



THE
SANDMAN'S FOREST
by
Louis Dodge

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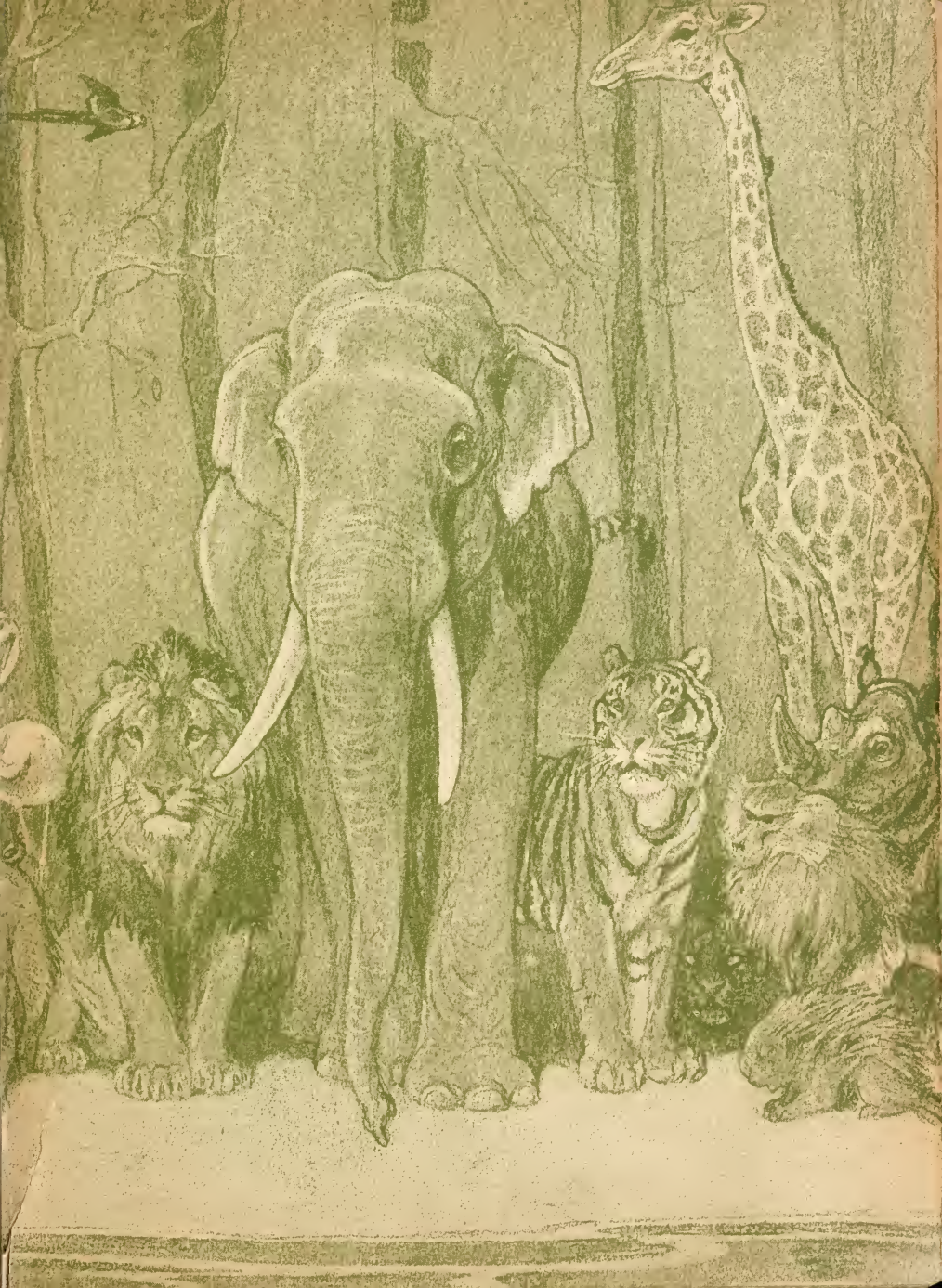
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THE SANDMAN'S FOREST



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Giddy did not hear this

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

A STORY FOR LARGE PERSONS
TO READ TO SMALL PERSONS

BY
LOUIS DODGE



ILLUSTRATED BY
PAUL BRANSOM

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1918

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TO
TWO BOYS NAMED LOUIS
AND
ONE NAMED HENDREE



THE
MUSEUM
OF
THE
CITY OF
NEW YORK

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE DARK ROOM	1
II. THE MYSTERIOUS VISITOR	12
III. THE FLIGHT	25
IV. GIDDY IS A PILOT	33
V. THE FOREST	45
VI. THE STRANGE CASE OF THE RABBITS	55
VII. THE ELEPHANT'S ANSWER	67
VIII. THE FIRST MORNING	78
IX. THE THOUGHTLESS SHARK	90
X. THE RIVALS	99
XI. THE ELEPHANT'S SECRET	111
XII. GIDDY GOES TO REASON WITH THE RABBITS	121
XIII. HOW THE RABBIT REASONED	128
XIV. LOST	137
XV. THE HOUSE WITH THE INTOXICATED STAIRCASE	148
XVI. ROOM NO. 77	158
XVII. THE KEY TO ROOM 77	167
XVIII. ZOOK AND ZUKIZMIC	176

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIX. A PRISONER	186
XX. GIDDY AND THE CANNIBALS	194
XXI. AN INTERRUPTED DINNER	206
XXII. THE RETURN	215
XXIII. THE GOOD SHIP <i>ARK</i>	224
XXIV. A TIME OF PERIL	234
XXV. A FACE IN THE MOONLIGHT	244
XXVI. DISASTER	254
XXVII. THE WHITE FLAG	263
XXVIII. FACE TO FACE	271
XXIX. SAVED!	280
XXX. THE NEXT MORNING	289

ILLUSTRATIONS

Giddy did not hear this	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
“You are welcome, Giddy”	52
“Good gracious! There’s a brother of mine I haven’t seen for seventy-five years”	94
A number of monkeys and birds . . . began offering him his breakfast	108
He held firmly to his captive	134
Indeed, the tiger had put aside all polite manners . . .	216

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

CHAPTER I

THE DARK ROOM

IT was the day that Giddy was five years old. . . .

But then I ought to tell you at the start that his name was really not Giddy. It was Richard. He was called Giddy because his father *would* turn a thing into a joke whenever he could. He had made a joke when Giddy was just past one, and was beginning to talk. He had come home one day and had found Giddy's mother greatly excited about something. He had put his hat on the rack and turned toward her with a smile.

"Well, what's it all about?" he had asked.

And Giddy's mother had said: "It's the baby. He's beginning to talk in the most wonderful way. He can say *Richard*. He said it to-day. He said it quite plainly." Her eyes were dancing just as though she were saying,

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

"It rained rubies and diamonds out on the lawn to-day," or something like that.

But Giddy's father had put his hands on her shoulders and had shaken her gently, and had laughed loudly, and had said: "Nonsense!"

They had gone to the nursery then, of course, because Giddy's mother wanted to show him that she had not spoken nonsense at all. They had gone to the nursery and stood just inside the door quietly, as if they were both a little afraid of the nurse; and then Giddy's mother had gone to Giddy and had gotten down on her knees beside him on the rug, and had put her hands out to him. When she spoke you could tell by her voice that she was very anxious that Giddy should not disappoint her.

"What's the baby's name?" she had asked, and she was smiling, and her eyes were beaming.

You would have declared that Giddy meant to tease her just at first, for he looked at her without making a sound, and then at his father, and then at nothing at all. There was a strange, rather mischievous expression in his eyes. But

THE DARK ROOM

at last he looked at his mother again, and — well, he certainly said *something*.

There was a good deal of excitement for a moment. The nurse smiled proudly, as if it were she who had done something remarkable, and Giddy's mother had clasped her hands together and cried out, "Didn't I tell you?" and had turned to Giddy's father, who had gotten quite red in the face as if *he* were being praised for doing some great thing. But the very next minute he said, almost scornfully: "It sounded to me like *Giddy!*"

At this, Giddy's mother had pretended to be indignant. "Why, Charley Hill!" she had exclaimed, "he said *Richard*, quite plainly!"

But Giddy's father had pretended to think very little of the matter, and later that evening, when Giddy's mother had come downstairs from the nursery, he had said: "Well, is Giddy asleep?" And even the next day when he came home from his office, he asked lightly: "How is Giddy?" Whereupon Giddy's mother had looked really indignant and had replied: "*Richard* is quite well."

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

But from that day on Mr. Hill always asked when he came home: "How is Giddy?" And so it happened that he got to be called Giddy by everybody. Even his mother seemed to forget that his real name was Richard. Which only goes to show what will happen sometimes when a father permits himself to be careless.

Which brings us back to the day that Giddy was five years old.

On that day the first of a number of wonderful things to happen was that he had a birthday party. Eleven of his playmates had come and they had played on the lawn and sat at a table out under the trees. They had talked all at once, and had made a great deal of noise — almost like a flock of birds. It was amazing how easy it was to find things to laugh at.

Still, it was not until after the party that the most wonderful things of all began to happen.

It was just at sunset that Giddy stood on the lawn and watched his playmates going home. Above the privet hedge he could see the heads of the children who were moving away along the sidewalk. He could see pink

THE DARK ROOM

ribbons and red and blue, and the boys' heads. They were still talking, though not so loudly now. They were talking about what a great time they had had. Giddy knew this very well, though he could no longer hear them. And after a few minutes they were gone, and he could hear nothing at all.

It was then that he saw his mother standing up on the porch beside the cypress-vine. And he knew that she was waiting for him, and that she had something to say to him.

He was not surprised when she took him by the hand and led him into the house, though he looked up at her with a question in his eyes. She would ask him if he had had a nice time, he knew; but it seemed to him that she meant to ask him something else, too. And he could not think what it would be.

They went into the dining-room, and she sat down in the rocking-chair in the big bay-window overlooking the lawn; and then she put her arm about him and drew him close.

She did not ask him if he had had a nice time, after all. She only held him close, and

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

looked away through the trees, and at last she said, almost in a whisper: "Five years old." Her voice would have made you think of far-off music when she spoke those words. And then she turned to him and spoke much more cheerfully.

"Do you know, Giddy," she said, "that you are getting to be quite a big boy?"

Giddy did not know quite how big he was. He had no brothers or sisters who were larger or smaller than he was, and so there was no way to tell. He did not answer his mother. He leaned against her and put his hand up to her cheek and looked down.

"Quite a big boy," his mother said again; and when she paused and looked at him thoughtfully, Giddy knew, without really knowing how he knew, that something strange was about to happen. She went on: "And so . . . tonight you're going to go to bed all alone."

When he looked up at her in a startled way she was smiling serenely. She added: "You're going to show us all how big and brave you are."

THE DARK ROOM

He felt really uneasy. Was he really big and brave? It made him feel rather forlorn to have his mother say he was big and brave. He would rather *not* be, he thought. Still . . . he remembered that his Uncle John and his Uncle William and his Aunt Mildred would be there that night. They were coming for dinner. And he thrilled at the thought of being able to show his Uncle William that he was getting to be a big boy. He had an idea that there never had been as brave a man as his Uncle William. And he could imagine how his Aunt Mildred would open her eyes wide when she was told that he was going to bed alone. She would say: "What — *alone?*" And then she would look at one and another as if she could scarcely believe it. That part of it would be very nice.

His mother drew him a little closer, and brought her face down so that her cheek lay against his head. She went on: "To-night, after dinner, and after Uncle William has told you the stories you like to hear, you are to listen for the clock to strike nine, and then you are

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

to say 'Good night' to every one and go — all by yourself! — up to the nursery and go to bed."

That was when Giddy's heart nearly stopped beating.

He could think of nothing to say at first. He had never gone to bed by himself. His mother had always gone with him, and helped him, and talked to him. She had often asked many questions, and sometimes she had told him stories. And he had never known when she had gone away and put the light out. It had always been morning when he opened his eyes, and his mother had been standing by his bed, just as if she had remained there all night.

For a little while he felt that he would like to cry and have her put her arms around him. But she had said he was big and brave, and he knew that he ought not to cry just now. Instead, he tried to think that it was something fine that had been planned for him — an adventure, perhaps. And little by little it seemed to him that it really would be an adventure. He pictured himself lying in his bed, with no one near him. The room would be dark, and

THE DARK ROOM

there would be distant noises. There would be voices down-stairs, and distant sounds would drift in through the windows.

Yes, it would be an adventure. There was no telling what would happen in a dark room — and even if nothing happened, it would be delicious to think of things that might happen. Fairies might come into the room — though this did not seem likely. Fairies only came to strange places, he was sure. Still, his mother had seemed somewhat excited when she had spoken about his going to sleep alone, in the dark. Who could tell *what* might happen? Really, it would be the greatest adventure he had ever had.

And then a thrilling thought came to him. He really *was* brave, just as his mother had said. He was thinking about the new experience quite calmly.

He was still stroking his mother's cheek; but presently he withdrew his hand and looked into her eyes eagerly. "All right!" he said.

Neither of them spoke for a while, then; but Giddy's eyes were shining. He was think-

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

ing of the dark room and of what might happen in it. He was even afraid his mother might change her mind, and wish to go with him, as she had always done.

She had to leave him, then, because there was to be company for dinner. But even when he was left alone he did not feel lonely. He began to think how surprised his uncles would be, and his aunt. It would be fine to surprise them. His uncles and his aunt were quite nice people, Giddy thought. Especially his Uncle William. His Uncle William had been a great traveller. He had been to places where coconuts grew, and bananas. He had seen monkeys in a forest and parrots in flocks. He had been on the ocean when there was a storm, and he could tell you just what you did and how you felt when the ship rocked.

Uncle William did not have any wife. It was Uncle John who had a wife. She was Aunt Mildred. It seemed to Giddy that his Uncle John and his Aunt Mildred did not know very much compared with Uncle William. The great event was having Uncle William. The others

THE DARK ROOM

. . . he always knew what Aunt Mildred would say when she came to visit them. She would look at Giddy and say: "How the child grows!" And then she would sigh, and that was almost the last thing she would say about Giddy. He knew what his Uncle John would say, too. At the table he would say: "This is a fine salad, Gert!" And he would eat the salad almost like a starving man. You felt glad your part of the salad was on a separate dish. It seemed that Uncle John might eat it all if it had been on one dish, like the mashed potatoes.

