

For the Children's Hour Series

EVERY DAY STORIES



CAROLYN SHERWIN BAILEY



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"Sh!" he whispered, softly. "Look sharp!"

FOR THE CHILDREN'S HOUR SERIES

EVERYDAY STORIES

BY

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"For the Children's Hour," "Firelight Stories," "Stories
Children Need," "For the Story Teller,"
"Tell Me Another Story," etc.

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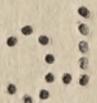


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Everyday Stories

WHAT KEPT THE NEW CHIMNEY WAITING.

A new chimney was going to be built on grandpa's house, and the boys were in a state of high glee. They were always excited when something was going on. This would be splendid, Wayne said.

"Mike is coming, you know, to mix the mortar and carry it up the ladder to the mason. He will tell us stories in the noonings!" Wayne told Casper.

"Yes," said Casper; "and, Wayne, let us go get his hod and play we are hod carriers, with mud for mortar. Come on."

"Come on!" shouted Wayne. "The hod is leaning up against the barn, where he left it when he brought the things over."

On the way to the barn they saw Grandpa harnessing old Molly to the big, blue cart. That meant a beautiful ride down

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to the orchard. The boys forgot all about playing hod carrier. They climbed in, and jolted away.

"Mike is coming to-morrow, you know, Grandpa, and the mason," said Casper. But dear old Grandpa shook his white head.

"Not to-morrow, boys. You will have to wait a bit longer. I sent word to the mason and Mike last night that they couldn't come for a few weeks longer. I have decided to put the chimney off."

Both the boys were disappointed. Grandpa did not speak again at once. He was driving old Molly carefully out at the side of the cart road. The boys saw a little crippled butterfly fluttering along in the wheel track. That was why Grandpa turned out. Grandpa's big heart had room enough in it for every live thing.

Back in the track again, further on, Grandpa said: "When we get home, boys, I will show you why we had to wait for the new chimney. You will agree with me, I know." And Grandpa's eyes twinkled.

"A little bird told me," he said, and

that was all they found out until they got home. Then the same little bird told them, too.

Grandpa took them up to the attic with a great air of mystery. The old chimney had been torn down half way to the attic floor. Grandpa tiptoed up to it, and lifted the boys, one at a time, to peer into it.

"Sh!" he whispered, softly. "Look sharp!"

And there, on a little nest of mud, lined with straws, and resting on the bricks, sat a little bird! She blinked her bright eyes at the kind faces peering down. It was as if she said:

"Oh, dear, no; I'm not afraid of you! Isn't this a beautiful nest? It is so safe! There are four speckly eggs under me. When I have hatched them and brought up my family in the way good little chimney swallows should go, you may build your chimney. Do not build it before."

And that was why Grandpa's new chimney had to wait.

HOW THE HOME WAS BUILT.

Once there was a dear family—Father, Mother, big Brother Tom, little Sister Polly, and the baby, Gustavus Adolphus. Every one of the family wanted a home more than anything else in the world.

They lived in a house, but that was rented. They wanted a home of their own, with a sunny room for Mother and Father and Baby. They wanted a wee room close by for the little sister, and a big, airy room for Brother Tom. They wanted a cozy room for the cooking and eating. Best of all, they wanted a room that Grandmother might call her own when she came to see them.

A box which Tom had made always stood on mother's mantel. They called it the "Home Bank." Every penny that could be spared was dropped in there for the building of the home.

This box had been full once. Then it had been emptied to buy a little piece of

ground where the home could be built when the box was full again.

The box filled very slowly, though. Gustavus Adolphus was nearly three years old when, one day, the father came in with a smiling face and called the family to him.

Mother left her baking, and Tom came in from his work. After Polly had brought the baby, the father said to them: "Now, what do we all want more than anything else in the world?"

"A home!" said Mother and Brother Tom.

"A home!" said little Sister Polly.

"Home!" said the baby, Gustavus Adolphus, because his mother had said it.

"Well," said the father, "I think we shall have our home, if each one of us will help. I must go away to the forest, where the trees grow so tall and fine. All winter long I must chop the trees down. Then I shall be paid in lumber, which will help in the building of the home. While I am away, mother will have to fill my place, and her own, too. She will have to go to market,

buy the coal, keep the pantry full, and pay the bills, as well as wash and cook, and sew. She will take care of the children, and keep a brave heart until I come back again."

The mother was willing to do all this, and more, too, for the dear home. Brother Tom asked eagerly: "What can I do? --- what can I do?" He wanted to begin work right then, without waiting a minute.

"I have found you a place in the carpenter's shop where I work," answered the father. "You will work for the carpenter, and all the while be learning to saw and hammer and plane. You will be ready in the spring to help build the home."

Now, this pleased Tom so much that he threw his cap in the air, which made the baby laugh. Little Polly did not laugh, because she was afraid she was too small to help.

But, after a while the father said: "I shall be away in the great forest cutting down the trees; mother will be washing

and sewing and baking; Tom will be at work in the carpenter's shop. And who will take care of the baby?"

"I will, I will," cried Polly, running to kiss the baby, "and the baby can be good and sweet."

So it was all arranged that they would have their home. It would belong to every one, because each one would help. And the father made haste to prepare for the winter. He stored away the firewood, and put up the stoves. When the wood choppers went to the forest he was ready to go with them.

Out in the forest the trees were waiting. Nobody knew how many years they had been growing there. Every year they had grown stronger and more beautiful for the work they had to do. Every one of them had grown from a baby tree to a giant. When the choppers came, there stood the giant trees. They were so bare and still in the wintry air that the sound of the axes rang from one end of the woods to the other. From sunrise to sunset the men

worked. It was lonely in the woods. White snow was on the ground, and the chill wind blowing. But the father kept his heart cheery.

Nobody's ax was sharper than his or cut so many trees. No one was more glad than he when spring came and the logs were hauled down the river.

The river had been waiting, too, under its ice. Now that the snows were melting, and all the little mountain streams were tumbling down to help, the river grew wide and strong. It dashed along, floating the logs when the men pushed them in, and carrying them on with a rush and a roar.

So they went on their way to the saw mills, where they were sawed into lumber to build houses. Then the father hurried home.

When he came there, he found that the mother had baked, and washed, and sewed, and taken care of the children, as only such a precious mother could have done. Brother Tom had worked so hard in the carpenter's shop that he knew how

to hammer, and plane, and saw. Sister Polly had taken such good care of the baby that he looked as sweet and clean and happy as a rose in the garden. And the baby had been so good that he was a joy to the whole family.

"I must get this dear family into their home," said the father. Then he and Brother Tom went to work with a will.

So the home was built, with a sunny room for Father and Mother and Baby. There was a wee little room close by for good Sister Polly. There was a big, airy room for Brother Tom; and a cozy room for the cooking and eating. Best of all, there was a room for the dear Grandmother, who came to live with them all the time.

SELLING TIMOTHY TITUS.

"Dear me," said mother, "I can't think of having four cats in the house all winter."

"I should say you couldn't," laughed father; "you will have to give them away."

But there was the old kitty. Father himself couldn't think of giving her away. She had been in the house since it was built, and there was not a better mouser anywhere. Then there were Toots and Jingle. It did seem a pity to part them. Even mother herself said so.

They were black and white. They were so nearly alike that you couldn't tell them apart unless you looked at their noses. Toot's nose was black, and Jingle's nose was white.

And then there was Timothy Titus. He was black and white, too, but a good deal more white than black. "He is an odd one," laughed mother. "We might give him away first."

But Caroline caught up Timothy Titus.

"O-oh," she said, cuddling him close to her neck; "he is so cunning and sweet, mother, I can't bear to part with him."

By and by, when the kittens were taking their afternoon nap by the fire, in came Mr. Davis. Mr. Davis lived on the other side of the river and peddled apples. He looked down at the little furry heap and laughed. "Seems to me you have more than your share of cats," said he. "We haven't got any."

"Caroline may give you one of hers," said mother. Caroline looked down at her shoes. Mr. Davis could tell which way the wind blew.

"Suppose we make a trade," he said to Caroline. "I'll give you a peck of sweet apples for one of these kittens," and he picked up Timothy Titus.

Caroline looked up. A peck of sweet apples did not grow on every bush. Besides, maybe four cats were too many.

"I--I will, if mother will let me keep Toots and Jingle," she said.

Mother laughed; she did not like to

promise. "We will see about it," she said; "three cats are less than four, anyway."

So Mr. Davis measured out a peck of sweet apples, and gave them to Caroline. And Caroline hugged and kissed and cried over Timothy Titus. Then she gave him to Mr. Davis, who put him in a basket and tied a bag over him.

"He will be all right," said Mr. Davis. "Good day," and away rumbled the apple cart.

But as soon as the apple cart was out of sight, Caroline began to be sorry. She stood at the window with a very doleful face, looking across the river at Mr. Davis's big, white house.

The sky had all at once grown cloudy, and the wind began to blow. And, as if to make a bad matter worse, Toots woke up and flew around the room in a fit.

"It is all because he knows that Timothy Titus is gone," sobbed Caroline, running to hide her head in her mother's lap. "How would I feel if Teddy were given away, where I'd never see him any more? The

apples are bitter, too; I don't like them. Oh, dear!"

But mother said that perhaps Timothy Titus would come home again. "I have heard of such things," she said. Then she told Caroline a story about a cat who traveled forty miles back to her old home.

"I don't believe Timothy Titus can," sighed Caroline, "because he is over the river, and there is no bridge—only the ferryboat. I know he can't."

"Oh, stranger things have happened," said mother, hopefully.

But she was as surprised as Caroline was the next morning. When the kitchen door was opened—what do you think? In walked Timothy Titus, as large as life. He was only a little bit draggled as to his fur and muddy around his paws!

"Hello!" said father.

"Well, well!" said mother. "Why, here is Timothy Titus!"

Just at that minute Caroline came running out in her nightgown. She gave

one look, and then she snatched Timothy Titus up in her arms.

"Oh, oh!" she said, too full of joy to do anything else for a minute. "Oh, you darling cat! How did he get here, mother?"

"I am sure I can't tell," said mother.

Neither could any one else, except the ferry man. When father questioned him, he said that he thought he did remember seeing a little black and white cat sitting under the seat the night before. He wasn't sure of it, though, and so Caroline couldn't be.

"Well, Timothy Titus has come back," she said, "and he is going to stay, isn't he, mother? We can give Mr. Davis back his apples."

But Mr. Davis said a trade was a trade, and he was not going to take back the apples. And Timothy Titus stayed!

THE TOMATO PLANT.

"Have another tomato, Johnny," said Grandma, as she saw the last red slice disappear from Johnny's plate; "I think you like tomatoes."

"I do," said Johnny; "I like them raw, and stewed, and baked, and almost any way."

"Didn't you like tomatoes when you were little, Grandma?" Johnny asked. He saw Grandma looking down at her plate with a smile in her eyes.

"No," Grandma said, "but that was because I was a big girl before I ever tasted one. I never saw a tomato until I was thirteen years old."

"I can remember it so well. A peddler came by our farm once a month, bringing buttons and thread and such little things to sell. He brought the tomato seed to mother."

"He used to carry seeds and cuttings of plants from one farmer's wife to the next.

They liked to see him come. He could tell all the news, too, from up the road and down.

"One spring morning he came. After mother had bought all she needed from his big, red wagon, he fed his horse. As he sat by the kitchen fire waiting for his dinner, he fumbled about in his pockets in search of something. Then he drew out a very small package and handed it to mother.

"'I have brought you some love-apple seeds,' he said. 'I got them in the city; I gave my sister half and brought half to you.'

"'Thank you, kindly,' mother said, as she looked at the little yellow seeds. 'I am very glad to get them. What kind of a plant is the love-apple?'

"'Well,' said the peddler, 'the man who gave the seeds to me had his plants last year in a sunny fence corner. The flowers are small, but the fruit is bright red. It is very pretty among the dark green leaves. You can't eat the fruit, though—it may be poisonous. It is something new. The man

who gave me the seeds got them from a captain of a ship from South America. They grow wild there.'

"So mother planted her love-apple seeds in a warm fence corner. They grew, and the little yellow blossoms came. After them came the pretty red fruit. We children would go out and look at it, and talk about it. We wondered if it would hurt us if we just tasted it.

"One day mother heard us talking about it, and she called us away. She told us that if we could not be satisfied to just look at the pretty red fruit she would have to pull up the love-apple vines and throw them away. The peddler had said it might be poisonous.

"We knew she would be sorry to do that, for no one else about had any love-apples. So we kept away from the fence corner. The vine grew and blossomed, and the red showed in new places every day. The birds did not seem to be at all afraid of the fruit, but ate all they wanted of it.

"One day, in the early fall, my uncle

came from New York to make us a visit. When he went out in the garden he stopped in surprise. ‘Why, Mary,’ he said, ‘what fine tomato vines you have! Where did you get them?’

“‘We call them love-apples,’ mother said. Then she told him how the peddler had brought the seed. But when my uncle found that we were afraid to eat them he laughed. He showed mother how to get some ready for supper.

“That was my first taste of tomato, Johnny,” Grandma said, “and you shall have some for supper fixed the same way—cut up with cream and sugar.”

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THE CALICO'S STORY.

Once I was very tiny and all covered with a brown coat. I had many brothers and sisters. We lived in the sunny South, and were kept huddled close together in a strong bag.

