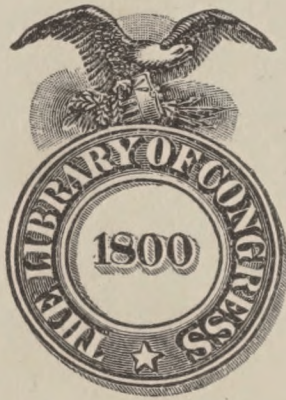


Witchery Ways



Amos R. Wells



Class 35

Book Fables

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WITCHERY WAYS



Frontispiece—Witchery Ways

"HIS EARS GREW AS LARGE AS PALM-LEAF FANS"

See page 20

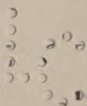
Witchery Ways

By

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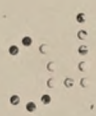
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PREFACE

I HAVE always had a high regard for the fairies, with all their kinsfolk, the goblins, brownies, gnomes, nymphs, dryads, elves, nixies, pixies, wizards, and even the witches. I have always refused to believe that these happy fairy friends of ours spend their time in nothing but sipping honey-dew and dancing around toad-stools. It has been a great pleasure, therefore, to discover some of the more useful operations of the fairy folk, and to record in this book their practical pranks.

These are fairy stories with a purpose. "The Reflecting Face" is intended to mirror a fault or a virtue of your own. "Cram" may teach you to study, and Student William, to teach; Æsop's Jackdaw to be honest, and "Dr. Bright's Alarm-clock" to be industrious. "The Discerning Hammer" is intended to hammer a truth or two into your head, and from "The Magic Counter" you may buy some notions worth having. With King Nirvus you will find out the secret of a soft

PREFACE

bed, and with Tricephalos you will learn how to manage men. "Splatzonderkoff" will become, I hope, a word of some significance in your vocabulary, and the Propulsive Pen may be allowed to do your writing.

I have a high opinion of my readers, too, as well as of the fairies. I believe they will be no less pleased with these stories because they mean to do more than entertain. But I hope they *will* entertain. At any rate, if you go to sleep over this book you may throw it away, and I'll never say a word!

AMOS R. WELLS.

BOSTON.

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WITCHERY WAYS

WITCHERY WAYS

I

“EYES AND MOUTH AND NOSE AND HANDS”

“**M**OTHER! Mother!” cried Student William, rushing in from a walk.

“And what now, my boy?” asked his mother.

“The King! The princes!”

“What about his Majesty and their Royal Highnesses?”

“The King needs a teacher for the princes, and wouldn't I do, mother? I've studied hard and want to be a teacher, and I'm sure we need the money.”

“That we do, sorely, my boy, since your poor father died. But the King would never choose a laborer's son like you. Princes' teachers are great folk, my dear young innocent.”

“Ah, but, Mother darling, the King has a new idea. He is to choose his teacher in some

strange way, and has invited every one to come and try for the place; yes, every one. And I must go."

"Well, it will do no harm, at least. God's blessing go with you, my helpful boy!"

And so Student William posted off to the palace. His brain was all afire with the hope of teaching, for he thought the teacher's calling the noblest in the world. "To make royal young men of those manly little princes! What happiness!" said he to himself as he stoutly trudged along.

The palace-gate was besieged by quite a company of applicants of all kinds, old and young, solemn and jovial, and as they were ushered into the King's audience-room still another company came out, looking exceedingly crestfallen. From the audience-room sounded loud shouts of laughter, and now and then, even after they had entered, they heard muffled giggling, as if something very comical had just happened.

At one end of the room sat the King on a rich throne, and at his feet were the princes, three handsome boys, as bright and jolly youngsters as could be seen in the kingdom. On all sides of the hall were arranged chairs,

which were full of great ladies and gentlemen of the court, and wise, white-wigged members of the royal council with their long black gowns, and all, for some reason or other, were in a state of smothered glee.

As soon as Student William and the crowd of applicants were seated near the throne the King remarked quietly :

“Gentlemen, I have observed that teachers often know enough to teach well, but fail because of some slight trouble connected with other parts of the body than the brain. And so, with your kind permission, before the members of my council examine into your knowledge, I wish to test you in a more general way, with the aid of my Court Magician. The test may not be agreeable, but it will not injure you in the least. Do you consent?”

All nodded their heads with the exception of Student William, who, queer young man that he was, had been so interested in looking at the dear young princes that he had only half heard what the King said, and was quite confused by the question.

“Who will be examined first?” the King asked.

“I,” said a sharp little man, jumping up

quickly. "I am Professor Seeitall, your Majesty," and he stepped briskly out before the throne, casting shrewd glances at King, princes, and court.

At the King's nod an imposing old gentleman advanced, with long white hair and beard, and long white gown. He carried a white staff in his hand, with a stuffed bat on the end of it. He was the Court Magician. Solemnly he waved his staff over Professor Seeitall, while he chanted this rhyme:

*"Eyes and mouth and nose and hands,
Ears and feet, my charm commands.
Used too much or not enough,
Smaller be, or larger puff!"*

Instantly the court, King, and even the waiting crowd of applicants burst into a roar of laughter, it was so comical. Professor Seeitall had been conspicuous ever since his entrance for the open-eyed curiosity with which he had stared at everything and everybody—a bold, impudent stare, which had annoyed the ladies of the court not a little, and angered the gentlemen. At the waving of the magic wand the Professor's two sharp little eyes at once flashed out into great owl's eyes, three inches

across at least, which met over his nose and reached to his ears, so that the Professor was a wonderful object to behold.

“Ah, my dear Professor Seeitall,” said the King, as soon as he could speak for laughing, “I’m afraid you are a little too fond of investigating things about you to make a good teacher. You may go,” and the attendants led the astonished fellow away. As he passed from the room his eyes returned to their natural size.

But all this time Student William, queer young man that he was, was so earnestly engaged in looking at the princes and trying to get an insight into their characters that he actually saw nothing whatever of what was going on.

“Who next?” called the King, impatiently, as the applicants naturally hesitated to come forward. Hereupon a mild-appearing old man advanced from among them, and bowed before the King. “I am Doctor Eaves-dropper,” he said, smiling blandly.

The Court Magician came forward as before, and waved his staff three times, chanting the same powerful rhyme that he had used before:

*“Eyes and mouth and nose and hands,
Ears and feet, my charm commands.
Used too much or not enough,
Smaller be, or larger puff!”*

The wonderful staff had hardly reached the floor again before the room rang with renewed merriment. Doctor Eavesdropper, while waiting outside, and even within the audience-room, had been listening with exceeding care to every word said by any of his competitors, and some of their careless remarks he had stored up in his mind to use against them, if it became necessary. And it was for this reason, I suppose, that the magic charm acted as it did. For his ears, that had been quite small before and close to his head, instantly grew as large as palm-leaf fans, and flared out on either side of his head, in most absurd fashion.

“Dear me! I’m afraid there would be no such thing as a state secret with you about the court, Doctor Eavesdropper,” giggled his Majesty, and the Doctor was conducted out, his ears flapping wildly.

But all this time Student William, queer young man that he was, saw nothing whatever of what was going on. The princes had

laughed, of course, at Professor Seeitall's weird transformation, and the laugh of the youngest had an unpleasant ring which Student William had noticed, and was wondering what defect in the lad it indicated, and how he might get him to laughing more pleasantly. The boy now laughed again in the same disagreeable way, and Student William was quite worried.

"Come! Another!" the King commanded, and Captain Peter Ponderous came forward slowly. Captain Ponderous had left the army because he really could not endure the fatigue of carrying a sword. He thought that he might manage to hold a book, as schoolmaster, especially if the hours were easy. His hands were very white, and he had hired a carriage to take him to the palace, though he lived only four squares away.

*"Eyes and mouth and nose and hands,
Ears and feet, my charm commands.
Used too much or not enough,
Smaller be, or larger puff!"*

So chanted the wizard again, with a third ridiculous result. To the intense delight of the assembly, the feet, that Captain Ponderous

so seldom used, and his lazy white hands, suddenly shrank till they were no larger than an infant's, and he was carried from the room amid the jeers and banterings of the court, while the King shouted after him:

“The princes are too active young fellows for a man with such hands and feet to manage, ha! ha! ha!”

But all this time Student William, queer young man that he was, saw nothing whatever of what was going on. A large fly had settled on the forehead of the oldest prince and was evidently annoying him, but he was too lazy to do anything but twitch his eyebrows. At last he made an indolent motion with one hand and scared it away. Student William was lost in thought. How could he make the oldest prince more energetic?

Well, so it went on. One after another of the applicants was submitted to the strange test. Old Mr. Dozy, who had stumbled into the room in a sleepy way, his eyes almost shut, and did not seem to know half what was going on, under the mystic spell lost what eyes he had. Professor Timothy Talkative, who had kept up a constant chatter with his neighbor ever since his entrance, under the charm sud-

denly developed a monstrous tongue, which filled his mouth, and hung down, like a great red ribbon, to the floor. Doctor Discipline had chanced to notice something about the conduct of the princes which he didn't like, and involuntarily clenched his hands, wishing that he could give them a sound whipping. The marvelous rhyme disclosed his tendencies by swelling out his bony hands till they were larger than boxing-gloves, and lengthening his arms till they could reach the floor.

But through all of these strange events Student William, queer young man that he was, had no eyes or ears or mind for anything but the princes, and he was quite startled when the King called him, and he saw that he was the only one left. He stepped out before the throne, made his bow and told his name, with his eyes still on the princes, and his thoughts still full of them. And when the Court Magician waved his staff and chanted his rhyme, he stood there unchanged!

The King and all the court clapped their hands.

“I have watched you, young man,” said the King to our astonished William, “and I have noticed that ever since your entrance you

seemed absorbed in thought of the boys whom you hope to teach. I think you love to teach, and love children.”

“I do, indeed, your Majesty,” said Student William.

“And that is why this powerful charm had no effect upon you. I am satisfied; and now let my wise councilors proceed to examine this young man, to see whether his brain is well stocked for my purpose.”

It was not long before the councilors had learned that Student William’s enthusiasm for teaching had not stopped short of studying, and that his brain was well trained and well filled.

And so it was that Student William became schoolmaster in the royal household, and was so successful in his teaching that his fame spread all over the kingdom, just because his “eyes and mouth and nose and hands,” and all there was of him, for that matter, was intensely interested in the work he had set himself to do.

WITCHERY WAYS

II

THE REFLECTING FACE

I SUPPOSE you do not live in that part of the United States where fairy godmothers are common. Probably you have never seen a fairy in all your life; and if you are the kind of girl Sue Clifford was, you had better avoid fairies as much as possible, or you may have such an awkward experience as this of hers which I am about to relate.

If Sue had known that old Charity Armstrong was her fairy godmother, of course she would have been more careful; but how should she, when no one knew it but old Charity herself? And so it happened that when May Farnham and Kate Shaw made fun of the poor old woman, Sue, who always did what other girls were doing, joined in the ridicule.

Charity Armstrong was hobbling about her little front yard as the girls passed, trimming up her rose-bushes, mumbling, and

making wry faces, as was her wont; for she was a queer old woman. So May and Kate began to mumble as they went by, and to hobble in imitation of the little bent figure in the front yard; and Sue felt obliged to do the same.

And then it was that old Charity Armstrong looked sharply up from her bushes, waved her long shears, and, fixing her piercing black eyes on poor Sue—though why she singled *her* out Sue never knew, though we know—spoke these terrible words: “On you be the curse of the reflecting face!”

Well, Sue laughed as she skipped on, thinking little of it, though somewhat uneasy, and soon turned into her own gate. Her mother met her at the hall door. “Why, my dear!” was her greeting, “I took you for May Farnham, as you came up the walk; you are getting her expression exactly. I wish you wouldn’t go with her so much. She hasn’t the disposition I wish to see in *my* girl. Before you take off your wraps I want you to mail this letter for me, and call at the butcher’s after the meat I ordered. He forgot to send it.”

Sue met old Mrs. Chester as she went out. Old Mrs. Chester kissed her, saying, "You look more like your mother every day, dear child; and it's a sweet way to look!"

"Why, how funny!" exclaimed Sue, laughing. "Mother just told me I was growing to look like that pert little May Farnham. You can't both be right."

The village postmistress was an odd little personage, with small mouth tightly pursed up, queer wrinkles over the top of her nose, and very sharp and diminutive eyes. Sue talked with her a moment as she gave her the letter, and then went off to the butcher's. She thought that the friends she met looked at her very strangely in passing, but did not know why, until, in a small, cracked mirror hanging beside the butcher's counter, she happened to glance at her image. Startled, she looked again. Yes, there were the queer wrinkles on top of the nose, the pursed-up mouth, even the contracted eyes, of Mrs. Sally Poindexter, the postmistress.

It was with the very greatest difficulty that Sue could tell her errand, so alarmed was she. Sam Prince, the butcher, was a funny fellow, somewhat weak-minded, but always good-

natured and cracking his jokes. He had a wide mouth, always distended in a grin, a flat nose ever broadened with a smile, and an enormous, square double chin. He was bubbling over with merriment that morning, and tried to have a little badinage with Sue; but she was too much disturbed for any such amusement.

All the way home Charity Armstrong's words rang in her ears. "Cursed with a reflecting face!" What could that mean? Must she look like Mrs. Poindexter all her life? Every one she met seemed in the best of spirits, and some burst out laughing at sight of her; but she was in no mood for jollity. Cursed with a reflecting face! She wished she hadn't talked so long with Mrs. Poindexter.

"But pshaw!" thought Sue, "what nonsense this is! I have too active an imagination!"

Notwithstanding, as soon as she got home she ran up to her little room, to look at herself in the mirror. She couldn't help laughing at first, horrible as it was, and though she soon began to cry. From the mirror looked out at her, not Mrs. Poindexter's little



Witchery Ways

SUE'S REFLECTING FACE AND THE BUTCHER

pursed-up countenance, but Sam Prince's broad, smiling one, widely grinning mouth, laughter-distended nose; she could even see a trace of a double chin! And how absurd seemed tears, coming from such a face!

Here was a terrible thing to happen to a pretty little girl, to be compelled to copy in her own nice features the expression of every one she might meet! She ran downstairs, crying as if her heart would break, and threw herself into her mother's lap. "Oh, Mother! Mother! What shall I do?" she cried.

"Why, my little Sue, what is the matter? And why do you make up such a ridiculous face?"

"Oh, Mother, I didn't make it up! It made itself up! It's a reflecting face!" And then came the whole strange story.

Of course, Mrs. Clifford could do nothing. She knew that no one but a fairy could make a reflecting face, and it's foolish to oppose a fairy. So she held her little bewitched daughter in her arms and kissed away her tears, and looked lovingly into her face until the butcher's coarse grin was quite gone. And then she sent Sue to the glass to see her

mother's sweet smile and radiant eyes reflected from its truthful surface.

And now it would require a volume to tell the many grotesque incidents that filled Sue's life from that time. Without at all desiring it, she obtained, of course, a reputation as a perfect mimic. Many were the enemies she made by this unconscious imitation. People could not understand her frequent and remarkable changes of countenance. Some thought her simple-minded; others believed her crazy. A few mischievous girls delighted in tormenting her, bringing her suddenly to see some one of peculiar expression, that they might watch its likeness in her reflecting face.

More and more, as she grew accustomed to her remarkable condition, she came to rely on her mother to restore her face to a beautiful appearance, and often would run crying home with some strangely transformed countenance, to get her pretty features back in her mother's arms.

But, unluckily, it happened one day that her mother received bad news. Her little niece, in a distant town, was very sick, and she must set off at once to take care of her. She did not dare expose Sue to the contagion

of the disease, and did not know where to leave her; for they two made up the whole family.

“Well, Mother, let me stay with Alice Stevenson,” said Sue. “I know they’ll be glad to have me. I’ll go and ask them.”

Mrs. Clifford knew Mrs. Stevenson to be a kind, good woman; and the matter was finally arranged.

But Mrs. Clifford did not know Alice, or she would have hesitated long. This young lady was a dangerous person for a little girl with a reflecting face to see very much. She had a turned-up nose, which would not have been so bad if her mind were not always in sympathy with it, ridiculing every one. She had sharp little eyes, which would not have been so bad if her temper had not been sharp to correspond. She had big ears, which would have done no harm if she had not been so fond of putting them in the way of conversation she was not intended to hear. She had an ugly little mouth, whose appearance was not half so unpleasant as were the spiteful remarks which came out of it.

You can guess what happened. Thrown for that month into constant companionship

with such a girl, poor Sue's reflecting face got into a shocking state. It became more like Alice's than ever was twin sister's. Sue's straight little nose became pert and upstart. Her soft, brown eyes learned to snap sharply. Her sweet lips took on that ugly curve, and even her dainty ears seemed growing prominent and coarse.

At first Sue worried a little over the change, and grieved before the mirror; but she consoled herself with the thought that when her mother came home she could get her pretty looks all back again, and in a few days became so used to Alice's face that she forgot she ever had a different one.

In a month, then, Mrs. Clifford returned very pale and sad, and dressed in black. But she grew sadder still when she saw Sue's transformed countenance.

"Never mind, Mother dear," said Sue, kissing her. "It will soon wear off when I look at your sweet face a little while."

