get away. But it was of no use at all, for that dreadful little needle sewed away until the tailor was stitched all over. At last Ba Ba got up and hoisted the tailor off of the ground and shook him in the air; but, dear me, you know it was of no kind of use, for a witch's needle sews very tight stitches. At last the two made such a noise that all the guards, and the Caliph, and the princess came out with torches, to see what could be the matter. As soon as the Caliph saw the tailor he knew him, because his hat, and wig,

and beard had all fallen off. The princess said this was no magic doctor, but only a vile little tailor.

Now as nothing could quiet Ba Ba, who was rushing about all over the gardens, the Caliph sent for his head magician. So soon as he saw Ba Ba he called to him, and at once the wise elephant came and knelt down and held out his trunk, which was sewed fast to the tailor with twenty-five thousand stitches. When the magician saw what was the trouble he cried aloud, "This is witches' work."

"Yes," said the tailor, "my wife is a witch. "She got me into this scrape."

No sooner was this known to the Caliph than he sent an officer to fetch the witch wife. When she came the magician bade her take her witch scissors and cut the stitches, because nobody else could ever do it. As it was it took her a week, because she had to catch the witch needle first, and then to cut all the stitches afterwards. But Ba Ba was very patient, and, by-and-bye, he was set loose from that crusty old tailor.

By this time the magician knew all about the witch needle, and how the tailor had teased Ba Ba, the elephant; and, when the Caliph heard how cruel and wicked the tailor was, he said that he and his wife should be put to

death. It was lucky for both of them that the princess was near just then, because she was so gentle that she could not bear to have any one killed. So she begged the Caliph not to kill them, but only to cut off the tailor's nose, as he had wished to cut off poor Ba Ba's trunk. Now the tailor's witch wife was so very glad not to be killed that she went to the good princess and told her that Ba Ba was not a real white elephant, but a beautiful young prince, who had been enchanted, and, besides this, the witch wife went into the garden and cast some water on Ba Ba, and said three strange words, which no one knew but herself. And no sooner were these said than there was a great smoke, and when it blew away Ba Ba was gone, and there stood a handsome young prince. And folks do say that he married the princess. As to the tailor, his nose was cut off and buried, but his witch wife dug it up and sewed it on again. Only she was in such a hurry that she put it on upside down; so that, whenever the rain fell, it got full of water, and the worst of it was, that whenever the tailor wanted to blow his nose, he had to stand on his head, because, you see, his nose was downside up, or, as some people say, upside down.

NAUGHTY HARRY.

LITTLE Harry said to his sister Jane,
"Oh, do come play with me out in the lane ;
I want to go all the way up to the wood,
To gather some chestnuts ; they're ripe now, and good."
But little Jane answered, " Dear Harry, no, no.
You know mamma said that we never must go
Up to the wood by ourselves to play,
And see it is growing quite late in the day ;
Our father and mother will soon be home,
Let us go in the garden and watch till they come."
But Harry was naughty, and wouldn't wait ;
He went down the steps, and out at the gate,
Up the green lane, away to the wood.
Running along as fast as he could,
For fear that his dear little sister Jane
Should try to persuade him back again.

Long time in the wood little Harry stayed ;
He picked up the chestnuts, and jumped and played ;
But, when he was tired of running about,
He found that he could not tell how to get out ;
He had wandered so far that he did not know
Either where he was, or which way to go.
Now the sun went down, and very soon
It grew quite dark, for there was no moon ;
The little birds had long ceased to sing,
Each head safely tucked 'neath a sheltering wing ;
The frisky squirrels had gone to rest,
Each snugly curled in its little nest.
The owls, which never can bear the light,
Came out and hooted with all their might.
The great brown bats flew round and round
His head, with a curious whirring sound.
Then Harry was frightened, and cried, " Papa !
Oh, sister Jane ! oh, dear mamma !
Do come and take me out of the wood,
And, after this, I'll be always good."
But nobody answered, for nobody knew
What part of the wood he had wandered to.

And, though his father was searching all night,
He did not find him till morning light ;
And then his poor little boy he found
Lying alone on the cold, hard ground,
Close to a pond, quite wide and deep,
Where, weary, he'd cried himself to sleep.
He took him up and carried him home,
And glad was his mother to see him come.
But Harry was instantly put into bed,
He had such a dreadful pain in his head,
And such terrible aching in all his bones,
It made Jenny cry to hear his moans,
With a fever that burned and troubled him so,
That his own dear mother he did not know.
He laid in his bed for many a week,
So ill that he could not move nor speak ;
And the time was longer than I can tell
Before little Harry was perfectly well.
But then he promised Mamma and Jane
He never would run away again.
And if all be true that I since have heard,
Like an honest boy, he has kept his word.

HARRY'S BIRTH-DAY.