One morning the people who lived in the house were up earlier than usual. I heard the master say: "Tom, you may plant my cotton seed to-day."

Cotton seed was my name, and I wondered if it were better to be planted than to be tied up in a bag. But while I was thinking, Tom picked me up with the others. I was soon put into a little bed close to a rolling river.

I loved to listen to the water as it laughed on its journey to the sea. I wanted to see it, but my coat fitted so closely that there was no chance.

But I began to feel larger and larger. One day my snug coat split, and I popped right out of the ground. Was I not happy,

then? I had a green body and two green leaves. I stretched my head higher, and higher, and at last I had three beautiful blossoms.

I think I must have been vain, for all my beautiful petals left me, to go with Mr. Wind. I mourned for them every day, but, to my surprise, the little bolls left by the blossoms burst. I was covered with cotton as white as snow and as soft as silk!

I was as happy as a queen! The cool wind fanned me. The sunbeams came to warm me, and the dear old river lulled me to rest. I did not need any other friends, but I found that I had some, soon.

"Come, children," I heard Aunt Chloe call, "we must pick the cotton."

And the children did come—a dozen woolly heads, and twice that number of shining eyes. One little fellow cried out: "Oh, did you ever see nicer cotton?" And in a minute all my white was held in his little black fingers. Next I was riding in a basket on top of Tom's head. Then I was in a cart on my way to the "gin."

I was sorry as I left the fields, and said: "Goodbye, old seed and leaves. Goodbye, dear river."

When I came to the "gin," a machine took from my downy grasp many little fellows dressed in brown coats. They looked just as I did before I went to sleep in Mother Earth.

My next trip was in a bale. I was loaded on a big ship which sailed on a great sea. I liked this bale and the ride. It made me think of the river where I used to live.

By and by the ship stopped.

I was carried to a large house where I heard "buzz, buzz, buzz." So many strange things happened to me that I wondered what would be the end of it all. I was cleansed, and twisted, and spun, and woven, and bleached. At last I found that I had become white cloth.

One thing I enjoyed here was the old river that rushed along. It turned heavy wheels that made the spindles buzz and the shuttles fly.

My next journey was through a printing machine. At first I was white. But this machine sent me under a roller which left little bunches of red cherries all over me. Then I went under another roller which put green stems on the cherries, and left green leaves close to the stems. A third roller left brown twigs where all the stems and leaves ought to hang. Prettier bunches of fruit you never saw.

Now my white was almost gone, but what was left was made black by a fourth roller.

I went under these rollers so quickly—a mile an hour—that I could not see very much. But I know that cherries were cut into the first roller, and that they had red dye on them. The leaves and stems were cut into the second roller, and covered with green dye. The twigs were cut into the third roller, with brown dye all over them.

I wondered if some of the leaves, twigs and stems might not print themselves in the wrong place, but they never did.

After I left the black dye roller I was

dried, folded, and sent to a shop in a noisy city. There I lay on a shelf.

One day a little country girl came into the store with a basket of eggs. She wanted to look at me. Just think, she gave the shopkeeper all of her eggs for eight yards of me. Then I was made up into a dress, with pretty ruffles at the neck and sleeves. I gave much joy to the little girl, who always liked to wear dainty things.

On her way to and from school she used to sit upon a log to rest. Here I used to watch the plants which grew near, but they were very unlike my old self. They did not grow in a warm country. What I enjoyed most of all was a river which flowed near and sang the same song as my old friend had sung.

THE NEW RED DRESS.

A long time ago, when your grandfather and grandmother were children, there lived a little girl named Rachel. She had no playthings that came from the store.

In place of a rocking-horse, her big brother, Joseph, had whittled for her a fine little trotting horse. She had a soft kitten to hold. She had a soft rag doll, with black eyes and red cheeks like her own. But none of her clothes came from the store, and her father made all her stout boots.

One Thanksgiving Day little Rachel was feeling very happy, because she had a new, warm red dress to put on. The weather had grown quite cold. The brown cotton dress she wore in the summer had become thin and old. She was, first, to have her hair combed, and then to put on the new red dress. She would be ready when Uncle John and his family came to spend Thanksgiving.

“Oh, mother,” said Rachel, “tell me the

story about my new red dress—the story you told me yesterday."

"Very well," said mother. So she began:

"Last spring, when it was warm and pleasant, a wise little fairy knew that cold weather would come after a while. Then a little girl's cotton dress would not be warm enough; so she said: 'Where can I find something to make Rachel a new dress?'

"'How would our petals do?' said some bright red poppies that were growing in the garden.

"'Your color is just right,' said the fairy, 'but you will not last until winter.'

"'How would my feathers do?' sang robin red-breast.

"'It would take a great many to make a dress,' said the fairy, 'and you could not spare them. No; we must look farther still.'

"'Maa-a, maa-a!' said Nannie, the sheep. 'How I wish that I could lay off my coat. It is getting so warm. I am sure that

another would grow before cold weather comes.'

"'If the color of your coat can be changed,' said the fairy, 'I believe it will be the best thing in the world for Rachel's dress. But how am I to get it off?'

"'We will help you,' said some strong, sharp sheep shears. Snip, snap they went, until Nannie's coat was all in a heap on the ground.

"'But the wool is so dirty,' said the fairy.

"'Swish, swosh, swish,' said some soap and water; 'see what we can do.' Sure enough, the wool was soon washed and clean. It hung drying in the sun, as white as snow.

"'How nice!' said the fairy, 'but that wool does not look very much like a dress yet. I wonder who will help me next.'

"'Here we are,' said some strong combs. Queer as it seems, the combs were called cards. Back and forth they went, until the wool was all combed out into long rolls. The rolls were nearly two feet long and

about as big around as one of Rachel's curls.

"The rolls were scarcely finished before 'z-z-z, z-z-z' was heard in the attic. The spinning-wheel had begun to spin some of the rolls of wool into yarn. The wheel hummed and worked day after day until many skeins of soft, white yarn had been made. They hung beside the kitchen fire-place.

"'S-s-s, s-s-s!' hissed the big brass dyeing kettle. 'Put the skeins in here and see what will happen to them!' In went the white skeins, and out came red ones as bright as the gay summer poppies.

"The fairy was just thinking what wonderful things had been done, when 'Slam, bang!' was heard in the room above.

"'See what my shuttle can do with the yarn,' said the great loom. When the yarn had been placed in the frame, back and forth flew the shuttle. By the end of the day, a long roll of cloth was lying on the back part of the loom.

“‘That begins to look like a dress,’ said the fairy. ‘Now, who will finish it?’

“‘Here we are,’ sang a pair of sharp scissors. ‘Sister Needle and myself belong to the Steel family, and we are very bright and sharp. We can do wonderful work.’ So they went to work at once. They worked so fast that soon, in place of the cloth, there was a pretty, red dress. It had two sleeves, a waist, and a skirt. It was all ready for Rachel to put on.”

“What a lovely story!” said Rachel, when mother had finished. Her hair was all combed and curled now; so Rachel put on the new red dress and went downstairs to open the door for Uncle John.

THE LITTLE GRAY GRANDMOTHER.

Nobody knew from where she came, or where she went. All the children could have told you about her was that sometimes when they looked up from their play, there she stood.

It was her soft, misty cloak and shadowy gray veil they saw first. Sometimes they could scarcely see her face behind this veil. But if any one of them had been brave, and unselfish, there would be the Little Gray Grandmother. Then her face was quite clear, smiling down on them

There was a large family of them, and they had sharp eyes, too. But none of them ever saw her coming until she stood in the midst of them.

They lived near the great sea, and the mist often covered the coast for miles and miles. Their city cousins laughed at them, and said the Little Gray Grandmother was only a bit of sea fog, left behind after a damp day. They knew better, though.

She never spoke to them, but sometimes she looked sad when she came upon one of them doing a mean or greedy thing. Oh, how stern her eyes were the day she found Wilhem telling a lie!

No one could make them believe she was only a dream, or a bit of sea fog. Had she not left the thimble for Mai, which pushed the needle so fast that a long seam was finished before you could say "Jack Robinson"? Who else brought the boots for Gregory, which helped him run so quickly on an errand? Even his dog, Oyster, could not keep up with him when he wore them.

They were all as certain as could be that she had given Doodle, when he was a baby, those soft, warm mittens. They were strange mittens that grew as he grew, and always just fitted his hands. Such wonderful mittens, too! On the coldest day all Doodle had to do was to reach out his hand in his hearty, cheery way to any one. No matter how cold they were, they were sure to feel a warm glow at once.

That was the way that Doodle got into

the way of looking out for all the lame dogs and sick cats; and why all the old people liked him so much. They said he made them feel young again. And Tom, and Wilhem, and the rest; the Little Gray Grandmother had left a gift for each.

Oh, they were a happy family! What if they did have to eat herring and dry bread, with a few potatoes thrown in, all the year round—and live in a hut? Didn't they have a Little Gray Grandmother?

So, you may know how eagerly they were all looking one day at something the Little Gray Grandmother had left for them in the sand. What could it be? It glittered like the surface of a pool of water when the sun touches it. They could see their faces in it—oh, so clearly! They decided to take it to the dear-mother.

Ah, the dear-mother—who cooked, and sewed for them, and nursed them when they were ill, and was always ready to answer their questions—she would know. So they took the glittering thing in to her. She thought it was pretty. She always

liked anything they brought in, if it were only a bit of sea weed or a star fish. She said it was made of precious metal, and perhaps the sea had washed it up. But the children said: "Oh, no; the Little Gray Grandmother left it."

At last they hung it up on the wall where every one might use it for a mirror; but, oh, such strange sights as the children saw in it! It had a queer way of turning itself about toward the east or the west window, so the children could see as easily in the evening as in the morning light. One day when Mai was tired, and spoke crossly to the little brothers, she looked in it. She saw the face of a grizzly bear reflected in the wonderful mirror.

Gregory had a way of boasting about the things he was going to do. He often caught a glimpse of a rooster in the mirror, strutting about as if he owned the whole barnyard. Once little Beata came in ahead of the others. Finding some rosy apples the father had brought home, she took the very biggest and began to eat it. But the mirror

swung quickly around and showed her a greedy little pig, eating a whole pile of apples. The picture made Beata so ashamed that she laid the apple down again.

The pictures in the mirror were not all disagreeable ones. Sometimes they were beautiful. One bright summer day, Mai had given up her play to stay indoors and help the dear-mother. There, in the mirror, was a vision of a saint with a golden light about her head, smiling down on Mai.

Once Gregory rowed little Beata across the bay. He did without his dinner that he might use his penny and pay for letting her climb the lighthouse stairs. When they came home at night Beata looked in the mirror. There she saw the good Saint Christopher wading a dark stream with the little Christ Child on his shoulders. Somehow the face looked like Gregory's, but when Beata cried, "Look!" the picture was gone at once.

Again and again, when the children did a kind, or a truthful, or a loving thing, the mirror shone with a beautiful picture. And

it faded if it were spoken of. Somehow it made them think of the glad look in the face of the Little Gray Grandmother when she found them playing happily together. Strange to say, the Little Gray Grandmother never came again after the small, silver mirror was hung on the wall. Perhaps she knew that they did not need her any more.

Adapted from Elizabeth Harrison's "In Storyland." Reprinted by Miss Harrison's permission.

THE BIG RED APPLE.

Bobby was a little boy, and he had a grandpa.

One day Bobby's grandpa sat by the fire while Bobby lay on the hearth rug, looking at a picture-book.

"Ho, ho!" yawned grandpa, "I wish I had a big red apple! I could show you how to roast it, Bobby."

Bobby jumped up as quick as a flash. "I'll get you one," he said; and he picked up his hat and ran out of the house as fast as he could go. He knew where he had seen an apple tree away down the road—a tree all bright with big red apples.

Bobby ran on by the side of the road, through the drifts of fallen leaves, red and yellow and brown. The leaves made a pleasant noise under his feet. At last he came to the big apple tree. But though Bobby looked and looked there was not an apple to be seen. There was not an apple

on the tree ; there was not an apple on the ground !

"Oh," cried Bobby, where have they all gone ?"

Then he heard a rustling through the dry leaves on the branches of the tree :

"I haven't an apple left, my dear.
You'll have to wait till another year."

Bobby was surprised. "But where have they all gone ?" he asked again. The apple tree only sighed. So the little boy turned away and started home across the fields.

Pretty soon he met a pussy-cat. "Oh, pussy," he cried ; "do you know what they have done with the big red apples ?"

Pussy looked up at him, and then began rubbing against his legs, saying :

"Mew, mew, me-ew !
I haven't a big red apple for you."

So Bobby went on, and at last he met a friendly dog. The dog stopped and wagged his tail, so the little boy said to him :

"Oh, dog, can you tell me what they have done with the big red apples?"

The dog kept on wagging his tail, and barked :

"Bow, wow, wow !

If I knew, I'd surely tell you now."

So the little boy went on until he came to a kind old cow who stood looking over the fence.

"Oh, mooly cow," said Bobby, "will you tell me what has become of the big red apples ?"

Mooly cow rubbed her nose against him, and said :

"Moo ! moo-o-o !

I'd like a big red apple, too."

The little boy laughed, and he walked on till he came to the edge of the wood. There was a big, gray squirrel.

"Hello, gray squirrel," said Bobby, "can you tell me what has become of the big red apples ?"

The squirrel whisked his tail and looked at Bobby.