But, alas, it did not. To Sue's dismay, her reflecting face seemed fixed at last, and into a most ugly shape. Running eagerly to her mirror, after that first hour with her mother, she saw still the fretful mouth, the sharp eyes,

the pert nose. Must she go through life now looking like that ugly-tempered girl? How Sue cried, and how Sue's mother cried, and all in vain! The reflecting face would reflect no longer.

Well, that was the best thing that could have happened to Sue, after all. From that sad day she stayed home a great deal and was most of the time with her mother, imitating her pretty ways and looking longingly into her face. After a good many weeks she thought that her face seemed growing a little bit more gentle, and after a good many more she was sure of it. Her former face was coming back to her. The very thought made her so happy that she filled the whole house with song, and danced about her work.

It took a long time, and Sue was many months away from all the places where she might fall in with the girl who had wrought the mischief; but her patience was rewarded at last. For one morning old Mrs. Chester came cheerily in, as she had on that first unlucky day, and said, as she took Sue's face between her hands and kissed it: "You are the image of your mother, my dear girl; and it's a sweet way to look."

WITCHERY WAYS

III

“CRAM”

ONCE—and it was upon a time, of course —there lived a king who had one daughter and two sons. The King did not believe in the education of girls, but for the instruction of the princes he had one Professor-in-Chief, with a staff of one, who was called a Tutor.

The Professor-in-Chief took for his share of the pupils the bright Prince Quickly, who learned everything by reading it over once. The Tutor, however, was compelled to teach Prince Slowboy, who was too tired to study, and did not want to study, and saw no use in studying, and could not remember anyway, so there! Though very much younger than the Professor-in-Chief, the Tutor was the wiser of the two; and yet the wisest man in the world cannot teach a youngster who will not learn. I know, for I have tried it.

Because Prince Slowboy would not learn, both the King and the Professor-in-Chief con-

stantly found fault with the Tutor, as if he were to blame! The poor young man was in the palace-garden one day, moaning over his sad lot, when he bethought him of something his old nurse had taught him, of which he was to make use only when in great trouble.

So the Tutor did as his old nurse had told him. He picked a leaf of tansy, and a black-and-yellow pansy, and he found a four-leaved clover underneath a maple-tree, and with these three in his right hand he knocked with all his might and main upon the hollow oak where dwelt the Busy Bee. The Busy Bee was a fairy, who came out immediately upon the application of this charm, and sang:

“I come at the call of the symbols three.

What does the Tutor want with me?”

Now, though the Tutor was a very bright young man, he had never before this found any use for poetry, and not a rhyme came into his head. In plain and vigorous prose, therefore, he told his woes.

“I am set to teach Prince Slowboy, who is always too tired to study, and does not want to study, and sees no good in studying, and



Witchery Ways

THE TUTOR CALLS ON THE BUSY BEE

cannot remember anyway, so there! I work hard, and I think I know as much as the Professor-in-Chief; but he teaches Prince Quickly, who learns everything by reading it over once. So he gets all the praise, and I get all the blame.”

The Busy Bee was very indignant and sang:

*“Fie upon the lazy wight!
Rub the books upon his head,
Leaf by leaf, from left to right;
Thus our fairy-books are read.”*

Then she flew back into the hollow oak.

The Tutor considered this decidedly ridiculous advice; but that very afternoon Prince Slowboy was so provokingly stupid over his geography lesson that really nothing remained untried except the fairy charm. So the Tutor solemnly and carefully rubbed the three pages of that day's lesson over the prince's head from left to right, the boy meanwhile looking somewhat frightened and astonished, as was natural, to be sure. Then the Tutor began his questions again, and found to his delight that Prince Slowboy had a perfect lesson. He knew all the capitals

and principal cities, and could bound everything and tell its products.

Progress was easy and pleasant from that moment. Latin, history, arithmetic, grammar—it was all play to Prince Slowboy now. Four times the ordinary lessons were learned in a wonderfully short time. Newspapers were read, and a vast amount of general information was picked up from the magazines, all in this expeditious manner. Small wonder that when the King next came to examine his two sons he found Prince Slowboy as much in advance of his brother as he had before been behind him. The chagrin and astonishment of the Professor-in-Chief can hardly be imagined. He redoubled his efforts, and still the Tutor's marvelous pupil grew rapidly wiser than his own.

At length he decided to be present, unseen, at one of Prince Slowboy's recitations, that he might gain some insight into the new methods which had been so strangely successful. Thus he learned the fairy charm, and hurried off in great glee to tell the King about it.

“And now, your Majesty,” said he, with a chuckle, “let us bring that young pedagogue to confusion. Allow me to use his charm

most vigorously upon Prince Quickly for a few hours, and then call the boys up for examination. When we have exposed the Tutor we may well dismiss him, as I shall then be able myself to care for the two.”

The King did not quite like it, but he agreed to the program of the Professor-in-Chief, and in a few hours sent for the boys and their teachers, as he often did, to test their progress. It was to be observed that the Professor-in-Chief was very warm and appeared fatigued, his arms hanging quite limp, while Prince Quickly's hair was in a shockingly confused state, and his books sadly crumpled. Both, however, seemed confident and pleased.

Then the King began to ask questions. But what had happened? Prince Slowboy replied more readily than ever before, but Prince Quickly appeared to have forgotten everything! He could not decline *mensa*, he could not parse a common noun, he could not give the multiplication table of tens, he did not know where London is. He was in an alarming state of ignorance.

“What have you done to him?” cried the King in a fury, and dismissed the Professor-

in-Chief on the spot, while the Tutor was promoted to his place with double salary.

“What did I do, to be sure?” muttered the old man, as he crept away. “And why did not the charm work as well in my hands as in his?” After long thought the truth suddenly flashed upon him. He had rubbed in the wrong direction. Rubbing from right to left had reversed the charm, and had drawn out of poor Prince Quickly’s brain all the learning it had ever contained. Having come to this opinion, he did not despair, but watched his chance.

The education of the princes, under the new Professor-in-Chief, went on charmingly, of course. Prince Slowboy had gained such a start, through the blundering application of the charm to his brother’s head, that he always kept a little in advance of him, though both were becoming veritable sages. The King was so well satisfied that for some weeks he had not examined the boys at all.

Such was the condition of affairs when the princes, after a long ramble in the woods one hot day, lay down and fell sound asleep. They were all alone. Not quite alone, however. Soon, from behind a large tree-trunk

peeped a great pair of spectacles, and behind them the sparkling eyes of the old Professor-in-Chief. On his back he carried an enormous bundle of books. These unfastening, he sat down back of the two boys as they lay on the ground, and softly and noiselessly, with wonderful swiftness and patience, rubbed page after page and volume after volume over the heads of both princes, and in the wrong direction. This done, with a chuckle he gathered up his books and set off to the King's palace.

“Your Majesty,” said he to the King, when admitted after some difficulty, “I fear you are mistaken in regard to the ability of the young man who occupies at present the position of Professor-in-Chief. His methods are questionable; his results are therefore questionable. May I inquire how recently you have examined the princes?”

And when the King confessed that it was now some weeks since he had inquired into their progress, the old man continued:

“Then I advise you to investigate the matter at once. Call the young man and his pupils, and if everything is well, I will be off and never trouble you again.”

The King thought this a very easy and reasonable way of getting rid of the old gentleman, and so he sent for the new Professor-in-Chief and for the princes, who had just returned, and proceeded at once to ask questions.

Well, the result may be conjectured. Every trace of knowledge seemed to have vanished from the boys' minds. Indeed, they could scarcely read. Startled more and more, the King plied them with every imaginable question. To their own grief as well as his, they found themselves absolutely ignorant.

"Leave the palace!" shouted the King to their dismayed teacher. "And, my good sir, be pleased to resume your former position as Professor-in-Chief, and see what you can do for my poor sons, if their minds are not utterly ruined."

"Your Majesty," said the old gentleman, "I will accept my former position on condition that this young man be retained in your employment, and be given equal honor with myself. We may both be called Professors, and there need be no Professor-in-Chief. I have learned to admire his ability, and regret my unfairness in forcing him to teach only

the more stupid of your sons We have both been using magic, and I propose that we lay it aside from this moment, and proceed on old-fashioned principles.”

“I agree, my dear sir,” cordially assented the former Tutor, “for I fear that this magic learning is untrustworthy. To be sure, it comes very quickly, but it vanishes as easily, I perceive. We have now an opportunity to make a fresh and fair start with the princes, for their knowledge is equal, since now they both know nothing. I promise your Majesty that though their future progress may be slower than the past, it will be more certain and satisfactory.”

With this the two Professors, the young one and the old, retired from the King’s presence to consult, and form plans together for the education of the princes. Having the rare opportunity of beginning again at the start after so much experience with the same boys, they thought that something wonderful should be accomplished in the teacher’s art. And so it was; for the harmonious and wise plans of the two Professors, working slowly but surely for many years, gave the world two princes whose marvelous intelligence and wis-

dom were the wonder, not only of the kingdom over which they came to reign jointly, but of all men.

One word to my lazy readers, and I am done. Doubtless the fairy charm of which I have told you may appear so tempting on the occasion of your next hard lesson that you will wish to try it on yourself, undismayed by its sad results in the case of the princes. But do not venture. For everything depends on moving the book from left to right, but whether it is from left to right of the book, or from the left to the right of the scholar or of the teacher, I never could learn. Therefore, in ignorantly operating on yourselves, you might draw from your heads all you already know, and that would be a pity.

WITCHERY WAYS

IV

HOW KING NIRVUS GOT TO SLEEP

KING NIRVUS was a tall, thin man, who did not know how to take things easy. He was worn almost to a shadow by the cares of state. Oh, how he worried over the discontent in his realm, over the quarrels of parties, and the opposition of rulers! And not only through the livelong day did he suffer. These worries must even haunt his pillows, and destroy his hard-earned rest.

The court physicians did the best they knew. They gave him all sorts of drugs, regulated his diet, prescribed amusements, but all in vain. The poor king tossed and fretted through the sleepless nights, and was nearly crazy with longings for slumber.

He stormed so fiercely at the luckless court physicians that one morning, after a particularly wide-awake night, one of them ventured to say, "Your Majesty, I am at my wits'

end. I have only one thing left. I have never dared mention it, since it is so far from the regular line of practice. In a neighboring province is an old man who has gone far, they say, in mysterious arts. I believe that he claims to possess a bed which will bring slumber to the most wakeful. If it please you, sir—”

“I’ll try it!” cried the King, fairly trembling with eagerness. “And let us start off at once, at once! Another such night as the last will be the death of me! Fetch instantly the royal coach!”

What a king commands is soon done. There’s that much satisfaction for him, anyway, poor fellow! So they set off at once. This was early in the morning, but they had to ride and ride all day at a brisk pace, and then arrived at the sage’s house only as the sun was near its setting. Poor King Nirvus was in such a state of eagerness and weariness and anxiety, that he could hardly enter the house, though supported by an earl on either side.

The wise old man whose brain had contrived the magic bed came bowing out to meet him. His name was Doctor Komuncentz.

“At once! At once!” cried King Nirvuvus impatiently, as soon as his errand was made known. “Show me the bed at once! I am going insane for lack of sleep!” And truly the poor, pale man was in a dreadful state.

“There is one condition, your Majesty,” said Doctor Komuncentz, “and only one. It is necessary for the working of the charm that you go to the magic bed along the passageway into which that door opens, straight along until you reach the bed,—and all without attendants.”

“Well, well! I care not, good Doctor. Indeed, I shall be glad to be by myself a while. If only I can sleep! Open the door at once!”

So Doctor Komuncentz opened a richly carved door, and let the King into a low, dark passageway. Immediately the door was closed behind him. The King was alone. Quickly he groped his way along a gloomy corridor, coming out in a small room which he scanned with an eager glance. The expected bed was not there. The room was empty, save that just in front of a door on the other side stood a saw-horse, with a log

of wood upon it. Against this log rested a saw, and on the log the King, as he drew nearer, read a placard: "Saw me."

Impatiently King Nirvus tried to push the log aside, but it was not to be moved. He lifted and tugged with all his might, but it would not budge. "That is strange!" he muttered. "I must be weaker than I thought!" He groped his way back through the dark passage, to find the doctor and scold him for his carelessness. The great carved door was locked fast. No push of his could move it, and no sound reach an ear on the other side, though he screamed angrily till he was hoarse.

"How stupid!" laughed King Nirvus at length. "I will climb over the log, and go on." But when he came to the log again and tried to climb over it, lo! the log rose from the saw-horse as the King's leg went up to step over it, and settled again as the King sprang back in amazement!

"Evidently a magic log!" said King Nirvus. "I may as well obey directions." So he took up the saw and went manfully to work, as the placard bade him. And though a sawyer would have laughed heartily at the

performance, yet, for a man who had never tried it before, he did very well.

As the log fell apart, cut into three lengths, behold, the saw-horse disappeared, and the door before it sprang open! King Nirvus walked quickly through it. He heard a thumping behind, and turned to see the sticks of wood he had just cut hopping smartly along after him.

“Truly another prodigy,” remarked the King. “My friend the doctor is quite an ingenious wizard.”

This second room was empty, also, except that in the center of the floor lay a bright, new ax. Another door was opposite, toward which the King walked quickly, being anxious by this time for a sight of the promised bed. But as he neared the ax the three sticks of wood ranged themselves in front of him, and upon their freshly cut edges the King read these words: “Chop me!”

“Strange, indeed,” said the King, “and very impudent. I’ve a mind to go back!” And he started toward the door he had just left. But the three sticks of wood leaped before him again in an instant, plainly bent on being chopped. So the King gave it up. With

an impatient grunt he picked up the ax, swung it over his head, and chopped the sticks into fine pieces, at the imminent risk of chopping off his royal toes.

King Nirvus gave a sigh of relief when the task was done, and started toward the opposite door. Hearing a mighty clatter behind him, he turned again, and saw a queer sight. Each little stick had become a board, nicely planed, and the entire company were hopping along behind him! "*Pro—digious!*" cried his Majesty. "Doctor Komuncentz is a genius!"

The next door opened easily, and the King found himself in precisely such a room as he had left. The room seemed perfectly empty, but as the King crossed it, to try a door which he saw opposite, there flew into his face a great white chicken, crying loudly, "Catch me! Catch me!" Every move the poor King made to leave the room was frustrated by the obstinate fowl, who kept flying at him, excitedly demanding to be caught.

"Ah, I *will* catch you!" roared the King in a rage, and he rushed at her. But she dodged him, and around and around they ran, the chicken clucking frantically, and King Nirvus puffing and mad. Such a race as she led him!

At last, when he was about to give it up, being covered with perspiration and quite worn out, the provoking fowl settled quietly down in a corner.

“*Now* I’ll teach you to play your pranks on me!” cried the King exultingly, as he seized her, and started to wring her neck. But he turned and twisted and screwed, and all in vain, for the neck would not come off. After each turn the fowl looked up and winked.

“Now,” said she at last, “if you are through with *that*, pick me!”

King Nirvus was becoming accustomed to marvels, and so, as two empty cloth cases, one large, one small, settled down—from nowhere—near him, he set to work obediently, plucking feathers from the chicken’s breast. He plucked out great handfuls, one after the other, putting them into the cases, and it seemed to make no difference whatever to the chicken. Fresh feathers instantly covered her breast. As soon as the cases were full the openings closed up of their own accord, and the king let the chicken loose with a sigh of relief.

“Now you may go on!” said the chicken.

So on he went, the two cases of feathers rolling after, followed by the clattering boards.

The King found the next door already open, and, passing through it, stepped suddenly out of the house. He was in a courtyard open to the sky, surrounded on three sides by tall blank walls, and on the fourth side by a high stone fence. The ground was closely covered with cotton plants, growing luxuriantly, their tops snowy with great white bolls of cotton. In the middle on a support was a sign: "Pick me!" King Nirvus had learned by this time to obey all signs, as likely to be the quickest way out of his trouble, so he set to work filling with cotton three enormous baskets which he saw in one corner.

He worked hard, and was very weary indeed when the task was done. Just as he threw the last handful into the last basket he noticed on the basket's side these words, which certainly had not been there before: "Throw me over the wall!"

"A foolish proceeding certainly," said the King, "but over you go!"

He could hardly manage it, but succeeded by vigorous efforts in tossing the baskets over

the high stone fence. Precisely as the last basket went crashing over, there sprang from the center of the wall a crank with a handle, and a card tied to it which read: "Turn me!"

"This is becoming decidedly interesting," said the King, and set to work turning vigorously, wondering what would happen next.

What did happen was certainly strange. As he turned, a crack appeared in the wall at the base, and through the crack came slowly a cotton sheet, fine and new, and folded itself up at the King's feet! Then another sheet worked its way in, followed by a pillow-case and two counterpanes. Finally the handle came off, and the crack closed up. This King Nirvus accepted as a signal that his work was completed, and very glad he was of it, for the grinding had been far from easy. His back ached, and his weariness, if possible, was greater than ever.

There appeared a little open doorway in the stone wall. The King had not noticed it before. Possibly it had not been there. He was almost afraid to enter, fearing some new task, but enter he did, with boards, feathers, sheets, and coverlets tumbling along behind. He found himself in a long, dark passage-

way like the first, and at the end another vacant room. Nothing at all in it.