ONE evening, when Harry was going to bed,
His mamma took him up in her lap and said,
"To-morrow's your birth-day, you know, Harry dear;
I've invited your cousins to come out here;
And, because you have lately been gentle and good,
We can all go together to walk in the wood.
And Robert shall carry the kettle for tea;
We'll have it there under the great oak-tree."
You never beheld such a glad little boy
As Harry; he clapped his hands for joy,
And said, "Dear mamma, how kind of you
Such a *very* delightful thing to do.
I love to go up in the wood to tea,
Where squirrels, and rabbits, and robins we see.
Now kiss me—good night, mother dear, I must go
To tell sister Jane; she will like it, I know."

That night little Harry could scarce go to sleep
For thinking how nicely his birth-day he'd keep.
He was up in the morning by peep of day,
As fresh as a lark, as bright and as gay :
And every one in the house he told,
"It's my birth-day to-day! I am six years old!"
Mamma gave him a book with pictures in,
And papa a humming-top to spin.
Harry thanked them both, and he and Jane
Looked at the pictures again and again ;
They made the new top go round and round,
And laughed at its queer little humming-sound ;
But, when papa wound it, it hummed so loud
That to own such a top made Harry feel proud.
They had so much fun that the afternoon
Seemed to the children to come quite soon ;
And then they had but a short time to wait
Before a nice party drove up to the gate.
There were Charley, and Fanny, and dear little May,
Ready to dance, and to laugh, and to play.
There were kind Uncle William, and sweet Aunt Grace,
With her gentle words and pleasant face ;

And handsome brown Rover, so fast and so kind,
While the little dog Carlo came frisking behind.
When there'd been a great kissing, and "How do
you do?"

They all got their hats, and their light baskets too,
And walked to the wood, where they thought it was best
To sit in the shade some moments to rest.

Then the children ran races, and Charley's boat
In the sparkling brook was set afloat.

They feared 'twould be lost, it went so fast,
But a great stone brought it up at last.

A beautiful bird's nest Harry found,
Which had fallen down from a tree to the ground;
Round pebbles they gathered in it to lay,
(For the last year's birds had flown away.)

And Harry gave it to Fanny to keep
With her pigeon's eggs, and marble sheep,
Her butterfly with the velvet wings,
And all the rest of her pretty things.

Now papa was calling, "Come to me;
There is something here you would like to see."
They ran where he stood, and the very first thing
Which greeted their eyes was a nice low swing,

With an arm chair seat, so carefully made,
That sweet little May need not feel afraid.
Said papa, "You must take your turns to swing,
And must not quarrel for anything;
Your uncle and I have fastened the chair,
And hung up the ropes with the greatest care.
But, if we hear any one fret or complain,
We shall certainly take them all down again."
They thanked him, and promised they all would try
To be gentle and kind, and not swing too high.

Now, after they'd swung a long time in great glee,
They saw Robert coming to call them to tea.
So up to the table, so tasteful and neat,
They all went together, and each took a seat,
Behaving politely, as all children should
At the table, although it be spread in a wood.

They'd as much bread and milk as they wanted to eat,
And strawberries too, which they thought a fine treat;
With sponge-cake so light; and the table was graced
With wild flowers and ferns, in a moss-basket placed,

Which their mother and aunt had been making, while they
So busy had been with their talk and their play.

Now the sun in red clouds was ready to set,
And they thought about home ; but Jane said, " Not yet,
Dear mamma ; for, indeed, we must ask you to sing ;
We wouldn't miss *that* for anything."

They all said, " Oh, yes, it was not very late ;
They had plenty of time for a song to wait."
So they seated themselves on the grass to hear
Mamma, with her voice so sweet and clear,
Sing this little song, which she'd lately made
On purpose for Harry and Jane, she said.

" Pleasant it is in the gay greenwood,
Where the birds sing merrily,
And the bright-eyed squirrels seek their food,
Leaping from tree to tree.

" Where the yellow violet shyly peeps
From the leaves by last year shed,
And over the moss arbutus creeps,
With its berries of glassy red.

“Where the little streamlets gaily run,
Singing a joyful song,
Splashing the old gray stones, for fun,
As they swiftly race along.

“Where the sunbeams pierce through the woven trees,
To dance on the short green grass ;
And the tall ferns bow, with graceful ease,
Giving welcome as you pass.

“Then love the greenwood, sweet and wild,
Which greets you as a friend,
And the simple joys of the little child
Only with life shall end.”

REAL MAGIC.

A GOOD while ago, I knew two little children, who lived in a nice old house in the country. There was a wood behind it full of squirrels, and acorns, and chestnut trees, and birds, and crooked sticks, which were good for shinies, and lots of jolly things, such as boys like to have. On one side of this wood, and around the house, flowed a little brook, where frogs lived, and minnows and speckled newts. If you had sharp eyes and looked cleverly, I should not wonder if you might also have found there little cray fish under the stones. It was a good brook to build dams across; and in one place there was a fine large pond, where boys could sail boats.

I used to think the garden the nicest part of all, because it was full of tall box, with no end of crooked walks, that were first-rate for hide and seek.