"This is a fine salad, Gert!" He did not like to hear his Uncle John call his mother Gert. It did not sound pretty at all and his mother was very lovely.

But Uncle William . . . whenever he looked at you his eyes twinkled, and you felt that he had something strange to tell you, when he had the chance.

"What will Uncle William say," Giddy wondered, "when he knows I am going to sleep alone, in the dark?"

CHAPTER II

THE MYSTERIOUS VISITOR

IT was a wonderful dinner, Giddy thought. He could not be sure whether the others were different, or whether the change was all in himself. But he was quite sure that never before had he been so happy.

First, there was the change in his Uncle John's manner. When his Uncle John came into the room, while his mother and Aunt Mildred were still talking out in the hall, he spoke in a kind of crisp way — though he was smiling politely. “So, young man! You are five years old!” Those were his words. And Giddy felt anew that he was quite a big boy, as his mother had said.

And when his Aunt Mildred came in, after a minute or two, she did not treat him as if he were a baby. She shook his hand and said: “Five years old!” And Giddy's eyes brightened when he heard her say this. He repeated

THE MYSTERIOUS VISITOR

the words to himself: "I am five years old." There seemed to be a new meaning in the words. He could have laughed aloud when he thought of his secret, and his mother's. He was going to bed alone after a while. He would show them what it meant to be five years old!

And then his Uncle William came, and immediately Giddy knew, by the way his uncles looked at each other, that there was a mystery somewhere. They were hiding something, and for a moment he was afraid to look at them, lest they might read his mind, and know that their secret was not wholly hidden. He thought: "They have got something in their pockets! Something for me!" But he could not bear to look toward their pockets. He pretended not to be thinking of their pockets. He was thinking to himself: "What is it they have got?" He tried to think of something he did not care very much about. It would be nicer to think of something he did not care very much about, and then find that it was . . . maybe a compass! He could never travel, as his Uncle William had done, unless he had a compass.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

His eyes grew very bright. Perhaps it was a compass!

It would be Uncle William who would have the compass, of course. But at first Uncle William did not seem to be thinking of anything in his pocket. He looked down at Giddy, and his eyes twinkled, and he said, "Old Giddy!" and put his hand a little heavily on his shoulder. And Giddy felt very well satisfied with himself. He said to himself again: "I am five years old."

He kept on thinking of this when they all went into the dining-room after a while and sat down at the table; and then for a time he could think of nothing except how beautiful the table looked. The sun came in through a loop in the elm-tree on the lawn and shone on the glass vase, with flowers in it, and on the snowy table-cloth, and the silver.

And then he found himself looking rather anxiously at his Uncle John, who had begun to eat. But the minutes passed, and his Uncle John did not say, this time: "A great salad, Gert!" And Giddy drew a sigh of relief.

THE MYSTERIOUS VISITOR

It seemed to him an endless time before the dessert was served, and when it came at last he felt himself growing warm all over. This was not because of his eagerness for the dessert — though it was something he liked exceedingly. He was thinking, “I shall know what they have in their pockets before long,” and he was stealing timid glances at his two uncles.

And then the great moment came at last, when his Uncle John pushed his chair back from the table, and arose, and looked about quite carelessly, and then said: “By the way, I almost forgot something I have in my pocket!”

He felt in one pocket after another. It really seemed for an instant that he might have lost it. But no! . . . there it was — a little narrow box. “This is something for you, Giddy,” he said.

And Giddy took the package and felt that it was very hard just then to look at his Uncle John or at the gift in his hand. His eyes met his mother’s, and she was smiling.

“You may open it, dear!” she said. And

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

Giddy's fingers began to fumble at the string. The string came off, and the paper, and then the lid. He could see a beautiful piece of pearl shell, and silver. He looked at his mother again. His face flamed with joy. It was a knife! It was the kind of a knife his father had: it had a big blade at one end and two little blades at the other. He took it into his hand and held it up for his mother to see.

His mother's eyes opened wide. "Oh," she cried, "a knife!"

And then Giddy grew hot again all over. He must say "Thank you!" to his Uncle John, and it was difficult to say thank you. It was like drinking a very tiny sip of water when you were dreadfully thirsty. It didn't seem to do any good. He wished it were polite for him to run away into another room, and hold the knife to his cheek, and toss it up and catch it, and lay it on a chair and go quite away and look at it. But he said "Thank you!" in an abashed voice, while his cheeks grew very red.

And then his Uncle William began to speak. "That makes me think!" he said. "I was about

THE MYSTERIOUS VISITOR

to forget, too!" And he began feeling in one pocket after another.

Giddy thought: "It will be a compass!" But he could not look at his Uncle William. He stole a glance at his mother, who was still smiling.

It was a different-shaped package Uncle William found at last. It was a round, flat package. And Giddy's fingers trembled more than ever. He could not quite remember, afterward, how he got the string and paper off, and the lid. He almost forgot to breathe. There was a little dancing bit of steel which seemed to be in a great fidget because it could not point to the north. And Giddy held the shiny brass box steadily, and the needle settled down, with its point to the north, and went on trembling in the most mysterious way. Giddy felt that he could scarcely bear to hold it — it was so wonderful to have a compass of his own at last. He cried, "Oh, mother!" and placed it in her hands. But he held to her hands, and kept on looking at that needle, which quivered in such a strange way. Then he glanced help-

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

lessly at his Uncle William. He could not speak! But his Uncle William helped him out by saying: "Now, then, Giddy, you can be a traveller, too!" He spoke quite easily, as if it were nothing at all to give Giddy a compass, and while he was speaking they all went into the sitting-room, and his mother turned the lights on, and they all sat down, Giddy sitting on his own little red chair, with the knife and the compass in his lap.

He was thinking so intently of the knife and the compass that he did not know just when his Uncle William began to tell a story, nor what had been said to remind him of it. But suddenly he caught the words: "Yes, a rather close call. You see, it was a very dark night, and the guides had been uneasy because . . ."

Giddy did not know why his uncle should have stopped short off; he only knew that his uncle and his mother had exchanged glances, and that his Uncle William had seemed rather confused. And then his uncle had gone on in a rather lame fashion: "Er — yes, it was a *monkey* that crossed my path." He paused as

THE MYSTERIOUS VISITOR

one does when one is trying to make up something. It seemed that he was in need of prompting, and Giddy asked:

“And what did the monkey do, Uncle William?”

“What did he do? Why — why, he shot up into a tree and — and *squeaked* at me!”

Giddy thought: “That isn’t a story at all.” Something was wrong, somewhere. “But you said it was a dark night,” he reminded his uncle. “How could you see the monkey if it was such a dark night?”

“How? Well, you see,” and here Uncle William looked at Giddy’s mother reproachfully — “why, the moon came out from behind the clouds just then.”

Giddy murmured, “Oh!” and looked at his uncle wonderingly. What was it they were trying to hide from him? — that was the question which came into his mind.

However, there was a new start, and some very good stories followed, and Giddy’s mother smiled complacently, because in these stories there was not a word about a dark night, or

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

uneasy guides, or anything unpleasant. The sun was shining in all of them.

And at the end of the very pleasantest story of all there was the sound of a musical gong striking out in the hall: One, two, three . . . the clock was striking nine!

For Giddy the most thrilling moment of the evening had come. He arose and looked proudly at his mother and then at the others. It is true that for an instant his mind was filled with a picture of the dark room up-stairs, and that it seemed rather terrifying to go up into it alone. But he felt that he should not have wished to change anything now. He said: "It is my bedtime. I must tell you all good night." He wondered if they noticed the lump in his throat. He was suddenly afraid he might break down, and he turned his back upon the company resolutely.

He was looking toward the staircase, and for a moment it seemed to him that his heart would break, because his mother only sat where she was and said gently: "Very well, Giddy — good night!"

THE MYSTERIOUS VISITOR

But before he had quite reached the bottom step he heard a movement behind him, and then all of a sudden his mother was kneeling beside him, with her arm about him. At the last moment it seemed to her that she was letting her baby go away from her, and that it would be only a little boy who came back in the morning.

“Good night, dear!” she said again, whispering; and then, in a murmur which no one but Giddy could hear, she said: “You will not be afraid? There is *nothing* that will harm you — nothing at all!”

And then Giddy heard his Uncle William’s voice calling out comfortably: “You’re a fine boy, Giddy — a fine boy. I’ll tell you what, Giddy, the next time you have a favor to ask — no matter what it is — you just come to me and it shall be granted. Understand?”

Giddy stood almost as if he were in a dream and considered what his Uncle William had promised. He was thinking how his Uncle William never forgot his promises. He said to himself: “I shall think of a hundred things

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

before I make up my mind what to ask of him."

He really began the ascent of the stairs, then, with the knife and the compass in his hands. He reached the upper hall, and wanted to look back; but it seemed wiser not to do this. He opened the nursery door and peered into the room. The light was burning brightly. It did not seem at all terrible to go in, after all. Still, it required an effort to close the door behind him. And then it seemed to him that the voices down-stairs were already very far away. He listened attentively, and it seemed strange to him that they could sound so calm, while he stood up here in his room, all alone.

He wondered how his mother would know when to turn the light out. And when he thought how the room would be in darkness after a while he felt quite excited. He must be in bed before the light went out! And yet, little by little, it seemed to him that he was not afraid at all. His mother had declared that nothing would harm him. And he liked to think what his Uncle William and the others

THE MYSTERIOUS VISITOR

would say to one another about his going to bed alone.

He kept thinking of that, even after he had put the knife and the compass away, and had undressed, and was in bed.

. . . He noted that the curtain by the southern window was blowing softly in the wind, and he said to himself: "I must remember, when the light has gone out, that it is only the curtain blowing."

And then, after quite a long time, as it seemed to him, the light went out. He was startled at first; but in just a moment he said: "But I am not afraid!"

It was all very quiet, save for those murmuring voices down-stairs. But it was really not dreadful at all. Through the open window he could see the stars and the elm-tree, and he could even see things in the room, though only dimly. And all of a sudden he could have laughed, because he had minded coming to bed alone. It was really delicious — the sound of those voices down-stairs. He could see his mother clearly. He could see how the light

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

began to beam in her eyes when it was her turn to talk. It was all truly wonderful — his being five years old, and alone in the dark and not afraid.

He thought he should like to lie awhile and look at the stars and the elm-tree through the window; still, the bed was deliciously comfortable. In a very short time it seemed almost impossible to keep his eyes open more than a minute at a time. And those voices down-stairs were really like music. . . .

What was that on the window-sill, blotting out the elm-tree and the stars?

He had not expected to see anything on the window-sill, certainly. Yet he was extraordinarily calm. He was calm, even when he made out the two piercing eyes, and the enormous body, all covered with feathers, and the great yellow beak.

It seemed the most amazing thing that he was not at all afraid. He asked, in the most casual tone — because he wished not to startle his visitor:

“Who are you?”

CHAPTER III

THE FLIGHT

THE answer came in a slightly surprised yet friendly voice:

“I am the Superstork.”

“Of course!” said Giddy. He felt a little ashamed that he had had to ask. He felt that it was very nice to have the Superstork there on the window-sill. He got out of bed and went over to the window. He felt that he knew a great deal about birds — especially strange birds. He remembered that story his Uncle William had once told him — about a ship which sailed off the beaten path and came to a region where the gulls had never learned to be afraid, and came close and hovered above the ship with sharply inquisitive eyes. Still he was surprised at the size of the Superstork. Its body filled the whole window, except here and there a crack; and the ends of its wings, and its tail, stuck out almost as far as the elm-tree.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

"It was very good of you to come," murmured Giddy. He was thinking what calm, kind eyes the Superstork had.

"But you see, it was time for me to come," said the Superstork. "You have not forgotten that you are five years old, have you?"

"Oh, no," said Giddy. "No, I haven't forgotten *that*."

"Well, then!" said the Superstork. He added lightly: "And so it is time for you to visit the Sandman's forest."

"So it is!" said Giddy, as if he had just remembered.

The Superstork preened himself a little with his immense bill. But soon he spoke again, in a brisk manner: "I suppose you've got everything ready?"

Giddy did not quite know what to say to this. "I ought to take my compass along, oughtn't I?" he ventured.

"Your compass, certainly. I thought there might be something else you'd want to take along."

"Well, I might take my knife?" Giddy

THE FLIGHT

spoke as if it were quite an ordinary thing to have a pearl-handled knife with one big blade and two little ones.

But the Superstork fidgeted and said: "Um-m — I should think not. You see, the scissors-bird does most of our cutting for us."

Giddy blushed a little. He asked himself: "How could I have forgotten the scissors-bird? Well, I guess I'll only want the compass, then," he said.

He was getting into his rompers with nervous haste. He could not understand why he had not thought to be ready when the Superstork came for him, and it seemed to him possible that the visitor would go away without him. He tried to think of things to say, so that the time would seem to pass rapidly.

"I think it is you who brings the babies, isn't it?" he asked, trying to employ a pleasantly familiar tone.

The Superstork rummaged about with his bill until his head was quite back under his wing, and Giddy had the uncomfortable thought that perhaps the visitor was laughing

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

at him, and that he was politely concealing the fact.

But the answer came presently: "Oh, no — it is my son, the stork, who brings them. He isn't big enough to take them away when they are five years old, and it's time for them to visit the forest. That is where I come in."

"I see," said Giddy. He made up his mind not to make any more mistakes, if he could help it. But he was wondering how the Superstork meant to carry him. He could not go in a napkin, certainly. It wouldn't be big enough. Perhaps the coverlet would do, and yet it seemed to him that it would be rather stuffy in the coverlet if the Superstork carried it by the four corners. He decided to venture another question, after all. "And when you take them away," he said, "I mean, when you take *me* away, you have to have something large — like a coverlet?"

The Superstork rummaged about with his bill again — this time on the other side. But at last he said simply: "You ride on my back!"

THE FLIGHT

Giddy laughed outright. It would be splendid, riding on the Superstork's back. "Of course," he said. "I sit up, and you have a bridle on, and I hold the reins to guide you."

The Superstork partly closed his eyes and meditated. "That *used* to be the way, of course. But when you have a compass. . . ."

"You don't need the bridle then. I see," said Giddy.