But as the King looked around for the magic bed, almost ready to fall on the floor, so tired was he, behold, the boards came together in a rough bedstead in the middle of the floor; on it the large feather-case plumped down; the small bag, which had donned the pillow-case, jumped on top of the first; the sheets spread themselves, and over the whole flew the counterpanes, on the topmost one of which appeared the legend: "Good-night!" *King Nirvus had made the magic bed!*

"Good-night!" The King needed no further invitation. His clothes were off in an instant, his body laid in the coarse sheets, his head on the coarse pillow, and he was sleeping as he had not slept since his happy boyhood! He slept all night, and all the next morning. He was making up for his lost time. It was high noon when he awoke, feeling like a new man.

Doctor Komuncentz stood by the bedside, a jolly smile on his face, as the King opened his eyes.

"Where am I?" cried the King, through whose brain flitted a confused remembrance of hopping boards, talking hens, and mys-



Witchery Ways

"THE BOARDS CAME TOGETHER IN A ROUGH BEDSTEAD"

terious cranks. "Where am I? Oh, yes! In the magic bed! Doctor Komuncentz, come with me, and I'll make you court physician. You alone. I'll send the rest away. I can't do without you."

"Oh, I could never think of it, your Majesty," said Doctor Komuncentz. "You surely do not need me to tell you every night to take some exercise before you go to bed!"

"Well," said the King, laughing heartily at the thought of the chicken, the log, and the crank, "your method of prescribing is certainly unique. Do you know, Doctor, I do not believe you are a wizard at all, but only a very sensible old man? In that case you would indeed be out of place in my court. I think I will take just one more nap, and then get up. I have surely found a cure for my sleeplessness." With these words the King turned over, and fell to snoring.

Thus it was that King Nirvus learned how to get to sleep.

WITCHERY WAYS

V

THE DISCERNING HAMMER

THE King who possessed the Discerning Hammer was very much troubled. His feet were so tender that only such shoes as the magic hammer made were endurable to him, and his old shoemaker had died. Now, the Discerning Hammer would not permit Tom, Dick, and Harry to use it. It was as much as a man's life was worth to handle it without its consent.

The King took the Discerning Hammer to the most fashionable shoemaker in the city, and said, "Mr. Kid, if you will make me a pair of shoes with this hammer, you shall have double pay. But the shoes must be a perfect fit."

"Never fear, your Majesty," said Mr. Kid, with confidence.

But the next day Mr. Kid came before the throne with a very black eye, and said, as he laid the hammer at the King's feet (which showed a small hole in the toe of each shoe),

“Not for ten times my pay, sire, would I use your Majesty’s hammer another hour. Whenever I took it in my hands it flew up and struck me in the eye. I am almost blinded by it.”

The King then took the Discerning Hammer to the man who made more shoes than all the other shoemakers in the city put together, and said: “Mr. Morocco, if you will make me a pair of boots with this hammer, you shall have ten times your usual pay. But the shoes must be a perfect fit.”

“Never fear, your Majesty,” said the shoemaker, boldly.

But in a few hours Mr. Morocco appeared in the audience-chamber very crestfallen, and muttered, as he laid the hammer at the feet of the King (which now looked out through much larger holes in the shoes): “Not for one hundred times my pay, sire, would I use your Majesty’s hammer again. Whenever I tried to use it, it stuck fast to the leather as if of a piece with it. You must excuse me, your Majesty.”

Then the King took the Discerning Hammer to the most active exporter of boots in the country, and said: “Mr. Calfskin, if you

will make me a pair of shoes with this hammer, you shall have one hundred times your usual pay. But the shoes must be a perfect fit.”

“Never fear, your Majesty,” was the unhesitating reply; “you shall have the shoes to-morrow.”

The morrow, however, brought Mr. Calfskin, with a pale face, but no shoes. Said he, as he laid the hammer very carefully at the King’s feet (covered now with but the tattered shreds of shoes): “Not for a million times my pay, sire, would I attempt again to use your Majesty’s hammer. Some witchery about it greatly vexed me in my work. Now it would weigh so much that I could barely lift it, and of a sudden it would fly out of my hand for very lightness. Now its handle would be straight, and anon bent like a serpent. Its face would change in an instant from flat and square to round and spherical. But, notwithstanding, I worked all night, and had nearly finished a handsome pair of shoes. I was giving a few blows with the hammer to end the job, when it suddenly got a sharp edge, and cut the shoe in two. Do not ask me to make another attempt, your Majesty.”

The King tried other shoes in vain. No store in the kingdom could furnish slipper, shoe, or boot that did not torture him, after wearing the work of the magic hammer. He tried going barefoot, but that hurt, too. In despair, he offered a large reward to any shoemaker who should tame the tricky hammer and make him some shoes with it, but the shoemakers were afraid to try.

There lived in an obscure village of the kingdom a cobbler, Crispin Cowhide, who was a dear old man, and loved all the world. He had a large family which he found it hard to support, since the village had several smart, young, fashionable shoemakers, who got the greater part of the trade. But he did not worry, and worked steadily, with a cheery face. The news of the King's trouble was long in reaching that obscure village, but when it came Crispin was very sorry for the King. To think that one who had a whole kingdom to plague him should have to worry about shoes as well! So he set out bravely for the King's palace, promising that he would hurry home as soon as might be to half-sole a neighbor's boots.

The King laughed at first at old Crispin,

and was for turning him out of the room. Truly, how should he succeed where the ablest of his trade had failed? But as the King turned away from the old cobbler he stubbed his toe, which reminded him of his plight, and urged him to miss no chance, however unpromising. So he gave the cobbler the Discerning Hammer.

And whether it was the loving, humble spirit of the man I do not know, but never did hammer work so well before. Almost without the cobbler's will it flew—became awl, needle and wax-end, knife, scraper and hammer, at need; punched and pounded, cut and polished, as was fitting; and made, in a marvelously short time, the finest and most comfortable pair of shoes the King had ever worn.

So the King gave old Crispin Cowhide the promised reward, and made him his court shoemaker. The cobbler, with his large family, moved to the city, and the blessings of the whole village went with him.

WITCHERY WAYS

VI

THE MAGIC COUNTER

OLD Mr. Wideawake, who kept the dry-goods store in our village, had great difficulty in the matter of clerks. It required a large part of his time to oversee them, set right their blunders, prompt their slowness, and guard against their dishonesty. For these and other causes he had dismissed many.

One day he was lamenting this trouble to the learned village doctor.

“Why,” said the doctor, “you need spend no more time in watching your clerks. I can give you something which will test them.

“Now, Mr. Wideawake,” said he, giving him a flask, “this is a very wonderful varnish. Paint your counter with it to-night. It will dry instantly. Then note the effect on your clerk in the morning.”

So that night, after his clerk had gone home, old Mr. Wideawake carefully spread the mystic varnish over all parts of the

counter. It dried instantly, and the counter looked no different.

Now the clerk, whose name was Gilbert Guzzler, stayed up rather late that night at a wine-party, and therefore it was with a head not at all of the clearest that he took his place at the counter the next morning. But, though he knew he was dizzy, he was totally unprepared for the antics of the counter.

The first time he threw a bolt of cloth upon it the counter seemed to sink down a foot or two, springing suddenly back. As he measured off three yards the counter moved in waves, so that he had the greatest difficulty in handling the cloth. His yard-stick, too, squirmed whenever it touched the counter, and twisted nearly double.

Gilbert Guzzler was horror-stricken, especially when he saw that his customer perceived nothing of the strange performance. The unfortunate clerk believed that he must be growing crazy. At noon he took a little brandy to steady his nerves. In the afternoon, however, the counter was still more eccentric in its movements, curling and twitching and sinking until Gilbert felt as seasick as the worst storm at sea would make him.

That night, in the company of some jolly fellows, he quite forgot his trials, but the following day was a wilder one than the first. What a witch's dance the counter did lead him, to be sure! So it went on, until in a few days Mr. Guzzler resigned his situation.

His place in Mr. Wideawake's store was taken by a young man named Edward Easy, whose temper was decidedly indolent. He also had trouble with the counter. With whatever part of it he had to do, the varnish there seemed to soften and stick to every thing laid upon it. Mr. Easy was naturally slow, and, with the counter holding in this fashion all the ribbon and calico and wrapping-paper, it took him a marvelously long time to do up a bundle.

Soon the scissors caught the counter's obstinacy and would hardly open or close. The yard-stick grew heavy as lead. The twine refused to unwind. To be sure, the luckless clerk discovered that if he moved briskly none of these things occurred; the varnish remained hard, the scissors worked easily, the twine unwound readily, and the yard-stick was light. But this state of affairs required of Mr. Edward Easy an amount of exertion

quite distasteful to him, and he soon gave up his place and went off to seek his fortune in the city.

His successor was Mr. William Witty. Mr. Witty was quite lively and energetic, but had such an opinion of himself as facts hardly warranted, and a boundless supply of impudence. The counter, however, was equal to his case.

The first fidgety old woman who came in Mr. William Witty began to banter in an ugly way, which he thought very smart. Suddenly the counter doubled up and boxed him on the ear, quite unnoticed by the customer, who wondered at his subdued expression.

An hour later he was flirting with a pretty girl who had come in after some pink ribbon, and not at all after a flirtation. As Mr. Witty was assuming what he thought his most fascinating manner the counter seemed instantly to rise on edge and interpose a wooden barrier between him and his fair customer. Before Mr. Witty had recovered from his amazement the counter settled back into its place and the pretty girl got her ribbon without further annoyance.

These and many similar experiences, however, soon disgusted William Witty, and he also resigned. He had always thought himself fitted to shine in city life; so to the city he followed his predecessors.

Mr. Stephen Steele was the next clerk to stand behind the magic counter in old Mr. Wideawake's store, but his career there was cut short by an unfortunate circumstance. Mr. Steele was a young gentleman whose grammatical studies had not gone far enough to enable him to appreciate the difference between the possessive cases of the first and second personal pronoun. He confounded mine and thine.

He had not been in Mr. Wideawake's store more than three days when, happening to wish some money to pay a small debt, he concluded to take some from the till when no one was looking. Now, the till had been varnished with the rest of the counter, and as soon as Stephen Steele put in his hand with that unlawful purpose the drawer closed and held his hand in a tight grip. The poor clerk screamed with pain, but the till would not open until old Mr. Wideawake seized the knob. Stephen's hand was then seen to be

full of coin. So this clerk followed the others to the city.

The fifth clerk was named Oliver Honest. There was not a lazy bone in his body. Though he did not think himself unusually smart, he was all the more anxious to improve what brains he had. He would sooner swallow melted lead than a drop of brandy, and would rather fill his pocket with live coals than with other people's money.

With him the counter seemed more bewitched than ever. It actually unrolled the cloth and measured it off for him. The yardstick was as light as a feather. The scissors made a perfectly straight cut almost without his assistance. The proper change flew from the till into his hand. Indeed, so marvelously quick and accurate, with the counter's assistance, seemed the clerk that old Mr. Wide-awake's trade was soon doubled. Oliver took an interest in the business, and when the senior partner died, became owner of the store.

He has a fine home now and a charming family, and every one likes him. Indeed, they have made him mayor of the town, and last week he was compelled to do four dis-

agreeable things: to send Gilbert Guzzler to the insane asylum, William Witty and Edward Easy to the work-house, and Stephen Steele to prison.

WITCHERY WAYS

VII

SPLATZONDERKOFF

LANDLORD GEOFFREY kept an inn for its owner, who was a young man living many a score of miles away. The first Tuesday of every month Landlord Geoffrey sent to this young man the earnings of the house for the month, less the landlord's wages. The inn had been a famous one in times past, and was still a great, comfortable establishment, whose very roof was an invitation, it spread out so cosy and generous. But its renown was slowly passing away. Travelers constantly left dissatisfied, and there was even talk of building an opposition lodging-house in the town. The truth is, the old landlord was becoming lazy and careless, and his laziness and carelessness were soon caught by every one about the building.

By every one but his daughter Gertrude. She was ashamed of such a state of things, and often remonstrated with her father:

“Father, don’t you tell that young man when you write to him that there is little travel? Don’t you say that business is dull? Suppose he should pay us a visit. I’m afraid he would find out another reason why we have little money to send him.” But Landlord Geoffrey would only grunt, and puff away lazily at his great black pipe.

One very hot day in August a carriage drove smartly up to the inn door, and from it alighted a brisk old man, with long white whiskers and curly white hair. He gave an expectant glance around, and then, as there was no one to do it for him, tied his horse for himself, and walked into the office. Landlord Geoffrey was sitting with his feet on the window-sill, reading the paper and smoking. He was a fat old man, with bushy red hair, and a double chin.

“Where is the landlord, sir?” asked the stranger.

“I am the landlord,” answered Geoffrey, motioning lazily to a counter. “There is the register. Make yourself at home.”

The brisk old gentleman gave an astonished stare at the stolid landlord, who was now buried again in the newspaper. Then

he rubbed his hands, and thundered out this word: "Splatzonderkoff!"

Landlord Geoffrey looked up in wonder, and his amazement became painful when he saw, stepping smartly up to the stranger, a fat old fellow, red hair and double chin, the exact image of himself.

"*Good-morning!*" said this apparition, bowing and smiling. "Hot traveling, I fear. Let me take your hat. Won't you have a glass of cold water?" and the mock landlord drew a glass of ice-water from a cooler in the corner, which had been dry all summer, as Geoffrey well knew, and handed it to the mysterious guest.

"Where did you come from? Drove, I see. *Too* bad there was no one to tie your horse. Valise out there? Where *can* that porter be?" and the figure with the likeness of Geoffrey rushed to the call-bell, and gave it such a pull as it had not received for years.

Peter the porter was in the kitchen talking quietly with the chambermaid when he heard that startling peal, and sauntered a little less leisurely than usual to the office.

"Come, sir!" cried the mock landlord, stamping his foot, while the porter looked in

stupid amazement at his duplicate masters. "What is your duty? Get this gentleman's valise to his room at once. Number 27!"

Still Peter the porter stared, with his mouth wide open, and did not budge. Straightway the wonderful stranger rubbed his hands together, and again thundered, "Splatzonderkoff!"

"Coming, sir!" called a brisk voice from the next room, and there came running up a young man for all the world like Peter the porter, without his slowness. "Where's the valise? In the carriage? Oh, yes. Here it is. And the umbrella? Anything else? Shall I show you to your room at once, sir?"

"Not yet. I should like to see my horse well cared for first. An old family pet, landlord," answered the marvelous traveler, turning to the false Geoffrey, while the feet of the real one came down from the window-sill, and the genuine Peter the porter felt his hair begin to rise.

"Very well. *Very* well," said the mock landlord. "Peter, lead the gentleman's horse to the stable. Let us walk around and see it comfortably quartered"; and the two led the way, with the white-haired guest, while the



Witchery Ways

"PETER FELT HIS HAIR BEGIN TO RISE"

genuine landlord and porter followed slowly as in a dream.

The stable-yard was very untidy, and the wide-open stable-doors showed a sadly confused state within; but, worst of all, no stable-boy appeared.

“Sim! Sim!” loudly called Geoffrey number two, and Sim the stable-boy, roused by the unwonted noise from his slumber in the shade of the straw-stack, came sleepily forward.

“Now, then, Sim, you lazy fellow, this gentleman’s horse, don’t you see?”

Sim did see, and saw also the two landlords and the two porters, and stood still, his eyes as big as saucers. But the brisk old gentleman was none too patient. He rubbed his hands,—“Splatzonderkoff!”—and out of nowhere sprang cheerily a second Sim the stable-boy, duplicate of the first. He nimbly flew to the carriage, unharnessed the horse in a moment, led him to a stall, pulled down some hay, pulled out some corn, and, drawing the carriage into the shade, fell to washing it off. This was all done so deftly that the old gentleman was well pleased. “Good!” said he, turning to Geoffrey number two. “And now I will go to my room.”

“This way, sir. Peter, get the luggage. And on the way call Clara the chambermaid. The room is our best, sir, but may need some rearranging.”

And surely, when they arrived there, the room did appear to need a dozen chambermaids. It was wide, and high, and nicely furnished, yet there were no towels, no water, no soap, no clothes-brush, no matches. The bed lacked pillows. The window-shutters were tightly closed. The room had a musty, damp smell.

As the awe-stricken Geoffrey and Peter peeped in at the door, they saw their doubles fly at the windows in a fury, raise them, throw back the shutters, and let in a flood of light that showed the room in all its untidiness.

“And now, where is that Clara the chambermaid? Where is Peter? Oh, here you are. Did you call Clara?”

“Yes, sir. She said she would fix things up after dinner, but I hurried her up, and she is coming now.”

And to be sure, in sauntered a tall, slovenly girl, untidy and languid. Seeing first the mock Geoffrey, she said to him, “Is there any hurry? I’ll right the room before dark.”

“Splatzonderkoff!” shouted the stranger, rubbing his hands vigorously, and a second Clara the chambermaid came running upstairs, dressed in pretty pink calico, with a coquettish cap on her head.

“Why, what a state this room is in!” she cried with a glance around, then drew some clean towels out of a drawer, sent Peter for some water, flew off and back with soap, pillows, matches, clothes-brush, hung the traveler’s linen duster on a peg, brushed up some litter from the carpet, and whisked out again, while the true Clara looked on in amaze.