In this nice old house lived a boy and girl. Their names were Tommy and Annie. These children had as

pleasant a time as any that ever I knew, because after their lessons there was so much to see and to do in the barn-yard and fields, in the wood, and by the brook. After they had raced and chased all day—when the autumn evenings were growing long—they most loved to go and see their aunt, who sat in the library at that time poking the wood fire, and thinking all by herself, till of a sudden this boy and girl would scamper in and shout a verse or two of poetry about “This is the Children’s Hour.” I ought to say that if you are a little boy or girl, and have an old uncle or aunty who likes to sit still in the twilight, and not ever tell stories at all, you have only to learn those verses about “This is the Children’s Hour,” and say them to that old aunty or uncle. And I think if you try this you will find out that those little verses are a kind of charm at twilight, to make big folks do whatever the little folks wish. When you all rush in and cry those nice verses, which I advise you to learn, saying, “This is the Children’s Hour,” you will be sure to get a story, and will be such clever fairies that you will make some of the grown folks feel like crying; and, I suppose, you had better not ask them why.

Whenever Tommy and Annie ran in and asked for stories, their aunt was always ready; and, when she could not think of any more, she knew all the books just where to find about the fairies, and giants, and witches, and gnomes,—and about Launcelot, and Bedivere, and Gawan, and Tristram, and the Seven Champions. Also she knew stories about the sea-gods, and mermaids, and flying-fish, and a long story of an ancient mariner. I couldn't tell you the names of all the stories this good aunt knew.

The stories Annie liked most were about those true knights of King Arthur; but Tommy had rather have heard about enchanted places, and how young princes were turned into dogs and horses when the sorcerers sprinkled them with water and said, "Abracadabra, and crononhotonthologos."

These two children liked stories so much that when they were away in the woods they used to act them. Annie would say, "Now be a giant, and I will be Jack, and kill you." Or they would go to a great rock, which was hollowed out beneath, and which they called the robber's cave. Here Annie had their treasures, such as bits of broken china and looking-glass, two lame dolls,

some shells, and an old kitchen knife, which made a fine scimeter for the captain of the robbers when they played Ali Baba.

Now Tommy had been thinking that it would be a very jolly thing to try a little magic in good earnest, but it took him a long time to get everything ready. For first he must have a gold rod, and this was very hard to get; and then there must be candles. There was a certain Master Frank, who was a big brother of Tommy's, and who had come home from school to stay for a little while. Tommy thought he would get him to help him, because he felt sure that all big brothers must know a good deal about magic, and all that kind of thing. So Tommy and Frank had some long talks, and Frank amused himself a good deal with telling Tom how to try real magic.

At last, one afternoon, Tommy asked Annie to go to the rock with him, and when he got there he made her sit down, and told her that he was going to try some real magic. At first she was a little afraid, but, by-and-bye, she agreed to it,—and then he showed her that he had two half candles, which the cook had given him as a great favor. As for the gold rod, which no magician

can do without, he told her he had been a good deal puzzled; but at last he had borrowed his aunt's gold pencil case. This pleased Annie very much, and they talked about it till it was getting to be towards dusk; for, as Tom said, "it was of no use to try magic in the daylight." When the woods were becoming dark, and full of evening shadows, Tom said it was time. So he took a bit of chalk and drew a circle, and told Annie that she must not move beyond it, or else the fairies would carry her off to fairy land. This frightened Annie, and she said they had better not try any magic this time, which made Tom tell her "she was a coward, just like all girls." By-and-bye he lighted his two candles, and stuck them in the ground, which made a big enough candlestick. Then he piled up some leaves in the middle of the circle and lighted them, so as to cause a famous smoke.

Now all this while the children did not know that Frank was hiding behind the big rock, and was quietly laughing to himself, until he was almost choked. You may be sure he thought it funnier than ever when Tom said to Annie, "Now I am going to try the real magic, and don't you be afraid."

“Oh, dear,” said Annie, “but, perhaps, when you say the words, and move your wand, perhaps the great giant, Blunderbore, will come and—and—and gobble us up.”

“No,” said Tom, “we will only call good fairies, and very, very little people.”

This comforted Annie, and Tom began to wave his gold rod and say, “Abracadabra,” and all sorts of queer words, out of fancy books. At last he said, “Hop o’ my Thumb,—come quickly,”—for you must know he was just a little afraid himself; and Hop o’ my Thumb was the smallest one of all the fairy folk he could think of. As soon as he said the words, the two children almost held their breaths. In a moment they heard *pit pat*, *pit pat*, behind the rock, and this was Frank, just for fun tapping on the dead leaves, to make them fancy it was Hop o’ my Thumb walking. You may guess how still they kept. Pretty soon the noise ceased, and yet no one was seen. At this Tom grew bolder. “I heard him,” said he; “and I, too,” said Annie. “Who shall we call next?” “Suppose you call for Whittington’s Cat?” “Cats are not fairies. It wouldn’t be any use,” answered Tom.

Just then, Frank, who was lying behind the rock, cried aloud, "Meow!"

"Oh, dear," whispered Annie, "there it is. Please be careful not to say any names like Cormorant, or Blunderbore!"

Now Master Frank heard her and roared out, "Fee fau fum; I smell the blood of an Englishmun."