"The best way *now*," added the Superstork, "is for me to have the compass on a ribbon, around my neck — quite loose, you know. You can hold the compass as long as you like, and give me the directions. You say: 'A little to the starboard!' or 'strong a-port!' Like that, you know. According to the way the needle points. And when you get tired, and want to take a nap ——"

"Then we should be lost," thought Giddy with a delicious thrill; but the Superstork went on:

"Then you *box the compass*. With either hand. And it falls down to where I can see it, and I guide myself until you wake up again."

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

"I might have known," murmured Giddy. "Of course, there wouldn't be any other way." He mused a moment. "If you'll excuse me, I'll find a ribbon," he said.

He went to his door and opened it and crossed the hall into his mother's room. When he came back he had a beautiful blue ribbon in his hands.

He took up the compass, where it lay on the table by his bed, and for the first time he saw that it had a place to slip the ribbon through. He slipped the ribbon through and tied the ends together — as if he were making a kind of necklace. Then he placed the ribbon around the Superstork's neck.

"You did it very well indeed," said the Superstork graciously. "And now . . . I think we are ready?"

Giddy faltered a moment. If he might tell his mother good-by!

But the Superstork read his thought. "That would be the right thing if you were going anywhere else," he said, "but in this case . . . you see, you'll be back before she misses you."

"That's true," admitted Giddy. He seemed

THE FLIGHT

to have forgotten that. "Well, the sooner we're off, the better, I suppose."

He had only to put on his straw hat, and then he climbed up on the chair by the window, and put one toe on the window-sill. He hoped he would not seem very awkward.

. . . There he was on the Superstork's back. It had been very simple. He tried to assume a natural manner, as if only the minor details of this strange experience were new to him.

The Superstork seemed to be really impressed. "Are you *sure* you've never taken a ride like this before?" he asked sharply.

"Well, . . . not just like this," admitted Giddy. He did not wish to be really untruthful.

"It's rather strange," said the Superstork; and then Giddy felt that the immense bird was making certain preparations with his feet.

"You seem very strong," he remarked politely. He did not wish to seem to be paying very eager attention. "I suppose you could fly a mile — or even more — without getting the least bit tired."

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

The Superstork was poisoning himself. "You've no idea!" he exclaimed. "I can fly for days and nights together. I can cross whole countries, and even oceans. It's no trick at all, when you have wings like mine."

"I thought very likely you could," admitted Giddy. He pulled his hat firmly into position, and then he pretended to be seriously engaged with the compass. He felt very calm. Still, he was slightly startled by the Superstork's next words, uttered almost sternly:

"Let's go!"

Giddy could not think how it was managed; but in an instant they were out over the lawn, and the Superstork's wings were spread out so wide that they would have covered a great field.

They began to rise. They were above the house — above the great elm-tree. Giddy could see the lights of a thousand windows, which gradually began to seem quite small and far away.

"We're off!" he announced crisply, trying to pronounce the words in a truly official manner.

CHAPTER IV

GIDDY IS A PILOT

IT had seemed to Giddy at first that he might fall off, if he did not take care, but this thought speedily left his mind completely. He began to feel as if he were actually a part of the Superstork — almost as if he too were flying. And he found that he had ever so much more room than he needed. It was almost like sitting in the middle of a large bed. Strangest of all, he began to feel securely fixed to his place. The thought that he might fall off had given place to the conviction that he couldn't have walked off, or rolled off, even if he had tried.

And the motion — it was delightful. Something like a new sort of swing. He wondered how fast they might be going. Not so very fast, he thought; yet this was a mistake, he soon realized. He found out his mistake when he saw the lights of a city far ahead. Only

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

for an instant did he look away from the lights of the city, to see how near to the clouds they were; and when he looked for the lights again they were gone. His eyes were blank with surprise for a time; and then, looking back over his shoulder, he found the lights of the city again. They were already far behind!

And then almost immediately there was another city ahead, and another. And far away to the right and left there were groups of twinkling lights, where towns and villages lay. And constantly they seemed to be swinging past him and far away until they became invisible.

He was not sorry that he could not look straight down. He had an idea it might have made him dizzy. But there was always a fine view ahead. He could see winding rivers among hills and valleys, and great plains, and forests, and mountains. He could not see them very clearly, it is true, because it was in the night-time; but he could imagine how they would look after the sun came up. And he said to himself: "Maybe that won't be a great sight!" He was really a little excited.

GIDDY IS A PILOT

There was trouble with his straw hat almost from the beginning. He had to hold it on tight. He had not known the wind *could* blow so hard. Yet it was not a stormy night. He looked up at the skies, and the stars were very calm, and the few clouds adrift just now were standing still, it seemed, because they moved so slowly. And then he began to realize how fast the Superstork was flying.

He began to feel a bit restless, because there was nothing at all for him to do; and then, little by little, he began to feel resentful, because the Superstork had not asked him anything about the directions. How could one travel properly if one did not look at the compass?

At that very moment the Superstork inquired: "Will you please see if we are going due west? I've been flying by a star — but it *might* be the wrong star."

Giddy took hold of the ribbon about the Superstork's neck and drew the compass up into his hands. This was more like it! He took a careful observation. He hoped they

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

might be a *little* out of their course. But no: they were going due west.

He wished to reply in the right kind of words, and after thinking a moment he cried out crisply: "All's well!" And he flushed with pride when the Superstork said, with the same surprise he had betrayed back on the window-sill: "Is this really the *first* trip you ever made?" And while Giddy tried to think of a suitable reply to this, the Superstork added: "At any rate, it's easy to see that you're a natural-born pilot!"

Giddy decided that he need not make any reply at all; and for quite a long time they travelled in silence.

The next sound was a cry of wonder and delight which broke from Giddy's lips. The sky was suddenly filled with golden sunlight!

He had realized for some time that it was getting lighter, and little by little the pale light of dawn had become rosy and warm; but now he knew that the sun was up. More wonderful still — before him was spread the most wonderful sight he had ever seen. It was the sea!

GIDDY IS A PILOT

He could think of only one word: *heavenly*. He had always supposed the sea was just a flat body of water, with ships on it. But now he knew there was something about it which never could have been put into words. It seemed alive as even the earth is not alive. It was like music which somehow could not be heard. It was like all kinds of motion woven into something that seemed all one. And the color of it! He had never known before what *blue* was . . . or was it green? And it was not flat. It rose like a hill without any end to it, until it touched the sky, away off there where the clouds had turned into long pink streamers. There were no ships on it at all. Yet wait . . . those triangles of white canvas in the sun, far away against the sky — they were sails!

He wanted to say something, but the only word he could think of was *goody!* and he would not say that. It wouldn't have been enough, and so he only clenched his fists and looked, and looked, and looked!

And then — it seemed to him he would burst

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

with the wonder of it all — he saw an island — and another — and another! They seemed quite tiny. Looking downward, he could see all the way around them — just as he could see robins on the lawn at home from the nursery window.

Then, before he could think what it meant, he saw a fleet of airplanes rising in the air from one of those islands, like so many birds.

They were coming straight toward him!

The Superstork began to fly more slowly. This he managed by “back-peddalling,” as Giddy would have said, and then by floating. “You’ll want to have a good look at them,” he explained to Giddy.

The first of the airplanes passed them and Giddy saw quite plainly what was in it: a boy and a girl of about his own age, he thought; and they had little baskets of eggs on the floor of the airplane. But they were different from him, he realized. They wore beautiful crowns filled with gems, and their garments were of purple and gold.

The other airplanes swept past, and their

GIDDY IS A PILOT

passengers were all precisely like the passengers in the first one.

Giddy wished to ask the Superstork to explain this, but it seemed difficult. He was recalling how the sun had shone on the crowns those little people wore, when the Superstork spoke:

“Those are the queens and kings of the islands, on their way to market.”

“Kings and queens . . . of course,” said Giddy. “But I couldn’t understand why they were carrying baskets of eggs.”

“The people who live on the islands are peculiar,” explained the Superstork. “The people who have plenty of money, and who sit around doing nothing, are looked down upon. Those who do ordinary kinds of work are called lords and ladies and princes and princesses. But those who take eggs to market — *they* are the kings and queens.”

“It’s very strange,” murmured Giddy.

“Not at all. Carrying eggs to market . . . I suppose you will admit that an egg is the most wonderful thing in the world?”

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

"Well . . . yes," agreed Giddy. It occurred to him that it might be natural for any kind of a fowl to think this, and he felt that he was in no position to argue.

"But . . . perhaps we're getting on delicate ground," suggested the Superstork politely.

Giddy thought it might be wise to change the subject. "It seems to me we're a long way from any ground at all!" he said. He spoke pleasantly, but as he looked at the back of the Superstork's head he winked mischievously. It was pretty neat — that remark of his.

Nothing more was said for quite a long time, and then the Superstork remarked in a business-like tone: "We may as well change our course here. From now on we'll go directly south — straight to the equator. Will you kindly give me the points?"

Giddy became very serious. He consulted the compass, and then he tried to think of suitable instructions to give. He had it! "Up with the right sail!" he commanded. And then he continued to repeat in a firm voice: "Steady — steady. . . ."

GIDDY IS A PILOT

As the Superstork lifted his right wing they wheeled about until they were headed due south. "As you were!" said Giddy in his best official tones. And instantly they were flying on an even keel again, straight toward the south.

There were no adventures after that for a long time, unless you counted the steamers they passed now and then, and the fleet of battleships. They had gotten quite out of sight of the mainland, and there were no islands now. The sea was fairly calm, though millions of little whitecaps twinkled in the sunlight — always in different places. Once they saw a school of porpoises, tumbling about in a very awkward manner, and there was one place where flying-fish emerged from the crests of the waves as they arose and darted away until they *plopped* back into the water again.

They also encountered a vast flock of wild geese — thousands of them — making a journey somewhere. The geese looked at them curiously, but made way for them; though for a minute or two Giddy felt that the hum of their wings would make him sleepy.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

And then they beheld a sight which Giddy felt he could never forget. Directly ahead of them arose a great column of smoke. It seemed to come up out of the sea — though Giddy felt sure there must be at least a small island there — and it arose as high as the clouds, where it began to flatten out, like a great trailing vine, until it formed miles of dense black clouds.

“That’s one of my guide-posts,” said the Superstork. “It is a volcano.”

Giddy became almost nervous. There would be need of expert steering here! It seemed to him that the Superstork meant to fly right through that column of smoke.

“Hard a-port!” he shouted.

The Superstork altered his course slightly, and for an instant Giddy held his breath. Ah, they were going to miss the column, after all!

But there was another possibility: they were bearing directly toward those flat masses of smoke which spread out from the top of the column!

For one dark moment Giddy was at a loss for the right word of command. And then

GIDDY IS A PILOT

he had an inspiration. “*Duck!*” he shouted. He drew a great sigh of relief to think that he had hit upon the right word.

The Superstork obeyed.

And then an amazing sight was revealed. The base of that column was not all smoke! There was an angry red glare mingled with it. And little by little Giddy looked down into what seemed a vast furnace, without any top.

He looked at the Superstork’s head anxiously. It occurred to him to ask: “You don’t feel that you are at all tired, do you?”

The reply came in a cheerful tone: “Not at all! Why do you ask that?”

“Oh, I just wondered,” said Giddy.

They had passed quite beneath that overhanging blanket of smoke, and Giddy felt that the Superstork’s course ought to be righted. He was still flying in a downward direction. But what word should he use now?

Then again the inspiration came. “*Un-duck!*” he cried.

And in an instant they were again moving along in a level line and all was well.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

Toward the latter part of the afternoon, while Giddy was lying flat on his back, looking up at the blue sky and the fleecy clouds, and feeling a bit drowsy, he was thrilled by these words by the Superstork:

“Here we are!”

He could not be quite sure what the Superstork meant. “You mean . . . ?” he said.

“You can see it just ahead there — the Sandman's forest.”

CHAPTER V

THE FOREST

GIDDY sat up eagerly. He had tried to think what it would be like when he reached the forest; but now his eyes opened wider and wider, and he knew he never should have imagined anything like this!

There was too much to look at all at once, and for a moment he could not take his eyes off the wonderful beach which stretched before him — a beach which, he felt sure, could not have been equalled in all the world. It was almost as white as snow, save where the waves of the sea broke over it, and there it was a beautiful yellow — almost like gold. He thought it must be fully a mile in width, and at first he could see nothing but the purest sand on it, from the ragged line where the waves came gently tumbling in, to a point where the shadow of the deep forest fell over it. He tried to think how long it might be; but he found that it

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

hurt his eyes a little to try to see to the end of it in either direction. Certainly there were many miles of it. And then he saw that it was dotted with shells, like diamonds in a white-lace dress. The shells were pink and blue and other colors, and some of them were of the most curious shapes.

And then he began to observe the forest, and instantly his delight and amazement grew. The trees were real giants of their kind, reaching almost to the clouds. They were wonderfully stately and solemn, and they grew rather close together, and there were millions of them. His eyes could not reach to the limits of that forest, it was so immense.

A question occurred to him as to whether he had come to a region where people dwelt. He thought it improbable. There was not a human being in sight — not even a vessel of any kind on the sea. And of course it was impossible to tell what lay back in that dense forest. It occurred to him to look for evidences of smoke rising from the land, but of these he could find none.

THE FOREST

And then he made an amazing discovery.
He was expected!

A great army of birds were coming out to meet him. The assembling of the gulls was what he noted first. They were gathering together from far and near along the sands, and presently they began a direct flight, with a leader at their head, toward the Superstork. And then — he could scarcely tell where they all came from — he saw other kinds of birds: every variety and size. They were pouring out of the forest at various openings, and they were all flying straight toward the Superstork. There were no end of parrots: some of the little green kind, and others with long tails, and top-knots, and feathers of every color, though mostly of red and blue. One great flock of little birds he recognized, with a thrill of pleasure and amusement, as canaries. There was a perfect swarm of them, and they came with swift, dipping movements, chirping excitedly. From another direction came birds of paradise, and these were followed by lyre-birds and other brilliant species. The very sky was full of them.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

They all took their places behind the Superstork, like soldiers on the march; and then the immense aerial cavalcade moved along the beach at full speed until the Superstork began to move more slowly as if he were approaching a landing-place.

And then Giddy made another discovery which brought his heart into his mouth. There was an immense line of animals standing along the edge of the forest, facing the sea, like soldiers standing at company front. As far as he could see this majestic line of animals extended. He felt that he should have been really alarmed if the animals had dashed out across the beach; but they did not do so. They held their places in the line with perfect steadfastness.