“And now, sir, take a good bath, and you will be ready for dinner. Dinner in half an hour, sir,” said the mock landlord, bowing himself out of the room, and leaving the mysterious visitant alone.

In half an hour the traveler descended the great stairway, and found his way to the dining-room. The marvelous duplicates had all disappeared, but the landlord and his crew were gathered in a frightened knot in the wood-shed, talking about the propriety of sending for the constable.

So the old gentleman had to judge of the location of the dining-room by the sense of

smell. A very appetizing odor, however, drew him with no mistake to a room very different from the rest of the house. Here Gertrude reigned. It was a cosy apartment, with but one table set, for a solitary guest. Gertrude herself came to meet him with a winning smile, as sweet a damsel as the glad light ever shone upon. She seated him at the table, neat and shining with bright dishes and a pretty vase with some delicate roses in the center. She spread his napkin deftly, and with the daintiest grace in the world began to wait upon him.

“Who is cook here?” asked the old gentleman. “That department, at least, needs no improvement.”

“I am, sir, now that we have few guests, though my father, the landlord, sir, thinks the work too hard for me. But I call it pure fun.”

“Does it take all your time?” queried the old gentleman, and that question was but the beginning of a long talk. In fact, the old gentleman did more talking than eating, and the dear Gertrude more talking than serving, for the old gentleman’s eyes kept growing brighter and his voice lower, and at last, when

Gertrude came in from the kitchen bringing the dessert, she nearly dropped the server, for there sat a handsome young man, and on the floor lay a wig and whiskers of white hair!

“Gertrude, I am the owner of this inn, and I have come here to find out why my receipts kept diminishing. I have learned that, but I have found out something more. Can you guess what?”

Things happen rapidly in fairy stories. Soon after dinner, into the presence of Landlord Geoffrey, who had regained some of his composure over a fresh pipe in the office, came a blushing couple, his daughter, and a fine young man.

“Landlord, I am the old man, your guest. I am the owner of this house, and came in disguise, to find out why my receipts have been decreasing. I have found more. I have discovered the dearest girl in the world! We ask your blessing.”

Geoffrey, small blame to him, stood lost in wonder at this new prodigy. Thereat the young man rubbed his hands and said slyly, “Splatz—”

“Hold!” cried Geoffrey, looking around in

awe. "That's something I prefer to do myself. And, indeed, I intend to require no duplicating in the future, in any matter. God bless you, my children!"

WITCHERY WAYS

VIII

THE WISHING-SNOW

YOU will hardly believe it, my dear children, but in my youthful days I, even I, commonplace though I seem to be, studied magic under no less a person than the Wonderful Wizard. In my old age I have forgotten most that my master taught me. To tell the truth, I have made little use of it all, for I have found the wonders of our modern science more magical than any Black Art could imagine.

But though I have forgotten so much, I shall never forget the first lesson in Practical Magic which I received from my teacher.

We were seated in the Wizard's study, and the wise old gentleman was teaching me, from a black-letter folio, the properties of the Fern-seed Wand, and the use of Formula No. 54.

Suddenly he discovered that it was snowing heavily outside, and asked me if I wouldn't like to make practical trial at once of the principles we were studying. I agreed gladly, for,

up to that time, I had done nothing but pore over big, dry books, and I was eager for something more entertaining.

Of course, I dare not tell you just how we used the Fern-seed Wand and Formula No. 54. That's a secret. However, by their aid we quickly charmed forty feet of the sidewalk which stretched in front of our study-window. This was a broad bay-window, very close to the street, and commanding a good view in either direction, for the Wonderful Wizard learned many valuable secrets from a study of the passers-by.

Then my teacher told me that all the snow which fell now over those twenty feet of sidewalk had been transformed into a wishing-snow; a snow, that is, which would indicate, by the form it took on, what thought or wish was uppermost in the minds of those who might enter the mystic region. I watched the result with interest.

The first to pass down the street was a pretty young girl in a seal-skin sacque, who wore a hat the trimming of which was far too delicate for the rough weather. She was evidently thinking of nothing but her own appearance, and so I was not at all surprised to

see the snow-flakes, as they fell upon her, change into peacock feathers. What a ridiculous figure she cut as she walked on, carrying her head high, that head radiating long peacock feathers in all directions, while her sacque looked like a feather duster! The people turned and stared at her, but she thought it was on account of the beauty of her garments and herself, and held her head the higher, poor thing!

The next to approach the charmed spot was old Peter Bullion, a very rich and miserly speculator, whose hands were always in his pockets and his thoughts always of stocks. He had hardly placed his foot upon the bewitched ground when the snow turned yellow and began to fall down very fiercely, like a golden hail. Indeed, old Peter Bullion was being pelted with gold dollars, and pelted most unmercifully, stung all over with hard, sharp edges, so that he began to run for his life. Happening to catch sight of the gold, however, he stopped short, and began to gather it from the ground. But the gold was red-hot, and scorched his hands, and burned great holes in his pockets, and Peter Bullion rushed away in an agony to the nearest apothecary's

shop. As soon as he left the place the magic gold disappeared.

In a moment walked smartly by sharp-featured Miss Vinegar, the town gossip, whose crabbed face but faintly showed forth her sour temper. She must have been feeling unusually ugly just then, for as soon as she touched the enchanted space the snow became gray and bright like steel, and changed to sharp pins and needles, and part of it to fierce bees and hornets, which pricked her and stung her as unmercifully as her thoughts were stinging her neighbors, so that she screamed in terror, and quickly ran out of sight, to the amazement of the entire street.

Hardly were we through laughing at this merited punishment when a young student stepped slowly into the weird region, his head bowed down, and his ambitious thoughts intent on some scholarly theme. The white snow-flakes became broad over him like leaves of paper, and gathered together swiftly and strangely into books, which nestled down under the student's arms as if they belonged there, as, indeed, they did; so that the young man carried several precious volumes from the mystic spot, all unconscious of his gains.

Then came staggering up a toper, just come from the saloon, blear-eyed, red-nosed, and giddy-brained. It was a horrible sight, for in his presence the spell turned all the white flakes into ugly red serpents, which squirmed down through the air, twisted into the poor man's ears and mouth and filled his clothes, and drove him howling and frantic, as fast as his unsteady legs could carry him, to his wretched home.

We breathed more freely as one of his little children came following sadly after him. It was a pitiful thing to see, for she was thinly clad against the storm, and her face was pinched. And we both wept,—the Wonderful Wizard and I,—as the magical snow-flakes transformed themselves into her wish, for they came down great buns, and loaves of bread and rolls of butter, so that the poor little thing gathered up a big armful, and went home happy.

Soon from the other direction came bouncing into view a red-cheeked urchin, fat and happy, the son of a well-to-do merchant. As he entered the enchanted ground the flakes became red and green and yellow, and were swiftly massed into a gayly painted sled with

bright runners, which the jolly young fellow seized with unconcern, as if the sky often rained down things for him.

The flakes were falling less rapidly, and the storm was evidently near its end, when there came into view a sweet-faced little woman, the true home-mother of a large family, whose love went out as well to many little children not her own. And surely the wonderful snow rejoiced in her, for it fell down softly on her in form of rose and lily and all sweet-scented blossoms, so that the mother marveled at the sudden fragrance, but did not know whence it came.

We both thought this a pretty ending for our experiment, and so we disenchanting the ground (by the use of the Blue Hazel-wand and Formula No. 94) and returned to our studies in the Theory of Magic. And now, my dear young readers, let an old man advise you to be very careful of your thoughts whenever you walk out in a snow-storm, because, you see, you are likely at any time to stumble into a wishing-snow!

WITCHERY WAYS

IX

AROUND JIMTOWN WITH COLUMBUS

HAROLD RANDOLPH leaned back in his easy-chair, reading, by the light of the gas overhead, for the fourth time, Washington Irving's *Life of Columbus*. That book had for him a strong fascination.

“A wonderful man!” thought Harold to himself, leaning back, and laying down his book. “A wonderful man, and a wonderful deed! Oh, that such things were possible still! But everything is discovered,—except the North Pole, and that will be discovered next year, I guess.

“How I should like to set sail on an unknown sea, some ‘Sea of Darkness,’ and sail ‘on—and on—and on—and on—,’ to a whole, fresh, marvelous continent! What a notion, for a fellow who lives in Jimtown! Jimtown—bah! If it were only Jamestown, now; but how would it sound, ‘the great discoverer, Harold Randolph, of Jimtown?’ It doesn’t signify,

though. The world is pretty much divided up into town lots already, and mapped by the square foot.”

What! What! Harold sat up straight in his easy-chair and rubbed his eyes. He was no longer alone in the room. The door had not opened, yet a man stood before him. And the man was—he rubbed his eyes again.

The stranger was stately, dignified in bearing. He wore an antique and splendid garb, and carried a sword. His hair was white. His face was seamed. The features carried the marks of endurance and heavy trouble. Nevertheless, he was erect, alert, proud, of heroic form; and in his eyes was the mingled light of a poet and a warrior.

Harold sprang up and stammered a greeting. He half held out his hand, but the courtly stranger, with his far-away look, did not seem to see it.

“Discoveries—discoveries—” said he, in measured tones; “what do you know about discoveries?”

“Nothing, sir; but I was wishing to know something.”

“Yes, discoveries across great seas, through mighty forests, across deserts, and piercing

jungles, among savages, mutineers, knaves,— well enough, well enough; but I've learned better. Stay at home, lad. Make your discoveries here."

"But this is Jimtown."

"Jimtown! What of it? People live here, do they not? My boy, I have been a discoverer in my day. Will you go with me on a Jimtown cruise to-night?"

Harold did not need to say yes. Before he knew it, he was out in the dark street of the little village, his mysterious visitor by his side. The operatives were just hurrying home from the ropewalks. Jimtown's one industry was making rope, and the mills often carried a night force; but work was slack now, and many operatives were compelled to be idle.

Just in front of Harold and his guide were two girls, their arms around each other. One was crying.

"To think that I should be discharged at such a time as this, just when mother is *so* sick, and we need the money *so* much," she sobbed.

Harold found that they paid no more attention to him than if he were not there, close

behind them, and he heard every word of the answer.

“There, there! Don’t cry, darling. *I’m* not discharged, and I won’t be. They can’t spare me. They said so. And you shall have my pay until you get taken back. I have quite enough laid up, you know, to live on for a while. Yes, dear; you must take it. I won’t have it any other way.”

Harold felt the stranger pulling him aside down a cross-street. “There!” said the stately guide; “that is our first discovery in Jimtown, and is it not worth while?”

“It is, indeed,” replied Harold, with a lump in his throat.

On that cross-street lived Bill Grant, a rough and stupid boy, whom Harold had cordially disliked ever since, in a bit of boorish sport, Bill had pulled a flower out of Harold’s coat. “Hi! Dandy! Dude!” Bill had sung, on that occasion.

Nevertheless, Harold found himself entering Bill’s front yard. The stranger led the way, and Harold felt mysteriously impelled to follow. They looked in at a side window.

On a little white bed lay a little, white-faced girl. It was Bill’s sister, and Harold now re-

remembered that Bill had not been to school for several days. Doctor Green was in the room. He wore a sober face, as he measured out medicine. Mrs. Grant had red eyes.

But what Harold chiefly saw was Bill. Bill was sitting by his sister's bedside, with one little, frail hand clasped hard in his great, coarse fingers. With his other hand he was smoothing the beautiful hair that streamed over the pillow. And Bill's face was as tender and gentle as any woman's could be.

"Let me go in," begged Harold of the stranger; but the stranger shook his head.

"Perhaps I might help in some way," urged Harold.

"There is no need," answered his guide, gently pulling him away. "She will get well, though it will be a hard struggle. But haven't you made a second discovery?"

"Bill!"

"And a worthy discovery?"

"A great one!"

On went the two, off into a wider street, and into the grounds of a grand old country mansion. The owners had once been rich, but now were poor enough. In fact, Mrs. Courtland was a widow, with nothing to support the

two little girls of the family but the salary of her son, a young lad who taught a room in the village school. Harold was in Frank Courtland's room, and did not like him. To be sure, the young collegian knew a great deal, but Harold fancied him "stuck-up." He shrank back, but could not help following the stranger up the fine avenue of elms that led to the house.

As before, they looked in at a window, but this window was on the second floor. Harold never knew how he got on top of the porch roof, but there he was.

Within was indeed a curious scene. Mrs. Courtland was lying in a chair, wrapped up in blankets, for she was an invalid. Fanny and Grace, Frank's younger sisters, were saying their lessons to him. And he, the learned, "stuck-up" collegian, was mending stockings! A basket of clothes was by his side, and he was evidently just completing a good evening's work.

Harold was so much astonished that he did not notice how he got out into the street again, but he soon found himself outside of the grounds.

"Well?" asked his mysterious conductor.

“I shall never call Frank Courtland stuck-up again.”

“A third discovery, then?”

“I should say so.”

“And a noble one?”

“Yes, indeed.”

They turned from the most respectable quarter of the village to “Coontown,” an outlying district filled with miserable huts. Before the worst of these they stopped. Gate and fence were rickety. The window-panes through which they looked were dirty, and one was badly broken. There was no curtain.

Within, it was bare and poor enough, for this was the home of a drunkard. Harold recognized the owner, sitting by a wretched, broken-legged table, on which was a blear-eyed lamp. Through the open door of the kitchen could be seen the wife and children, gathered about the stove. They cast occasional glances through the open door, and their faces were not sad, but hopeful, though they were pale and thin.

Tim Mallory was a bad egg, a confirmed drunkard, and could get no work. What could put even a sparkle of hope and cheer into his wife’s face?

Harold saw Parson Brownlow sitting by Tim's side. Now Parson Brownlow was the subject of another of Harold's aversions. The parson's preaching was not brilliant, it must be confessed. It even tended irresistibly to put people to sleep, with its measured, solemn sentences, droned out in minor key. Harold seldom went to church.

There, nevertheless, sat Parson Brownlow, with his arm around dirty, whiskey-soaked, ugly Tim Mallory. And Tim was crying like a baby. The parson was pleading with him earnestly, lovingly. He took a little book out of his pocket, and read to him. In a few minutes the two knelt down together, the parson's arm still around the drunkard. When they rose, Tim looked more manly than Harold had thought possible. He shook the parson vigorously by the hand. Tim's wife had come timidly out, and Tim kissed her. As the parson left, he forced upon Tim some money.

Harold could not stand that. "Let me speak to him!" he whispered to his conductor, as the parson shut the door and went toward the rickety gate. "I want to thank him. I want to ask his pardon for all the mean things I have said about him. I

want to go with him the next time he comes to Coontown.”

“No,” said the stranger, and tried to hold him back. Harold struggled in his strong grasp, struggled, and—awoke! He was in his easy-chair. Washington Irving’s story of the great discovery was lying on the floor. Was it all a dream?

WITCHERY WAYS

X

THE PROPULSIVE PEN

I

TROT sat on the front steps, a tear in each of her big brown eyes, and in each of her chubby little hands a part of a doll. One hand held the china head, with its beautiful flaxen curls. The other hand held the poor body, dressed in brown silk to match Trot's eyes, and with the white china neck pitifully protruding its ragged edges. The terrible accident had happened an hour ago, and though Mother had promised to mend Dolly Angelina Seraphina Lily Bess, Trot scorned the proposal.

“When peoples have their heads cut off they're dead, 'n' Angelina's dead. She must be,” sobbed logical Trot, and Mother could think of nothing to satisfy the little reasoner.

From the street Trot made a sorrowful sight. That was evidently the opinion of a queer little man with a pack on his back like a peddler, who stopped at the gate, looked

sharply at Trot from under his bushy eyebrows, and then walked smartly up the front walk.

“What’s your name, my dear?” he asked, in the jolliest little squeak imaginable.

“My name, sir,” answered our little girl, “is Twot—Betsey Twotwood. Only my real name is Elizabeth Benton.”

“And may I ask what’s the matter, Miss Trot, for I see what’s left of two tears, one in each of your pretty eyes?” Trot had never before been told that her eyes were pretty, but her grief left her no thought for compliments.

“Dolly’s dead.”

“Dolly?”

“Yes, Dolly Angelina Seraphina Lily Bess.”

“And is this the—the—remains of Dolly Angelina—Lily—and the rest of her?”

“Yes,” sobbed Trot, her sorrow breaking out afresh at the thought, “this is all that’s left of her—just her head and her body—and her clothes.”

“Trot, it’s very lucky I came along just now. I am Doctor Fixdollie, the best doctor in the world. Wait till I get my medicine chest. Hum—hum.” And Doctor Fixdollie

reached around, opened his pack, and drew out the queerest bottle Trot had ever seen. It had a twisted, snaky neck, and Trot was almost sure she saw it wriggle as if it were alive.

“Now put Dolly Angelina together,” commanded the doll-doctor; and when Trot had done so he wet his finger with the liquid in the strange bottle, and rubbed it once around the dead doll’s neck. Trot looked at Dolly Angelina in astonishment. Not even a crack was to be seen.

“Dolly’s alive again! Dolly’s alive again! And”—here Trot almost screamed in her excitement—“she’s winking at me!”

Sure enough. Dolly Angelina had had fine eyes before, but they were stiff and staring. Now—what a wonderful physician was Doctor Fixdollie!—the doll opened and shut her eyes. But the queer little stranger left her no time for hugging the restored infant. With his stout cane he tapped Trot’s stout little toe.