"Oh, my—oh, dear," sobbed Annie; "call Jack, the Giant Killer, quick."

"We had better run," says Tom.

"Boo! I'm hungry for babies," roared Frank. And, when they heard this, my goodness how they scampered. It was getting dark very fast, but they ran ever so fast, and were glad enough to get out of the wood. As to Frank, who was a scamp to frighten little children so terribly, he walked after them laughing fit to kill himself.

When he came to the house he found Tom and Annie sitting in the corner of the library, just like two little mice. Frank only said to them, "You were very late in the wood; did you see any fairies?" As for the children, they were so scared that they could hardly close their eyes that night. For my part I think that any-

body but Tom would have had enough of magic by this time, and, I suppose, that he would never have tried it again if Frank had not helped him.

One day, about a week after the fright in the wood, Tom wanted to roast some chestnuts at the kitchen fire; but, as it was near tea time, the old black cook, whose name was Judy, told him "clare out." Tom ran out of one door and in at another until the old cook lost all patience, and told him he was "the perseverenest chile dat eber she seed."

By this time Tom was growing mischievous, so he ran to the dresser and took some water and sprinkled cookey, and cried out in a great solemn voice, "You old black cookey, be a sheep right away."

"Dat's pretty talk," said Judy, and, as quick as could be, she seized Tom, who was waiting to see her turn into a sheep, and what did she do but tie a great dish-cloth to the tail of his jacket, and then let him go. Tom was so angry at this disgrace that he went and told his good aunty, who only smiled and said he should keep out of the kitchen, which was not the place for boys. Poor Tom was so vexed that he went away crying, to find Frank.

"Halloo, old fellow," says Frank, "quit crying. I know a boy as had a grandmother as knew a boy who cried so hard he drowned himself. What's the matter?"

"I wanted to roast chestnuts," says Tom, "and Judy tied a dish-cloth to me—to my jacket—and I threw water on her, and told her to be a sh—sh—sheep, and she didn't."

"Perhaps," said Frank, full of fun, "you did not sprinkle her enough; she's a monstrous big old cookey, and you are a very small magician." So he kept a grave face, and gave Tom some advice about magic, which, I fear, was rather naughty; for what do you think happened? Tom listened to Frank, and without saying a word, but very, very angry at cookey, he went straight down to the kitchen and said, "How dy'e do, Judy? Please to give me a drink."

Now Judy was good-natured, like all fat cooks, so she gave him a ladle of cool water, and stooped down to tie his shoe, which was unlaced. As quick as could be Tom said, "Be a sheep this time, you bad old cookey," and poured the ladle full of water down the back of her neck.

"Bress us," says Judy, and she picked up Master Tom and tucked him under her arm, and took him right away

to his aunt. Tom roared and kicked, but Judy held him tightly; and, when she found his aunt, she told all about how Tom had called her a sheep. And then Tom had nothing to say, but to blubber and promise to be a good boy, until Frank came in and told his aunt how he had put Tom up to this last trick, and also about the magic in the woods. His aunt was very much vexed, and gave him a nice, long scolding, you may be sure. As to Tom, he was not told another story for six weeks, until one night, when he came in softly, and got behind his aunt and whispered, "This is the children's hour."

"Ah!" said she; and so the two children sat down, one on each side of her, and she told them a long, long story, about the fairy Contenta, who turned rags into velvet, and dust into gold, and old crusts into apple dumplings, — one of the jolliest kind of stories that ever anybody heard.

CARELESS SOPHIA.

SOPHIA was a careless child
As ever I have known,
And she was often by this fault
Into great trouble thrown ;
For, almost daily, sad mishaps
This foolish girl befel,
For want of just a little care,
As I am going to tell.
She often did the very thing
Her mother told her not ;
And, when she was reproved for it,
She'd say, " Oh ! I forgot."
Her toys, when she was tired of play,
Were left upon the ground,
And constantly were trodden on,
Or lost, and never found.

Her dolls had neither legs nor arms,
Their pretty clothes were torn,
They looked like soldiers from the wars,
Or beggars all forlorn.
Her frock and apron she would soil,
Or into slits would tear,
And then she'd cry, "Those horrid doors
Catch every thing I wear."
For careless children seldom are
Patient as they should be,
And Sophy's mother oft was grieved
Her hasty ways to see.
Once her papa came home from town,
And from his pocket took,
Among his other purchases,
A pretty story-book,
Printed in letters large and clear,
And full of pictures too,
Of birds, and animals, and flowers,
And many a pretty view.
He called Sophia from her play,
And set her on his knee;
With sparkling eyes she looked and said,
"Did you buy this for me?"

“Yes, dear, it is to be your own;
’Tis full of pictures rare.
I hope that you will value it,
And keep it with great care.”

“Oh! yes, papa, ’twas very kind
To bring me such a book;
I’ll take it to my garden seat,
And at the pictures look.”