“The farmer has hidden them all away,
To eat on a pleasant winter’s day,”

he chattered. Then the squirrel ran to the foot of a chestnut tree and began to fill his little pockets with shiny nuts to carry to his own storehouse. Bobby said: “Oh, thank you,” and ran up the hill to the farmer’s house as fast as he could go. The farmer was standing by the door, and he smiled when he saw Bobby.

“Good morning, my little man,” he said; “what can I do for you to-day?”

“Please,” said Bobby, “I want a big red apple.”

The farmer laughed. “Come with me,” he said, “and you shall pick one out for yourself.”

So Bobby and the farmer walked out to the great barn. There Bobby saw many barrels standing in a row. Every barrel was full of big red apples!

"Oh, what a lot!" said Bobby. "Why did you pick them all?"

"We didn't want to leave them for Jack Frost," said the farmer.

"Does Jack Frost like apples?" asked Bobby.

"He likes to pinch them," said the farmer, "but we like to eat them; so we gather them in for the winter."

Bobby began to look about the barn. Near the barrels of red apples was another row of barrels all filled with green apples. Farther on was a great pile of golden pumpkins. Near that was a heap of green and yellow squashes, and another of turnips. And there were piles of yellow corn.

"Are you keeping all these for winter?" asked Bobby.

"Yes," said the farmer; "we have been gathering in the harvest. These are the good things that the summer has given us."

"And do the squirrels gather in a harvest, too?" asked Bobby.

"They do," said the farmer.

"Then that was how he knew," thought Bobby.

Soon the little boy's eyes began to shine. "Won't you have lots of good things for Thanksgiving!" he said. "Pumpkin pie, and apple pie—and everything!"

"Well," said the good farmer, "there is plenty to be thankful for right here. Did you say you wanted a red apple?"

Bobby walked up to the barrel and picked out the biggest red apple he could find.

"Thank you, Mr. Farmer," he said. Then he ran home to give the apple to his grandpa.

"Why, why," said grandpa, "where did you find it?"

"Oh," said Bobby, "I went to the apple tree, but it had no apples. Then I asked the cat where the big red apples were, but she didn't know. I asked the dog, and he didn't know. Then I asked the cow, and she didn't know. Then I met the squirrel, and he knew because he gathers a harvest for himself. He told me to go to the farmer.

I went to the farmer and asked him for a red apple, and he gave me this great big one."

"Well, well!" said grandpa, when Bobby stopped. "Now bring me a bit of string."

Bobby found the string, and grandpa tied one end of it to the stem of the apple. He fastened the other end of the string to the mantel piece.

There the apple hung over the fire.

It turned and twisted, and twisted and turned, while Bobby and grandpa watched it. The juice came out, and the apple grew softer and softer. By and by, the apple was roasted.

Then Bobby brought a plate and two spoons. He and grandpa sat before the fire, and they ate the big red apple.

APPLE-SEED JOHN.

There was once a farmer who had worked in the fields all his life. Every year he had ploughed and planted and harvested, and no one near had raised such fine crops as he.

It seemed as if he needed to only touch the corn to have it turn yellow and ripen upon the ear. If he laid his hand upon the rough bark of a tree one could be sure that the blossoms would show and the branches hang low with fruit.

But, after years and years, the farmer grew to be an old man. His hair and beard became as white as the blossoms on the pear trees. His back was bent crooked, because he had worked so hard.

He could only sit in the sunshine and watch some one else ploughing and planting the fields that he wanted so much to plough and plant. He felt very unhappy, because he wished to do something great for other people. He could not, for he was poor.

But one morning he got down his stout cane from the chimney corner. He slung an empty bag over his crooked shoulders. Then he started out into the world, because he had thought of a good deed that even a poor old man could do.

Over the meadows and through the lanes he traveled, stopping to speak to the little wild mice, or the crickets, or the chipmunks. They knew him and were never afraid when he went by.

At every farmhouse he rested and rapped at the door and asked for—what do you think?—just a few apples! The farmers had so many apples that they were glad to give some of them away. The old man's bag was soon full to the very brim.

On and on he went, until he left the houses far behind, and took his way through the deep woods. At night he slept upon a bed of moss out under the stars. The prairie dogs barked in his ears, and the owls hooted in the tops of the trees. In the morning he started on his way again.

When he was hungry he ate the berries

that grew in the woods, but not one of his apples—oh, no! Sometimes an Indian met him, and they walked along together. At last the old man came to a place where there were wide fields, but no one to plant them, for there were no farms.

Then he sat down and took out his jack-knife. He began carefully cutting the core from every apple in his bag. With his stout cane he bored deep holes in the earth. In every hole he dropped an apple core, to sleep there in the rain and the sun. When his bag was emptied he hurried on to a town where he could ask for more apples.

Soon the farmers came to know him, and they called him old Apple-seed John. They gave him their very best apples for seed—the Pound Sweets, and the Sheep's Noses, and the Pippins, and the Seek-no-Farthers. They saved clippings from the pear trees, and the plum trees, and the peach trees for him. They gave him the corner of the settle which was nearest the fire when he stopped with them for a night.

Such wonderful stories as he told the

children of the things he had seen in his travels.

He told of the Indians with their gay blankets and feathers, the wolves who came out of the wood at night to look at him with their glaring eyes, the deer who ran across his path, and the shy little hares.

No one wished Apple-seed John to start on again the next morning, but he would never stay. With his bag over his shoulder, his clippings under his arm, and his cane in his hand, he hurried on. He planted young orchards by every river and in every lonely pasture.

Soon the apple seeds that had been asleep when Apple-seed John had dropped them into the earth awoke and arose. They sent out green shoots, and began to be trees. Higher and higher they grew, until, in the wind and the sun, they covered the ground with blossoms, and then with ripe fruit. All the empty places in the country were full of orchards.

After a while old Apple-seed John went to live with the angels, but no one forgot

him. When the children who had known him grew to be grandfathers themselves, they would sit out under his trees, and say to each other: "This orchard was planted by Apple-seed John."

THE ELDER BROTHER.

He was one of a very large family living on a hilly road near a white house.

The people in this house, who wore funny pink dresses and pink sunbonnets and thick shoes, called his mother "That Beautiful Oak." His mother smiled at the name, for she liked the sunbonnets and knew that they were friends who wore them.

Near by were the children of a plump neighbor whom the pink sunbonnets called "Our Maple." For companions there were the sunshine that came and went, and the rain that splashed over them. And, there was the tree family itself. So big a household could never be lonely. At almost any hour of the day or night one who listened could hear a soft murmur. This meant that most of the children were trying to talk at once.

All the time they talked and laughed they were growing up, with many twistings

and stretchings, into bigger and bigger children; and one day this special Elder Brother,—although they were all Elder Brothers, when you stop to think—felt something pressing againt his foot. He knew just what it was and what was coming. He stopped talking and listened.

Presently he heard a wee, wee voice.

"Elder Brother, Elder Brother," it called, "you are standing on my head."

"I know it," said Elder Brother. "and it is good for your head."

"But I want to get out."

"You can't; it isn't time."

"But I want to see the world."

"You will when you are old enough."

"When will that be?"

"Oh, by and by, when you have grown more, and we have changed our dresses."

"Will you tell me when it is time?"

"Yes, Little Brother; now go to sleep and grow."

So Little Brother cuddled down quietly, and the weeks went by. Then, when he had had a nice long nap, he called out:

"Elder Brother, Elder Brother, is it time?"

And Elder Brother answered cheerily: "Not yet! The birds have not gone. The nights are still warm, and our dresses are still green. Sleep some more."

So Little Brother cuddled down again and more weeks went by. Then he called once more.

"Elder Brother, Elder Brother," he called, "is it time?"

And Elder Brother answered cheerily: "Not quite yet. The apples are red. The winds are sharp at night. Some of us have begun to change our dresses, but I have not. Wait just a little longer."

Again Little Brother cuddled down and slept. This time it was Elder Brother who spoke first.

"Little Brother, Little Brother," he called, "wake up! It is time. My dress is all scarlet and yellow, and the wind is calling me. Wake up!"

Little Brother roused. "Is it really time to go?"

"Yes; I am going to leave you."

"Oh," said Little Brother, "is that the way?"

"Yes," said Elder Brother, "that is the way."

"But I shall miss you," said Little Brother.

"No, you will not, for there is much to see. Besides, you will be an Elder Brother yourself. Before I go, let me tell you something. You must only peep at the world for a long time yet. Remember that. After many months there will come a soft wind telling you it is spring. Then a sunbeam will call you, but be careful. Sometimes, while they are talking, wet snow will scurry around. Be patient and wait until you feel warm inside. Wait until your brothers and sisters look fat and pink, and the snow is all gone from the shady hollow. Then it will be time to put on your first dress. Good-bye, and good luck to you, Little Brother. I am off to try my fortune."

Little Brother felt something stretch

and lift over his head. In another moment the light was shining down upon him. He knew he was out in the world at last.

"Elder Brother, Elder Brother," he called, "it is good to grow, and I am very happy. Are you happy?"

"Yes," came from far down the road, where Elder Brother was dancing and romping along. Several grown people, who saw him as he went, said: "What a beautiful oak leaf!" But one of the children in a pink sunbonnet picked him up. She knew that he was an Elder Brother. Looking at the base of the slender stem, she found a tiny hollow, as round as a cap, in which Little Brother had snuggled as he grew.

WHO ATE THE DOLLS' DINNER?

"Why can't dolls have a Thanksgiving dinner as well as real folks?" asked Polly Pine.

"I don't know why," said mamma, laughing; "go and dress them in their best clothes, get the doll house swept and dusted, and the table ready. Then I will fix their dinner before we go downstairs."

"Oh, how nice!" said Polly Pine.

The doll house stood in the nursery. It was very large and very beautiful. It was painted red. It had tall chimneys, and a fine front door with "R. Bliss" on a brass plate. There were lace curtains at the windows, and two steps led up to the cunning little piazza. Polly Pine swept the rooms with her tiny broom and dusted them. Then she set the table in the dining-room with the very best dishes and the finest silver. She set a tiny vase in the middle of the table, with two violets in it. She put doll napkins at each plate.

When the house was clean and ready, she dressed Lavinia in her pink muslin, and Dora Jane in her gray velvet, and Hannah Welch in her yellow silk. Then she seated them around the table, each one in her own chair. Polly was just telling the dolls that they must not eat with their knives, or leave their teaspoons in their cups when they drank their tea, when the door opened. In came mamma with a real doll's Thanksgiving dinner.

There was a chicken-bone to put on the platter before Hannah Welch, for Hannah always did the carving. There were cunning little dishes of mashed potato and cranberry sauce, and some celery in a tiny tumbler, and a small squash pie baked in a patty pan. Polly Pine hopped up and down with delight when she saw the dolls' dinner. She set everything on the table. Then she ran to put on her nicest muslin frock with the pink ribbons, and she went downstairs to her own dinner.

There were gentlemen there for dinner—

gentlemen Polly was very fond of—and she had a nice time visiting with one of them. He could change his table-napkin into a white rabbit. She forgot all about the dolls' Thanksgiving dinner until it was dessert-time, and the nuts and raisins came in.

Then Polly remembered. She jumped down from her chair and asked mamma if she might go upstairs and see if the dolls had eaten their dinner.

The front door of the house was open, and there sat the dolls just as their little mistress had left them. But they had eaten nearly all the dinner! Everything was gone except the potato and the cranberry sauce. The chicken leg was picked bare, and the bread was nibbled, and the little pie was eaten all around.

"Well, this is strange," said papa.

Just then they heard a funny, scratching noise in the doll house. A little gray mouse jumped out from under the table. He ran out of the front door of the doll house, and over the piazza, and down the steps before

you could say "Jack Robinson." In a minute he was gone—nobody knew where.

There was another tiny mouse in the doll house under the parlor sofa. There was a third mouse under Lavinia's bed, with its poor, frightened, gray tail sticking out. They all got away safely. Papa would not allow mamma to go for the cat. He said :

"Why can't a poor little mouse have a Thanksgiving dinner as well as we?"

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MAKING THE BEST OF IT

"What a dreary day this is!" said the old gray goose to the brown hen. They stood at the henhouse window and watched the falling snow. It covered every nook and corner of the farmyard.

"Yes, indeed," said the brown hen; "I would be almost willing to be made into chicken pie on such a day."

She had scarcely stopped talking, when the Pekin duck said fretfully: "I am dreadfully hungry." Then a little flock of speckled chickens all huddled together peeped: "And we are so thirsty!"

In fact, the feathered folks in the henhouse were cross and discontented. Since the farmer's boy had fed them, early in the morning, they had been given nothing to eat or drink. Hour after hour went by. The cold winter wind howled around their house. It is no wonder that they felt deserted.

The handsome white rooster, though,

seemed quite as happy as usual. That is saying a great deal, for a jollier, better-natured old fellow than he never lived in a farmyard. Sunshine, rain, or snow were all the same to him. He crowed quite as lustily in stormy as in fair weather.

"Well," he said, as his bright eyes glanced about the henhouse, "you all seem to be having a fit of the dumps."

Nobody answerd the white rooster, but a faint cluck or two came from some hens. At once they put their heads back under their wings, as if ashamed of having spoken at all.

This was quite too much for the white rooster. He stood first on one yellow foot and then on the other. He turned his head from side to side, and said: "Well, we are a lively set! Any one would think, to look in here, that we were surrouded by a band of hungry foxes."