“What’s this?” he asked, sharply. “And what’s this?” he continued, putting the cane on her dress.

“Why, that’s—that’s a hole in my shoe, and that’s another hole in my dress. They will

come, and I'm 's careful as I can be, and Mamma cwies."

"Your mother cries?"

"Yes, at the holes; and I guess she finks I cost a good deal, 'cause she's so poor. I wish I didn't wear out things so."

The little man reached around in his pack without saying a word. He pulled out a piece of leather and laid it carelessly on Trot's shoe, just where the little, white-stockinged toe was showing through. The next instant he pressed a piece of cloth against the hole in Trot's dress.

"O—o—o—o!" cried Trot; "my shoe's whole, it's all whole, and how they bof shine! Are you a shoe-doctor, too?"

"Yes," said the stranger, smiling. "I am sometimes called Cobbler Cutapatch." And truly Cobbler Cutapatch had done a fine job, for the bit of leather had grown over the hole in the toe so neatly that the sharpest eye could not see the patch, and both stout, copper-toed boots shone as if new.

"And oo—o—o—ee!" squealed Trot again. "I've got a new dwess! Oh, you dear doctor, you dear doctor! You are a dwess-doctor, too!"



Witchery Ways

"THE QUEEREST BOTTLE TROT HAD EVER SEEN"

“To be sure. I am often called Tailor Tattermend, Trot.”

And certainly Tailor Tattermend used wonderful cloth, for in a jiffy it had grown over the hole in Trot’s dress, so that you couldn’t tell that place from any other place in the dress. Best of all, the dress looked brand-new, and it actually had an extra ruffle! Don’t you wish you had a yard of Tailor Tattermend’s magic cloth?

“Oh, thank you! thank you, Doctor, you dear Doctor!” and Trot puckered up her rosebud of a mouth for a kiss that the little man was not slow to give her.

“Thank you, Trot,” said he, heartily. “That kiss tastes good to an old man like me. And now, Trot, why is your mother so poor?”

“ ’Cause Papa’s dead, and— ’cause she is,— and oh! Doctor, haven’t you some bottle to keep her from cwyng?”

“Isn’t there any one to take care of you? Haven’t you any relatives?”

“No one but Gwanpa Benton, and he—he—I never saw him, and Mamma doesn’t want me to talk about him.”

“Oho! I remember the story now. John Benton didn’t like your father. A rich old

miser! How could he like that fine young fellow? Tell your mother, Trot dear, to keep up her spirits, for the doll-doctor will take her case in hand. Good-by, Trot.”

Trot winked her big brown eyes in wonder. “Oo—o—o—o!” she squealed again,—for Doctor Fixdollie, tailor and cobbler, had disappeared! There wasn’t a trace of him except the mended doll and boot and dress. With these Trot ran in to her mother.

II

John Benton, Trot’s grandfather, was a rich old man, living in a great city nearby. He was sitting at his desk in his office on the afternoon of the very day when Trot had her strange visitor. He was in a very bad temper, because a card had just been brought in by his office-boy, bearing the name, “Thomas Barnes.” Mr. Barnes was always collecting subscriptions for some hospital or charity or mission, and the old man knew Mr. Barnes had come to beg for some good cause he could hardly refuse.

While Trot’s grandfather was frowning at this card, a second one was brought in by a

clerk. It read, "Peter Penn, President of the Propulsive Pen Partnership."

"He looks like an agent," said the clerk, apologetically; "and he has a pack on his back. But I didn't know what to make of his card."

"I'll see him at once," said Mr. Benton, glad to have some excuse for putting off his interview with Mr. Thomas Barnes.

A moment afterwards in came our friend of the many names, Trot's Doctor Fixdollie. He stepped briskly up to the old gentleman's desk, and began to rattle off this speech, like a practiced agent:

"I want to show you, Mr. Benton, the most marvelous mechanical contrivance of this century, the Propulsive Pen. This is a genuine fountain pen. All others are misnamed. A pen isn't a fountain pen if you have to press it and wriggle it all the time to make it run. Now my pen, the Propulsive Pen, works while held still in the hand. Write your name, sir."

Saying this, he put into Mr. Benton's hand a very strange contrivance. It was a pen shaped like the head of a little old man, with a wise and merry face. His hair was in a long

queue, and in the end of the queue was a gold pen.

Peter Penn showed Mr. Benton how to take hold of this head, and rest the tip of the queue on the paper before him. No sooner had he done this, than, in the most weird way, a stream of ink began to flow from the pen, though Mr. Benton did not move his hand. The ink ran crinkling out, twisting up, twisting down, doubling on its course, until it had swiftly formed the name, "John Benton."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Mr. Benton, in spite of himself. "How much is it?"

"Seventy-five cents," answered Peter Penn. "This is a job lot, and I am selling them cheap. If you were to buy this from any one but the president of the Propulsive Pen Partnership, you would have to pay one dollar."

"All right. I'll take one," and Mr. Benton counted out seventy-five cents, his eyes sparkling. Whoever heard of such a bargain? The old gentleman dearly loved a good bargain. Peter Penn seemed equally well pleased, took his money, and departed, making an impish little bow at the door.

As he went out, Mr. Thomas Barnes walked in. He was a business man,—even more of a

business man than John Benton, only his business was the Lord's and John Benton's was his own. In a business-like way, then, he went to work, and speedily disclosed the needs of the Sunbury Orphan Asylum, and in such a way that Mr. Benton saw he would be obliged to draw a check.

Trot's grandfather was thinking how small he could manage to make the check, and took up, in an absent-minded way, his new pen. He held it on the check, the amount he would give growing constantly smaller in his mind.

A flash of black ink! A lightning flash, of wrinkled black lightning! Never was a check made out so quickly before. Mr. Benton's hand had not moved, but the magic line of ink flew along the paper, doubled one line, curved back on the next (for it could evidently write backward as well as forward), squirmed forward over the next, and finished with "John Benton" at the bottom,—a bold, black signature.

The old man's back had been turned upon the visitor, so that Mr. Barnes had seen nothing of all this, but as Mr. Benton started back in astonishment, the man of charity perceived that the check was already filled out.

“You are a rapid penman,” he remarked, taking up the bit of paper. “Ah! thank you! thank you! you are very generous. This is a noble check!”

“Wh—wh—what?” stuttered Mr. Benton, looking at the check in absolute horror. It was made out for five hundred dollars. He had intended to give five dollars!

Mr. Barnes was profuse in his surprised gratitude, and Mr. Benton hadn't a word to say. He didn't know how to take that check back. Some way, he didn't care to take it back as much as might have been expected, Mr. Barnes was telling him of so many beautiful things that that money might do for those orphans.

It was a new rôle for Mr. Benton to play—that of a generous giver, but really, it wasn't so unpleasant after all. As Mr. Benton walked to the elevator with Mr. Barnes there was a look on his face the amazed clerks had never seen there before, and the old miser returned to his little office with a tingle of real warmth in his heart such as he had never before felt.

He took up the strange pen and looked at the wise head at the top of it, with its merry eyes.

“You’ve cost me much more than seventy-five cents,” he said to himself, “but there is no great harm done, so you don’t do it again. I’ll never dare use you before folks any more, however.” Being by himself, Mr. Benton tried the pen on a clean sheet of paper.

“Orphans—orphans—orphans—” that’s what it wrote, which was natural enough, so far. “Orphans—orphans--orphans—orphans—daughter—grand - daughter—Mary—Mary—Elizabeth—poor—poor—hungry, maybe--”

Old John Benton let the pen fall, but that made no difference. The tip still touched the paper, and the ink flowed on from the wonderful “propulsive pen” as if it were alive,—a thin, black snake:

“—hungry—ragged—sick—who knows?—and you—with your hundreds of thousands—fine house--rich food—write her a letter—John Benton—a letter—a good letter—a kind letter—”

The old man snatched up the pen, with fingers trembling, and a queer flutter at his dry heart-strings. Anyway, he would see what the magic pen wanted to write. And this is what it wrote:

MY DEAR DAUGHTER:

You are left alone, and I am lonely. You have a child, and my great house needs children. Can you love an old man—your father—after the neglect of all these years? Can you let by-gones be by-gones, as I will? I am greatly afraid you need me; and in a very different way, my darling, my daughter, I need you. Will you not come to me? Lovingly,

Your father,

JOHN BENTON.

And, will you believe it? the next mail that went from that office carried this magic letter!

And truly it was a magic letter. Trot's mother cried over it: "But it was a happy cwy," said Trot. And then, in a very few days, the widow's poor possessions were packed up and carried off, and Trot's merry prattle ceased to gladden the little house that had witnessed such a brave struggle with poverty and sorrow.

But in the city a certain great house had become all alive with a strange, new joy. Trot's mother walked through it like a beautiful, pale queen restored to her throne. And

as for Trot, it was all as wonderful as a fairy story.

Our little girl admired everything, and prattled about everything. One day she spied a queer figure of a man's head, occupying the post of honor in a glass case in the library.

“See! See! Gwanpa,” she cried, “what a funny little man! And why does he wear a pen at the end of his hair?”

“That little man, dear,” said Grandpa Benton gravely, “pointed out to me the way of life.”

But what the old gentleman meant Trot will learn for the first time when she reads this story.

WITCHERY WAYS

XI

THE NOVILLE INDICATOR, REVISED EDITION

IT was a glad day for John Hansom when he became editor-in-chief of the *Noville Indicator*. He had worked his way up from the lowest position in the composing-room, and, though young, understood every detail of the business. He could set type, make up forms, superintend the stereotyping, report a meeting, interview a noted lecturer, attend the newsboys, write heavy political leaders.

And now he and Jennie would be able to move from their stifling lodgings to a charming little house in the suburbs, on which he had had an eye for months. Only one matter marred his joy, and this he hardly confessed to himself. He was ashamed of the *Indicator*. To be sure, it had the largest circulation of all the city papers, and was considered by every one a very newsy and enterprising sheet; but John had the uncomfortable belief

that its columns, though brightly written and "smart," were anything but helpful and useful.

This disturbed him little when he was working under orders, but it was a different matter when he himself became responsible for the sheet. Still, what can one do? Must not one provide what the people want to buy? And so John shut up his desk at the close of his first day of chieftainship, feeling pretty well satisfied with the newspaper he had prepared for the morrow.

It was to contain full accounts of two terrible murders, details of a railroad accident which no other paper had obtained, a spicy article on a crime committed in respectable society, and some very sensational disclosures of the crooked dealings of an eminent politician. There would not be a dry line in the paper, and it would sell like hot cakes. So John went home to Jennie with a smile on his lips.

That was at twelve o'clock at night. Now it chanced, as the *Indicator* office was managed, that the great building was vacant for just one hour at this time, from twelve to one. The news was in from all over the world, had

been written out, and put in type. At one o'clock the pressmen would come, start up the great engine, and begin to transform the mighty rolls of white paper into *Noville Indicators*. If it had not been for that vacant hour, possibly I might have had no story to tell.

John and the night editors went out, and locked the door. Bill Thompson, the watchman, was drowsy, and was sitting in the lower hallway. But if he had only thought to peep into the editorial rooms, upstairs in the fifth story! A window was half open, and the building was no sooner deserted than a little winged midget flew in, seated itself at John's desk, took a pen, and began writing as for life!

Soon another flew in through the window, and another and another, swiftly and noiselessly, until every chair in the large room was occupied with little imps, all scribbling with lightning rapidity! In a moment attendant sprites put in an appearance, carrying manuscript from the various desks to the tube which communicated with the composing-room.

And if drowsy Bill Thompson had chosen to peep into that composing-room, how he would

have rubbed his eyes! On every stool stood a fairy type-setter, composing-stick in hand, pages of fairy manuscript before him, and the type seeming fairly alive under his nimble fingers.

In one corner a set of little workmen were busily taking to pieces the newspaper on which John had so prided himself, which stood there in type, ready for the stereotyper. Grasping handful after handful, these tricky fairies distributed the bits of metal into empty boxes. The types rattled into the cases faster and thicker than any hail in any storm that ever was.

In another corner the foreman—a comical little fay with an important air and a pair of spectacles—was taking proof of the articles as fast as the compositors finished, sending the proof up the chute to an impish proof-reader who sat at a desk in the fifth story.

What a hive of busy laborers, and all so silent! Goblin reporters kept flying in through the open window of the editorial room, dashing off an article at a desk, speeding away again over the dark city for fresh ideas. The fairy chief took a new pen. The slide of the manuscript chute grew hot. Faster flashed

the fingers of the type-setters. The important foreman almost flew to pieces in his hurry.

And then soon a fairy fire leaped up in the engine-room, the monster printing-press began to revolve, and the great rolls of white paper rapidly received their impressions, were cut, pasted, folded, piled in a monster stack. And when, at one o'clock, the morning workmen came, rubbing their eyes, to make the plates, and print the morning edition of the *Noville Indicator*, they found the building as still as usual; but the type was all in the cases. The imposing forms were bare. The great roll of paper was gone from the press. And, lo! ready in piles for the newsboys, the fairy *Indicator*.

What was to be done? No time now to set up a second paper, to gather the editors, reporters, compositors, and proof-readers. Evidently, though there might be mischief in it, this mysterious set of papers must go to the newsboys. And so it happened that when John, at his early breakfast-table, took up with eager glee the damp sheet which the newsboy had just thrown into the yard, he uttered an exclamation of surprised dismay.

“Why, what’s the matter, John?” cried Jennie.

“Matter enough! I’m undone, Jennie! See here!” And John handed her the paper with a groan.

In staring type at the head she read, “*No-ville Indicator*, Revised Edition.” The page looked very neat and clean, for it had none of the long, sensational head-lines which usually enticed people to read. Yet the articles were so brightly written that she found herself forced to finish the first, and then the second, and the third. John read over her shoulder.

There was not a single account of a murder in the paper. John’s exclusive and thrilling details of the terrible railroad accident were boiled down to a few lines. The crime in high life and the disclosures regarding the crookedness of that eminent politician, on which John had relied to effect the day’s sales, were greatly condensed and in an obscure corner of the paper.

The greater part of the paper was crowded with matter which looked startlingly novel. There was a long, well illustrated description of a set of miserable tenement-houses which lined an out-of-the-way city alley. One could

hardly read the article without a sob. There was a careful discussion of the matters which had come before the police courts the day before—a discussion which tried to show what led to all these wrong deeds, and how affairs might be improved. There were accounts of city industries, and explanations of various departments of the city government.

The different aid societies had full bulletins. There were several sparkling columns containing the funny things that had happened the day before. Much was made of a certain old woman who, at the risk of her life, had snatched a little boy from before a runaway horse. A scientific lecture was given an entire page, being extravagantly illustrated. Fires, suicides, accidents, murders, burglaries, fights, races, scandals, were omitted, or mentioned with the greatest brevity. Politics were discussed without prejudice, and yet with force and brilliancy. There was a whole page given up to interesting items concerning church work. And the foreign events of the day before really worth knowing about, were so ably set forth that one almost felt that he had been in those distant lands.

“Ah, I’m ruined, Jennie!” groaned John.

“This paper will never sell—not ten copies! Who could have put in this unheard-of stuff! How can I ever look the proprietors in the face!”

“Why, John,” said Jennie, looking up with sparkling eyes, only half understanding him, so closely had she been reading, “I’m proud of you! I never saw a nicer newspaper! I’m sure your supply will run out! How did you get so many interesting articles?”

Well, John kissed Jennie, and hurried away to the office with a sinking heart. But every one in the street-car seemed to be reading the *Indicator*. Newsboys were going around already with flabby satchels. Those who had a few copies left were actually charging double price, and getting it, too! It seemed to be the topic of discussion everywhere. “So novel!” “So original!” “So bright!” “So good!” Every one was saying such words. Acquaintances came up to congratulate him on his bold departure. One of the most distinguished and influential men in the city took pains to stop him, and express his hearty approval. The wealthiest of the proprietors of the paper met him at the door of the *Indicator* counting-room, rubbing his hands and saying, “Never

were such sales, Mr. Hansom! The other papers can hardly dispose of a copy, and we are hard at work on a second edition! We must advance your salary, sir, at once!"

John went to the editorial rooms with his head in a whirl. He found there a crowd of his reporters and sub-editors. They all began talking at once. "How did you do it?" "Where did it all come from?" "What are we to do to-day?" This last query came in very anxious tones from the sporting editor and the police court reporter.

"Gentlemen," said John, when the noise had subsided, "it's all a mystery. You may smile, but I assure you I know nothing at all about the origin of this morning's paper. I even suspected some of you of a plot to ruin me with it! We have no time now to investigate the marvel. Evidently, the Revised Edition has made a hit, and I propose that we follow it up. We have a hard day's work before us, as the work is on such unusual lines. But I have perfect confidence in the skill and brains of the *Indicator* staff."

With this, he assigned them tasks, mapping out a paper as much like the success of the morning as he could, trying to follow its popu-

lar feature of emphasizing the good, and omitting the bad, except for purposes of bettering it. Of course, his trained reporters had hard work that day; and, of course, the next issue of the *Noville Indicator*, Revised Edition, was not as good as the fairies' number; but it sold better, because people were now eagerly watching the new departure in journalism.