Then to her shady arbor green,
With its seat nice and low,
Which her papa had made for her,
Did little Sophy go.
And there for a long time she sat
Upon her book intent;
Her bright blue eyes with eagerness
Upon the pictures bent;
Until she heard the pattering sound
Of little feet draw near;
And, looking up the walk, she saw
Her Cousin Lucy dear.

“Oh! Lucy, I am glad you’ve come;
I know you’ll like to see
The beautiful new story-book
Papa has given me.

But I have looked at it so long
My neck begins to ache.
Suppose that first a little run
Around the walks we take.
I've had some very pretty books
Before, but I declare
This is the very best of all;
I'll leave it lying there
Till we come back,— we won't stay long.
I've seen it now all through;
But then it will be very nice
To show the plates to you.”
So up the garden walk they skipped
Towards the little wood.
But just out in the open space,
Where the sun-dial stood,
They met the gardener, who said,
“Miss Sophy, did you know
Your little ducks are all hatched out,
And on the pond below?”
“My ducks? Oh! Thomas, I'm so glad!
Come, Lucy, let us run;
I hope they're like their mother, she
Is such a pretty one.”

Soon to the water-side they came,
And Sophy with delight
Counted her ducks, and thought she ne'er
Had seen so fine a sight.

“What funny little things they are!
That down looks more like fur
Than feathers,—the old duck’s quite smooth,
They are not much like her
Let us go in and tell mamma,
She always went with me
To watch the eggs; I’m sure she’ll come
The little ducks to see.”
Up to the house they quickly ran,
And soon mamma was told
Of Sophy’s treasures, in her eyes
Each worth its weight in gold.

“But, Sophy dear, where is your book?”

“Oh! that I’m sure must be
Quite safe upon the garden seat;
I’ll get it presently.

But we must go to see the ducks
Before they come to land;
We’ll take some bread to throw to them
As on the bank we stand.”

'Twas queer to see each little duck
Dipping its funny head,
And turning quickly round to catch
The little bits of bread.
Long after her mamma had gone,
Sophy with Lucy still
Stood throwing crumbs, which soon were snatched
By some broad golden bill.
And when the old duck called her brood,
And brought them all to land,
The little girls stole quietly
After the feathered band,
To see what shelter she will choose
For the dear little things.
And now she gathers them at last
Beneath her ample wings.
They do not see the great black cloud
Which o'er the heavens spreads,
Until the first big drops of rain
Come pattering on their heads.
And the bright lightning's yellow glare
Flashes before their eyes ;
And then they turn a wondering glance
Upon the darkened skies.

And hand-in-hand towards the house
They scamper with all speed;
And, just as they had reached the door,
The storm broke out indeed.
The lightning flashed, the thunder rolled,
Down came the floods of rain,
Swept on before the gusts of wind,
Which shook the window pane.
Sophy and Lucy stood to watch
How there came little rills
Upon the walks, and how the drops
Danced on the window-sills;
And how the bubbles floated by
Until knocked on the head
By some great drop; and then there came
Another in their stead.
The chickens, looking all forlorn,
Were gathered 'neath a tree;
Their long-tail feathers, once so fine,
Now drooping mournfully.
But, while the girls were wondering
If it *could ever* clear,
They saw, amid the breaking clouds,
The sun's bright rays appear.

And in a moment all the trees
With glittering diamonds shone,
And every leaf and flower had
A jewel of its own.
Ruby and emerald were there,
Topaz and sapphire too,
All quivering in the golden light
With ever-changing hue.
But, when on the still tearful clouds,
The rainbow's arc was hung,
Fresh exclamations of delight
Burst from each little tongue.
They watched it till the last soft tint
Had faded quite away,
And then they from the window turned
To seek some pretty play.
"The ground is wet, we can't run out;
Mamma, what shall we do?"
"Sit down dear, with your picture-book;
You can't have read it through."
But Sophy answers not a word,
And all in vain she tries

To choke back the fast-coming tears
Which gather in her eyes.
“Why Sophy, what’s the matter now?
You do not often cry;
And these tears come quite suddenly;
Come here and tell me why.”
“Oh! dear mamma, my picture-book,
So beautiful and new!
I left it on the garden seat,
And now what shall I do?
It has been out in all the rain,
And ruined it must be;
If I had only brought it in
When you reminded me!
How shall I ever tell papa,
Or see him when he hears
What I have done?” And at this thought
Forth burst fresh floods of tears.
The book was brought into the house
All ruined by the rain,
And Sophy thought she’d never be
A careless girl again.

But it is not an easy thing
To mend so suddenly;
And often she would quite forget
How good she thought to be;
For careless children often say,
"Oh! dear, I quite forgot!"
They think that is a good excuse,
Perhaps, but I think not.

TOMMY'S TRIALS.

LITTLE Eva sat under the apple tree,

With her dear old knit doll by her side;

“Come, Tommy,” she said, “let us go and see

Where the little violets hide.

We took dear Mamma some yesterday,—

Sweet-scented ones,—blue and white;

The sun's getting low, and we're tired of play,

Let us take her some more to-night.

These lovely pink blossoms, I'd like to try

To reach, and take to her, too;

But *you* must sit still; they are all too high,

I am very sure, for you.”