Just then a daring little bantam rooster hopped down from his perch. He strutted over to the big rooster, and said:

"We are all lively enough when our

crops are full, but when we are starving the wonder is that we can hold our heads up at all. If I ever see that farmer's boy again—I'll peck his foot!"

"You won't see him until he feeds us," said the white rooster, "and then I guess you will peck his corn."

"Oh, oh!" moaned the brown hen, "don't mention a peck of corn."

"Madam," remarked the white rooster, bowing politely, "your trouble is my own. I am hungry, too. But we might be worse off. We might be on our way to market in a box. Then, too, suppose we haven't had enough to eat to-day; at least we have room enough to stretch our wings."

"Why, that is a fact," answered the brown hen; and all the feathered family—the smallest chickens included—stretched their wings. They preened their feathers and looked a trifle happier.

"Now, then," went on the rooster, "suppose we have a little music. It will cheer us and help pass the hours until roosting time. We will sing a merry song.



"Cock-a-doodle-doo!" This comes of making the
best of things."

Will you be kind enough to start a lively tune, Mrs. Brown Hen?"

The brown hen shook herself proudly. She tossed her head back, and began: "Cut-cut-cut-ca-dak-cut." In less than two minutes every one in the hen-house had joined her.

Now the horses, and the sheep were not far away. Hearing the happy voices in the hen-house, they, too, joined in the grand chorus. And the pigs did their best to sing louder than all the rest. Higher and higher, stronger and stronger, rose the song. Louder and louder quacked the ducks. Shriller and shriller squeaked the pigs.

They were all so happy that they quite forgot their hunger until the door of the hen-house burst open. In came three children, each carrying a dish full of steaming chicken food.

"Don't stop your music, Mr. Rooster," said the little girl. She was so snugly bundled up that you could scarcely see her dear little face. "You see, we were so

lonesome that we didn't know what to do. But when we heard you singing out here in your house, we laughed and laughed until we pretty nearly cried. Then we went to tell Jack about you. He was lonesome, too. Poor Jack is sick with a sore throat. And he said: 'Why, those poor hens; they haven't been fed since morning!'"

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!" said the white rooster. "This comes of making the best of things. Cock-a-doodle-doo!" and nobody asked him to stop crowing.

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GRANDFATHER'S PENNY

Once upon a time, when it was so long ago that there were no trolley cars or telephones, Grandfather was a little, little boy named John.

He lived in a small red farmhouse set in the middle of wide fields. There were woods all about, and only a cow path to walk in across the meadows until you came to the stage road.

In the summer Grandfather used to have the best time, for he knew the places where the biggest blackberries grew, and he could find the patches of checker-berries in the woods. He knew where the brook ran swiftest to sail his boats, and he could climb the tallest apple tree that ever grew.

But in the winter it was quite different. Then Grandfather wore a little cap made of coonskin, and a bright-green tippet, and a home-spun suit, and a pair of hide boots. It was always very cold in the country in the winter time. Grandfather had to walk

two miles to the schoolhouse, with his little tin dinner pail hung over his arm. When school was over, he must hurry home to help with the chores. There were kindlings to split, and the cows to feed, and paths to shovel.

At night he was a tired little boy and he tumbled upstairs to bed in the attic. The attic walls were hung with strings of dried apples. The spinning-wheel in the corner pointed its long finger at him, until he pulled the patchwork quilt high up over his cold little nose and went fast asleep.

One morning when Grandfather woke up, and jumped into his clothes, and hurried down to the kitchen, he found that a dreadful thing had happened. The fire in the fireplace had gone out over-night, and nobody could set it going again. They had no matches in those days, and the tinder box was lost. The water in the tea-kettle was ice. There could be no breakfast until the fire burned once more.

"You will have to take the lantern, John," said Great Grandmother, "and go to

Mr. Stone's for a light. I am sorry, little lad. Pull your cap down over your ears, and hurry."

So Grandfather took the big brass lantern and hurried off in the early morning, across the snowy fields, for a light. It was so biting cold that not even the wood rabbits were out. Grandfather's toes ached, and he had to blow on his fingers to keep them from freezing.

It was a mile to Mr. Stone's! But he reached there at last. He lighted his lantern at Mr. Stone's fireplace. He carried it home very carefully, that the flame might not go out. Then Great Grandmother started the fire. She boiled the water in the tea-kettle, and they had breakfast.

When the kitchen was warm, and breakfast was over, Great Grandmother went to the blue china mug on the chimney-piece. She took out of it a big copper penny as large as a silver dollar.

"This is for you, John," she said. "You had a long walk this morning. You may buy yourself a peppermint stick."

Oh, how Grandfather's eyes danced! Pennies were few in the little red farmhouse, and he remembered how red and twisted the peppermint sticks looked in the glass jar at the store. He had wished for one all winter.

So he started out early for school because the store was such a long way off the road. He skipped along, with his penny held fast in his little red mitten. He was thinking how good the peppermint stick was going to taste.

The snow was deep, and Grandfather had to wade through the drifts, and climb the fences. One snow bank was so high that it came up to his waist, but he didn't mind. There was the store at the cross-roads. Grandfather opened his little red fist to look at the penny. But where was it? The penny was not there at all; it was gone. Grandfather had dropped his penny in the deep snow bank!

Poor little boy! All the morning, as he sat on the hard bench in the schoolhouse, saying his A B AB's and writing pothooks

in his copy book, he had to squeeze back the tears. And when he went home, Great Grandmother said that she was sorry, but there were no more pennies in the blue china mug. She did not know when he could have another. Grandfather took his shovel and dug all around in the snow bank, but he could not find his penny.

The winter was very long; but one day the red-winged blackbirds came back to sing in the south pasture. The song-sparrows twittered in the swamp. The blue flag blossomed, and it was spring. Grandfather laid away his coon-skin cap, and began making willow whistles. He forgot all about his penny.

One morning he took a basket of eggs to the store, to change them for sugar and tea. He went the same way that he had gone that other morning; and he was just as happy as he skipped along down the road.

"Here is the place where the big snow bank was," he said, "right in this fence corner, but it is all melted now. Why-ee, here's my penny!"

Yes, there it was—sticking up out of the mud. It was not bright and shining any more, but a good copper penny just the same. All winter it had been waiting there for Grandfather to take it to the store and buy a peppermint stick.

And this is the true story of how Grandfather bought his peppermint stick, after all. And this is the reason why Grandfather gives you so many pennies,—because he remembers how he was a little boy, once, with only just one.

THE PINE TREE

In the woods there lived a nice little Pine Tree. He stood where the sun and the fresh air could get at him. Around him grew many comrades—other pines and big firs. But the little Pine wished so much to be a grown-up tree.

Sometimes the cottage children ran near the little Tree to hunt for wild strawberries and raspberries. They would sit down near to his roots and say: "Oh, what a nice little fellow!" And the Tree could not bear to hear them say this.

In a year he shot up a good deal, and the next year he was still taller. Yet, when it was winter and the snow lay glittering about, a little Hare would come leaping along. The Hare would jump right over the little Tree. Oh, it made him so angry!

"I wish I were as tall as the others," cried the little Tree. "Then I could look out into the wide world."

In the fall the wood-cutters always

came and cut down some of the tallest trees in the forest. The trees fell to the earth with noise and cracking. The branches were cut off, and the trunks were drawn off in sledges.

"I wonder where they go," thought the little Pine Tree, and he asked the Swallow and the Stork about it.

"Yes, we have met them," said the Stork. "They are made into new ships which flit across the water."

"Oh, I wish I were old enough to fly across the sea," sighed the little Pine Tree.

When Christmas came, the youngest trees were cut down, and these always kept their branches. They, also, were carried away from the forest in sledges. The little Tree wondered very much what became of them.

"Oh, we know," chirped the Sparrows. "We peeped in the windows down in the town. We saw them standing in warm rooms, all dressed up with gilded apples, and gingerbread, and toys, and hundreds of lights."

"Ah!" cried the little Tree, "perhaps some day, I shall sparkle, too, like that."

So he stood, a rich green in the forest, through the winter and the summer, and grew and grew. Everybody looked at him.

"What a fine tree!" they said. Toward Christmas they cut him down with an axe, close to the ground.

When he came to himself he was being carried into a large and splendid room. He trembled with joy as they stuck him into a cask filled with sand and wrapped the cask all about with green cloth, that it might not show. On one branch they hung little nets cut out of colored paper. There were gilded apples and walnuts hung everywhere. More than a hundred colored tapers were stuck into the ends of his twigs. There were wonderful dolls that looked, for all the world, like real persons, and they fluttered among the branches. On the very top was fixed a large, gold star.

"Oh," thought the little Tree, "now I am splendid. I wonder if the other trees

from the forest will come and look at me. I wonder if the Sparrows will beat against the window-panes. I wonder if I shall stay dressed like this all summer."

But the candles were lighted and a troop of merry children rushed in. They shouted and danced about the Tree, and they pulled the presents from off the branches.

"What are they about?" thought the Tree.

And the lights burned down to the very branches. The children danced about with their pretty toys, and then they all sat down under the Tree and cried: "A story! a story!"

So a queer, jolly little man told them the fairy story. He told how Klumpy Dumpy tumbled down stairs and came to the throne, after all, and married the princess.

"This is all quite strange," thought the Pine Tree, and he stood very still and thoughtful. "The Sparrows never told me anything like this. Perhaps I shall tumble down stairs, too, and so get the princess."

And he waited with joy for the morning, when he should again be decked with candles and toys.

But the next day they dragged him up the stairs to the attic. They left him in a corner, where no daylight could enter.

"What shall I hear or see, now?" said the Tree, as he leaned against the wall and thought and thought. "The earth is hard and covered with snow. How thoughtful the people are! They have put me here under cover to stay until the spring, and then they will plant me."

"Squeak! squeak!" said a little Mouse, peeping at that moment out of his hole. Another little one came out. They sniffed at the Pine Tree and rustled among his branches.

"It is dreadfully cold," said the little Mouse. "Where do you come from, old Pine Tree?"

Then the Pine Tree told the Mice about the woods, where the sun shone and the little birds sang. He told his story from his youth up; and about Christmas eve, when

he was decked out with cake and candles. The little Mice had never heard the like before.

The next night they came with four other Mice to hear what the Tree had to tell. They sat about and told him of a wonderful larder they knew, where cheeses lay on the shelves and hams hung from above. There, one danced about on tallow candles, and went in lean and came out fat. So the Tree, not to be outdone, told the story of Klumpy Dumpy, who married a princess. Next night two more Mice came, and on Sunday two Rats, even.

But one morning there came a number of people to the attic. The trunks were moved and the Tree was pulled out and taken down the stairs once more. So he felt the fresh air and the first sunbeam.

“Now I shall be planted!” he said with joy, as he spread wide his branches. But, dear, dear, his branches were all dry and yellow! He lay in a corner among the weeds and nettles, with the golden star still

hanging upon his topmost branch, shining in the sunlight.

In the courtyard were some of the merry children who had danced about the Tree on Christmas Day; and they were very glad to see him again. They began dancing around him as he stood in his corner there—among the nettles. But the gardener's boy came and chopped the Tree into a whole heap of small pieces. He set fire to them, and the children ran to where it lay. They sat down before the fire, and peeped into the blaze.

And the Tree thought once more of the summer days in the wood and the winter night when the stars shone. He thought of the Sparrows and the Hare. He remembered the toys and the Christmas candles and the story of Klumpy Dump—the only fairy story that he had ever heard. And so the little Tree burned out.

TINY TIM

It was Christmas Day, and the Cratchit family were going to have a most wonderful dinner. Some other days, they had scarcely enough to eat, for they were a large family. Work as hard as Father Bob Cratchit could, there was often not enough to go around. There were Mother Cratchit, and Martha who worked in the milliner's shop, and Belinda who helped at home, and Peter, and the two little Cratchits, and last of all, Tiny Tim. Alas for Tiny Tim! He bore always a little crutch and had his limbs supported by an iron frame! But, although he was only a little, little child, Tiny Tim was patient and mild, and they loved him more than all the rest. And it was Christmas Day.

Mother Cratchit and Belinda laid the cloth. Peter blew the fire until the slow potatoes, bubbling up, knocked loudly at the saucepan lid to be let out and peeled. The two little Cratchits came tearing in to

say that outside, at the baker's, they had smelled a goose and knew it for their very own. Martha came home. Last of all, in came little Bob, the father, wrapped up in three feet of muffler. His threadbare clothes were darned and brushed to look seasonable. Tiny Tim was on his shoulder.

"And how did little Tim behave?" asked Mother Cratchit.

"As good as gold," said Bob, "and better," setting Tiny Tim carefully down. The two little Cratchits took him off to the wash-house, that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper.

"He told me coming home that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple. It might be pleasant for them to remember, upon Christmas Day, Who made lame beggars to walk and blind men to see."

Bob's voice trembled, and it trembled more as he said he thought Tiny Tim was growing very strong and well.

But they heard the sound of Tiny Tim's crutch upon the floor and they helped him

over to his stool by the fire. Then the two little Cratchits went out to the baker's to fetch the goose. Mother Cratchit made the gravy hissing hot. Peter mashed the potatoes. Belinda sweetened the apple sauce. Martha dusted the hot plates. Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table. The two little Cratchits, come home with the goose, set chairs for everybody, cramming spoons in their mouths lest they should shriek for goose before it came their turn to be served.