And that was the beginning of a newspaper revolution. The other papers soon found that most people had been buying their literature simply because they couldn't get what was better. They, too, began to issue Revised Editions. And now, in this year of our Lord 1915, newspapers of the old style are circulated only on the sly, in saloons and such evil places, forbidden the mails, and hunted down by the Society for the Prevention of Crime.

John and Jennie have long ago moved from their suburban cottage to a grand mansion, and people still insist on calling John Hansom the Revolutionizer of the Press. Pshaw! If the fairies had waited for a man bold enough and wise enough to take the step, I fancy that the world would still have many decades of the old, degrading journalism ahead of it.

WITCHERY WAYS

XII

DR. BRIGHT'S ALARM-CLOCK

DR. BRIGHT was a worthy young man who had worked through the medical college with distinguished honor, and who knew everything contained in the dozen big, leather-bound doctor books which occupied the middle shelf of his small library. He had engaging manners, and a very charming, frank countenance; yet handsome face and well-stocked brain seemed utterly unable to win patients in the same town with Dr. Prate.

Dr. Prate was also a young man. He was almost bald, wore glasses, and never used a little word when he could think of a big word of approximately the same meaning, nor an English word if he knew the Latin. He had a library of so many books that all of his numerous patients could write their names in the dust on the tops of them.

One day Dr. Bright sat in his office with his head leaning on his hand, thinking rather gloomily of his one patient. This one patient

was old Mrs. Grunt, who suffered terribly with rheumatism, and could not afford to pay Dr. Prate's big fees. She had been under Dr. Bright's care for three weeks now, with no good result, and was growing uglier toward him every day.

As the doctor sat glowering at his boots the bell rang sharply, and he jumped up with his heart throbbing high. It might be a patient. But as he opened the door there stepped in briskly a little, wiry old man, with a fringe of gray beard meeting a fringe of gray hair, and with a shrewd twinkle back of his spectacles. He had a black satchel in his hand. Evidently a book-agent.

“Good-morning. Dr. Bright, I believe? Have heard of you, sir. We wish to put into the hands of every energetic young physician our new improved alarm-clock, patent applied for. It is an extraordinarily ingenious mechanical contrivance, which not only rouses the medical practitioner at any hour of the day or night, but also indicates distinctly and audibly at the same time the proper remedies to be administered in the cases the physician has then in charge. The only requirement is that the physician shall have spent at least

two hours in studying those cases, with the alarm-clock immediately in front of his books.”

Dr. Bright smiled good-naturedly at the joke, not without some faint suspicion of a gleam of insanity in the bright eyes of his visitor. “My health is good, sir, and I find no difficulty in going to sleep when I wish and waking up when I desire. And as I have never had but one patient whose case perplexed me, I am not inclined to purchase your very ingenious clock.”

The little old man winked impishly at this. “Wait till you hear my terms. I find myself suffering under a slight attack of indigestion. Now, if you will write me a prescription for indigestion caused by the overeating of green cucumbers, you may take a clock and welcome.”

“Willingly,” replied Dr. Bright, whose suspicions as to his visitor’s sanity were now confirmed. However, he sat down and wrote a prescription for indigestion caused by eating green cucumbers, and handed it to the wiry old fellow, who immediately opened his large, red mouth and gulped down the paper. “I prefer to take my medicine in that way,” he

said, with a sly grin. "And now, here is your pay."

With that he took from his satchel and gave to the doctor a very strange little image. It represented a spectacled old man, with a ponderous wig, seated in front of a large study table, on whose top was described the clock face. In front of the old man was a pile of books, and he appeared deeply interested in their contents.

"Take it, my young friend, and God's blessing go with it," said the goblin-like old man, and backed out of the room with a jerky bow. Dr. Bright stepped quickly to the door, with a confused notion of detaining his light-headed visitor and putting him in some asylum or other. He looked up the street and down; the street was deserted. In great amazement, he took a few paces in either direction, looking sharply around. It was a strange disappearance.

There was nothing for it, however, but to return before the neighbors should begin to wonder at his queer proceedings. Dr. Bright was rather surprised to see the alarm-clock actually standing, ticking away, on his table. He had half expected that to disappear also.

He sat down in front of it. "Old fellow," said he, "the days of witchery are said to be past, but Edison is a greater wizard than any of mediæval times, and since I have nothing else to do, I'll play lunatic awhile, and try you on old Mrs. Grunt's rheumatism. Old Mrs. Grunt's rheumatism, do you hear?" He shouted in the ear of the ponderous-wigged image, and proceeded, with a cheerful smile, to set the alarm for three hours from that time. Then he drew down his books and magazines and papers, and, the clock in front of him, began, for the tenth time, a thorough study of the subject of rheumatism.

Dr. Bright soon became absorbed in his work, entirely unmindful of the old gentleman opposite. He was getting several new ideas, and was intensely interested in following them out in his various authors. So the hours passed very rapidly, and the doctor was startled into a prodigious jump by the sharp clatter of the alarm-clock at the expiration of the time.

After the whir, Dr. Bright, regarding the spectacled image intently, was astounded to see it slowly raise its head, and still more amazed to hear it say deliberately, in a very

thin squeak: "Try her with salicylate cinchonidia." Then the image bent again over its book.

"Well, of all—" began the doctor, and then broke out in a great hearty laugh. "Why, this out-Edisons Edison!" And he put on his hat and proceeded at once to call on old Mrs. Grunt, stopping at a drug-store on the way to obtain some little white lozenges of the substance the marvelous image had indicated.

He found Mrs. Grunt in a worse mood than ever, and inclined to refuse further treatment altogether. However, she accepted the lozenges ungraciously, and agreed to take them according to directions. And, strange to relate, the prescription of the old gentleman of the alarm-clock worked with magic efficiency. In a few hours old Mrs. Grunt was able to walk—a pleasure which had not been hers for months. And the very next day she was able to go about among her neighbors and tell them what a wonderful, wonderful doctor that young Bright was.

This was the turn of the tide. Beneath Dr. Bright's shingle from this time on passed a daily increasing number of the ailing, and the cheerful peal of his front door-bell was heard

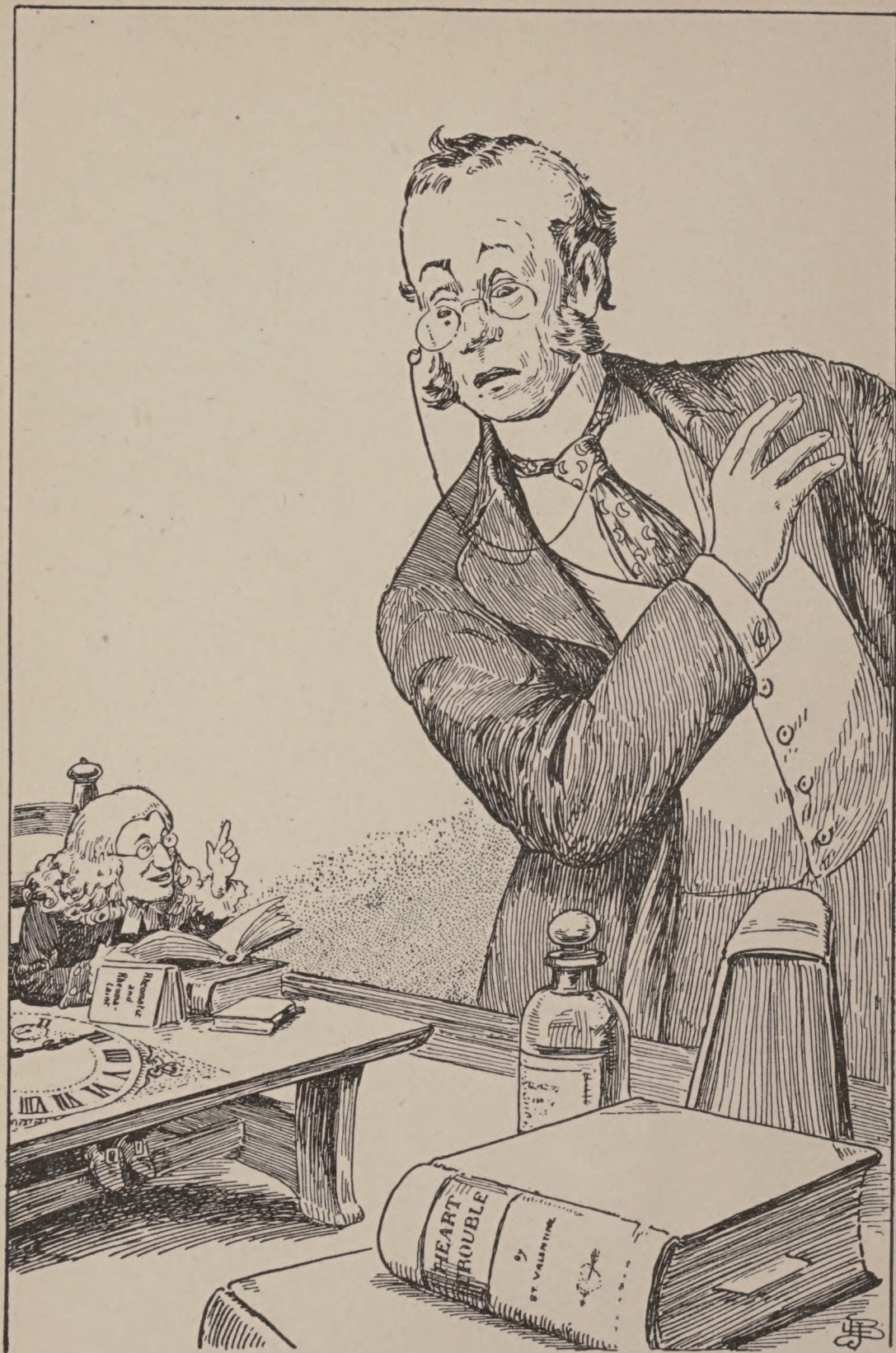
with increasing frequency. Needless to say that till late at night, and through the dim hours of the morning, the young doctor and the mighty-wigged image held long meditation over the twelve big books and the medical journals. At the end of each studious session the timely whir would come, the spectacled head would be slowly lifted, and the figure would give sententious oracle. And the image's prescriptions never failed.

So popular was Dr. Bright becoming, and so many and such wealthy patients were flocking to his office, that Dr. Prate became seriously alarmed. "He was entirely incapacitated to comprehend the inordinate notoriety of this *novus homo*, this charlatan upstart." Things became so bad, finally, from his point of view, that he determined on a visit of investigation, a sort of reconnaissance of the enemy's country. So he called at Dr. Bright's office, intending to ask him to act as his assistant in an important case.

The office happened to be deserted. Dr. Bright had been called suddenly, but would soon be back. So said the smart young office-boy whom the young man's good fortune had enabled him to obtain. Therefore Dr. Prate

sat down in the easy-chair by the side of the great table thickly piled with open books, in the midst of reading which their owner had evidently been disturbed. But Dr. Prate was immediately attracted by our old friend the alarm-clock, directly opposite him, on the table. He looked at the queer image for some time before he discovered the clock face. He observed with some surprise that the alarm was set for three, of which it then lacked but a few minutes. Dr. Prate was examining with contemptuous interest a great heap of well-filled note-books, and wondering what his rival expected to gain from all that useless poring over medical literature, when he was somewhat startled by the metallic whir of the alarm-clock. Looking up at it, he jumped from his chair in great fright as he saw the large head of the figure lifted, and heard in its sharp tones these words: "Give him a good dose of valerian."

Dr. Prate recovered from his astonishment rapidly. His eyes became very bright, and a wicked smile crept into the corners of his mouth. He looked cautiously around. The office-boy was nowhere near, and the room was empty. So Dr. Prate quietly tucked the



Witchery Ways

“GIVE HIM A GOOD DOSE OF VALERIAN”

alarm-clock under his coat and walked home.

That night he went to a wine party, and came home late and jolly. He had some important patients in charge, and should have been studying their cases, but now the alarm-clock would save him all that trouble. He chuckled as he set it for six o'clock the next morning.

“Now, old chappy,” said he, nodding hilariously to the image bending over its books, “study away all night, and in the morning tell me what is best for Mrs. Jones’s pneumonia, and Judge Dusky’s gout, and Peter Pound’s heart-disease. Understand? Tick it out, and wake me at six. Ta-ta.” So Dr. Prate went to bed, and slept soundly, with mind at rest.

At six o'clock came the prompt whir, and Dr. Prate sleepily raised his head to catch the day’s instructions. “Whir-r-r,” went the clock, and then the image, lifting its head, sharply snapped out:

“Get up! Get up! Lazybones! Doctor Lie-a-bed! Doctor Muddlehead! Get up! Get your books! Go to work!”

“What consummate impudence!” drawled

the doctor, as he put his hands up to his aching head, rolled over on his pillow, and went to sleep again. In an hour the bright sunlight woke him up. He took his late breakfast, and then sat down in his office in front of the image which had so sadly disappointed him.

“Now, old fellow,” said he, as he set the alarm for eight o’clock, “I’ll give you just eight minutes to work up an opinion on Judge Dusky’s gout. If you don’t behave yourself, I’ll smash you. I will, by the memory of Hippocrates!”

Unfortunately, as Dr. Prate sat impatiently waiting and idly watching the clock, the office-door opened, and in walked unceremoniously his wealthiest and most influential patient, Senator Biggun. The doctor inquired his symptoms very nervously. He cast an anxious glance at the clock. With all his heart he wished it back in Dr. Bright’s office. He was trying to plan a way to draw Senator Biggun into the next room, when the clock began to whir. The old man in the big wig had never spoken so loudly and distinctly.

“I belong to Dr. Bright. Dr. Prate stole me. Dr. Prate’s a quack. Dr. Prate’s a noddlehead. Dr. Prate never reads. Dr.

Prate never studies. Dr. Prate drinks wine. Down with Dr. Prate. Go to Dr. Bright.”

It is impossible to describe the confusion of the convicted physician. His uneasy jokes and blundering explanations about the queer mechanical toy, the ingenious application of the phonograph, to which he had been teaching some ridiculous phrases, all seemed to freeze his visitor more decidedly into an icicle. Senator Biggun soon bowed himself out, and Dr. Prate turned, with despair in his heart, to the image.

“I’ll give you a lesson in manners, my talkative sir. Come along!” And he picked the old gentleman up by the head, carried him into the back yard, laid him on a stone, and with one blow of the ax silenced the wonderful alarm-clock forever.

Well, to end my story, though Dr. Bright was greatly alarmed at first, and dismayed, over the mysterious disappearance of the accommodating old gentleman in the wig, it really seemed to make no difference in his practice. He studied no harder, because he was studying as hard as possible before, and his prescriptions continued to be marvelously successful. His patients increased in number

so rapidly that he had to find a partner, an earnest young fellow, anxious like himself to do a great deal of good in this aching world, and they soon had such a thriving business that they were enabled to take two additional partners, whose names did not appear on the office-door.

As for Dr. Prate, strange stories began to be told of him, his patients fell away rapidly, and one fine day he took down his nice gilded sign and put up another one: "Samuel Prate, Auctioneer."

WITCHERY WAYS

XIII

TRICEPHALOS

POOOR King Blunderbuss had a hard time of it. He did his best, but grew more unpopular every day. His people were very quarrelsome; and in settling their disputes, as a good king should, he had by this time made mortal enemies of half of them. The other half were exceedingly disrespectful, and in upholding the dignity of his throne King Blunderbuss had managed to offend half of this half. The remaining quarter were displeased because the good King always treated them as strangers and never knew their names. Therefore, the King wished to resign his crown, but no one would have it.

Affairs were in this condition when there appeared one day at court a very strange old man with three heads, who bore a letter of introduction from the son of King Blunderbuss. This son had been very successful at the kingdom business in a distant portion of the continent.

The letter read as follows:

“TO MY MOST ROYAL AND BELOVED FATHER:

“SIRE:—*This will introduce to you a person who has enabled me to win what success I have attained in our business of ruling. Judging by your request that I accept your kingdom in addition to my own, I think that you will receive with gladness the friendly counsel of my most valued adviser, and so I send him to you. If you will follow his leading you will have no further desire to abdicate. With dutiful affection,*

“DEMETRIUS, R.”

The King looked with interest at the venerable bearer of this epistle.

“My son’s letter of introduction,” said he, “strangely omitted your name. May I know who you are, and what you can do for my miserable kingdom?”

“I am Blankhead Tricephalos,” said the left head of the old gentleman, which had a very dreamy and sleepy expression, “and I will do your Majesty’s forgetting.” “I am Longhead Tricephalos,” said the cheery countenance which rose above the sage’s right shoulder, “and I will do your Majesty’s re-

membering.” “And I am Shorthead Tricephalos,” said the center head briskly, “and I will do your Majesty’s talking. If you will promise to do just as I say for two months, I will win back to you every heart in this nation.”

“Capital!” cried the King, rubbing his hands. “It will be a novel experiment at any rate”; and, turning to the throng of great men in his audience-room, he at once declared Tricephalos to be his Prime Minister *pro tem*.

“And now, Tricephalos, what shall we set about first? I am eager to begin.”

“Your Majesty will first journey to the kingdom’s end, visiting all your Majesty’s cities.”