While his glance travelled wonderingly along this long line of animals it paused at length upon the most enormous elephant he had ever seen; and by an offhand reckoning he concluded that the elephant occupied a position precisely in the middle of the line — as if it were the most important animal of all. On

THE FOREST

one side of the elephant there was a very noble-appearing lion, and on the other a magnificent tiger. He briefly took in certain others: a leopard, a very friendly appearing bear of a fine reddish-brown . . . he became a bit confused as he tried to look at them all. Somewhere he had seen a deer with wonderful antlers; but when he tried again to find the place where the deer was, he saw a great giraffe, with an antelope standing beside him.

They were all most wonderfully clean, and they all held their heads high, as if they were very proud and pleased.

Then the elephant raised his trunk in a quaint, crooked fashion, and trumpeted loudly, and all the animals turned sedately and disappeared.

The Superstork had been gently sailing along the beautiful beach while Giddy surveyed the scene, and now he turned out of his course slightly so that he came close to the edge of the forest. But as yet it seemed that he did not intend either to alight or to penetrate in among the trees. He skirted the face of the

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

forest for all the world as a boy will walk along a street, past many houses, until he comes to his own door. He was now flying very low — in the shadow of the great trees, and Giddy had an excellent opportunity to look at the trees.

Well! He had never supposed there were such trees in the world. They were even more immense than he had at first supposed them. Some of them were so big around that twenty boys, holding hands, could not have spanned them. The branches were so long and thick that you could not tell which tree they belonged to. They formed a kind of ceiling overhead, so that the ground beneath was no better lighted than a room with the blinds drawn. Indeed, just at first Giddy thought it must be very gloomy in the forest; and then he remembered that he had been out in the sunshine all day, and that it might seem lighter under the trees when you got used to it.

He noticed, too, that some of the trees were completely covered with vines. Some of the vines were much bigger around than his body.

THE FOREST

And up among the branches the vines were covered with grapes: tapering bunches at least a foot long, and very beautiful. Some were purple, and some were red, and some were amber-colored, and some were white, and some were quite black.

He was so intent upon making out the various kinds of grapes that he was wholly unprepared for a new move on the part of the Superstork. The immense bird altered his direction so abruptly that Giddy was almost upset; and then he realized that they had come to a cavern-like opening into the forest, and that the Superstork was entering the region of trees. His wings were not moving now. He was sailing close to the ground.

And in another moment Giddy realized that he could see almost nothing at all. Deep shadows surrounded and covered him. He peered about him curiously. A great sighing sound was in his ears. For the first time he could hear the voice of the forest. And little by little he began to see more clearly. They had come to a place where there was a moun-

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

tain, and a waterfall, and a deep glade near by.

There were animals, too — perhaps the same animals that had come to the edge of the forest to witness his approach. They were all stationed in a great circle — some of them so far distant that Giddy could barely make out their outlines. Only the elephant had a separate place: he was in the middle of the circle.

Giddy was thinking to himself: “You’d think I’d be afraid of them — but of course I’m not.”

There was really nothing to be afraid of, even if the Superstork were to alight with him right in the midst of them: and this, it proved, was precisely what the Superstork meant to do.

There was a brief period of discomfort while the Superstork checked his flight completely, and then he came to rest right in front of the big elephant. Their long flight was ended.

Giddy knew precisely what was expected of him. He slid to the ground without waiting to be told. For an instant he felt like stretch-

THE FOREST

ing himself. He really had begun to feel a bit cramped. But he felt that he was being very generally observed, and he had no doubt there would be some sort of ceremony, because he had come; and so he stood very erect, waiting to be formally welcomed.

He knew he had done precisely the right thing when the elephant cleared his throat with a sound like thunder, and then glanced with great dignity to left and right, and behind him. All the animals were arising, much as people do at church when they mean to sing.

And then the elephant spoke:

“You are welcome, Giddy. I speak for myself and all my people.”

That was all.

Giddy caught himself twisting a button on his rompers, because he did not know quite what to say. But at least he ought to make a bow — of that he was certain. And so he bowed politely to the elephant, and to the Superstork, and then he made a wide gesture with his arms toward the great circle of animals.

“I thank you for this — this cordial recep-

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

tion," he said. "I am — in fact, I am very glad to be here."

He bowed again, and the elephant said, "Um-m!" with a very satisfied tone, and there was a murmur among all the other animals.

It was the Superstork who placed things upon a more comfortable basis. He preened himself mightily, and then observed to the elephant: "A very fine boy — don't you think?" And the elephant repeated with deep satisfaction:

"A very fine boy, indeed."

CHAPTER VI
THE STRANGE CASE OF
THE RABBITS

GIDDY supposed there would be some sort of reception. There was no doubt in his mind that the many animals he had seen, and which he knew to be all around him at a distance, would begin to approach, so that he could get acquainted with them. He supposed they would have a good many questions to ask.

But the minutes passed, and he realized that nothing was going to happen — at least right away. There stood the elephant on one side of him, regarding him steadily — one might have said almost sleepily. And on the other side of him stood the Superstork, preening himself at intervals, and seemingly waiting for something. It was precisely as if they were waiting for instructions.

And then, quite suddenly, the forest became

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

darker, and Giddy knew that the sun had gone down.

A queer sensation stole over him. He looked again at the elephant and observed that the immense beast had begun swaying back and forth, and that his eyes were half closed. The Superstork had settled down on the ground, and for the moment was resting with his head under his wing. And then, much to Giddy's amazement, he perceived that a gray monkey had taken his place quite near him, and that he was moving his lips as if he were framing sentences — though there was no audible sound.

Other strange things began to happen. There was a whispering sound, as of wings moving, and then a row of birds took their places on the elephant's back. There were large birds mingled with little birds. They stood in a row, and moved their heads about restlessly — and then they began tucking their heads under their wings.

For a time there was not a sound to be heard save the steady sighing of the trees far overhead.

THE CASE OF THE RABBITS

Giddy felt that he had been placed in a very awkward position — just as you would feel if you had been invited into a house where there were a great many people, and nobody spoke to you. However, the only thing to do seemed to wait and see what would happen. He sat down on the dry earth and clasped his knees with his hands. He stole another glance at the elephant, who, he found, was still regarding him steadily and darkly.

And then upon the silence there fell an odd tapping sound; and Giddy, peering away through the shadows, made out the splendid coat of a tiger that was approaching him. The manner of the tiger's approach was most singular. He was crouching on the ground, waving his tail from side to side, so that it struck the ground with that tapping sound Giddy had heard. At intervals he moved forward a little, and then crouched again, and lay tapping the ground with his tail; and finally he crept forward a little farther, moving with the greatest stealthiness.

Giddy felt rather sorry for the tiger. He

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

seemed to realize that this was the only manner in which the poor creature could advance, and it struck him as the most uncomfortable manner imaginable. He noted, too, that the elephant had observed the tiger's approach, and that his eyes expressed unmistakable disapproval.

But Giddy pretended not to pay any attention, and at last the tiger was lying quite close by his side. The splendid creature spoke finally — and Giddy thought he had never heard such appealing tones: “I do hope you are going to like *me!*”

“I certainly *do* like you,” declared Giddy heartily. He placed a hand on the tiger's wonderful coat; and at this the great striped creature actually wriggled over on his side — he was so pleased.

It was then that the elephant explained the somewhat mysterious situation. “You will understand, Giddy,” he said, “that as you are our guest, we expect you to make your wishes known. While you are with us, you have only to command us and we shall take pleasure in obeying.”

THE CASE OF THE RABBITS

“I’m sure that’s very good of you,” said Giddy. He said to himself: “So *that’s* it, is it?” He still clasped his knees with his hands. And next he ventured to say: “I had an idea I should have a talk with — with the others. Of course, I’m very anxious to — to meet you all.”

The elephant nodded his approval. “I’m truly glad to hear that,” he declared. “Of course, they’ll all want to be friendly with you. It was my idea that just for to-night you might like to be a little quiet. I don’t suppose you’ve ever made quite such a long trip before? The others aren’t far away. They’ll be only too glad to pay you little attentions when they’ve given you time to rest.”

When the elephant spoke these words Giddy gazed away through the shadows of the forest; and sure enough — there were thousands of eyes and heads and rough coats as far as he could see. Some of the distant eyes were like coals of fire, and he could not make out the bodies to which they belonged. It really made him feel a little strange. And for the first time

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

it occurred to him that it might be much more agreeable to meet all these creatures one at a time, or at least in small groups. He should have felt quite oppressed if they had all come forward at once.

“In brief,” added the elephant, “our whole wish is that you should feel quite comfortable and at home.”

“It is very good of you,” murmured Giddy politely. And then suddenly it occurred to him that he had not eaten a bite all day. That was one of the reasons he had felt strange and uncomfortable. He was hungry — very hungry.

He became, for the first time, thoroughly uneasy. How was he to get anything to eat? There was no table in sight, nor a chair; and he could not see that the least effort was being made to get supper ready, though it was now really dark. Surely it would not be proper for him to ask about supper? Yet the elephant had seemed quite sincere in proffering his services. He decided to offer a delicate hint, at least.

THE CASE OF THE RABBITS

He turned to the elephant and said in a voice which faltered: "You don't happen to have any peanuts handy, do you?" He tried to say this in a casual way, as if it really did not matter.

But he could see that his words had a profound effect upon the elephant and the Superstork and the tiger and the gray monkey — to say nothing of the birds. They looked quite guiltily at one another, and finally the elephant voiced the general sentiment, "He is hungry, of course," he said. And to Giddy he added: "We really beg your pardon. We had forgotten about your supper. We must look after that instantly."

And he had no sooner spoken than several of the larger birds fluttered away, and the gray monkey also disappeared.

"You see," explained the elephant, "we have no special time for our meals, here in the forest. We eat whenever we happen to be hungry."

Giddy nodded. "I'm sure that's a very sensible plan," he agreed. "I've often wished I might do that myself!"

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

He had scarcely finished speaking when the birds and the monkey came back. They placed at his feet a truly royal feast: figs and bananas and grapes and other things.

"It's really very good of you," said Giddy. He tried to speak quietly, but he knew very well that he wished to shout with joy. His eyes had become quite round. And then a cry of eagerness escaped him, in spite of himself. He had come upon a very fine coconut.

He realized, then, that he was very thirsty, too; and there would be milk in the cocoanut. He took it into his hands and turned it over and over, regarding it in perplexity.

The tiger saw what the difficulty was, and he whispered eagerly: "Let me!" And in a jiffy he had sunk a sharp claw into the places at the end of the cocoanut where you get the milk out.

"You do it very well," said Giddy, nodding approval. He took the cocoanut and drank heartily. He took a long draft and then a shorter one. He also began to eat the fruit.

THE CASE OF THE RABBITS

He added graciously: "I've never seen such nice fruit before." And it was perfectly true.

The elephant's eyes were twinkling. "That's much better," he declared. "I can see that you're going to get along famously after you've had time to get your bearings. They'll all be like that every minute of the day, if you'll give them the least bit of encouragement. They'll only want to know that you subscribe to the one law we have here among us."

It seemed to Giddy that he ought to ask what that one law was; but the elephant voluntarily explained: "That is that there is to be no fear among us."

"That's fine," declared Giddy. He hesitated, and then added: "You mean that none of you is afraid of any of the others?"

"That's it precisely. And there's every reason for it. We are all careful to treat one another with kindness."

"Of course," said Giddy.

"I shall hope you'll remember that. They'll all treat you with perfect consideration, too. They'll all be anxious to play with you, nat-

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

urally; but if one of them should be the least bit rough with you . . . well, I shall put my foot down *hard*."

This, somehow, struck Giddy as amusing; and after reflecting a moment he nodded and smiled and ventured to say: "I should think it would be strange if you could put it down any *other* way." After he had made this remark he put his hand over his mouth in a discreet way to keep back his laughter.

The elephant looked hard at the Superstork, who began to preen himself very rapidly.

The elephant said: "Of course, everything is relative."

"You mean," said Giddy, "that you're all one family?"

"Well, that's the main point," agreed the elephant. "We shall just let it go at that."

There was silence a moment while Giddy went on with his supper; and then the elephant said: "I've no doubt you'll want to have a good long sleep after you've finished your supper. But to-morrow you'll really begin your visit. We shall want to make you some trousers and

THE CASE OF THE RABBITS

a coat that will be more suitable for your use here than those ——”

“Rompers,” prompted Giddy.

“Those rompers,” said the elephant. “A nice coat of rabbit-skins would look very nice on you, I think.”

“I’ve often thought so, too,” admitted Giddy. “But I’m afraid I shouldn’t know how to make them.”

“Naturally, you wouldn’t. It wouldn’t be expected of you. We’ll attend to that. Some of our birds sew very neatly. It can all be arranged without a bit of trouble.”

“I had no doubt it could,” Giddy said. And then a sudden dark thought occurred to him. “But . . .” he faltered.

When he paused there was a sudden change in the manner of the elephant and the Superstork and the monkey and the tiger. Giddy felt that he must have been at the point of opening a forbidden door.

“But what?” asked the elephant almost sharply.

“You said you were all kind to one another,”

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

said Giddy, swallowing with difficulty. "And I was wondering how you could get the rabbit-skins without — without being unkind to the rabbits."

At that a solemn silence fell, and the several members of the group looked anxiously from one to another, and finally at the elephant. They seemed to realize that he would find it very difficult to answer that question.

Indeed, the elephant stood for a long time with downcast eyes before he tried to answer. But Giddy felt sure that when the answer came at last it would explain everything.

CHAPTER VII

THE ELEPHANT'S ANSWER

GIDDY did not stir while the elephant remained in a brown study, trying to decide what to say about the rabbits, and how they were to get the rabbit-skins without being unkind to the rabbits. He felt a little sorry for the elephant, who seemed deeply perplexed. He decided to be satisfied with almost any explanation, whether it was a good one or not. And finally the elephant began to speak.

“I told you,” he said, “that we did not know what fear was, here in the forest. I believed I was speaking the truth. But I had forgotten about the rabbits. It is only fair that you should be told about them now, though it is a subject which is very painful to me. The fact is, we have never been able to persuade the rabbits not to be afraid. From the beginning they had a silly habit of hopping about like sparks and vanishing at every unexpected

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

sound. There they would stand, with their noses wriggling and their ears erect — and the next instant their ears would be lying flat along their backs and they would be running as if they saw the end of the world coming. In a way it was comical; yet it was a serious matter, too — for they were violating the one law we placed above all others. There was a time when we argued with them patiently and gave them every proof that they need not be afraid. But it never did a bit of good. It was very difficult. What were we to do? We could not have as a member of the family any animal that set a bad example to our young people. It would have been quite demoralizing. And so we held counsel with one another and finally agreed that the rabbits must be regarded as outcasts.”