There never was such a goose! Bob said he didn't believe there ever was such a goose cooked. With the apple sauce and the mashed potatoes there was enough dinner for the whole family. Indeed, Mother Cratchit said, as she looked at one small bone upon the dish: "We have not eaten it all, at last." The little Cratchits were steeped in sage and onions to the eyebrows. Then Belinda changed the plates and Mother Cratchit left the room, alone, to take up the pudding and bring it in!

Suppose it should not be done. Suppose

it should break. Suppose some one had come over the back wall and stolen it while they were making merry with the goose. Hello! a great deal of steam. The pudding was out of the copper. A smell like a washing-day! That was the cloth. A smell like an eating-house and a pastry cook's next door to each other, with a laundress next door to that! That was the pudding.

In half a minute Mother Cratchit entered with the pudding like a speckled cannon-ball, so hard and firm, and blazing, and with Christmas holly stuck into the top! Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody thought it at all a small pudding for a large family. Any Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing.

At last the dinner was all done, the cloth was cleared, the hearth swept and the fire made up. A pile of apples and oranges was put upon the table. A shovelful of chestnuts upon the fire began at once to sputter and crackle noisily. All

the Cratchit family drew around the hearth, and Tiny Tim sat very close to his father's side upon his little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, for he loved the child, and he said :

“A merry Christmas to us all, my dears ; God bless us !”

“Merry Christmas ! Merry Christmas !” said all the Cratchit family.

And : “God bless us—every one !” said Tiny Tim, the last of all.

LITTLE COSETTE

Montfermiel was a little village in France. There were large houses there, and small houses, and shops, and a little church. It would have been a pleasant place to live, only for one thing. There was no water to be had in Montfermiel. One had to go a long, long way and fetch it in a bucket from the spring.

In one of the very large houses—so large that peddlers could stop there at night and sleep—lived Cosette. She was only a tiny little girl, but she had no mother to love her and no one to buy her food and clothes. She took the place of a maid-servant in the house. There were Madame Thernardier and Father Thernardier, and their two little girls, Eponine and Azelma. They were all happy and gay, but not one of them all was kind to little Cosette.

She was so thin and ragged and unhappy that they called her Toad. All day long she ran upstairs and downstairs.

She washed, and swept, and scrubbed, and dusted, and fluttered about, and did all the hard work. It was Cosette's place, also, to go with the heavy bucket to the spring for water, even when it was night. No one ever said "thank you" to her. Madame Thernardier only scolded her, or struck her for not hurrying faster.

It was one Christmas eve that this story is about. Father Thernardier's large house was full of peddlers stopping for the night, and they sat about the kitchen fire smoking. Little Eponine and Azelma were playing happily with the kitten, but little Cosette was not allowed to play. She sat on the cross-bar of the kitchen table near the chimney corner. She was all in rags and her little bare feet were thrust into wooden shoes. She was knitting woolen stockings for Eponine and Azelma. All at once one of the peddlers jumped up. "My horse has had no water," he said.

Little Cosette began knitting faster, but her heart jumped like a big snow-flake.

"My horse has not been watered," said the peddler once more.

"Well," said Madame Thernardier, "where is the Toad?"

She looked down and saw little Cosette hiding under the table.

"Are you coming?" called Madame Thernardier.

Cosette crawled out and went for the empty bucket in the chimney corner. The bucket was nearly as large as she.

"Toad, on your way back you will buy a big loaf at the baker's," said Madame Thernardier. "Here is the money. Go along, now."

Cosette had a little pocket in her apron and she put the money in it. Then she went out, and the door was closed behind her.

Across the road were the shops all gay with the Christmas gifts. The very last in the row was a toy shop glittering with tinsel and glass and pretty objects of tin. In the very front of the window stood an immense doll nearly two feet high. She

wore a pink silk robe. She had gold wheat ears on her head. She had real hair and enamel eyes. All day she had smiled out upon the little girls, but no mother in all Montfermiel was rich enough to buy her.

Poor little Cosette went across the road and set down her bucket to look at the doll.

"She is a lady," she said softly to herself. "And the shop is her palace. The small dolls—they are the fairies. The toy man perhaps is as kind as the Eternal Father."

But she heard Madame Thernardier's voice calling to her: "What are you doing there? Go along, Toad, and fetch the water or I shall be after you."

So Cosette picked up her bucket again and ran as fast as she could. At last she was no longer able to see the lights from the toy shops. It was quite dark.

The farther she went the darker it grew. There was no one in the streets. At last she came to the open fields, and the darkness seemed full of beasts walking in

the grass and shadows moving in the trees. She ran through the woods and came to the spring. But as she leaned over and plunged the bucket down, down, and then drew it up full again, the money for the loaf fell from her pocket. It went splashing down into the water below.

Cosette did not hear it fall. She sat down in the grass too tired to move. Then she remembered that Madame Thernardier was waiting, and she started for the village again.

Oh, it was cold! The bucket was very heavy, and little Cosette walked like an old woman. The handle froze to her tiny fingers, and the cold water splashed down on her little bare legs. No one but God saw that sad thing — and her mother, perhaps.

Yet, suddenly, the bucket was not quite so heavy. Some one had taken hold of the handle, and a kind voice said:

“My child, what you are carrying is too heavy for you.”

“Yes, sir,” said little Cosette.

"Give it to me," said the man; "I will carry it for you. Have you far to go?" he went on.

"A long way farther, sir," said little Cosette.

With one hand the man held little Cosette's cold fingers close in his, and they went on together. Little Cosette was not in the least afraid. She told the stranger all about how pretty Eponine and Azelma were, and the hard work, and how she had no mother.

"What do those little girls do?" asked the stranger.

"Oh," said Cosette, "they have beautiful dolls; they play all day long."

"And what do you do?" asked the stranger.

"Sometimes I play," said little Cosette. "I have a little leaden sword, I wrap it in a cloth, and rock it to sleep when no one sees."

Soon they passed the shops. "Why are the windows lighted?" asked the stranger.

"It is Christmas eve," said Cosette.

When they reached the house Madame Thernardier was waiting to scold little Cosette for being so long. "Where is the bread?" she cried.

Little Cosette had forgotten the bread. She turned her pocket inside out. What had become of the money? Madame Thernardier was about to strike Cosette, but the kind stranger stepped up to her.

"Here is money," he said. "When I return I will stay at your house for the night."

Then the man went straight to the street door, opened it, and stepped out. When he opened it again he carried the wonderful toy-shop doll in his arms; the same doll, with her pink silk robe, the gold wheat ears on her head, the real hair and the enamel eyes!

"This is for you, little one," he said to Cosette.

Little Cosette crept out from under the table. Her eyes filled with tears, but they shone with joy, too, like the sky at day-break.

"May I touch it?" she asked timidly.
"Is the Lady mine?"

There were tears in the stranger's eyes, also. "Yes, she is yours," he said again. "Tomorrow you shall come with me and be my little girl." And he put the doll's fingers in little Cosette's tiny hand.

HOW CEDRIC BECAME A KNIGHT

A long time ago, in a small stone hut, at the foot of a high hill, there lived a little boy named Cedric. At the top of the hill there stood a grand old castle. The little boy used to watch the strong iron gate rise slowly from the ground as the brave knights rode out of the castle courtyard. It was a gay sight when the sun lighted their helmets and shone upon their brave faces. Their horses, even, seemed proud to carry them. Little Cedric thought nothing was so beautiful to see as the knights riding down the hill.

One day Cedric was playing with the kitten. The queer little thing went out into the middle of the dusty road and curled herself up for a nap. Suddenly Cedric saw five knights galloping down the hill and the kitten was still fast asleep in the highway. He jumped out and gathered the kitten in his arms just before the horses swept by.

As they passed, one of the knights

smiled down upon Cedric and said: "My little boy, you are brave enough to be a knight some day."

As Cedric went into the house he repeated softly to himself: "To be a knight some day." He ate his supper of bread and milk, and undressed for bed, just as he did every night. But when he went to sleep he dreamed of being the bravest knight in the whole world. He would rescue a beautiful princess from an ugly giant who had shut her up in a dungeon.

In the morning he fed the doves, and watered the cows, and brought hay for the horses. He helped his mother with the housework, and at last he said: "Do you think I could ever grow up to be a knight, mother?"

His mother smiled and said: "Knights have many hard things to do. You are only a very little boy, Cedric. Run out to play."

One evening, when it was summer time, Cedric stood in the doorway. He heard the tramp of horses' feet, and he saw a gay



"Thank you," said the soldier, "you are as courteous as a knight."

party of horsemen coming. His face lighted with a gay smile. It was Sir Rollin du Bois and his soldiers riding home from the king's war. As they rode nearer he saw that even the tallest knight looked weary. One of them stopped and said: "Little man, will you give me a drink of cold water?"

Cedric ran and filled a cup at the spring.

"Thank you," said the soldier; "you are as courteous as a knight, my boy."

Cedric ran to tell his mother. He asked again: "Mother dear, can I ever be a knight?"

After many months a wonderful thing happened. One day Cedric's father came in from his work and said: "Sir Rollin wishes a lad to come to the castle as a page. May Cedric go, mother?"

Cedric's heart nearly stopped beating, until his mother said slowly: "Yes." She made a bundle of his few clothes that very afternoon, and his father took him up the steep hill to the castle gate.

The iron gate slowly lifted. They crossed the drawbridge and the courtyard. They went into one of the castle rooms where the walls and ceilings and floor were all stone.

"You would like to be a knight, my lad?" asked Sir Rollin, after he had talked with Cedric's father. "You will not mind hard tasks, and you will be brave and true? It will take many years."

"I will try," said Cedric.

So he bade his father good-bye and he went with an older boy up a flight of stone steps to a tiny room. He was to sleep for the night upon a pile of straw with only a sheepskin to cover him.

That night his supper was coarse rye bread and a bowl of broth, and in the morning his lessons began. He had to learn how to stand straight, and run very fast, and jump on or off a horse when it was galloping, and throw a spear straight at a mark. Above all, he must go quickly when Sir Rollin called, and do an errand faithfully and well.

After years and years Cedric grew large and tall. One day Sir Rollin came to him and said: "Cedric, you are to take a letter to the king. It must reach him quickly. Take my gray horse and ride swiftly. Remember how much I trust you."

Cedric's heart beat with joy to know that Sir Rollin had chosen him for a messenger from all the pages. He was ready in half an hour. He jumped on the gray horse and galloped off down the highway. But the road was dark and lonely, and at last he entered the deep woods. "If I am ever to be a knight, I must learn to be brave," thought Cedric, but he was quite sure he heard a deep growl close by. He rode steadily forward. There, coming toward him, was the great wild boar which had destroyed the farmer's cattle. Cedric spurred his horse forward and hurled his spear at the boar. The boar rolled over upon the ground—dead.

After a time he came to a little village and he saw a group of boys who were

t tormenting a poor lame man in their midst.

"How dare you!" cried Cedric, riding up to them, and he said, gently, to the old man, who was trembling with fright: "Come with me. You may ride my horse."

So Cedric walked until they reached the next village, where he left the old man at his own door. Then he hurried on, not even stopping for food. Late in the evening he reached the house where he was to rest for the night. By dawn the next day he was up and off on his journey once more.

As he rode along he came to a rippling brook. He saw a poor little fish lying on the bank, gasping for breath, where some fishermen had carelessly left it to die.

"Poor little thing!" thought Cedric. He stepped down from his horse and gently laid the fish back in the brook once more and watched it swim gaily away. "A knight should help any suffering thing, no matter how small," he said as he rode on.

At last the knight's beautiful palace was in sight, and Cedric rode into the courtyard. He was very weary, but he carried Sir Rollin's letter safe. When the king read the letter he sent for Cedric. Sir Rollin had written to say that Cedric was brave, and true, and courteous, and ready to be a soldier. So the king told him that he was to serve in the army and live at the palace.

Then, after more years, came a wonderful day when the king called Cedric to his great throne-room. There sat the king upon a beautiful throne of gold, beside him the queen. There was a canopy of velvet over their heads, and all the ladies-in-waiting and the courtiers stood about. Cedric knelt upon one knee before the king's throne, as was the custom in those days. The king raised his beautiful golden sceptre and struck Cedric lightly upon the shoulder with it, saying at the same time: "Arise, Sir Cedric!" Then Cedric knew that he was at last a knight.

After a while he had a beautiful castle

of his own, and his own prancing horses. He was always so brave, and noble, and kind that all his people loved him, and called him "Sir Cedric, the Good."

Adapted from "In Storyland," by Elizabeth Harrison. Reprinted by permission of Miss Harrison.

A LITTLE LAD OF LONG AGO

Little Abe hurried home as fast as his feet would carry him. Perhaps if he had worn soft wool stockings and finely fitting shoes, like yours, he could have run faster. But, instead of stockings, he wore deerskin leggings. Pulled over these were clumsy moccasins of bearskin that his mother had made for him.

Such a funny little boy as he was, trudging along across the rough fields! His suit was of warm, gray homespun. His odd-shaped cap had once been on the back of a coon. The coon's tail flew out behind as he walked, like a funny, furry tassel. But if you could have looked into the honest, twinkling, blue eyes of this little lad of long ago you would have liked him at once.