The King’s countenance fell. “You don’t know what a reception we’ll meet, Tricephalos! However, I promised, and I must obey you. We set off to-morrow.”

On the morrow, therefore, a gorgeous train marched out of the capital city, to traverse the entire kingdom. The King and Tricephalos rode at the head. The peasants on the way scowled at them, and at the first town they reached—a town whose name was Hawlborough—they were met only by a deputation of

barking dogs. People peered out of their doors and then shut them with a bang. The small boys hooted.

The King's lodging was soon beset by an army of the discontented, who wanted the King's aid in all sorts of grievances. One was unjustly brought to trial; one was pursuing a bad debt; one was denied admission to the army. All these Tricephalos presented to the King by name, and dismissed with a cheery smile, saying: "The King has at heart the good of all his subjects."

In the town there existed a quarrel of such magnitude that a town meeting had to be held to argue the matter before the King. One party wanted to build a town hall, and one party denounced the scheme as uneconomical. When the orators on both sides had made their pleas, in the presence of a great throng, there was a hush, in expectation of the King's reply. Tricephalos, however, stepped forward and said: "Good people, his Majesty commissions me to inform you that he has the highest regard for public spirit." Nothing more would he say.

The next morning, as the King's cavalcade left Hawlborough, his Majesty remarked:



Witchery Ways

"ALL THESE TRICEPHALOS PRESENTED TO THE KING"

“Tricephalos, if I should return to Hawlborough I think they would stone me. Is this the way in which you propose to win back the hearts of my people?” To which the Prime Minister *pro tem.* made answer: “We shall see, your Majesty.”

Next in their course they came to Schuylkill, and were received with still greater unkindness. On entering here, Tricephalos was even hit with a rotten egg, to the King’s great amusement. “I told you so,” said he.

The throng of complainants about the King’s rooms was introduced to the King and turned away by Tricephalos, as before, with the words, “His Majesty has at heart the good of all his subjects.” Here also reigned a town feud, and here also a great mass-meeting was held, to lay the matter before the King. A large public-school building was to be erected, and the orators on one side contended that it should be in the business portion of the town, so as to be central, and their opponents that it should be removed from the center, so as to be quiet. In suspense they awaited the King’s decision. But Tricephalos stepped forward and said: “Good people, his Majesty commissions me to inform you that in his judg-

ment a public-school building should always be as accessible and quiet as possible.”

And so they pleased no one at Schuylkill, but were nearly driven from the town by the people's anger.

“Things are pretty bad, you see, Tricephalos,” remarked the King.

“We shall see, your Majesty,” said the Prime Minister *pro tem*.

And so they went on till they came to Lightington, whose citizens were in a terrible uproar about gas. As soon as the crowd of private suitors had been met by the King, and dismissed by his Minister with the customary assurance, “His Majesty has at heart the good of all his subjects,” a meeting was held here also, and one side urged the lighting of the streets on the ground of public safety, and the other opposed it as extravagant. Tricephalos, as usual, made the response for which they were looking to King Blunderbuss: “I am commissioned by his Majesty, good people,” he said, “to inform you that he hopes that, as soon as his subjects can afford it, the streets of all his towns shall be lighted at night.”

At this answer the people were so indignant

that the King's party was obliged to leave in the night, to avoid unpleasant consequences.

“How is this, Tricephalos, my sage counselor?” mockingly asked the King, as they hurried away in the darkness.

“We shall see, your Majesty,” replied the Prime Minister *pro tem.*

The next town in their course was called Kwirekwarrel, and so disliked the King that the Mayor sent asking his Majesty to refrain from a visit, since he feared a riot. But Tricephalos insisted on the usual program, which was carried out, even to the mass-meeting to discuss the town feud. Here it was especially violent, for it raged between the choirs of the churches of St. Cecilia and St. Agnes, each of which thought it had been mortally offended by the other. Half the town was on one side, and half in opposition. The Prime Minister *pro tem.* rendered the decision after the usual speeches. “His Majesty commissions me to tell you that he has the greatest respect for all singers whose business it is to produce harmony.”

The King and his train left that town in the next half-hour with a raging mob close upon them.

“This looks promising, my excellent Prime Minister *pro tem.*,” said the King, when they could ride at a quieter pace.

“We shall see, your Majesty,” cheerily said Tricephalos.

Well, in this way they passed through the entire kingdom. Everywhere they found discord and hatred. Everywhere the strange Prime Minister *pro tem.* managed matters in the same unsatisfactory way.

“And now,” said the King, after they had passed out of sound of the howling of the last town, “we have completed the circuit. What does the wise Tricephalos advise to do next? At this rate I am in danger of losing my royal head at this business of winning my subjects’ hearts.”

“Next, sire,” said Tricephalos, coolly, “we must make the same circuit over again; and here, an hour’s ride distant, is our first town—Hawlborough.”

“Hawlborough!” said the horrified King. “Have you forgotten the barking dogs?”

“Yes, I have forgotten all about them,” said Blankhead Tricephalos; and this was the first thing he had said on the trip.

“And that town hall? You surely remem-

ber that? And all those urgent private complaints?"

"I have utterly forgotten them, sire," said Blankhead.

"Well!" exclaimed the amazed King, "you are certainly a stupid councilor! I risk my life to enter that town. Would the two months were over!"

But the aspect of Hawlborough appeared changed. People looked kindly upon the King. The workmen were already laying the foundation for a grand town hall.

"You see, your Majesty," said the Mayor to the King, "your words set us to wondering whether we really were public-spirited in our constant quarreling, and so we held a good-humored popular election, in which the hall people carried the day, and now both parties claim the honor of having originated the plan!"

The King held a reception. By his side stood the shrewd Prime Minister, who, with his right hand, of course, whispered to his master the name of each of the former suitors as they advanced, so that the King could call them cordially by name without waiting for a second introduction. As to their complaints,

they had all been attended to long ago by the proper officials. Tricephalos quietly called aside two or three of the most sensible, and investigated a few real grievances which he promised should be remedied at once. Every one was charmed, and most of all, the people whose names had been remembered, and a crowd gathered the next morning to bid the King an affectionate good-by.

The King did not want to go to Schuylkill; but Blankhead had forgotten all about the rotten egg and the school-feud, so on they had to go. A still more cordial reception was given them. They were taken to see a fine new school-building begun in a place which combined, as nearly as was possible, the accessibility and quiet which Tricephalos had advised.

“We had never thought of a compromise, your Majesty,” said the Mayor, “till your wisdom suggested it.”

Longhead Tricephalos was the King's right-hand man at the crowded reception which followed, and every one was made to feel that the King had a personal interest in himself. As before, the Prime Minister *pro tem.* was able quietly to ferret out a few abuses and wrongs,

which Longhead carefully laid away to tell the King. So popular had his Majesty become at Schuylkill that he was escorted quite a distance on his way by a brass band.

It was the same in every town. The concise statement of general principles which Shorthead Tricephalos had boldly spoken had put matters in a new light, and set men to thinking of the folly of their quarreling. Blankhead Tricephalos had so completely forgotten all disagreeable events that the King finally began even to doubt whether they had ever occurred. And Longhead Tricephalos, with his convenient memory of names, and of the few cases of real wrong, made every one feel that his Majesty really had at heart the good of his subjects.

As, amid the hurrahs of his enthusiastic people, the good King returned to his capital, to which his newly won popularity had preceded him, he turned to the sage triple-headed councilor and said: "Tricephalos, you have done nobly. You are now no longer Prime Minister *pro tempore*, but Prime Minister *in perpetuo*."

"I thank you, sire, but I think by this time you have an inkling into the three most im-

portant duties of any man—fit talking, fit remembering, fit forgetting. My mission is accomplished, and I now beg your Majesty's leave, and disappear."

This he did, to the amazement of every one. But the King had thoroughly learned from the mysterious Tricephalos how to win and keep the hearts of his people.

WITCHERY WAYS

XIV

SCHOOL-ROOM WITCHERY

A DULL school-room. Eyes wandering and hands lying listless. A cross school-room. Here and there close-pressed lips and faces flushed with anger. A mischievous school-room. Paper wads flying, sly nudges, malicious squeaking of slate-pencils.

As a matter of course, a dull schoolma'am. Miss King's eyes are weary, her head is aching. A cross schoolma'am. Her words are wiry and quick. A discontented schoolma'am. "Oh, for one of the old witches at my service! How pleasant it would be to charm these children into quiet, into shame, and obedience!"

As Miss King thought this, behold, the door suddenly opened, and in it stood old Mother Kipperton, her bright scarlet shawl over her shoulders and her little black dress, her black eyes flashing through her spectacles. She lived in a lonely house at the back of the woods, and called children to her door to give

them cookies. They took the cookies, but they never dared enter, because Mother Kipperton had a black cat, and such very black eyes.

The little woman spoke quietly: "May I, too, come to school, Miss King?"

Without waiting reply, she sat down at a desk in a dark corner, by the side of Maria Kitchel, snuggling up to her as the frightened girl moved away, and bending over her geography with her.

Even dull Billy Jackson is roused to look around, his weak blue eyes staring widely. Even nervous Sukey Miles stops wriggling, and peers uneasily at the mysterious visitor. Even mischief-loving Tommy Crass forgets his attempt at pinioning to his desk the curls of the girl in front, in his interest in the stranger. Even Miss King herself, for the moment, loses thought of her aches, her worries, and her discontent.

She nods pleasantly toward Mother Kipperton, and continues the recitation somewhat more briskly.

"If six apples cost twelve cents, how much will ten apples cost?"

They will cost—they will cost—if ten apples cost six cents,—or twelve cents,—

Back into the old rut again. For Mother Kipperton keeps very still, and the children one by one forgot her presence. Billy Jackson returns to vacant, blurred vision of his speller. Sukey Miles begins to twist over her Fourth Reader. Tommy Crass succeeds in his pinioning operations. Even Maria Kitchel begins to make her lips move as she reads, "Brazil is the only empire in South America. Its capital is—" for the geographies of District No. 6 are not up with the times.

Hum, buzz, slates dropped with a clatter, scraping of uneasy feet, dogged droning of the arithmetic class.

Miss King's eyes smart again, her head aches, her tongue recovers its sharpness. "What's eight times twelve, Sammy? You ought to know eight times twelve. Come, now. Don't be so stupid!"

Yes, Sammy thinks eight times twelve's seventy-two, Miss King.

Oh, if Mother Kipperton were really a witch! If she would only point a long finger at this great, stupid farmer's boy, and flash from its tip some life into his flat features, and some spirit into his soggy brain!

What! What! Miss King felt herself be-

coming larger and heavier. Her hands grew clumsy and calloused and her skin became stifling with sunburn. Her head seemed hot, and her brain helpless, groping. She was great Sammy Bolton, standing stupidly at the blackboard! And before her at the teacher's desk was Sammy, small and fine, little fingers nervously twisting a pencil, every muscle of the clear-skinned face drawn tense as his shrill voice cried: "Eight times twelve, Sammy? Come, think!"

Think! Miss King feels herself floundering hopelessly about between three long columns of figures, as if they were three black ditches. Think! But what to think of?

Sammy has an emotion never felt in his slowly moving life before,—the tiger feeling, of one who would like to spring and clutch.

It is over in an instant. Black eyes twitch from behind great glasses out of Maria Kitchel's dark corner. Miss King is back again in her chair and Sammy is back again at the blackboard. A strange fancy! A sudden day-dream! Yet the schoolma'am's voice is milder.

"Well, Sammy, that's pretty hard, to be

sure. Study your 'eights,' and tell me in a few minutes."

And Sammy speaks out, "Oh, now I know, Miss King! It's ninety-two!"

Not right, to be sure, but how briskly he said it! And the school plods on, hum, buzz, clatter, scrape, arithmetic down and Fourth Reader forward.

Oh, how Sukey Miles squirms and twists to-day! Not still on the bench for a second, jostling her neighbor, swinging her feet, whirling her book. How nervous it makes Miss King! Dear me! if she had some witch's charm, to make those quivering limbs quiet for a moment!

"*Can't* you sit still, Sukey?"

What! What! The schoolma'am is little, oh, so little! Her feet will not touch the floor, and the blood is uncomfortable in them. They twitch. They wriggle. A fly is buzzing at her ear, and fidgeting her nearly into fits. Every muscle cries for movement. She must run. She must leap. She must fling up her arms and scream. She is Sukey, twisting on the bench and saying, "Yes, ma'am!"

And Sukey? Her eyes smart. Her head aches. She is languid and weak. She wants

to lie down somewhere and rest. Her Fourth Reader is heavy, and she lets it fall to her lap as she scolds, "Why, you are wriggling even now, Sukey!" for she is the schoolma'am.

Just a moment. Black eyes snap, looking up with a smile from the side of Maria Kitchel's geography, and Sukey and Miss King are back again, just as before. No, not quite, for Miss King says, more kindly, "You may stand up to read to-day, Sukey." And Sukey actually stands on both feet, and quite properly, as she goes through the first verse of the "Psalm of Life."

But what can be going on over there by the window? Sly glances, suppressed smiles, a whiff of tittering, a red-faced girl, a studious boy behind.

"What is the matter, Ellen?"

"I can't move my head, ma'am. My hair's got fast."

Miss King goes down the aisle. Yes, brown curls are securely bound to the bench with bent pins.

"Tommy Crass, didn't you do this?"

Tommy looks fixedly at his grammar. He pushes the toes of his boots against the iron desk-legs. His face becomes red, like Ellen's.

Miss King waits. What a provoking boy! Always up to some trick or other! If she were a witch, now, wouldn't she like to teach him a lesson?

Again! Again! Miss King in copper-toed boots, hands thrust into big pockets, uneasily grasping marbles, knife, forbidden apple. A sense of injury in her mind. Lessons all learned. Nothing to do. So fine outdoors, fish in the brook, butterflies in the air. What's the use of going to school, anyway? What's the use of scolding when a fellow has a little fun? Wish I could run away and be an Indian trapper!

Tommy the schoolma'am standing, waiting. So tired! So tantalized! Ready to cry, ready to scold. Will this obstinate boy never speak? Will he never learn to love me, to obey me?

Ah! Ah! Only a jiffy. Black eyes flash their command from Maria Kitchel's desk. Tommy again on his seat, Miss King again in the aisle. But a mysterious change.

"Well, Ellen, never mind. Here, I'll free you. Tommy won't do it again, will you, Tommy? And it's almost recess-time, Tommy!"

And Tommy's voice is gentlemanly, and he straightens up in his seat. "No, Miss King; I won't; I'm sorry."

A stir in Maria Kitchel's corner. Old Mother Kipperton rises to go. The black eyes and the big glasses turn full on the schoolma'am. The red shawl and little black dress make a queer courtesy. "Good-by, Miss King. May I come again?"

"Yes, please do!" cries the schoolma'am, with a heartiness that astonishes her.

A bright school-room. Eyes intent and busy hands. A cheery school-room. Here and there a smile, or a cheek dimpling with pleasure. An industrious school-room. Leaves eagerly turned, slate-pencils flying swiftly. Of course, a bright schoolma'am. Miss King's eyes are shining, her head is clear. A kind schoolma'am. Her words come loving and gentle. A happy schoolma'am. "Oh, what witchery is love's! How pleasant it is to charm these dear children into quiet, into joyful obedience!"

WITCHERY WAYS

XV

JACK AND ÆSOP'S JACKDAW

“**H**ELEN RICHARDSON, do you keep your promises?”

“Why, yes, of course, Jack—when I can,” said Helen, rather doubtfully, for she suspected that her brother meditated some inroad upon her time, and the *Little Women* were very charming just then. “I’ve not promised you anything lately, have I?”

“Well, Miss Richardson, allow me to remind you that when I whitened the lines on the tennis-court for your last party, you promised solemnly that you would help me out of my next scrape, didn’t you? I had to pay ten cents for the lime, and got it all over my clothes, and it took mother one hour to clean them. And now am I to get nothing for all that trouble?”

“Well, what do you want?” asked Helen, regretfully laying “Miss Alcott” aside, for a promise was a promise, and she was planning a second tennis-party.

“Here it is,” said Jack, without more ado, pulling a crumpled, dirty manuscript from his pocket. “It’s my composition, you know, for the High School Literary Society to-night. And I’m disgusted with it. I want you to help me.”

“Read what you’ve written,” demanded Helen, with a despairing glance at Jack’s hieroglyphics, and her brother proceeded to read:

The Bicycle is a Machine for Getting over the Ground in a Hurry with. As to this it is like the Pony, but the Latter costs more to Support. For the Former does not Eat anything but Sperm Oil, and a new Crank or Spoke or So once in a While. In learning to Ride the Bicycle the Important Point is to Preserve your Ecuelibreum. For if the Ecuelibreum is not Preserved, the Consequences are a Header. A Header is where the Hind Wheel is Exalted, and the Consequences are a Decline and Fall of the Bicycler. The Cause is usually a Loose Stone, or a Rut, or Attempting to Tip your Hat on the Wheel, which is perrillous. In riding the Bicycle the Road Hog is Frequently Fallen in with. The

Road Hog is a Being Which owns the Universe and Drives in the Middle of it and won't let you get By. The Celeschal Chineze say that before you get to Heaven you have to cross a very Deep Ditch on a very Narrow Bridge. And I think that every Road Hog ought to be met on that Bridge by every other Road Hog and be Crowded off to Stay in the Ditch Forever and Ever. When you can get On and Dismount without a Header he is a Bicycler. But when you can Coast and ride Hands Off he is a Bicyclist. It is a good Plan to have one Pair of Trowsers to ride in while your Mother is mending the Other. The Bicycle is the Greatest Triumph of Modern Engineuity.