Tommy, the knit doll, had nothing to say

Against Eva's proposition;

He was quite content on the grass to stay,

Nor desired to change his condition

Little Eva stood on her very tip-toes,
But the blossoms were high o'er her head.
"Well, I must go into the house, I suppose,
For papa's hooked cane," she said.
"Now don't you stir, Tommy; sit quite still,
And I'll soon be back again.
You will be delighted, I know you will,
When you see me take the cane
And draw the branches into my hand
In exactly the very same way
That Frank does; — the cane must be on the stand,
For papa *rode* to town to-day."

So Eva ran off, up the path to the house,
To bring back the crooked-neck stick,
And good little Tommy sat still as a mouse;
He never had been very quick
In his motions; and after Miss Eva had said
That he must on no account stir,
It never came into his innocent head
To be disobedient to her.

But little pup Trip chanced to pass by that way,
And, as soon as our Tommy he spied,
He thought, "That fine fellow shall come now and play."
And, running right up to his side,
He gamboled around him, and poked his cold nose
In Tom's face, his acquaintance to make;
But Tom's manner said, "You are not to suppose
Of your tricks any notice I'll take."

But Trip was an ignorant sort of a pup,
Whose life had been spent in the stable;
And without polished manners, so far, he'd grown up,
Though the grooms taught him all they were able,
So finding, at last, that he waited in vain
For an answer to all he had said,
He exclaimed, "Very well, I shall not speak again!"
And picked up poor Tom by the head.

Then Tommy, of course, was extremely alarmed,
Beside the great pain he was in;
He never before had been threatened nor harmed,
And now Trip's sharp teeth in his skin,

And the terrible doubt as to what he'd do next,
Had frightened him nearly to death;
And he still was quite silent, and sorely perplexed,
When Trip, not a bit out of breath,
Began now to toss him high up in the air,
To catch him again, and to say,
"You make a most excellent ball, I declare!
I thought you would know how to play."
But, just at the hundred and fiftieth throw,
Master Trip threw a little too high,
And in the next moment poor Tommy was low
In the depths of a fish-pond close by.
The next, to the top of the water he came,
Quite close to a duck, who cried, "Quack!
Here's a queer-looking fellow! I don't know his name,
He is trying to climb on my back."
"To climb on your back! what an impudent thing!"
Cried old Dr. Gobble; "just take
The insolent vagabond up by the wing,
And give him a pretty hard shake."
On her back our poor Tom would be thankful to climb,
But he knew it was of no use to try
After such a remark; so he wasted no time,
But looked round, to find something dry.

But the water appeared to make everything wet ;

There wasn't a creature in sight

But the ducks, and Tom thought that he never could get

Out of such an unfortunate plight.

The ducklings all viewed him with curious eyes,

(Their mother can't knit dolls like *him*.)

And one of them cried, in the greatest surprise,

"I really don't think he can swim!"

"No, ladies," said Tommy, "I can't swim a bit ;

I fear I shall drown in your sight ;

On one of your backs, if you'd just let me sit,

You'd find me exceedingly light."

Not a single kind "yes" would the young ducklings say,

But, "He wanted to climb mamma's back.

He came out here, too, in a very strange way ;

We'll have nothing to do with him, — quack!"

Tom thought his last hour had come, when he espied

Eva's brother and playfellow, Frank,

Run down through the garden, with Trip by his side,

And stop when he came to the bank.

"Why look, Trip," said Frank, "there is something afloat

Out there by the Muscovy duck ;

I scarcely can think 'tis my snug little boat
Which capsized, — that would be *too* good luck, —
But, Trip, you shall swim out and see what it is.”
And Frank threw a very small stone,
Which grazed Tommy's head, (he had meant just to
miss,
And so it was very well thrown.)

Like a well-behaved spaniel, Trip followed the throw,
And whether to laugh or to cry
At what was now coming, our Tom didn't know,
As he saw his old enemy nigh.
He had no time to choose;—when Trip came to the
spot,
Where he'd seen the small stone disappear,
He dropped his wet ears and thought, “Whom have
we got?
’Tis the man that I murdered! — that's clear.”
Whatever he felt, not a word did he say,
For he knew that his master was Frank;
Not a jot of his orders he dared disobey,
So he carried Tom straight to the bank.

His cold, dripping burden, he dropped on the grass ;

Said Frank, "'Tis no boat ; — I declare

It is Eva's old doll ! Why, how came it to pass

That it ever on earth could get there ?"

He gave Tom a squeezing that wrung his poor heart,

But it certainly did him great good ;

And then at full run for the house did they start,

Trip following fast as he could.

"Come, Eva, and see what a wetting Tom's got,

Trip has just pulled him out of the pool."

"Oh ! did *you* throw him in ?" "No, indeed, I did not,

I this moment have come home from school.

And such a mean fellow I never would be,

But how do you think he got in ?"

"I don't know ; I left him just under the tree.

Oh, dear, he is wet to the skin !

Oh, Tommy ! you bad, disobedient boy,

Why didn't you mind what I said ?