In one hand little Abe held something very precious. It was not a purse of gold, nor a bag of gold. It was only a book, but little Abe thought more of that book than he would have thought of gold or precious

stones. To know just what that book meant to little Abe, you must be very fond of reading. You must think how it would seem to live far away from all the schools, to have no books of your own, and to see no books anywhere, except two or three old ones of your mother's that you had read over and over until you knew them by heart.

So, when a neighbor had said that little Abe might take a book home and keep it until he had read it all through, do you wonder that his eyes shone like stars? A real book—a book that told about little boys and girls and the big world! Little Abe's heart beat fast. It seemed almost too good to be true.

Little Abe's home was built on a hill-side. It was not much like your home. It was not built of stone or brick, not even of nice, smooth lumber, but of rough logs. When little Abe lay in his small bed, close to the roof, he could look through the chinks between the logs and see the great, white stars shining down on him. Some-

times the great yellow moon smiled at him as she sailed through the dark night sky. And sometimes, too, saucy rain drops pattered down on the little face on the coarse pillow.

Tonight, after little Abe had crept up the steps to the loft, he put his precious book in a small crack between the logs. When the first gray light came, in the morning, he awoke and read until his father called him to get up. Night after night he read, until the book was nearly finished. Little Abe worked hard all day long. Never a minute had he in the day-time to peep between the covers of his beloved book.

One night he slipped the book away as usual and fell asleep to dream of the wonderful story. He awoke very early, but there were no golden sunbeams to peep through the chinks and play across his pillow. The loft was dark and little Abe could hear the wind whistling out in the trees. He reached out his hand for the book—and what do you think? He put

his hand into a pile of something white and cold lying on his bed! His bed was covered with an outside blanket of soft, white snow!

He shivered and sat up, reaching again for the book. He pulled it out. Then the poor little fellow almost cried. That precious book was wet from cover to cover. Its crisp leaves were crumpled and soaked from the heavy fall of snow. Poor little Abe! He sat up in his cold bed and brushed off the snow as best he could. He could scarcely keep the tears back. There was a big lump in his throat, and a big lump in his heart. What would the kind neighbor say?

As soon as he could, little Abe set off across the snowy fields to the neighbor's house. It was more than a mile away, but he trudged along. He did not think of the wind or the cold, but only of the book. When he found the neighbor he held out the poor, spoiled book. Looking straight up into the man's face, with clear, honest eyes, he told his sad story.

"Well, my boy," said the man, smiling down into the sober little face, "so my book is spoiled. Will you work for me to pay for it?"

"I will do anything for you," said the little fellow, eagerly.

"Well, then, I will ask you to pull fodder corn for me for three days," said the man.

Little Abe looked up into his kind face.

"Then, sir," he said wistfully, "will the book be all mine?"

"Why, yes, of course," said the man, "you may have the book; you will earn it."

So little Abe went to work for three days. He was cold. His back ached as he pulled corn for the cattle, but he was too happy to mind. Was not that precious book to be soon his very own?

What do you suppose that book was, for which little Abe worked so long and faithfully? Was it a book of wonderful fairy tales, like yours? No; the book was the story of George Washington. Years afterward, when little Abe had grown to

be a great man and the President of the United States, he used to tell the story of his first book.

"That book—the story of George Washington—helped me to become the President," said Abraham Lincoln.

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BIG BROTHER'S VALENTINE

Aunt Anne laughed. "Sarah Jane Simpson," she said, "what is the matter? Who ever saw such a puckered up little face! Can't you get your lesson?"

Sarah Jane laughed, too, and laid down her geography. "I wasn't really studying Aunt Anne. I was trying to think what I could send Big Brother for a birthday present. You know his birthday comes on St. Valentine's Day."

Sarah Jane always called her brother Bob, Big Brother.

Aunt Anne laughed again. "On St. Valentine's Day!" she said. "Well, you are beginning in season. This is only October."

Sarah Jane thought that perhaps she was a bit too early. But, oh, she had been so lonesome ever since Bob had started away yesterday morning. His school would not close until June. She wanted to do something very nice for his birthday. Christmas came between, to be sure, but

it was a birthday present on which Sarah Jane had set her heart.

"Make him a valentine," said Aunt Anne. "You can cut out flowers, and birds, and Cupids, and pretty little faces from picture-cards. I will give you some nice cardboard. You can paste them on, and then write a little verse on it, and make a border of hearts all around. I will draw you a plan this minute."

Aunt Anne took her pencil and began to draw, and Sarah Jane opened her geography again. All at once she laughed. "You need not draw me a valentine, Aunt Anne," she said. "I know what I will do." And off she ran upstairs.

Next morning after breakfast Sarah Jane ran outdoors—hoppety, skipperty, hop—as fast as she could go. Down the garden-walk she skipped. She went by Bob's long marigold bed, and through the little garden-gate into the barnyard. Bob's dog, Don, came running up to her and jumped all about her. He was so happy to see his master's little sister.

"Oh, Don!" Sarah Jane cried, "I am going to make Big Brother a valentine for his birthday, and don't you want to help?"

Don wagged his tail for joy. Just then Big Brother's little brown hen came out of the hen-house and Sarah Jane went to meet her.

"Oh, you dear Henny Penny, I am going to make a valentine for your master, and won't you give me two tiny brown feathers?"

The little brown hen shook her wings. There on the ground lay two tiny brown feathers. Sarah Jane picked them up and put them in her apron. Then she said: "Now, where is Ducky Daddles?"

Ducky Daddles was just going down to the pond.

"Oh, Ducky Daddles," called Sarah Jane, "I am going to make a valentine for your master. Won't you give me two of your shining green feathers?"

"Quack, quack!" said Ducky Daddles, and there on the ground lay two shining green feathers. Sarah Jane picked them

up and put them in her apron, and then she said to Don: "I will get some of the ferns that grow by the little bridge we made, and some of the marigolds from his garden-bed, and I will make a most beautiful wreath!"

So Sarah Jane went, skipperty-hop, to the pond and picked the little green ferns and put them in her apron. Then, skipperty-hop, she went to the garden and picked the yellow marigolds and put them in her apron. All the time Don ran about and barked, and thought he was helping a great deal.

"Now for Billy Button," said Sarah Jane, and back she went, skipperty-hop, to the barnyard.

The pony was in his stall eating hay, and Sarah Jane said: "Oh, Billy Button, I am going to make your master a birthday valentine. Won't you give me a hair of your beautiful, long tail?"

Billy Button switched his beautiful black tail about, and there on the floor lay a glossy black hair. Sarah Jane picked

it up and wound it round and round her finger, so as not to lose it. Then she went to see Bob's gray squirrel in his cage by the door.

"Oh, Chipperty," she said, "I am going to make your master a valentine of the things he likes best. Will you give me a little bit of your soft, gray fur?"

Chipperty was whirling on his wheel, but he winked, as much as to say: "Help yourself!" Sure enough, there was a little tuft of soft, gray fur sticking between the bars. Sarah Jane poked two of her fingers inside and got it. She put it in her apron, and then she said: "I wonder what I can get from Bunny. I am sure Big Brother would like something to make him think of his white rabbit."

So Sarah Jane went, skipperty-hop, to the rabbit's house and she said: "Oh, Bunny, I am making a valentine for your master. What will you give me for it?"

Bunny was eating his dinner of turnips and parsley. He lifted his long ears, and moved them thoughtfully for a moment.

Then he tossed her a stem of parsley. Sarah Jane picked it up and put it in her apron. Then she turned, and, with the little scissors from her apron pocket, she snipped off a red curl from Don's back and put that in her apron, too.

With the little red curl in her apron, and Chipperty's fur, and Bunny's parsley, and Henny Penny's brown feathers, and Duck Daddle's green ones, and the little ferns from the bridge, and the marigolds from the garden, and Billy Button's long, glossy hair around her finger, Sarah Jane went, skipperly-hop, into the house. She was ready to make the birthday valentine for Big Brother.

Aunt Anne gave her a piece of cardboard and a pot of paste, and Sarah Jane made a most beautiful wreath. It took her a long time to paste the tiny, green sprigs of parsley in among the yellow petals of marigolds. It took her a long time to lay the ferns and the green and brown feathers just right to make the two sides and curve around at the base. It took a very long

time, indeed, to sew the little red curl and the glossy black hair and the lock of squirrel fur to cover the bottom. But the whole was a perfect wreath to send to Big Brother.

And then she wrote in the center—

“When this you see,
Remember us!”

It did not sound just as it should, but it said what Sarah Jane wanted to say to Big Brother.

Sarah Jane put the valentine in the dictionary to press it nice and flat. When the twelfth of February came she took it out. She put it in a beautiful, large envelope. She directed it and stamped it, and it started on its two-days' journey.

And when Big Brother opened it he looked at the wreath a long time. He read the verse inside the wreath, and then he said: “That's from little Sarah Jane, and from Don, and Billy Button, and Chipperty, and Bunny, and Henny Penny, and Ducky

Daddles, and our bridge, and my garden-bed—oh, funny little Sarah Jane!"

And he laughed, and dropped a big, happy tear right-splash!—on his new valentine.

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THE SNOWDROP

The snow lay deep, for it was winter time. The winter winds blew cold, but there was one house where all was snug and warm. And in the house lay a little flower. In its bulb it lay, under the earth and the snow.

One day the rain fell and it trickled through the ice and snow down into the ground. Presently a sunbeam, pointed and slender, pierced down through the ground and tapped on the bulb.

"Come in," said the flower.

"I can't do that," said the sunbeam; "I am not strong enough to lift the latch. I shall be stronger when the spring-time comes."

"When will it be spring?" asked the flower of every little sunbeam that rapped on its door. But for a long time it was winter. The ground was still covered with snow, and every night there was ice in the water. The flower grew quite tired of waiting.

"How long it is!" it said. "I feel quite cramped. I must stretch myself and rise up a little. I must lift the latch, and look out, and say 'good morning' to the spring."

So the flower pushed and pushed. The walls were softened by the rain and warmed by the little sunbeams. The flower shot up from under the snow. A pale green bud was on its stalk, and some long, narrow leaves on either side. It was biting cold.

"You are a little too early," said the Wind and the weather. But every sunbeam sang "Welcome," and the flower raised its head from the snow. It unfolded, pure and white, and decked with green stripes. It was weather to freeze it to pieces—such a delicate little flower—but it was stronger than any one knew. It stood in its white dress in the white snow. And every day it grew sweeter.

"Oh," shouted the children, as they ran into the garden, "see the snowdrop! There it stands so pretty, so beautiful—the first, the only one!"

MR. EASTER RABBIT

A long time ago, in a far away land, there was a famine. In the early spring, when the first grass peeped out, the sun shone so hotly that every blade was dried up. No rain fell through the long summer months, so that the seed and grain that were planted could not grow. Everywhere the fields and meadows, usually so green and rich, were bare. Here and there a green tree waved its dusty branches in the hot wind. When fall came, instead of the well-filled granaries and barns, there was great emptiness. Instead of happy fathers and mothers, there were grave, troubled ones.

But the children were just as happy as ever. They were glad, even, that it had not rained. They could play out of doors all day long; and the sand-piles had never been so large and fine.

The people had to be very saving of the things that had been left from the year

before. All the following winter, by being very careful, they managed to provide simple food for their families. When Christmas came there were not many presents, but the children did not miss them as we would. In that land they did not give many presents at Christmas-time.

Their holiday was Easter Sunday. On that day they had a great celebration, and there were always goodies and presents for the little boys and girls. As the time came nearer, the parents wondered what they should do for the children's holiday. Every new day it was harder than the day before to get just plain, coarse bread to eat. Where would they find all the sweetmeats and pretty things that the children had always had at Easter-time?

One evening some of the mothers met, after the children were in bed, to talk about what they should do. One mother said: "We can have eggs. All the chickens are laying; but the children are so tired of eggs, for they have them every day."

So they decided that eggs would never

do for an Easter treat. They went home sorrowfully, thinking that Easter must come and go like any other day. And one mother was more sorry than any of the others. Her dear little boy and girl had been planning and talking about the beautiful time they were to have on the great holiday.

After this mother had gone to bed, she wondered and thought if there were any way by which she could give her little ones their happy time. All at once she cried right out in the dark: "I know! I have thought of something to make the children happy!"

She could hardly wait until morning. The first thing she did was to run into the next house and tell her neighbor of the bright plan she had thought of. And the neighbor told some one else. So the secret flew until, before night, all the mothers had heard it, but not a single child.

There was still a week before Easter, and there was a good deal of whispering.

The fathers and mothers smiled every time they thought of the secret. When Easter Sunday came, every one went, first of all, to the great stone church. When church was over, instead of going home, the older people suggested walking to the great woods just back of the church.

"Perhaps we may find some flowers," they said.

On they went, and soon the merry children were scattered through the woods, among the trees.

Then a shout went up, now here, now there, from all sides.

"Father, mother, look here!"

"See what I have found—some beautiful eggs!"

"Here is a red one!"

"I have found a yellow one!"

"Here is a whole nestful; all of different colors!"

The children came running, bringing beautiful colored eggs which they had found in the soft moss under the trees. What kind of eggs could they be? They

were too large for bird's eggs. They were the size of hens' eggs; but who ever saw a hen's egg so wonderfully colored?

Just then, from behind a large tree where the children had found a nest full of eggs, there jumped a rabbit. With long leaps he bounded into the deep woods, where he was hidden from view by the trees and the bushes.

"It must be that the rabbit laid the pretty eggs," said one little girl.