The elephant paused and seemed to brood sadly over the fate of the rabbits; and Giddy felt his heart grow heavy because of his sympathy with the elephant. And yet he knew that part of his sympathy was for the rabbits, too.

The elephant continued: “They do not

THE ELEPHANT'S ANSWER

mingle with us. They hide away, like the silly creatures they are, in the depths of the forest, and we seldom see them. As a result, some of the members of our family seek out the rabbits sometimes, and catch them, and — and eat them. I should scorn to eat one myself, but the lion and the tiger, and in fact many others, declare that they are very nourishing. I may regard this as a delusion, but I say nothing. The truth is, we value freedom among ourselves quite as much as we condemn fear; and if certain of us wish to eat the senseless rabbits who would not listen to reason, it is their privilege to do so. And now you understand how we shall be able to get rabbit-skins with which to make you a coat.”

A delicate frown of perplexity had taken its place on Giddy's brow. He could not understand why the rabbits should be afraid. Of course, there was nothing to be afraid of.

“What *makes* them afraid?” he asked finally.

The elephant seemed grateful to him for asking this question. “We have talked that over among ourselves,” he said. “It has been

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

suggested that one reason why they are afraid is because they can run so fast. But I hardly know. And again we have thought that at some time or other the cannibals might have frightened them."

"The *cannibals*?" echoed Giddy, sitting up very erect.

"It is known," continued the elephant, "that there are cannibals living in a remote part of the forest. They live very far away. You might stay in the forest many years without seeing them. But you know rabbits sometimes travel a great distance. They may have seen the cannibals, who are certainly not pretty creatures. But I no longer try to think what the reason is. The truth is . . . did you ever try to *reason* with a rabbit?"

"No," admitted Giddy frankly, "I never did."

"Well, until you do, you'll scarcely be able to understand the matter at all."

"I suppose not," assented Giddy. "Only, I'm sorry. You see, I — I like rabbits."

At this the tiger purred in the most con-

THE ELEPHANT'S ANSWER

tented fashion. He squirmed over onto his back and patted his stomach. "I'm fond of them myself!" he said, licking his chops as he spoke. It seemed to him that Giddy was on his side.

"And as for finding a reason for things," said the elephant finally, "an intelligent boy like you knows very well that even when anybody gives you a reason, it's likely to be wholly unsatisfactory."

"True!" agreed Giddy thoughtfully. He felt that the remark was very just.

"However," said the elephant, speaking more briskly, "I've no doubt you are tired and will wish to go to sleep before long."

It occurred to Giddy that he really was quite tired, and besides, there could be no doubt that sleeping in the forest for the first time would be a great adventure. "I *am* rather tired," he admitted, "though if it shouldn't be convenient for me to go to sleep just yet . . ." He was anxious that the elephant should regard him as the sort of guest who makes no trouble for any one.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

"There won't be any inconvenience at all. It is our rule, you see, for each member of the family to sleep wherever he likes, and *whenever* he likes."

Giddy felt that this, too, was an ideal arrangement. He was murmuring his approval when the elephant added thoughtfully:

"I scarcely know what to suggest to you to-night. Of course, to-morrow you can get about a bit and make a choice. For to-night I suppose almost any place will do. I ought to tell you, however, that we have set apart a section of the forest for the monkeys, and I'd not advise you to go among them. They'd probably keep you awake all night with their chatter."

Giddy was trying to hide his amazement at the thought that there was to be no sort of bed for him to sleep in. The thought crossed his mind swiftly, that if he had been spending the night with the rabbits, he would have been offered a very comfortable bed indeed. But he put this reflection away from him sternly. The elephant would certainly do the best he

THE ELEPHANT'S ANSWER

could for him, and he must be prepared to be grateful for whatever was offered.

He remarked cheerfully: "I suppose, then, I'd better not go into the monkeys' section. . . ." He began looking about him, to discover where the monkeys' section was.

"To your right — over there," said the elephant, pointing with his trunk; and Giddy was delighted to see a great sign among the trees, in electric letters:

*Monkey, monkey, bottle of beer,
How many monkeys have we here?*

And just below were the figures

10,000!

He felt that he ought to be surprised to see electric lights in the forest, yet he really was not. He was thinking: "I know how you make electric lights. You press a button."

He had an idea his mother would not like to have him sleep in the monkeys' section, but he was thinking perhaps he ought not to speak of this, when the elephant addressed him again:

"You'll find this spot here quiet enough. . . ."

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

He stopped and looked away to a flat rock high up on the mountainside, where the cascade came flowing down. An odd figure was sitting there on the flat rock, and a sharp noise was being repeated at regular intervals. Giddy realized now that he had been hearing this noise for a long time, though he had paid no attention to it before.

He perceived now that it was a raucus that sat up there — a German raucus (the spotted, not the striped variety). The raucus held a very old telescope in his hands — though there was not sufficient light for Giddy to have seen what this object was. The information was supplied by the elephant, who said:

“It’s a telescope which washed ashore more than a year ago. It’s stopped up. He’s been spending most of his time ever since up there on that rock, trying to get it opened. He’ll quiet down after a while.”

Giddy heard the noise of the telescope being tapped on the rock, and then there was the voice of the raucus: “I’m going to see this thing through!”

THE ELEPHANT'S ANSWER

It seemed rather ridiculous — in fact, almost unreal. It was too dark now to see anything clearly. But the *tap, tapping*, went on.

. . . Giddy supposed he must have dozed for a moment, for he suddenly realized that the elephant had gone away — that, in fact, he was quite alone save for the tiger. The tapping sound up on the rock was stilled. His head was resting against the tiger's shoulder, and it seemed to him that he had never been more comfortable in his life.

It had grown intensely dark, too, and the forest was much more quiet than it had been. There was, to be sure, a chattering sound over in the monkeys' section, but it was not loud enough to keep him from hearing the restful sound of the waves falling upon the white beach in the distance.

Through the roof of trees he caught a glimpse here and there of a star, and there were certain patches of ground far away in the forest — he discovered these after peering intently into the night — where the starlight fell like silver.

He turned a little, so that he lay in a more

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

comfortable position. One of his arms fell lightly along the tiger's satiny side.

"Comfortable?" asked the tiger sleepily.

"Yes, indeed!" declared Giddy.

But it seemed that he could not go to sleep quickly, after all. He could not help thinking about the poor rabbits, and it pained him to think that the tiger could kill them, even if they *were* afraid. It was a very bad practice, he felt sure. If a tiger were willing to eat a rabbit, why shouldn't he be willing to eat . . .? He trembled a little, because of the thought which had come into his mind. It had occurred to him that nobody could feel perfectly safe with a tiger — not even himself. He had a burning desire to ask one question. He lay, framing the question, and finally he spoke. He tried to control his voice, so that his question might seem merely an idle one.

"What will you do when you've eaten *all* the rabbits?" he asked.

The tiger responded sleepily: "Oh, I suppose I'll find something else."

The words chilled Giddy anew. He ven-

THE ELEPHANT'S ANSWER

tured to say: "But I suppose there are still *plenty* of rabbits?"

"I know where they're as thick as leaves."

"That's good," said Giddy with a sigh.

"And after they're gone . . . well, I've sometimes thought it might be a lot of fun to make the deer and the antelope a little bit afraid. They can run pretty fast, too!"

But Giddy did not hear this. He had fallen fast asleep.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST MORNING

HE scarcely stirred the whole night through. Only once did he awake and then, oddly enough, he did not think so much about his strange experiences in the forest as about his last day at home. He thought how good they had all been to him — how his Uncle John had given him a knife, and his Uncle William a compass.

He regretted that he had not asked the Superstork for his compass when they had reached the forest, though he had no doubt that it would be well taken care of. He should really have no need of it until he felt like exploring the forest, and even then it was more than likely that some of the animals would go with him to see that he did not lose his way.

But thinking about the compass made him think also of that promise his Uncle William had made to him — that the first time he asked

THE FIRST MORNING

a favor, no matter what it was, it should be granted. He must not forget that. His Uncle William might be able to do almost anything for him. He might even take him on a long voyage some time. Of course, coming to the forest was a wonderful voyage, in a way; but after all, it would be nice to go somewhere with his Uncle William, to some place where there would be chairs to sit on, and a regular bed to sleep in, and knives and forks, and things of that kind.

He remembered, with something like a pang, that if he were home his mother would have biscuits and honey for his breakfast; and he remembered how the snowy table-cloth used to wave back and forth in the breeze of a morning, and how his mother always looked at him, even when she had nothing to say, with a smile in her eyes and on her lips. It was rather sad after all, being so far away from her.

Then he slept, and when he awoke again he sat up with a start. How soundly he had slept! He rubbed his eyes with his knuckles.

The tiger raised his head and looked at him

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

amiably. "I thought you would *never* open your eyes," he said.

"Am I late?" asked Giddy.

"Late for what?"

Giddy was about to say, "Late for breakfast," but he thought it might be absurd to say this, though that was the only thing he had ever been late for at home. What else was there to be late for?

But he said, instead: "Oh, late for my bath — or anything."

"We always do what we want to do whenever we want to do it," replied the tiger.

"Well, then it will be all right," said Giddy with a sigh.

His attention was next attracted by that sharp, pounding sound which he had heard the evening before; and looking up the mountainside he saw the raucus busily engaged in hammering the old telescope on the rock, and then jerking it to his eyes and trying to look through it. His movements were most vigorous and precise, though he seemed rather impatient. And Giddy heard him say, with stub-

THE FIRST MORNING

born energy: "I'm going to see this thing through!" And then *rap — tap — tap* went the telescope on the rock. Giddy thought he looked rather comical, with his broad, furry head and his little round ears. And then he thought of other things. He ought to make up his mind how he meant to begin the day, he decided.

He got up and stretched himself. The somewhat unhappy thoughts which had occurred to him during the night were all gone now. To be sure, things here were not what he had been accustomed to — but what did people have adventures for, or why did they go anywhere, if it wasn't because they wanted things to be different?

He turned to the tiger. "Have you had your bath yet?" he asked. And then, noting that the question seemed somehow a bit embarrassing, he did not wait for a reply. "I think I'll go and have mine now," he added.

The tiger looked at him a little wonderingly. "Where will you go to get it?" he asked.

"Well . . . if it wouldn't be too far to the beach" It had just occurred to him that

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

it would be fine, bathing on that beautiful white beach.

“It's not far,” replied the tiger eagerly. “You could ride on my back, if you'd like, and we'd get there in no time.”

The offer embarrassed Giddy a little, but he did not like to seem ungracious. “It would be very nice,” he said.

“Well, hop up!” The tiger edged quite close to him — so close that he touched him.

Giddy scrambled up, with the thought that there really ought to be a saddle; but it did not seem polite to ask for one. He felt decidedly out of place.

“I won't go too fast,” said the tiger reassuringly, “but if you don't want to — to fall off, you'll have to toe the mark.”

Giddy looked down at the tiger's shiny yellow stripes. “Yes,” he said dubiously, “if I knew *which* mark!”

The tiger made no reply to this; but he *did* move with the greatest caution. It was really a very slippery seat, and Giddy wobbled a little now and then, but on the whole it seemed to

THE FIRST MORNING

him that he was doing very well, considering that he had never done anything of the kind before.

He could not help wondering where the other animals were. Would they have gone to breakfast without waiting for him? And if so, where did they go to get breakfast? He felt that he might venture at least one question. "Where are all the others?" he asked a bit falteringly.

The tiger seemed slightly puzzled at first. "The others?" he echoed, and then: "Oh, they're all scattered through the forest. It's their way to keep to themselves, most of the time."

Giddy could not quite help a feeling of personal injury, just at first. Had they forgotten that he was their guest?

"There seemed to be quite a number of them here in one place last night," he said.

"Of course! There were ever so many more than you realized, last night. They wanted to have a look at you, naturally. So that when you meet any of them they'll know you. But

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

they know very well that you'll not want to have a crowd around you *all* the time."

Giddy reflected a moment, and then he said to himself: "How very delicate of them!" And he realized that he was ever so much more pleased by this proof of consideration than he should have been by mere formal politeness. Still, he couldn't help wondering if he were expected to go about and hunt for his breakfast, just as the others did. Hospitality might be carried a little *too* far, he thought.

Still, he had the tiger. And now he realized how considerate the tiger was in all his movements, and how he stepped cautiously as he made his way through the quiet forest. The forest was quite wonderful in the morning light. A sun-shaft penetrated it here and there, and it made you think of a great body of people, silent for the time being, but all ready to sing. And already he could see the beach in the distance, and the flood of sunshine, and the distant sea.

For the moment the tiger was pondering contentedly. He was recalling how Giddy had

THE FIRST MORNING

said, the night before, that he liked rabbits — speaking frankly in the presence of the elephant. So! he had a new ally, then — and one who was well worth having.

He couldn't help speaking of the matter. "I'm certainly glad you're on my side," he said at length.

Giddy frowned in perplexity. "But I'm on your *back!*" he said.

"Well, yes . . . of course," said the tiger; and he did not speak another word until they reached the edge of the forest, which proved not to be very far away. The tiger continued to move as if he were on cushions, and Giddy decided that it might be very pleasant to ride in this fashion, after he had had a little more practice.

And just before emerging from the forest he discovered that there *were* other animals not far away. He discerned quite a number of them on distant slopes, though they were a considerable distance from him. Perhaps they were waiting for him to have his bath before they offered to be sociable.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

At the edge of the great sand-bar the tiger halted. "Do you have your — do you have it here, or will you go closer to the water?"

"Why, we go to the water!" said Giddy. He could scarcely think what the tiger meant; but he concluded that it was simply a question of where he meant to undress.

"I didn't feel quite sure," replied the tiger apologetically; and then he meekly proceeded on his way.

For quite a distance the sand was firm and shiny, and even after it began to be loose the tiger got along very well. There was a fine, steady wind coming in from the sea, and the most beautiful whitecaps were breaking over the sands.

"Fine!" said Giddy.

But the tiger halted. "I guess we'd better stop here," he said.

"Yes, this will do very well," agreed Giddy.