No play for a week shall I let you enjoy ;

Come, I'll dry you and put you to bed."

Poor Tom ! his most sensitive feelings it stirred

To hear himself falsely accused ;

He was too much exhausted to utter a word,
But hot brandy he coldly refused.
Through all his long life he remembered the woes
That befell him that terrible day ;
But the worst of them was (as you well may suppose),
Being punished for running away.
In vain by strict searching, by question and guess,
Frank labored to gather a clue
To Tommy's adventure ; Trip would not confess,
Tom was silent, and no one else knew.
But when Eva would Trip's silken ringlets caress,
And say that she owed him a debt
For saving Tom's life, I am obliged to confess
That 'twas hard to forgive and forget.

LITTLE MABEL.

IN a large and pleasant garden
A group of children played;
Frolicked gaily in the sunshine,
Rested, laughing, in the shade.
All were bright, and fresh, and happy,
All were vigorous, save one,
Who, beneath a rustic arbor,
Where thick vines shut out the sun,
In a little wicker carriage,
Propped on softest cushions lay,
With a heart too sad for laughter,
And with limbs too weak for play.
As she gazed forth o'er the garden,
The large tears she tried in vain
To repress, came dropping slowly,
Like first drops of summer rain.

Not for loneliness nor envy
Did our little Mabel weep,
For her mother sat beside her,
O'er her darling watch to keep;
And light feet and loving voices
Oft came, bringing treasures new.
"The last violets, Mabel darling,
We have plucked them all for you.
Or, the strawberries are turning,
We have found you some quite red;
Mabel dear, the very large ones
All came out of my own bed.
Or look, Mabel, this moss basket
Maud and I have filled with flowers;
We thought, to see them growing,
Would beguile your lonely hours,
When we are in the school-room,
And mamma with little Grace.
Shall we hang it in your window?
Is not that the nicest place?"
Ready smile and thanks came quickly
From the grateful little heart;
But soon clouds have chased the sunshine,
And again the tear-drops start.

“What is it ails my Mabel?

Lay your head upon my breast;
Would a mother's love could shield it
From all sorrow and unrest.
Is the pain more bitter, darling?
Or has anything occurred
To wound that tender spirit,
By some hasty look or word?”

“No, dear mother, I feel better
In this air so soft and mild;
And none ever speak unkindly
To the little sickly child.
As I watched the others playing,
I thought how all could do
Something useful, kind, or pleasant,
For each other and for you.
Even baby Grace brings sunshine,
With her pretty little ways;
I give only care and trouble
Through the long and painful days.”
With a silent prayer, the mother
Bent that pallid brow to kiss;
“Mabel dear, our heavenly Father
Hath left none so poor as this.

Each has his special blessing,
Which with others he may share;
Think you, my precious darling,
That our Mabel we could spare?
Are you not the common centre
Where our thoughts and hopes all blend?
When my heart is sometimes heavy,
Are you not my little friend?
Is it nothing that your brothers,
For your sake, have gentle grown?
That your sisters seek your comfort,
Ere they think upon their own?
Trust our gracious Father's wisdom,
He has nothing made in vain;
Would he vainly doom my Mabel
To a weary life of pain?
Doubt not he has a purpose,
A wise purpose, boon of love,
Though he may not let you read it
Till you reach your home above."
Then they talked of that bright kingdom
Where can come no grief nor fears;
Where, from eyes long used to weeping,
God shall wipe away the tears;—

Till the little one's closed eyelids,
And her breathing, soft and deep,
Proclaimed the gentle presence
Of the blessed soother, sleep.
In her quiet, peaceful slumber,
Oft unconsciously she smiled;
And the mother's heart grew lighter
As she watched her sleeping child,
Till again the dark eyes opened,
But all quietly she lay,
As though her thoughts were pleasant;
At length she turned to say;
"Mother, while I was sleeping,
An angel seemed to come
And bear me, through the sunshine,
Straight to our heavenly home.
There were many glorious angels,
And many children there;
And their faces were most lovely,
I cannot tell how fair.
From a few forms among them
A star-like radiance shone;

And, mother, much I wondered
To see it round my own.
I asked one of the angels,
‘In heaven, where all is bright,
Why are these blest ones shining
As with a double light?’
And he said, ‘It is the promise
That those pure souls who turn
Many unto our Father,
Like stars for aye shall burn.’
He stayed no further question,
Though I longed to ask him why
The radiance should encircle
Such a little one as I?
I wandered, calm and blissful,
Through all those heavenly scenes,
And my dream has made me happy,
Though I know not what it means.
The mother thought, “Our Father
To the child hath surely given
The blessed task of winning
Some precious souls to heaven.

She is not one to travel
On the upward path alone;"
But she told not little Mabel
How her fair example shone;
Nor how her home was hallowed
By her love and purity;
For she would not rob her snow-drop
Of its sweet humility.

THE TALE OF THE GREAT GIANT, SMOKEY POKEY.