"I am sure it was the rabbit," said her mother.

"Hurrah for the rabbit! Hurrah for the Easter rabbit!" the children cried; and the fathers and mothers were glad with the children.

So this is the story of the first Easter eggs, for, ever since then, in that far-away land, and in other countries, too, the Easter Rabbit has brought the little children at Easter-time many colored eggs.

THE STORY OF THE LITTLE MOUSE

The little mouse lived with his father and mother and brother. They lived in a small, round nest in a field. He was very happy. He played in the field all day. At night he went to sleep in his nest in the grass.

Mr. and Mrs. Field Mouse knew how to bring up their children. They taught them never to go into the streets. There were cats and dogs and horses and carts going by.

One day a sleek, fat, gray mouse came to visit them. He was the cousin of the little mouse. He lived in a house on a street. The little Field Mice were awed by his fine ways.

"You could never be content here if you could once see my house," he said to them. "We have feasts! There is always cheese in the pantry. There is really too much to eat."

The little Field Mice opened their eyes.



"You may not wear such a fine coat, but it is better
to be safe."

Very often in their home there was not enough to eat. They knew what it was to go hungry to bed.

After the cousin had gone, the little mouse said to his father and mother: "Why can't we live in a house? Why can't we have more than we want to eat? Why can't we be fat, and have a fine gray coat like our cousin's?"

But the wise old mice said: "Your cousin is proud. He makes the most of his good things. He did not tell you about the cat that lives in the house. The cat has eaten up three of his family. He did not tell you of the mouse trap. His brother was caught in the mouse trap. You may not have such good things to eat. You may not wear such a fine coat, but it is better to be safe. A small home is better than a large one."

The little mouse did not think so. They did not know, he thought. He wanted to find out for himself. So, that night, after his father and mother had gone to sleep, he went out. He went softly across the

dark field. He went into the street to his cousin's house. He gnawed his way into the cellar there.

Never had he seen such a place before. It was big and dark. He heard something move near him. He jumped in fright. But he saw that it was only his fat, sleek cousin. The little mouse told him that he had run away. He said he wanted to see the cheese his cousin had told him about.

"Well," said the big, gray mouse, "come with me. I will show you around, but look out for the cat!"

They started through the big house. The little mouse opened his eyes in wonder. He said many times that he wished he might live there.

"You are safer where you are," said his cousin. The little mouse wondered what he meant. At last they reached the dining-room. There had been a fine supper that night. The cook had let it stand until morning. Here was a feast, indeed! There were a pie and a cake and crackers and cheese. Five other mice were there eating.

All were as sleek and fat as the cousin. The little mouse began to eat, too. But there was a scuffle, a squeal, and a scampering. A big, gray cat bounded into the room and caught the mouse that was nearest the door.

The other mice scampered away from the room. They ran to their holes. The big, gray cousin took the little mouse with him. There they stayed for a long time. At last they went out again into the kitchen. While the cousin nosed around, the little mouse spied a big bit of cheese in a shiny box. He made a dive for it.

Snap! Click! The little mouse was caught in a trap.

"Help! Help!" he cried.

His cousin ran to him.

"Oh, you silly mouse!" he cried; "you will never get out. They will come in the morning and give you to the cat. Oh, dear! Oh, dear!"

The little mouse was wild with fright. He struggled and he wriggled. Something sharp cut his foot. He wanted to get out

and go back to his own home! He twisted in and out. Harder and harder he wriggled. Then he worked himself out and was free again.

"That is because you are such a little fellow," said his cousin. "I never could have got out."

The little mouse ran as fast as his hurt leg would carry him out of the house. He went across the fields to his old home. His mother had missed him. How glad she was to see him! She cared for his hurt foot. Then she put him in his little grass bed, where he went to sleep. He was safe and he never left his home again.

THE RICH GOOSE

Once there was a rich goose going along with a bag of corn, more than he could eat in all his lifetime. As he walked along, so proud and happy, he met a crow.

The crow said: "Hello, Mr. Goose! You have a nice lot of corn there. It is too much for you to carry. Let me help you. I will take some of your load."

"Oh, no," said the goose; "riches are a great burden, to be sure. Still I am not going to give you any of my bag of corn."

"Oh, well," said the crow, "I just made a friendly offer. I suppose you wouldn't mind having more corn. I can tell you a way to make your corn pile grow bigger and bigger every minute."

"Tell me quickly!" said Mr. Goose, setting down his corn bag in the road.

"First," said the crow, "you must spread all your corn out on the ground, so we can count it."

The goose spread all his corn out. Then

the crow said: "Now, you count on that side, while I count on this."

So the goose began counting: "One, two, three, four, five, six—" And the crow began counting: "One, two, three, four, five, six—" As fast as he counted he gobbled up the corn.

At last the goose looked up and said: "Where is my corn, Mr. Crow?"

Mr. Crow flew off, laughing a loud, "Caw-caw-caw," as he went. So Mr. Goose picked up his corn and shouldered the bag, which was not so heavy now.

Well, Mr. Goose went on, and he met a top-knot pigeon. The top-knot pigeon said: "Mr. Goose, you've got a big lot of corn. Let me help you carry it."

"No," said Mr. Goose, "I don't want any help."

"Well," said Mr. Pigeon, "I know a little game you can play, and make your corn into more. I will show you how to play it."

"Well," said Mr. Goose, "I ought to have a little fun as I go along."

"Spread your corn in a circle," said the pigeon. "Begin on the outside to count. I will go behind you and count after you."

"Why don't you let me count last?" asked Mr. Goose.

"Because that is not the game," said Mr. Pigeon.

So Mr. Goose spread out some of his corn in a circle, and began counting: "One, two, three, four, five, six—" And the pigeon followed behind, counting: "One, two, three, four, five, six—" and swallowing as fast as he counted. When Mr. Goose got round to the starting point there wasn't any corn left.

"Where's my corn?" said Mr. Goose.

"That's the game—to find out where it went," said the pigeon, flying off. And Mr. Goose tied up his bag again, and thought how light it was.

He went on and on, and he met a crane. And the crane said: "Hello, Mr. Goose! What a fine lot of corn! Let me help you carry it."

"No, thank you," said the goose, "I don't need any help."

"If you will swim around that big rock in the pond," said Mr. Crane, "you will see pearls and diamonds and gold fishes."

"Oh, oh!" said Mr. Goose.

So Mr. Goose swam out into the pond to see the sights, and left Mr. Crane watching his bag of corn. But he saw no sights, and when he came back his bag was very light indeed.

"Where is my corn?" said Mr. Goose, and Mr. Crane just gave a loud screech and flew off to Canada.

So Mr. Goose went on and on, and he met Mrs. Brown Leghorn. Her ten little chicks were trying to keep up with her. She said: "Don't you find your corn very heavy, Mr. Goose?"

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Goose. "No one knows the load we rich folks have to carry."

"Well, Mr. Goose," said Mrs. Brown Leghorn, "shall I help you?"

"No, no," said Mr. Goose; "I am used to it."

"Very well," said Mrs. Brown Leghorn; "but do as I tell you. Throw some corn out here on the ground and see what will happen."

"Your chickens would eat it," said Mr. Goose.

"You must remember," said Mrs. Brown Leghorn, "that they are not common chickens. They are Brown Leghorns."

"Well," said Mr. Goose, "I will throw a little of my corn on the ground. If those chickens don't eat it I will give you all the corn you wish for yourself."

So the goose threw down the corn. The chickens started for it, but Mrs. Brown Leghorn gave her hawk cry, and they all ran to the bushes to hide. But Mrs. Brown Leghorn ate up the corn.

"Where is my corn? Shame on you!" cried Mr. Goose. He gathered up what was left, and went on until he met a bobtail horse.

"Let me help you carry that load, Mr. Goose. It is too heavy for you," said Mr. Bob Tail.

"No, no!" said Mr. Goose. He was just hurrying on, but the horse said: "You ought to open that corn and let the air freshen it. I know the weevils are eating it up."

"The weevils! Are they?" asked Mr. Goose.

So the horse took the Goose to a nice big box and poured out the corn. The goose said: "I can't find any weevils."

"Let me look," said the horse. All the time he was looking he was munching, munching the corn.

So the goose drove Mr. Bob Tail away. He put the little bit of corn that was left in the great big bag. He went on down the road, until he met a farmer's little boy.

And the boy said: "Mr. Goose, what is that little bit of stuff you have got in that great big bag?"

"It is all the corn I own in the world," said the goose, "and I am afraid to eat it up, for then I shall have nothing."

"Put it in the ground," said the boy, "and it will make more corn."

"Would that not be throwing it away?" said the goose, sadly.

"No," said the boy; "we farmers are always burying things in the ground, and they spring up and grow."

So the boy took a horse and ploughed and ploughed the land. Then he harrowed it, and laid it out in furrows, and planted the corn. When Mr. Goose saw the last of his yellow corn all covered up in the ground, he thought that he should never be happy again. But the boy said: "Cheer up, Mr. Goose! Here comes your corn."

And the corn grew and grew, until, at last, harvest time came. And for every grain the boy put into the ground there were hundreds of grains in the ears. Mr. Goose gave half his corn to the farmer's boy. And what he had at first was nothing compared to his riches now.

MOTHER SPIDER

It was a beautiful day in midsummer. The meadow was alive with busy little people astir in the bright sunlight. A long line of ants came crawling down the path, carrying provisions to their home under the elm tree. An old toad came hopping down through the grass, blinking in the warm sun. Just a little higher up the bees were droning drowsily as they flew from flower to flower. Above them all, seeming almost in the blue sky, a robin was calling to his mate.

Soon Mrs. Spider came down the path. She seemed to be in a great hurry. She looked neither to the right nor to the left. She kept straight ahead, holding tightly to a little, white bag which she carried in her mouth. She was just rushing past Mr. Toad when a big, black beetle came bumping by. He stumbled against Mrs. Spider and knocked the bag out of her mouth.

In an instant Mrs. Spider pounced down

upon him. Although he was much bigger than she, he tumbled over on his back. While he was trying to kick himself right side up once more, Mrs. Spider made a quick little dash. She took up her bag, and scuttled off through the grass.

"Well, well!" said Grasshopper Green, who was playing see-saw on a blade of grass.

"Oh, dear," grumbled Mr. Beetle, as he wriggled back to his feet. "I didn't want her bag. She needn't have made such a fuss."

"She must have had something very fine in that bag," said Grasshopper Green. "She was frightened when she dropped it. I wonder what it was." He balanced himself on his grass blade until a stray breeze blew him off. Then he forgot about Mrs. Spider altogether.

Two weeks after this, Grasshopper Green started out for a walk before breakfast. Just as he reached the edge of the brook, he saw Mrs. Spider coming toward him. She was moving quite slowly. She

no longer carried the little, white bag. As she came nearer, he could see that she had something on her back.

"Good morning, neighbor," called Grasshopper Green; "can I help you carry your things?"

"Thank you," she said, "but they wouldn't stay with you, even if they could when you give such great jumps."

"They!" said Grasshopper Green. Then, as he came nearer, he saw that the things on Mrs. Spider's back were wee baby spiders.

"Are they not pretty children?" she asked, proudly. "I was so afraid that something would happen to my eggs. I never let go of the bag once, except when that stupid Mr. Beetle knocked it out of my mouth."

"O-ho," said Grasshopper Green, "so that was what frightened you so! Your bag was full of eggs! Now, you are going to carry all those children on your back? Does it not tire you dreadfully?"

"I don't mind that a bit," said Mrs.

Spider, "if only the children are well and safe. In a little while they will be able to run about by themselves. Then we shall be very happy here in the meadow grass. Oh, they are well worth the trouble, neighbor Grasshopper."

"Yes," said Grasshopper Green, "I have a dozen wee boys of my own at home. That reminds me that it is time to go home to breakfast! Good-bye, neighbor. I hope the children will soon be running about with you. You certainly are taking good care of them. Good-bye."

Then he went home. And proud, happy Mother Spider kept on her way to hunt for a breakfast for the babies she loved so well.

THE UGLY DUCKLING

It was lovely summer weather in the country. The golden corn, the green oats, and the haystacks in the meadows looked beautiful. On a sunny slope stood a pleasant old farmhouse. Close by, under some burdock leaves on a river bank, sat a mother duck on her nest, waiting for her eggs to hatch.

At length, one shell cracked and then another, and from each egg came a little duck. They all quacked as well as they could, and looked about at the large, green leaves.

"How big the world is!" said the young ducks.

"Do you imagine this is the whole world?" asked the mother. "Wait until you see the garden! Are you all out?" she asked, rising. "No; I see that the biggest egg is here still," and she seated herself again upon her nest.

"How are you getting on?" asked an

old duck, who paid her a visit. "Let me see the egg that will not hatch. I have no doubt it is a turkey's egg. I hatched some, once, and the young ones would not go into the water. Take my advice and leave the egg where it is."

"I think I will sit upon it a little longer," said the mother duck.

"Please yourself," said the old duck.

At last the large egg was hatched, and a young one crept out, crying: "Peep, peep!" It was very large and ugly—quite different from the rest. The duck stared at it. "I wonder if it is a turkey," she said. "It shall go in the water, if I have to push it in."

The next day the sun shone brightly on the burdock leaves, and the mother duck took her brood to the water and jumped in. The little ducks swam about her quite prettily, and the ugly duckling swam by himself.