He got down and found an immense pink shell, spotlessly clean. In a moment he was standing in this shell, taking off his rompers.

THE FIRST MORNING

A touch here and there, a wriggle, and he was ready for his bath.

He could not help shouting: "Whoop-ee!" He ran toward an incoming whitecap. A second later he was dashing the water out of his eyes and laughing shrilly. He jumped up and down and ran into other whitecaps. He flopped down and let the waves roll him over and over.

And the tiger uttered just one word, "Mercy!" and then crouched down and watched.

There was a whir of wings overhead, and then a great swarm of sea-gulls began to assemble. They dropped down into the sea and played about Giddy with loud cries. *They* had found a playmate, too!

The one thing which Giddy knew nothing about, however, was that word had spread throughout the forest that he was down in the edge of the sea, playing; and a large number of animals had come to the openings among the trees and were watching him with amazed eyes. But if they were alarmed at first, their alarm soon gave place to amusement, for they

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

could see that Giddy was simply having a good time in his own strange way.

And then, in a very few minutes, it was all over. Giddy waited for one more breaker to fall over him, and then he ran back to the pink sea-shell and got into his rompers. He was ready to ride back to the forest. His cheeks were red, his eyes were shining. He had had a glorious time.

The tiger arose and regarded him curiously, and then came and stood close beside him. He was really too much amazed to ask any questions just at first. And just as Giddy was about to throw his leg over the tiger's back with an expert, familiar air, he heard a voice.

He turned toward the sea.

An immense shark, with a most amazing, jagged bill, had come up out of the depths of the water.

It may have been because the shark was really timid at heart that he spoke so gruffly; but, at any rate, his voice was quite unmusical as he said, looking hard at Giddy:

“Come here!”

THE FIRST MORNING

And Giddy, without an instant's hesitation, advanced to where the shark was swaying lightly backward and forward in the shallow water.

CHAPTER IX

THE THOUGHTLESS SHARK

THE shark seemed to swell up a little, as some persons do when they have an idea which pleases them very much. His eyes were opened as wide as he could open them. "How would you like to take a ride?" he asked. He fairly *boomed* the words. For the moment he spoke as if he had a very bad cold.

Giddy felt instantly that the shark was a comical fellow, to whom he could speak frankly. "Well, that would be all right," he said, "but . . . you've got *stickers* on your back!"

"Oh, *stickers!*" exclaimed the shark. "There's plenty of room where there aren't any stickers."

Giddy was still a bit dubious. "We might try," he decided, "though we ought not to go far. You see, I haven't had my breakfast yet."

"Well, just a little ride, then. Come on!"

Giddy distinctly heard the tiger make a

THE THOUGHTLESS SHARK

strange sound in his throat, as if he were trying to utter a secret warning; but he decided to pay no heed. He had to admit that he was greatly taken with the shark's manner. Still, he realized that he felt what you might call *gingerly* when he climbed astride of the shark's back, just back of the head. He didn't like the look of the stickers at all. And there was nothing whatever to hold to. "I suppose you needn't go very fast?" he suggested.

"Who, *me*? Why, I'll not go fast at all."

The shark floundered about rather awkwardly at first; but when he had gotten into a suitable depth Giddy had to admit to himself that he moved much more gently than the tiger had done, or the Superstork. He moved his fins and tail as gently as if they had been feathers. You wouldn't have known he was moving at all if you hadn't seen things gliding by along the beach.

Moreover, he proved to be the most interesting companion. He began to call Giddy's attention to certain things on the bed of the ocean, and when they were passing over anything

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

specially interesting he moved more slowly, so there might be plenty of time to look.

Giddy had to smile at certain mannerisms he had. When he called attention to anything large, he would do so in a great, bellowing voice; and when it was something delicate or small, his voice became a mere little twitter. "Look at that big coral-tree!" he would say, and Giddy thought he could hear thunder. But when it was a tiny starfish he would say, "Look at it — the little starfish!" and then his voice would be a mere squeak, like a mouse's.

It was really a wonderful experience. Although they swam out until the water was very deep, it was easy to see everything down there on the bottom. The water was as clear as the very finest air, and the sun shone straight through to the sea's floor and brought out the smallest things.

The sand itself was wonderful — like powdered gold. And there were ever so many things on it. The number of starfish was amazing: some large and some small. There were little coral groves, too, with grayish lower branches, which became

THE THOUGHTLESS SHARK

pure white at the tips. And the shells! Giddy wished he could have had some of those shells.

And then they began to see fishes, and Giddy sighed with wonder and delight — for he had never imagined there were such fishes in the world. Some of them were like goldfishes, yet of great size; and others were of the most beautiful greens and yellows and reds. Some were spotted and some were striped. And they were not the least bit afraid.

They came to a school of sea-horses: little creatures not much larger than your finger, which were shaped almost exactly like a tiny horse. They hung in the water, with their heads up and their tails down, and they seemed just to be floating idly. Giddy wondered how they could ever find their way back again — wherever they belonged.

“Look at the cute little sea-horses!” said the shark, in a voice like a twitter.

And an instant later: “Look at that big reef!” And his voice seemed to come from soundless depths. It almost made Giddy nervous.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

Taken all in all, it was such a wonderful ride that it seems a pity it had to end disastrously — yet the truth must be told.

The shark had been behaving as sensibly as possible all the time; but all of a sudden he stopped short and looked far away into the depths of the ocean. Little by little a deep tremor began to shake his whole body, and finally he spoke:

“Good gracious! There’s a brother of mine I haven’t seen for seventy-five years. Excuse me!”

And — *zip!* He was gone!

Giddy, of course, tumbled into the sea, and there he lay on his back with every thread of his rompers wet through and through.

He had to admit, then and there, that he had never been in such a predicament before in all his life. He lay on his back, rising and falling with the water; and though he was inwardly much ruffled by the shark’s inconsiderate behavior, he maintained a seeming calm. The water was very buoyant, so that he lay quite as safely as if he had been on a



*"Good gracious! There's a brother of mine
I haven't seen for seventy-five years"*

THE THOUGHTLESS SHARK

feather bed; but the worst of the matter was, he could not swim a stroke, and he could not imagine how he was to get back to the beach. If the shark had not seen his brother for seventy-five years he would naturally wish to have quite a long chat with him — and he might even forget to come back at all!

He was not very far from the beach, and he heard the tiger call to him in a distinctly uneasy voice: “Come on out!”

It seemed to him that the tiger was foolish to ask him to do something which he did not know how to do; and he called back — a bit impatiently: “Well, wait a while!”

Really, it was delightful, in a way, lying there on nothing, as you might say. It was only when a little choppy wave tumbled over and got on his face that he worried the least bit. On the whole, it was a great adventure: lying calmly and looking up at the blue sky, and the rare big clouds that seemed to be anchored up there in the heavens.

Now and then a bigger wave than the others tossed him a bit, and then dropped him. He

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

thought that might be great fun, when he got used to it; but for the present . . . well, the tiger must be worrying no little, and he had had no breakfast, and — in fact, the whole thing was entirely irregular.

A number of fish swam toward him in a row and stopped near him, while their fins waved gracefully. Their gills were opening and closing in a peculiar way.

“I suppose you can't come on down below with us,” said one who appeared to be a spokesman.

“No, I can't do that,” admitted Giddy.

“I'm told it's pretty hard, when you first begin,” was the reply. “I've heard that my forefathers had to learn it little by little.”

Giddy made a mental note of that. He must really urge his father to learn to dive, when he got home again. It wouldn't do much good at first, probably; but everything must have a beginning.

The fishes swam away, and he began to feel lonesome. He wondered again if the shark would come back and take him out. And now

THE THOUGHTLESS SHARK

nothing seemed more certain to him than that he would see the shark no more that day.

Another wave, larger than any that had come before, lifted him quite high, and he nearly lost his breath when he slid down to the sea's level again.

And then there was a surprise waiting for him. He heard the tiger again — and this time the voice was quite close. "You're certainly taking your time!" were the words the tiger said, and there was a really petulant note in his voice. But Giddy did not mind; for, turning his head as well as he could, he discovered that he was quite close to the beach.

"Oh, well — if you don't want to wait!" he said; and he felt about with his foot. Sure enough, he could touch the bottom; and in another moment he had walked out upon the dry sand.

He looked out to sea. The shark was nowhere in sight.

"I'll never ride with the shark again!" he exclaimed, a little angrily. Really, he felt quite excited, now that the thing was all over.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

The tiger looked at him critically. "You've got *sea* all over you," he remarked. "Will it ever come off?"

Giddy had never before fallen into the sea with his rompers on, and he scarcely knew how long it would take him to get dry. He only said, with an urgent note in his voice: "I wish I had my other rompers!"

But the tiger seemed to wish to comfort him now. "Never mind," he said gently. "We'll have to make you some things out of rabbit-skins. Come, I think it's time you had your breakfast."

CHAPTER X

THE RIVALS

WHEN Giddy and the tiger got back into the forest, there was a sudden sound of scampering feet which neither of them could have explained. Yet it seemed to Giddy, who glanced about him inquiringly, that they were quite alone.

The fact is that his adventure in the sea had greatly amazed the scores of animals who had gone stealthily to the edge of the forest to see what he was about. They hadn't the slightest idea what to think of it all. The bath, which came first . . . well, they wouldn't have cared to try it themselves, though they agreed that it was marvellous. Indeed, the raucus, who had witnessed it from his mountain height, was so deeply impressed that he had put aside his telescope for the time being and had approached the elephant in the manner of one who has something of great importance to say.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

"I'll tell you how we can all get our work done without doing it ourselves," he began, trying to speak impressively.

It chanced that the elephant had no great opinion of the raucus, and so there was a disdainful note in his voice when he replied: "What work do you mean?"

"Oh, getting things to eat for us, and having our beds made — that sort of work."

"Well, how can we get it done?" asked the elephant. He spoke rather sharply.

"We could get a cage and put Giddy into it with a lot of water, and haul him through the forest and show him taking a bath — I mean, show him to animals in the other part of the forest. We'd make them work for us before we consented to show him."

The elephant only stared at him coldly and incredulously. "Put him into a cage to be looked at?" he repeated angrily. "Never! I am surprised that you should think of such a thing. What kind of beasts do you think we are, that we should put any one in a cage for the sake of profit?"

THE RIVALS

He turned his back upon the raucus as a sign that he had nothing more to say; and the raucus tried not to show how disappointed he was. He went away and climbed up to his height again without saying a word. A moment later he could be heard pounding the telescope sharply on the rock and exclaiming, almost viciously: "I'm going to see this thing through!"

The elephant was still repeating scornfully, "Put him in a cage!" when Giddy returned. He retreated to an obscure spot, while many other animals disappeared completely. They had a suspicion that Giddy had been subjected to some little embarrassment by the shark, and they felt he might prefer to suppose that no one had seen him.

But Giddy came upon the elephant presently; and for a moment he felt abashed while the keen eyes of the great creature took in, reluctantly, the dripping and clinging rompers.

"It would have been all right," declared Giddy, a bit nervously, "if the shark hadn't seen his brother!"

In some mysterious manner a number of

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

other animals had drawn near in time to hear Giddy's explanation; and now Giddy perceived that his words had produced something of a sensation. They all looked at one another knowingly.

The large gray monkey whom Giddy remembered to have seen the night before now came forward and undertook to throw a little light on the subject. "Only a few days ago," he said, "the shark had the toothache and wanted me to pull a tooth for him. He promised that if I would pull the tooth, he would bring me a number of very fine shells from the sea. Well . . . I pulled the tooth; and no sooner was it out than he exclaimed: 'Excuse me! There's a brother of mine I haven't seen for seventy-five years!' And away he went. I never saw one of the shells he promised."

This seemed very strange to Giddy. "I suppose he has a number of brothers," he suggested.

The elephant took the matter in hand here. "No doubt," he admitted. "And that makes it all the worse. You see, he might see a brother

THE RIVALS

almost any time. The fact is, I would advise you not to make friends with the shark. We do not consider that his ways are — are delicate.”

It dawned upon Giddy that there might be some degree of jealousy between the creatures of the forest and the creatures of the sea; and it seemed to him that as long as he was the guest of the animals it might be in better taste not to pay too much attention to the fishes. Still, he had to admit that in certain ways he liked the shark.

He was turning the matter over in his mind when the elephant spoke again.

“It seems to me, Giddy, that your — your rompers are scarcely fit to wear just now, are they?”

“You think I might take cold?” asked Giddy.

The elephant had never heard of the word; but he accepted it promptly. “That’s it — you might take cold, certainly. My idea is that you ought to go to bed until we make you a new suit.”

Giddy frowned a little. “Well, yes . . . if

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

it wouldn't make me late for breakfast," he said. It had just occurred to him that he was very hungry.

"You shall have breakfast in bed," said the elephant.

Giddy instantly held his head high. It seemed to him a mark of distinction — having breakfast in bed. However, he must not forget that he was five years old. "Of course," he agreed. He tried to speak as if it were a very small matter.

"The only question is," continued the elephant, "where would you like to go to bed? You see, a great many beds have been provided for you this morning. I may say that there has been a great deal of rivalry. You will be welcome in many places. The monkeys, the wolves, the bears — even the birds — have tried their best to please you. They all hope you will be their guest, at least occasionally. Though we all wish you to feel that you are perfectly at liberty to please yourself."

Giddy felt that it was a rather delicate situation; and he might have had difficulty in de-

THE RIVALS

ciding if the Superstork had not arrived at that moment.

“I don’t wish to seem to urge you,” said the Superstork, “but for the time being I think you might like the bed the birds have made for you.” And as he spoke, he turned slightly and glanced up into one of the nearest and largest trees.

Giddy felt that he never should forget the sight he saw there. The great trunk of the tree divided into a score of branches some twenty feet from the ground; and in the immense forks a great mass of vines and twigs had been cunningly interwoven. He wished to jump with joy at the prospect of looking into that nest — or *bed*, as the Superstork had called it. But he tried to assume a wholly dignified mien.

“Very nice,” he conceded; “very nice, indeed. Of course, it seems a little — a little . . .” And then it occurred to him that it would be much nicer to speak just what was in his mind. “But how could I get up into it?” he asked.

“The simplest thing in the world,” replied the elephant. “Come!” And in a jiffy he had

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

seized Giddy carefully in his trunk and had hoisted him high up to where the bed was.