“Why, that isn't bad, Jack,” said Helen, laughing.

“Oh, well! but you know it sounds simple. Bob Jenkins is going to have a composition on Liberty and Civilization, and Will Chambers on Poetry and Philosophy. Can't you help me put some poetry and philosophy into mine? Come, now! you promised.”

“But it wouldn't be your composition, Jack, if I wrote it.”

“I don’t want you to write it. I only want you to give me some ideas, and I’ll write them up. Come! You can, you know, easily enough.”

“Your last sentence might do, Jack,” said Helen, scanning the composition critically. “Suppose you take for your subject, ‘The Mechanical Marvels of the Nineteenth Century?’ ”

“Good for you, Helen! Why, that’s splendid! Wait till I write it down.” And Jack hastily produced the pencil and paper which he had thoughtfully provided, and fell to scribbling. Meanwhile, Helen became absorbed again in *Little Women*.

“Well, what next?” asked Jack, after waiting respectfully a moment or two.

“I gave you your subject, Jack. You said you would do the writing.”

“I will. But give me some idea how to start the thing. Come, now! Just tell me how to write the first sentence.”

“Begin it in this way,” said Helen hastily, seeing that dictation was the shortest way back to *Little Women*—“What a transformation has occurred to civilization from the days of the wooden plow to the days

of the locomotive!—and just go on in that fashion.”

“Yes,” said Jack doubtfully, and laboriously wrote down that sentence, then fumbled with his pencil for five minutes more, while Helen finished her chapter and began another. Grown desperate, at last he cried:

“Helen! where is your promise? You said you would help me. You’ll see how I fix your old tennis-court the next time!”

“Jack Richardson, do you want me to write that composition entirely?”

“No, but I want another suggestion. What ought to come next to the locomotive?”

It would take too long to repeat the spasmodic conversation by means of which enough “suggestions” were extorted from Helen to make the following composition. Jack copied it carefully, with many a blot, from his hastily-written notes:

What a Transformation has Occurred to Civilization from the Days of the Wooden Plow to the days of the Locomotive. The Pianno Fort discourses Sweet Harmony and the Soing Machine Fashions Garments with Incredible Rapidity and Promptitude. The

Bicycle is the Greatest Triumph of Modern Engineuity. It goes with a crank. The Humane Speech is Transported over a Continent with a Rapidity of the Flashing Lightning. If the Bearings squeek it's a Sign they need Oil. Vollumes are Proddused from the Press and Broadcast. And Typewriters. And the Assassinasshun of the Zcsar of Russha is Read at our Breakfast Tables. I Read in a Newspaper the Other Day that a Bicycle Rider had been Reported to the Society for Cruelty to Animals for Making the Little Wheel work so Hard to keep up with the Big one. What Ekstasy to ride Fourth in the Dew of the Rising Orb of Day on the Bicycle and Contemplate the Beauties of Nature? The Swimming Clouds through the Distant Blue the Gorgeous Bow of Promise the Resounding Thunder. These all seem to Say to the Eye of Intellek To Him who in the Love of Nature Holds. But I once Tried to See some Seenery on a Bicycle it was a white Cow with a Black Eye and there was a Stick in the Road and I could not Ride for a Month.

Jack finished the last word with a sigh of satisfaction just as the supper-bell rang. He

ate the meal in haste and hurried to his room to dress for the society meeting. Before beginning that difficult and much-dreaded operation, he sat down to read over the new composition, to get accustomed to the strange words. It was very warm, and he soon became drowsy. He was half nodding over the paper when something happened which caused him to open wide his eyes in great astonishment. Through the open window, with one sweep of soft, black wings, flew a big bird, and perched solemnly on the table before him.

“Well, I never!” exclaimed Jack, as his visitor nodded sedately and extended a claw in salutation. “Who are you you?”

“I am *Æsop’s* Jackdaw,” replied the bird, in a very strange, croaking voice.

“What’s *Æsop’s* Jackdaw?” asked Jack, totally forgetting his manners, which was no wonder.

“*Æsop’s* Jackdaw, my dear boy, once became envious of some beautiful peacocks, and foolishly gathered some of their cast-off feathers, stuck them in among his own, and strutted forth expecting the world’s admiration. But, my son, *Æsop’s* Jackdaw got home with scarcely all of his own feathers, to say nothing

of his ridiculous, borrowed plumage. Your name also is Jack, I understand?"

"Why, yes, sir!" stammered Jack, in utmost bewilderment.

"Well, then, I have come to help you dress for the society meeting."

"Thank you, sir," said Jack politely, "but I can dress very well by myself, if you please."

For answer the strange bird made a queer flip with his wings, and there fluttered down upon the table something pink and shining. It was the waist of Helen's new silk gown.

"Take off your coat," said Æsop's Jack-daw, "and put that on!"

"But that isn't my clothes," objected Jack.

"Whose composition is that?" asked the bird, giving a sly glance at the paper before him and a sharp one at Jack.

"Mine," said Jack, boldly. "I wrote every word of it."

"With pen and ink, you mean," answered his visitor. "Now, you put on this waist, and it will be your garment, for you put it on, you know!"

"But Helen didn't help me very much. She only suggested. And I wrote at least one

third of it all by myself," stuttered Jack, who began in terror to see the point.

"Very well. You shall wear only a suggestion of her clothes, then. You may keep half of your own."

"I won't do it!" cried Jack.

"What!" exclaimed Æsop's Jackdaw fiercely. And he swelled up to thrice his former size, his eyes glowing like coals, and every feather rose. "Boy, put on that pink silk waist!"

"I will, sir! I will, at once!" said Jack hastily, throwing off his jacket and squeezing himself into the dainty silken garment. His heart sank as he saw the pretty lace ruffles around his hands.

"Now, take off your boots," was the next command, and as Jack obeyed, Helen's best kid slippers mysteriously appeared, high-heeled, satin-tied, and into them he thrust his feet.

"Now, these," ordered the Jackdaw, pointing to a pair of long, white kid gloves, Helen's especial pride.

Jack's heart sank indeed at that. "I can't do it! What will the boys say?" But it needed only a glance at the stern visitor to

cause him to make all haste to crowd his warm hands into the tight abominations. This done, he looked at them in disgust, with tears in his eyes.

But what is this Jack sees next? What tangle of artificial flowers and flying ribbons and delicately braided straw? Helen's summer hat! The mirror was before him, and Jack gave one despairing glance at his ridiculous image therein, thought of the crowning absurdity of that hat above his freckled countenance, and sat down on the bed blubbering vigorously.

"Jack! Jack! it's almost time for the society meeting. Are you nearly ready?" This came from Helen at the foot of the stairs.

"No! I'm not going! I won't go!" cried Jack, springing up in determination.

But lo! No bird is perched on the table. The room contains no living being except himself. And to his inexpressible relief, on looking down, he finds his own jacket and boots, and hands unadorned with gloves. It has been all a dream.

"I mean," he shouted quickly, "I mean I'm almost ready. I'll come soon!" and set to work to put on his Sunday clothes.

Attired in his best at length, a little late, and much flushed with the rapidity of his dressing, our young gentleman descended the stairs, and made his way to the High School Literary Society. And the manuscript that lay in his inner coat-pocket, just over the rapid beatings of his heart, was not headed, "The Mechanical Marvels of the Nineteenth Century," but was his own honest, bright and sensible composition, which won the praise of the superintendent, while Bob Jenkins's essay on "Liberty and Civilization," and Will Chambers's composition on "Poetry and Philosophy" received from him only a frown of disapproval.

"And why didn't you read the composition I helped you write?" asked Helen, after they got home.

"Because of Æsop's Jackdaw," replied Jack, and that was all he ever told her.

WITCHERY WAYS

XVI

FINE WEATHER ALL THE TIME

NOTHING troubled Prince Crownling so much as the weather. But that isn't saying much, because the weather troubled him greatly and all the time. It was seldom just right, neither too wet nor too dry, too warm, too cold, too dark, nor too sunny; and when it wasn't just right, Prince Crownling was a very disagreeable boy to have in the palace. Dear me! how he fretted, and how insolent he was to the Lord High Chamberlain and the ladies in waiting!

At last his indulgent father, King Easy, could endure this no longer, and hunted out for the prince a wise old gentleman who was a Wizard of the Weather.

For a year all went charmingly. The Wizard of the Weather set it to raining or shining, freezing or scorching, at the will of the small prince. To be sure, the fine ladies of the court would often dress in winter furs only to step out into midsummer. To be sure,

the poor farmers of the realm were sadly confused about planting. But Prince Crownling had ceased his ugly fretting, so that all were happy.

In the midst of this general satisfaction the old wizard died. Now what was to be done? Prince Crownling immediately relapsed into his fits of bad temper, and life was hardly worth living about the court. And, of course, with all the great folk cross, it went hard with the people. So King Easy advertised straightway for another Wizard of the Weather.

It was not long before the candidates began to appear. The first came on a very stormy day, whose rain and clouds had sent the prince into the darkest blues as soon as he awoke. "Make trial of your art at once!" commanded King Easy. "Take the prince out for a pleasant walk!" And every one chuckled at the prospect of getting rid of the prince for a little while.

The candidate bowed, took from his wizard's chest a magic umbrella, and asked Prince Crownling to follow him. At the palace entrance he raised the umbrella and held it over the prince.

"Ah! Ah!" and Prince Crownling, with a

laugh of boyish delight, walked eagerly out into the storm.

For there was no storm, to one who stood under the magic umbrella. From under that wonderful covering the sky seemed blue and smiling, the air clear, no rain, no clouds, a perfect day.

They walked on for several miles, the candidate and the prince, admiring the loveliness of the scenery, and praising the mystical umbrella.

“You shall be Wizard of the Weather,” Prince Crownling promised. “And now, isn’t it time to go back? I am getting tired.”

But just then something happened.

The storm, pouring down outside the magic umbrella, for some time had been increasing in violence, and the candidate had had difficulty in holding the umbrella over the prince; but as they turned to go back a sudden gust caught its silken folds, turned them inside out, wrenched the handle from the candidate’s grasp, and blew the magic umbrella far away, leaving the two exposed to the worst storm of the season, three miles from the palace!

What a change, from that magic, sunshiny landscape, to the blustering, drenching real-

ity! Prince Crownling began to run, scolding the poor candidate with what breath he had to spare.

The Wizard followed him awhile, until he thought of the possible consequences of his failure, when he slyly turned off on a side road and the prince saw him no more.

The second candidate arrived on one of those cloudless, blinding days, when the mid-summer's sun pours down such a glare of light that people with weak eyes, like Prince Crownling, can only pull down the window-shades and mope in the dark. You may be sure that had been a hard day for all the court, and when the second candidate appeared they were quick to send their young tyrant out for another walk.

As they left the palace the wizard gave the prince a pair of spectacles, which the prince put on. "Marvelous!" he cried; "glorious!"

It was a parched season, the flowers hanging wilted, the grass white with dust, leaves shriveling on the hot trees.

But the wonderful spectacles changed everything. Through their clear crystal the prince had visions of springtime. The flowers lifted their heads, and took on all the fresh-

ness of their early coloring. The grass was bright and soft. The leaves hung in rich clusters. Everywhere a new life seemed springing. And there was nothing of that fierce midsummer glare, but a pleasant, soft light, as if a thin cloud were passing over the sun.

The prince walked on, enchanted; on and on, until he began to tire. "This is enough!" he cried. "You shall be Wizard of the Weather. Let us go home."

But unluckily then the candidate noticed that the magic spectacles had become dirty. "Let me wipe them, your Highness," he said, "so that your return may be as pleasant as your coming hither." And whether the candidate was careless, or nervous, or awkward, I cannot tell, but in cleaning the glasses he let them fall, and there they lay, broken into a thousand bits!

The prince had covered his eyes, to keep out the sudden flash of light that followed the removal of the spectacles. At the crash he looked to see what had happened, and was quick enough to see the candidate making off as fast as his legs could carry him, leaving him to find his way home alone, through all that

blinding sunlight. Prince Crownling reached the palace with flaming eyes and a yet more fiery temper, and there was no peace in the palace for a week.

These failures so discouraged the wizards that it grew to be midwinter before another made the attempt. This third candidate came on the coldest day of the year. Of course, Prince Crownling, for all his furs and his fires, was shivering and peevish. He wanted to go out of doors, but the icy wind stung him on nose and ears, and his feet soon felt like lumps of ice.

“Take him for a walk, good Wizard,” cried the poor, tormented King, rubbing his hands in glee.

The candidate threw over the shoulders of the prince a slight cape, and bade him face the north wind without fear. The prince hung back, but had hardly taken a dozen steps before he leaped and shouted with delight. From the magic cape came a warmth, a magnificent glow, which spread over his entire body. It gave him a new and fine sensation. His blood began to course eagerly. His spirits rose, and he wanted to roll in the snow-drifts and open arms to the north wind, and plunge

into the icy current of the river. A bold, fiery life seemed to fill his body. He ran in his glee, on and on, until the wizard had to beg him to stop.

“Haven’t you had enough of it for the present, your Highness?”

“No! No! I could run around the earth! I could swim to the North Pole! You shall be Wizard of the Weather! Hurrah! Hip-hip-hip-hip—”

But just then the north wind, which for the last half-mile had been fussing and twisting at the button of the magic cape, accomplished his mischievous design. The cape flew open, flew off, and the wizard could hear the north wind crying, “Ha! ha! ha!” as he carried it away down to the equator.

The prince looked after it, dazed. Then he began to shiver and shake. Then he began to cry.

The candidate had run after the cape, and was out of sight. Oh, how the north wind stung! And the snow-drifts, how cold they were! How his legs ached! Could he ever go back those long miles he had traveled so exultantly? I really think the prince would have frozen to death there if the King,

alarmed at his long absence, had not sent attendants to find him and carry him home.

After this, slight hope was left in the court. January became February, and February became March, and spring began to hint at the wonders in store for men, but no more candidates came, and the prince was growing absolutely unendurable. Besides, the old King was failing in health, and a dreadful fear seized everybody. What would they do when Prince Crownling ascended the throne?

Plots of revolutions were springing up on all sides, when, very unexpectedly, a fourth candidate came on the scene.

This wizard was very different from the rest. He wore no long cloak, strangely adorned with cabalistic emblems. He carried no wand, and had no pointed turban or long white beard. He was simply a very nice looking young gentleman, in plain and serviceable clothes.

“You a wizard?” asked the King in astonishment.

“No, your Majesty,” replied the newcomer, “but I know how to make it fine weather all the time, and I will succeed with the prince, if you will try me for a month.”

There was a modest confidence about this fourth candidate which pleased everybody and made everybody believe in him. The King gave him permission to associate with the prince for a month.

And now it would take a long time to tell the story of that month. When the candidate took the prince out for a walk, as he often did, he took no magic umbrellas or spectacles or capes. He dressed the prince warmly if it was cold, and gave him rubber boots if it was wet, but let him face the weather as it was.

But how that young man did talk! He would tell the prince about the rain, how it started on the distant mountain-tops and found its way, by rills and torrents and rivers, to the broad surface of the ocean; how the warm tropic sun lifted it into the clouds and carried it over the palace-grounds, and let it gently down.

He would pull up a little flower, just beginning to grow, and show him the tiny roots, groping around in the dark for food and water. He told him how the first small leaves that peep timidly from the ground are built up into the mighty forest-trees. He taught

him how to name these trees, and the many spring flowers then beginning to bloom.

He introduced him to the insects, the birds, the fishes; set him to watching the spider spinning in the sunshine and the mole at work in wet weather. He gave him many kinds of seeds, and helped him plant them in neat beds, to watch their magical unfolding. He showed him the rocks weathering into soil, the soil brought down into the valleys by the hillside streams, to be compacted, after long ages, into rock again. All this, and a thousand times more, he told the prince.

Now Prince Crownling was not a bad boy. Like all boys, he wanted something to think about and to do, and since he had nothing else to occupy him, he had turned his mind to fretting and ugliness. But the fourth candidate soon won his heart. The prince learned to delight, with the flowers, in the fresh showers. He learned to hail, with the birds, the rising sun. He saw that there was no kind of weather, from the frost which breaks stubborn rock into fine soil to the scorching heat which ripens the corn,—no kind of weather that was not needed by some part of the wonderful world about him. And

when that happened, the young prince really had fine weather all the time.

At the end of the month King Easy assembled the court, and in the presence of all the lords and ladies complimented the fourth candidate on his great success, and offered him the position of Wizard of the Weather.

“No, your Majesty,” the young man replied. “I shall be glad to become the tutor of the young prince, for he and I have got to liking each other well. But I have taught him how to be his own Wizard of the Weather!”

A PRAIRIE INFANTA

By EVA WILDER BRODHEAD

A clever Western story that develops in a little Colorado mining town. One is made to see the green, tall cottonwoods, the straggling mud-houses and pungent goat-corrals of its people, among whom lived the woman who took to her great heart the motherless Lola.

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