"He is not a turkey," said the mother duck. "How well he uses his legs! Quack, quack! Come to the barnyard with me."

The little ducks did as they were bid, and they soon got to feel at home in the barnyard. But the poor ugly duckling grew, each day, more awkward. He was bit and pushed and made fun of by the big ducks and all the poultry. "He is too big," they said. The turkey cock, who fancied himself an emperor, because of his spurs, flew at him, red in the head with rage. Even his brothers and sisters drove him about. The chickens beat him, and the girl who fed the poultry kicked him. His mother told him she wished he had never been hatched. So, one day, he ran away, frightening the little birds in the hedge as he flew over.

"They are afraid of me because I am so ugly," he said, as he flew farther and came out on a large moor where the wild ducks lived.

"What sort of a duck are you?" asked the wild ducks, coming round him.

The ugly duckling bowed as politely as he could, but he felt very sad, and he did not reply.

"You are very ugly," said the wild ducks; "but that will not matter if you do not marry into our family."

After a day or so, some men came to the moor to shoot the birds there. Oh, how terrified the poor duckling was! He hid himself and lay quite still. Then, looking very carefully about him, he ran over fields and meadows away from the moor. A storm arose, but, toward night, he reached a poor little cottage. He was too tired to go any farther. He slipped through a hole under the door, and found a shelter for the night.

A woman, a tom-cat, and a hen lived in the cottage. The tom-cat could raise his back, and purr, and throw out sparks when he was stroked the wrong way. The hen, who was called Chickie Shortlegs, could lay very good eggs.

In the morning the duckling was seen, and the tom-cat began to purr, and the hen to cluck.

"What a prize!" said the old woman. "Now we shall have some duck-eggs." So

they allowed him to remain for three days on trial. But there were no eggs.

"Can you not lay eggs?" asked the hen. "Because if you can't, have the goodness to hold your tongue."

"Can you raise your back, and purr, and throw out sparks?" asked the tom-cat. "No? Then don't talk when sensible people are speaking."

So the duckling sat in the corner, feeling very low-spirited, till the sunshine and the fresh air came into the room through the open door. Then he began to have such a great longing to swim that he had to tell the hen. "I believe I must go out into the world again," said the duckling.

"Do go!" said the hen. So the duckling left the cottage, and found a place where he could swim and dive. But no other creature came near him, because he was so ugly.

Autumn came, and the leaves turned red and gold. Winter came, and the clouds hung low in the sky, full of snowflakes.

The raven stood in the ferns, crying: "Croak, croak." All this was very sad for the little duckling. One evening, just as the sun set, a flock of beautiful birds flew out of the bushes. They were swans. They gave a strange cry as they spread their glorious wings, and flew toward the warm countries across the sea.

The little ugly duckling gave a strange cry, too, as he saw them. Could he ever be as lovely as they? When they were out of sight, he dived under the water in excitement. But the weather grew colder and colder, and at last he was not able to paddle with his legs. He froze fast in the ice.

A peasant found him one morning and broke the ice. He took the duckling home to his wife. The warmth revived him, but the children wished to play with him, which frightened him. He started up in terror, fluttered into the milk pan, and splashed the milk all over the floor. He flew into the butter cask and into the meal tub, and out again. What a sight he was! The

children tried to catch him. The woman chased him with the fire tongs. But he slipped out through the open door and laid himself down in the newly fallen snow.

So, all winter, he was cold and hungry, and sad. But one morning he knew that it was spring. The warm sun was shining upon him, as he lay in the moor among the bushes.

The lark was singing, and the duckling felt that his wings were strong. He flapped them against his sides and flew high into the air. He flew to a large garden, where the elder trees bent their green branches down to a stream which wound about the lawn. From a thicket came three beautiful swans. The duckling remembered them.

"I will fly to those royal birds," he said. "They will kill me for being so ugly, but that will not matter."

Then he flew toward the beautiful swans. As soon as they saw him they flew to meet him with outstretched wings.

"Kill me!" said the poor duckling; but what did he see reflected in the water, as

he bent his head? His own image—not a dark, gray bird, ugly to see—but a graceful swan. The great swans swam round him, and stroked his neck with their beaks for a welcome!

Some little children came into the garden. "See!" they cried, clapping their hands. "A new swan has come, and he is more beautiful than any of the others!" And the old swans bowed their heads before him.

Then he felt quite ashamed and hid his head under his wing, thinking how he had once been so ugly. But the elder tree bent its boughs into the water before him, and the sun shone warm and bright. So he rustled his feathers, and curved his slender neck. He thought how wonderful it was, that a poor little ugly duckling could be changed into a beautiful swan.

THE BABY QUEEN

She was born, once upon a time, in a palace swarming with busy folks. At least some of them were busy. A few were very lazy indeed and made the others do all the work.

She was such a queer little baby, lying very still in her white dress! Her mother was altogether too busy to take care of her and the other babies. This baby had a great many sisters and brothers.

If it had not been for their many kind nurses, they would never have grown up at all. But the nurses watched over them very tenderly and carefully, and fed them on bread and milk all day long.

They never had to wait for something to eat. Their nurses fed them between meals, and at all times. So they grew ever so much faster than real babies do. Why, some of them doubled in size in only half a day! So, you see, their bread and milk agreed with them wonderfully.

I think the nurses must have loved this one special baby more than all the rest. They soon began to give her better food than they gave the other babies. She had rich, royal jelly to eat, while the others had only coarse yellow bread mixed with a drop of honey.

The strangest thing about this queer little queen was that the food she ate made her a queen. It was not because she was first heir to the throne, but because she had royal jelly for dinner and the other babies did not. Who ever heard of any other queen who owed her crown to her dinner?

She had a tiny room all to herself. So did most of the babies, for that matter. It was a cozy little room with six walls, and the door was always open until the baby queen was about nine days old. Then the nurses shut the door tight and locked it, after they had given her a good big meal of royal jelly.

For twelve long days the baby lived all alone in her little, locked-up room.

Nobody came to see her, or took any notice of her.

At first she seemed to enjoy being alone. She never thought of wondering why her nurses did not bring her any dinner or supper. She was very busy growing and putting on a suit of beautiful new clothes. As the door was kept locked so tightly, nobody could look in to see how the new suit was made, or how the wee baby put it on all by herself.

By and by, when she was dressed, the royal baby, although she wasn't much of a baby then, concluded she did not care to live alone any longer. She was also very hungry.

She began to turn slowly round and round, and cut a small round hole in her door with her strong little teeth. She had cut all her teeth by that time. When the circle was nearly completed—pop!—the bit of a round door flew open like a lid to a coffee-pot! The little queen poked out her head and looked out with a good deal of wonder.

What do you suppose she thought of it all? There were long rows of six-walled rooms. There were crowds of busy workers bustling about, bringing in new supplies of food and piling them into the rooms. The lazy ones were here and there, doing nothing at all.

It must have surprised the baby queen, but she was too wise to let any one know. Indeed, she was a very quiet little lady, and called out only something that sounded like "zeep, zeep, zeep," once in a while.

She popped her head down again and went back to her own little room to rest and think about it all. After that she peeped out of the door several times, and then, boldly, walked out. She was too hungry, just then, to wait for ceremony, so she walked about among the little food rooms helping herself.

Nobody objected at all. They all knew that she was a young queen, and a queen may do what she wishes. From that time she was perfectly at home in the busy

palace, and began to rule with quiet dignity.

Have you not guessed who the little queen was? Why, she is alive this minute, and lives in our backyard! Put on your hats, and we will go out to the bee-hive, and I will introduce you to her Majesty, the queen bee!

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TOM, THE WATER BABY

Once upon a time there was a little chimney sweep, and his name was Tom. He lived in a great town in the North Country, where there were plenty of chimneys to sweep, and plenty of money for Tom to earn and his master to spend. Tom could not read, nor write; and he never washed himself. He cried half the time when he climbed the dark flues, and the soot got in his eyes, and his master beat him, and he had not enough to eat. He laughed the other half, when he was playing with the boys, or jumping over the posts at leap-frog.

One day a smart little groom drove into the court where Tom lived. He said that Mr. Grimes, Tom's master, was to come up the next morning to a big house where the chimneys needed sweeping. Then he rode away again.

I dare say you never got up at three o'clock of a midsummer morning. It is the

pleasantest time of the twenty-four hours, and that was the time Tom and his master set out for the big house. Mr. Grimes rode the donkey in front, and Tom with the brushes walked behind. They went out of the court, and up the street, past the closed window shutters, past the roofs all shining gray in the gray dawn.

On and on they went, and Tom looked and looked, for he had never been so far in the country before. Now they had gone three miles or more, and they came to the lodge gates before the big house.

Grimes rang at the gate, and out came the keeper and opened it. Then the keeper went with them, around the back way, and into a little back door. In a passage the housekeeper met them, and she gave Grimes orders about the chimneys. Grimes listened, and said, under his breath, to Tom: "Mind that, you little beggar!"

Then they came to a big room. After a whimper, and a kick or two from his master, into the grate went Tom with his brushes, and up the chimney.



"Mr. Grimes rode the donkey in front, and Tom with the brushes, walked behind."

I don't know how many chimneys he swept, but he got quite tired and puzzled, too. They were crooked chimneys, and, somehow, Tom lost his way in them. At last, what did he do but come down the wrong one. He found himself standing in a room, like none he had ever seen before.

The room was all dressed in white. There were white window curtains, white bed curtains, white furniture, and white walls. The carpet was full of gay little flowers, and the walls were hung with pictures. He saw a wash-stand, with soap, and brushes, and towels; all for washing. "She must be a very dirty lady," thought Tom.

Then, looking toward the bed, he saw her. Under a snow-white coverlet, upon a snow-white pillow, lay the most beautiful little girl Tom had ever seen. Her cheeks were as white as the pillow. Her hair, like threads of gold, was spread all over the bed. Tom wondered if she could be one of the wax dolls he had seen in the shops. But, no, she could breathe.

"Are all people like that when they are washed?" wondered Tom.

He looked at his hands, and tried to rub off the soot. Then he saw, standing close to him, a little, ragged, ugly, black dwarf. It was himself, reflected in a mirror; and Tom found out that he was dirty.

He burst into tears, and tried to climb up the chimney again, but the fender upset with a terrible noise. Up jumped the little girl, and, seeing Tom, began to scream. In ran her nurse from the next room, and Tom jumped out of the window and down to the garden below. The gardener, and the groom, and the dairy-maid, and Mr. Grimes, all ran after Tom. But he made for the woods, and they could not catch him.

When he got into the woods, the boughs laid hold of his legs, and poked into his face, and scratched him. Still, he pushed bravely on through it all. On and on he went, over a great moor, where there were huge spiders, and green lizards,

and little foxes. Higher and higher he went, up a hill, and then down the other side, until he was a long way off from Mr. Grimes.

He was tired and hungry, for the sun was high now, but on he went like the brave little man he was, a mile off, and a thousand feet down. Of course, he dirtied everything as he went. There has been a black smudge all down the crag ever since. There have been more black beetles, too, for Tom dirtied the papa of them all.

On and on! He was so thirsty and footsore! But, at last, he came to a neat, pretty little cottage, with clipped yew hedges all around the garden. There were yews inside, too, cut into peacocks, and trumpets, and teapots, and all sorts of queer shapes. He came slowly up to the open door; and then peeped in, half afraid.

And there, by the fireplace, sat the nicest old woman that ever was seen. She wore a red petticoat, and a short dimity gown. She had on a clean white cap, with a black silk handkerchief over it, tied under

her chin. At her feet sat the grandfather of all the cats.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" she cried, as she saw Tom. "A dirty chimney sweep! Away with you!"

"Water!" said poor Tom, quite faint.

The old woman looked at him through her spectacles. "The boy is ill," she said. So she gave Tom a cup of milk and a bit of bread. She put him in a barn on sweet, soft hay, and bade him sleep. Then she went in again, but Tom did not fall asleep.

He turned and tossed. He seemed to hear the little girl crying to him: "Oh, you are so dirty!" And he kept saying, though he was half asleep: "I must be clean. I must be clean."

All of a sudden he found himself, not in the out-house upon the hay, but in the middle of a meadow, with a stream of water just before him. He had come there on his own legs, between sleep and awake, and he was not a bit surprised. He lay down in the grass and looked at the clear,

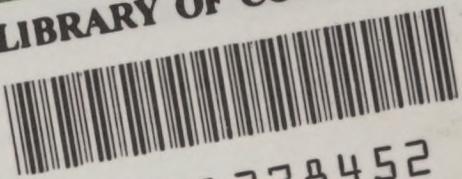
clear water. He dipped his hands in and found it cool. So cool!

"I will be a fish," he said. "I will swim in the water. I must be clean!"

So he pulled off his poor, ragged clothes. He put his little hot, sore feet in the water, and then his legs. Suddenly he saw a beautiful fairy rising up out of the water and reaching her hands to him. Green water weeds floated around her sides, and white water lilies around her head. The fairies of the stream came up from the bottom and circled around her, for she was their queen. She said to them, as she took Tom in her strong arms: "I have brought you a new little brother!"

Then Tom fell asleep—the sunniest, coziest, quietest sleep that ever he had in his life, because the fairies had taken him. And now comes the most wonderful part of the story. When Tom awoke he was swimming about in the stream, as white, and clean, and happy as possible. He was not a poor little chimney sweep any longer. The fairies had turned him into a water-baby.

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