ONCE on a time there lived in the mountains of the moon a great giant, who lay all day on his back, and smoked a pipe as big as a stove. He was so huge that the people brought him presents in harvest time, and begged him to go to sleep for a month, because if he stood up he got in the way of the sun, and kept the grain from growing ripe.

This giant had a son who was no larger than most folks, but who was as vicious, and wicked, and cunning as a fox. One day he went away on a journey, and when he came back he said to his father, "Pick me up; I have something to say." Then Smokey Pokey set him on his hand and listened. "I have seen a beautiful princess," continued his son, "and I wish to marry her. I have only nine wives; I have asked the king, her father,

to give her to me, and he will not." "Then," said the giant, "we will eat him. Go and tell him this."

Accordingly his son set off, and the next month reached the king's court, where he found a young prince, who, having come with a great retinue to woo the Princess Ellera, she had promised to love him for ever and ever. When the king heard the message of Smokey Pokey he cried aloud, "I shall never give my daughter to such a cruel, ugly, little wretch as you. I will give her to whoever is brave enough to kill the giant."

"Then," said the prince, "I will go. Make your mind easy. In a year and a day I shall be with you again." Thus saying, he mounted his horse and rode away swiftly, kissing his hand to the princess. Meanwhile the giant's son also departed. So soon as they met outside of the city the prince said to the giant's son, "You are a mean and cruel man to carry so base a message. Prepare to die, for I shall surely kill you."

Upon this the giant's son fled, but the prince soon overtook and slew him. Then he exchanged clothes with him and cut off his own beard, so as to be like as possible to the giant's son. After a long journey he came to the castle of the giant, and found him sitting on the hillside,

smoking a mighty great pipe, so that he could hardly be seen for the smoke. After the prince had sneezed for a day he was able to talk, and then he said to the giant, imitating his son's voice, "Papa, I have changed my mind; the princess is ugly, — I do not want her."

"Bah!" said the giant. "No matter: it is long since I ate a king; I shall eat them both."

At this the prince was in despair, but he concealed his vexation and said, "Well, let us set out."

The giant arose at once and started off, leaving the prince to follow him. The first night the prince caught up to him and found him asleep; so he took his sword and tried to stab him, but his skin was as tough as sole leather, and the giant only rolled about and cried out, "How bad the mosquitoes are!"

"I must delay his journey," thought the prince, "and get time to think a little as to what I shall do." So he found the giant's shoes near by, and built a big fire in them and burned them both, so that they were good for nothing.

"Dear me," cried Smokey Pokey, when he awoke, "this is queer." But in a moment he went to a river near by, and took two ships and tore out the masts, and

kicked in the decks, and put one foot in each, and walked away with these new shoes, saying, "They fit well enough, but they must be full of rats, for something is trying to nibble my toes."

After another day's journey the giant lost his way, and, when the prince caught up with him, he said, "These hills are very steep, — which is the way?"

"Here," said the prince. So he led the giant always on the side of a great mountain, around and around for a week.

"At last," said Smokey Pokey, "it seems to me that my left leg is too long, and my right leg too short!"

"What a dreadful hill, papa!" answered the prince. "If you were to cut your left leg a little shorter, you could walk better on the hillside."

"Yes," said the giant, who was as stupid as he was big, "that's a good idea. So he cut off five yards of his left leg, and found he fitted the side of the hill very nicely. But next day the prince began to go in the other direction, which caused the giant to hop like a grasshopper, and to cry out with fatigue. At last he grew angry, and, seizing the prince, gave him a squeeze, which nearly mashed him. "You young rascal," said

he, "you have lamed me for life; I shall never find my leg again, and I shall die without having eaten a king. Tell me quickly, you who are so cunning, what I shall do, or I will kill you!"

"Sire," answered the prince, "there lives near here a great sorceress, who will turn you into a dog, so that you can run furiously; and, when you are near the king's palace, she shall turn you into a giant again."

"Good," replied Smokey Pokey; "bring her hither." Upon this the prince left him, and after a week came back with his fairy godmother, who was the cleverest little magician in the world. So soon as she heard the giant's request, she told the prince, in a whisper, that he must be careful, because she would have to turn the giant into his own shape again if she promised to do so. "Leave the rest to me," answered the prince, "only turn him into a dog; I ask no more."

By this time, Smokey Pokey, who was very impatient, cried out, "Promise to change me into a giant again when we get near the palace."

"Yes," said the fairy, "I promise." Then the fairy touched him with her wand, and cried aloud some Persian words, and instantly a dog as big as an elephant

stood on the hill, and there was no longer a giant. Then they trotted along slowly, till at length the prince saw a swift little hare run out of the wood! As soon as the giant dog, Smokey Pokey, espied it, he began to bark awfully and to leap about. But when the prince cried out, "Hist, catch him Towser," Smokey Pokey set off after the hare at a great rate, and was soon lost to view. As to the fairy and the prince, they laughed for a week, because this was a magic hare, which no dog, big or little, ever could catch; and, I suppose, that poor Smokey Pokey may be hard after him yet.

This I do know that he never came back, and that the young prince married the lovely Princess Ellera.

THE END.



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