It was even more wonderful than Giddy had supposed. It was thickly lined with feathers, all woven in in such a way that not one of them was loose. And they were snowy white.

As soon as the elephant had released him, Giddy stepped cautiously down into the bed, and . . . well, he had a strong temptation to flounce about, and kick up his heels, and shout like anything. It was really too perfect! It seemed to him that a thousand birds must have helped in making this ideal place for him.

He climbed up to the edge and looked over. Other animals had assembled, and they were all looking up toward him anxiously. And then he noted that the limbs above his head were weighted down with a thousand birds, all looking at him with the deepest interest.

"It's just the thing!" he cried happily; whereat there was a general demonstration of satisfaction among the birds and the animals.

Giddy took his rompers off and hung them on a limb to dry. Then he rolled over and over

THE RIVALS

in his bed. He was still thinking how perfect it was when a number of monkeys and birds appeared on a limb near him and began offering him his breakfast. He looked at the various things they had brought. His eyes shone particularly when he was given half a dozen figs, one at a time. There was a cocoanut, too — and it had been opened for him at the end.

The monkeys and birds disappeared in a moment or two, and Giddy was pleased to realize that these friendly creatures were not only hospitable, but polite as well.

He was still eating his breakfast when he began to be impressed by the unusual stillness in the forest around him. There was scarcely a sound, save now and again an earnest, murmured word.

He looked over the edge of his bed to discover the meaning of this, and great was his delight at what he saw. Birds and beasts together had opened a small bale of rabbit-skins, and all together were earnestly engaged in making him a new suit.

He could not clearly make out how they

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

were going about it. One or another of them got in his way so that he could not see. And then it occurred to him that perhaps it was not polite to watch them too curiously, and he decided to withdraw into his bed until they had finished their task.

He was just about to do this when he saw a sight which caused every limb in his body to grow tense with excitement.

I have explained how a waterfall descended from the mountain where the raucus sat; but I have not said that this waterfall formed a deep, dark pool which ran away through the forest and emptied into the sea.

The thing Giddy saw was this: Quite close at hand, but standing well out into the pool, two strange-appearing men were facing him and observing him intently.

When they caught his eye they smiled; and he saw that their teeth were pointed and stained. They were very scantily dressed, and there were great rings in their noses and ears.

They kept smiling all the time, and they beckoned to him; and Giddy noticed that they



A number of monkeys and birds . . . began offering him his breakfast

THE RIVALS

seemed anxious that the animals should not see them.

The truth dawned upon him. *These men wanted him to come to them and go away with them!*

It was an amazing thought. It would be a great adventure, going away with them. In all his life he had never associated with persons having such an extraordinary appearance. Indeed, it might be quite improper for him to become familiar with them. Moreover, he remembered how the animals had seemed jealous because he made friends with the shark, and it seemed to him that they might object in just the same way to his having anything to do with these strangers, who behaved so mysteriously.

No, it seemed very plain that there was only one course for him to pursue in regard to this unspoken invitation.

He shook his head firmly.

They continued to beseech him. They smiled more broadly than ever, and held their arms out more enticingly.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

Again he shook his head, this time with unmistakable decision.

And then — what a change! The two men began to scowl, and to grind their teeth, and clench their fists. They began to move cautiously along the pool toward the sea; but again and again they turned and shot back at him a message of hatred.

And then another truth dawned upon Giddy.

These men were cannibals!

CHAPTER XI

THE ELEPHANT'S SECRET

GIDDY shrank slowly back into his bed, where he could neither see nor be seen. He could not help feeling nervous for a moment or two; and he was greatly puzzled. Where had the cannibals come from — and why had they come? Why had they behaved so mysteriously? Why had they not advanced among the animals in an open and friendly fashion? If they had wished to say anything to him, why had they remained at a distance, making signs? Did the animals look upon the cannibals, too, as outcasts? What would they have done if they had seen the intruders?

However, while these were all interesting questions, he could not think of an answer to a single one of them. And while he lay, pondering darkly, he heard a sudden commotion beneath him.

His heart beat a little faster. Had the animals

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

seen the cannibals? He climbed quickly to the edge of his bed and looked down.

The cannibals were nowhere in sight. The animals were not looking toward that dark pool which ran away to the sea. They were, instead, giving all their attention to something which was in their midst; and they all manifested the greatest joy.

And then he knew what it was all about: they had finished his suit of rabbit-skins!

Just as he came to this conclusion, the elephant took the new suit into his trunk and hoisted it up to where Giddy could reach it.

"Try it on," he said. He tried to speak as if it were all a very small matter, but Giddy could see that his eyes were twinkling with satisfaction.

It was the most cunningly made one-piece suit in the world, Giddy thought, and it went on without any trouble at all. He ran his hands along his sides with a thrill of delight. It was the first time he had ever had a rabbit-skin suit on.

He climbed up to the edge of his bed, his

THE ELEPHANT'S SECRET

cheeks rosy with delight. He held his arms out, as people do when they invite inspection. He was smiling proudly.

There was an actual demonstration down below. A great, comical brown bear seemed to express the satisfaction of all when he rose to his hind legs and pressed his immense front paws together, precisely as some ladies do when they exclaim: "Perfect!"

The elephant stretched forth his trunk again, and Giddy was lifted lightly to the ground. And when the elephant had released him he inspected him up and down and exclaimed at last, with affectionate pride: "Old Giddy!" And Giddy knew that now indeed he was a fellow to all these happy creatures who had treated him so kindly.

"And now," resumed the elephant, "and now to business!"

Giddy looked up from an inspection of the new suit. "Business?" he repeated dubiously.

"You know you've got a good deal of running around to do — visiting, and getting acquainted: that sort of thing. You'll want to see some of

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

the other beds that have been prepared for you, too. You'll hardly care to sleep in one place all the time, I suppose."

Giddy was musing. Yes, he did want to get about a good deal. But as for the beds . . . it did not seem likely that there could be another bed as nice as the one he had just been in. Still, he supposed it would not seem polite if he did not take an interest in what the others had done.

"You're right, of course," he agreed. "There must be a great many things in the forest for me to see."

He was still stroking his rabbit-skin suit; but now he looked about into the depths of the forest, which seemed really to beckon him. He had an idea he should like to explore the forest all alone, if it were possible to get away from all his companions. It would be wonderful, he thought, to stray away into those shadowy places, and feel that he could wander at will, finding out things for himself. He had always greatly desired to explore a deep forest.

But quite unbidden another thought came to

THE ELEPHANT'S SECRET

him, too. He was still passing his hand slowly and fondly over his new coat, which felt softer and finer than any garment he had ever worn before; and he realized, with a pang, that ever so many rabbits had had to give up their lives in order that this suit might be made. He felt really guilty. One suit would be all that he should need, he reflected; and the thought came to him that, now he was fitted out, it would be a fine thing to go and reason with the rabbits, and get them not to be afraid. The elephant had asked him, almost scornfully, if he had ever tried to reason with a rabbit, and he had been compelled to admit that he had never done so.

And now he declared to himself with conviction: "I'm going to find some way of reasoning with the rabbits."

He glanced at the elephant with an earnest appeal in his eyes. "I wonder," he said, "if I might speak to you in confidence?"

The request clearly surprised the elephant; yet he replied readily enough: "Of course!" And he had only to glance at the other animals

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

and they pretended to have business elsewhere to attend to. One after another they wandered away.

It occurred to Giddy that this was the first time he had really been alone with the elephant, and it flashed into his mind that even this was an adventure. He felt that there were a great many things he ought to know, if they were to be really acquainted.

He sat down on the ground and clasped his knees in his hands. The question of the rabbits could wait awhile. It might be introduced naturally, if they began to talk about other things.

And then — he could not tell by what process — a curious question popped into his head, “I don't believe you've got any mice in the forest, have you?” he asked.

He could have sworn that the elephant jumped a little. “Mice!” echoed the immense creature. “No, we've got no mice here.”

“I thought not,” replied Giddy; and then he continued, in the most casual tone he could command: “I've always been told that an

THE ELEPHANT'S SECRET

elephant is afraid of a mouse — which is ridiculous, of course!”

The question seemed to throw the elephant into a very strange state of confusion; and all he could say in reply was: “Er — well, I believe some of them are afraid of mice.”

“I shouldn't have believed it. I wonder why?”

The elephant stood in a deep study for many minutes, and Giddy felt that perhaps he ought to say he was not specially interested, after all. But before he could frame the thing he thought of saying, he caught a faint message in the elephant's eye. He got up a little wonderingly and drew nearer.

The elephant began to speak — his voice rising now scarcely above a whisper. He put out his trunk and drew Giddy close to him. And Giddy would have felt quite uneasy had he not seen that the elephant was now really amused by what he was preparing to tell him. His shoulders arose slightly, and his eyes began to twinkle. And then he explained — or *pretended* to explain — why the elephant is afraid

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

of a mouse. And as one sentence followed another, Giddy found himself clapping his hand over his mouth to keep from laughing aloud, and interrupting the elephant. It seemed very droll — and more and more so as he continued to listen.

And when the elephant had concluded, he released Giddy and pushed him playfully away with his trunk. “And *that*,” he said at last, “is the reason the elephant is afraid of a mouse.”

It was really too much for Giddy. He squatted down and slapped himself on the knees again and again. He hopped about, shrieking with laughter. It seemed funnier and funnier all the time; and presently he quite collapsed. He tumbled over onto the ground and rolled over and over, his whole body shaken with laughter.

He was glad he had on the suit of rabbit-skins, because it seemed specially made to roll around in. He could enjoy what the elephant had said as much as he wanted to. “It’s the —” he began, and then went off into another spell of laughter, rolling over again and

THE ELEPHANT'S SECRET

again. "It's the funniest thing I ever heard!" he managed to say at last.

And then he lay, almost exhausted, going all over it again; and every little while he began laughing again in a helpless manner, as if he should never be able to stop.

But at length he got up and tried to be serious. "Well, if *that's* the reason, . . ." he said; and after being interrupted by a final laughing spell, he succeeded in controlling himself.

A pleasant interval of silence followed, and then Giddy decided that he really ought to get around to the question of the rabbits. He tried to speak in a pointed, businesslike manner. "What I really wanted to say to you was this: Would you have any objection to my going out and trying to reason with the rabbits?"

"Reason with the rabbits!" echoed the elephant.

"I was thinking," said Giddy, "that it's a pity for them to be afraid. If you don't mind, I think I'd like to go to them and try to reason with them."

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

The elephant was not displeased: Giddy could see that. He *did* seem surprised; but after thinking a minute he said: "I can't see that there'd be any harm in it. You might try. The tiger ought to be able to show you where to find them. By all means, suit yourself!"

Giddy wanted to laugh once more at the story the elephant had told; but he conquered the temptation. After all, it was a serious task he had set himself — a matter upon which the entire future of the rabbits depended. And so he began to think earnestly about his new problem. It occurred to him that his visit in the forest would be the happiest experience of his whole life, if he could only succeed in reasoning with the rabbits.

CHAPTER XII

GIDDY GOES TO REASON WITH THE RABBITS

IF only Giddy had thought to ask the Superstork for his compass before he started out to reason with the rabbits . . . but there, it is my duty to tell you what happened, rather than to indulge in useless regrets.

He found the tiger only too glad to go with him to look for the rabbits, and it was still early in the forenoon when they set out together. The other animals may have been disappointed to find that Giddy meant to give so much of his time to the tiger, but if so they were too polite to betray any ill feeling. Perhaps they hoped their time would yet come. So it happened that many eyes followed the tiger and Giddy as they started away into the depths of the forest.

Neither spoke for a time, and then the tiger

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

said confidentially: "I'm certainly glad you are fond of rabbits!"

"Yes," replied Giddy dubiously, "I like them very well." And then he greatly amazed the tiger by adding: "That's the reason I want to reason with them."

"Reason with them!" exclaimed the tiger.

"Of course. I want to tell them they mustn't be afraid any more — that they may come and play with us without being harmed."

It was well he was not looking into the tiger's face when he made that statement. The tiger came almost to a full stop; and for an instant he looked straight ahead of him just as you would do if you put your hand into your pocket and found that you had lost something. But at last he said, with an injured air: "Oh!" And that was the last word that passed between them for fully half an hour.

It was the tiger who broke the silence at last. "And what if they won't listen to reason?" he asked.

"Why, then . . . then they'll have to go their own way, I suppose."

GIDDY AND THE RABBITS

The tiger made a coughing sound which caused his whiskers to stick out rather fiercely. He did not tell Giddy what was in his mind, but to himself he was saying: "Well, if I'm anywhere about, I think they'll *not listen to reason.*"

There was another long silence; and then the tiger spoke again: "Do you think you've seen any signs since you've been here that the deer or the antelope, or any of those — those fellows are beginning to be a little afraid?"

"Not at all," said Giddy.

"Well, then!" said the tiger; and though Giddy did not realize it, there was that in the tiger's tone which boded ill for the rabbits.

It proved to be quite a long journey. The great forest seemed to stretch to the very end of the world. Of course, there weren't any houses anywhere. It seemed to Giddy that there were no signs of life at all; though after a time he could see forms moving in the distance — solitary and silent. And one by one he saw members of the family near at hand, when he learned where to look for them.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

There was a splendid panther, up on that horizontal limb! The long, lithe creature seemed only half awake. His tail hung down limply, and his head rested heavily on the limb. His eyes were mere little yellow slits.

Farther on there were monkeys — quite a large number of them. They were racing up and down in an immense tree, playing some sort of a game; and Giddy wondered if they never got tired.

Most wonderful of all, perhaps, was the tree full of parrots they came to after a while. They were holding a meeting of some kind — that was plain. They made a great noise. They flew from one tree to another, all talking together as they moved, and flying with short, labored strokes of their wings.

About noon, as nearly as Giddy could judge, they came to a great grove of fig-trees, loaded with fine dark-blue figs.

“Shall we stop here and have our dinner?” asked Giddy.

The tiger glanced at the luscious figs quite indifferently. “Do as you like,” he said. “I

GIDDY AND THE RABBITS

think I'll wait and see whether the rabbits are reasonable or not."

And so Giddy stopped and ate his dinner of figs — the tiger watching him curiously, and even disdainfully.

They continued on their way, then; and indeed they walked so far that Giddy began to feel thoroughly tired. It seemed to him that there was nothing new to be seen in the forest now. It was all immense trees, one very much like another. There were scarcely any little trees at all. It was almost like walking in a great church that had all the pews moved out.

The tiger seemed to realize at length that his manner had not been altogether cordial, for he turned to Giddy after a long time and asked: "Shall I carry you a while?"

But Giddy did not like to admit how tired he was, and he replied politely: "No, thank you, I can walk."

Still, he was glad when they came at last into a new part of the forest. The appearance of things had changed. A hill rose before them in the distance, and they entered a region of

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

undergrowth. The ground was no longer like a great carpet of leaves. It became uneven and stony.

And Giddy felt his heart beat more vigorously when the tiger whispered: "We ought to be quiet along here. We're getting into the rabbits' country."

"But I think we ought to go on talking just as we have been," declared Giddy. "Then they'll know we are friendly."

"Oh, well — have it your way," said the tiger; but again he made that coughing sound, so that his whiskers stuck out more fiercely than ever.

They reached the hill and the tiger led the way up its rough sides. Giddy could not tell why he began to feel excited. Perhaps it was because of some change in the tiger's manner.

The tiger's manner *had* changed. He had become much more stealthy by the time they reached the top of the hill.

He stopped and spoke to Giddy, continuing to employ the most wary whisper: "We'll rest here a while," he said. "You'll see the rabbits very soon."

GIDDY AND THE RABBITS

“Where?” asked Giddy excitedly.

“Sh——h! Do you see that path at the foot of the hill?”

Giddy’s glance wandered about until it rested upon the path. He nodded his head quickly.

“Well, now then — watch that path.”

It was not long until rabbits began to hop along the path: one, two, a dozen, a score — an army of them.

“Good!” cried Giddy. “If you’ll wait for me. . . .” He began to move forward, pushing aside the little bushes as he advanced. He was greatly elated. He felt that he certainly should succeed in persuading the rabbits to listen to reason.

The tiger lay down with his head on his paws, his piercing glance following Giddy’s every movement.

Once Giddy looked back to wave his hand at the tiger; and it was then that a great surprise and a feeling of mystery came to him.

The tiger was nowhere to be seen!

But he gave little thought to the tiger now. He continued to descend the hill.

CHAPTER XIII

HOW THE RABBIT REASONED

BY the time Giddy reached the base of the hill the rabbits were no longer passing. The path was as empty as if a rabbit had never passed that way.

This seemed rather disappointing at first. Had they all passed, perhaps? And if so, would they come back after a while? It even occurred to him that they might be migrating to some distant part of the forest, never to return. But, again, they might have been out for exercise, and they might all come back almost immediately. That they could have been on the run because *he* was approaching, did not enter Giddy's mind.

Still, he could not help feeling depressed and lonely just at first. There was not a living creature to be seen. It was very quiet. Giddy had to admit that he would have felt un-

HOW THE RABBIT REASONED

happy if he had not known that the tiger was not far away.

And then he began to ask himself why the tiger had vanished, as soon as his back was turned; and he wondered if the disappearance of the tiger could have had anything to do with the fact that there was now not a rabbit to be seen. Well, he would wait in the hope that the rabbits would come back, or that others would follow the lead of that great drove that had disappeared.

It seemed to him that he had waited a very long time when at last his patience was rewarded. In the distance he spied two rabbits moving along the path, coming toward him. They were now moving in the opposite direction from which they had formerly moved.

Now was the time for him to put his skill to a test! He assumed his pleasantest manner; but he saw at a glance that the two rabbits were running so fast that it seemed unlikely they would stop to talk to him.

He was right in this. When the rabbits got opposite to him he called out in his friendliest tones: "Stop! I wish to speak to you!"

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

The rabbits jumped nervously and stared at him with wide eyes. But their speed was unchecked. One of them called back to him, after they had passed: "Excuse us — we're in a hurry!" And by the time he had uttered the last word he was far away.

"Strange!" murmured Giddy. But he was determined not to be discouraged. He found a comfortable flat stone and sat down, quite close to the path. Others would surely pass before long, and some of them might not be in such a hurry, or they might be more polite.

He had scarcely seated himself when an entire drove of rabbits passed, running even more swiftly than the first two. It seemed almost foolish to try to speak to them. But Giddy held up his hand reassuringly. "Stop!" he cried again. "If you'd only let me have just a word with you. . . ." But the rabbits were gone.

He shook his head, almost in despair. And while he tried to decide upon some sort of experiment which would give him a chance to speak to the rabbits, he heard a strange sound.

HOW THE RABBIT REASONED

It was almost like a whistle, at first; and then he sprang to his feet and stood very alert, for that whistling sound had changed to a terrified scream. It was a rather *squeaky* scream, certainly, but it was enough to give you a very uncomfortable feeling, there in the forest all by yourself.

He had not had time to think what that scream might mean when a great number of rabbits — a cloud of them, you might have said — poured along the path, running more rapidly than any horse. It was amazing to see anything move with such speed. That they were greatly terrified Giddy saw at a glance, for they were leaping high, and jostling one another, and there was an expression of agony in their eyes.

Yet even when the last of the great drove passed Giddy would not give up. Others would pass after a time, and one more sensible than the others might be among them.

He hit upon the plan of standing right in the path. They would *have* to take notice of him if he stood in the path, he thought.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

But this plan was unsuccessful, too. The next rabbit to appear stopped short in the path a great distance from him, and then vanished in the underbrush. And as long as Giddy stood on the path, not a rabbit approached.

And then he decided that he would have to adopt a somewhat risky plan (he would *not* give up until he had made every effort in his power).

He moved out of the path, and crouched down by it, his hand partly hidden behind a rock. He meant to seize one of the rabbits and hold it by force until he could reason with it.

He was not an instant too soon. There was another far-away scream, and then a perfect torrent of rabbits swept by.

Giddy thrust his hand out into the path and began opening and closing his fingers rapidly. Time and again he felt the touch of a furry foot, which always escaped him; and then ——

There was a scream and a great deal of confusion. A score of rabbits bounded out of the path and ran away in a twinkling. But one

HOW THE RABBIT REASONED

of the timid creatures lay helpless in the path, with Giddy's hand firmly gripping him by the hind legs.

The captive rabbit cried piteously, and wriggled so violently that Giddy was really afraid he might break his leg. But he could not give up the chance that had come to him. He held firmly to his captive until all the other rabbits had disappeared, and then he began to speak in quiet yet determined tones.

"I'm not going to hurt you — indeed I'm not. I only want a chance to talk to you."

The rabbit lay quiet at last. Little by little he brought his glance toward his captor. Finally he had observed Giddy critically, looking him up and down. And then he said, as if the idea had just occurred to him: "Oh, you just wanted to *talk* to me!"

"That's it."

There was an uncomfortable moment during which the captive continued to regard Giddy thoughtfully.

"Well," said the rabbit at last, "what do you want to talk about?"

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

"I — I want to reason with you," explained Giddy.

"Well, I'm certainly glad to hear *that*," said the rabbit emphatically.

It seemed to Giddy that this was a very favorable beginning. "I want to tell you that you needn't be afraid of the other animals. If you'll just come in and be one of the family, you'll not be harmed at all."

The rabbit did not reply to this directly. Instead, he said: "If you want to talk to me, would you mind taking hold of me in the proper way — by my ears, instead of by my legs? You're hurting me awfully."

Giddy could not help admitting to himself that this was entirely reasonable. "I *beg* your pardon," he said. "You see, I didn't know. And none of you would stop. . . ." He took the two long ears into his hand and released the legs.

The rabbit sighed with relief. "That's ever so much better," he said gratefully. "And . . . you mean to tell me that if we rabbits come into the family circle we'll be received kindly?"



He held firmly to his captive

HOW THE RABBIT REASONED

“That’s precisely it.”

“Wouldn’t the tiger want to chase us?”

“Not a bit of it.”

“Nor the panther?”

“No, nor the panther.”

“Would the wildcat be a real brother to us?”

“He certainly would.”

“And the leopard, and the lynx?”

“The leopard and the lynx, too.”

The rabbit put his paw to his eyes as if he wished to wipe away his tears. “That’s *such* a relief!” he said. He added, in a low voice: “You may let go of my ears, now. You see, I’m not at all afraid any more.”

Giddy could have clapped his hands with joy. You *could* reason with the rabbits, after all. He opened his fingers and let the rabbit go free.

And it was then that he received his first bitter disappointment since coming into the forest.

The rabbit made a movement which Giddy could not have described. But in a trice the deceptive creature was standing a dozen feet

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

away, prepared to jump in twenty directions at once, you would have thought. And in a jeering voice he cried out to Giddy:

“You tell me not to be afraid, and right this minute you’re wearing *my mother’s skin!*”

There was a movement like a spark on the hearth — and Giddy was all alone.

He honestly never knew which way that rabbit ran!

CHAPTER XIV

LOST

IT is not to be denied that Giddy felt greatly disappointed. He had been told plainly enough that the rabbits were unreasonable, yet he had persisted in finding out for himself — and the outcome had been entirely ridiculous.

Now there was nothing for him to do but to go back and tell the elephant and the others that he had failed completely. They might be too polite to say a great deal, of course; but he could imagine them talking among themselves and having a quiet laugh.

Without quite having a definite aim in view, he wandered for a short distance along the path where the rabbits had run; and it was by obeying this impulse that he brought upon himself another cruel blow. For when he had proceeded a short distance he came upon a

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

spot, near a bend in the path, where he found an explanation of those agonized shrieks he had heard. On the ground before him he saw a number of rabbit-skins, all fresh and warm, and badly torn, and carelessly scattered about.

For a moment he hardened his heart against the tiger. This was *his* work, of course; and Giddy realized with a quickening of his pulse that he had not had a fair chance with the rabbits, after all. For a moment he thought of returning without seeking the tiger at all; and then he realized that it would be a lonely journey to take all by himself. And besides . . . well, the one argument the rabbit had used was that he, Giddy, was wearing rabbit-skins; and of course he had to blame himself more than the tiger, after all.

With a heavy heart he turned away from the path and climbed the hill. He would tell the tiger he was ready to go back; and at the thought of going back he felt his legs tremble slightly. He was tired, and the return journey was a long one. If the tiger invited him to

LOST

ride at least a part of the way he would certainly accept the invitation.

But when he reached the top of the hill he discovered that the tiger was still absent.

“Strange!” he mused. He sat down, grateful for a chance to rest. He would wait for the tiger to come.

But unfortunately the tiger was now searching for *him*, and did not guess that he had returned to the place where they had separated. Instead, he supposed that Giddy would be somewhere along that path where the rabbits had raced to and fro; and he kept to the path until he had gone from end to end, and then he set out into the underbrush. But of Giddy he found, of course, not a trace.

The afternoon began to wane and Giddy became thoroughly uneasy. It is true that for a time he amused himself by recalling the story the elephant had told him — the story about the mouse. He thought it a really delicious story. His only regret was that there was no one he could tell it to. He realized how greatly his mother would be amused, when he told it

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

to her — and his Uncle William, too. In fact, it was really a better story than his Uncle William had ever told.

However, it did not occur to him that he ought to go home, in order to tell his mother and his Uncle William why the elephant is afraid of a mouse. He would wait until he had ever so many more things to tell them.

. . . The sun dropped down beyond a ridge of trees, and Giddy realized that the evening was at hand. He really must be stirring.

He arose and gave a last look to see if the tiger was in sight; but nothing moved anywhere — there was not a footfall to break the silence. Well, he would simply have to go back alone — or he might encounter some of the other animals before long, and they would go with him.

He did not realize right away how greatly in need of his compass he was. He was not to discover this until later. But the sad truth is that when he descended the hill and turned his face toward the family circle — *as he supposed* — he was really turned around. Instead

LOST

of starting in the right direction, he really set out *the wrong way!*

And in less than half an hour after he had started off in the wrong direction, the tiger returned, puzzled and weary, to find that he was gone.

I shall say nothing here about the tiger's state of mind, nor of the things he planned to do. It is enough to say that he knew well he would be blamed as the most careless of animals, if he were to return to the others without Giddy. For the time being, however, it is necessary for us to follow Giddy.

Naturally enough, he started off rather rapidly, because he was nervous, and because he hoped to finish his journey before dark. If night overtook him he could lie down on a mossy spot and go to sleep, of course; but he felt that it would be much pleasanter to sleep in the bed the birds had made for him, and be close to the white beach, in the morning, so that he could take his bath.

It is also to be recorded that after a time he believed he was making excellent progress;

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

and his heart beat quite lightly when, after walking half a mile or more, he came upon a great chestnut-tree, covered over with dry burrs. To his great delight he found that the ground under the tree was thick with large, ripe chestnuts. And right away he sat down to have his supper. He had really forgotten how hungry he was!

How long a time he spent eating the delicious chestnuts I cannot say; but when he arose, ready to continue on his way, he saw that the light was fading. Indeed, through openings in the roof of limbs overhead, he could see more than one star twinkling faintly.

But the darkness fell fast in the forest, and Giddy felt that he ought to look about for a button somewhere, and turn on the light. But he had not the slightest idea where to look. He searched far and wide for a sight of the great sign above the monkeys' section of the forest, but this he could not find.

For one dark moment the thought was in his mind that possibly he had taken the wrong direction, and it was then that he thought of

LOST

his compass. If he had only brought his compass with him! But this was a vain thought, of course. He must get along as well as he could without the compass.

It did not occur to him right away that it was strange he had not encountered any animals or birds. And when this thought came to him at last, it was so dark that it seemed likely the birds had gone to bed. He knew that they retired very early. As for the animals, he supposed they might be moving about in the dark, keeping their distance from a wish not to intrude upon him.

Once he believed he had caught the sound of a footfall among the shadows, and he stopped and called out eagerly: "Are any of you there?" But his voice sounded very thin and weak in that great silent place, and he got no answer at all. The sound of his own voice made him feel more lonely and he decided not to call again.

For another hour he walked as fast as he could, and then he had to admit that he was too tired to go any farther without resting.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

He sat down on the projecting root of a great tree and clasped his knees in his hands. He listened intently for sounds of any sort; but he heard only the moaning of the wind in the trees. And presently he noted that a soft, mysterious light had begun to steal into the dark forest. He looked about him to discover the cause of this, and much to his delight he saw that the moon was coming up. It would be lighter when he was ready to continue on his way.

He had just turned this thought over in his mind when he was greatly startled by a sharp voice seemingly right over his head. It was a strange voice, and it uttered just one word, drawing it out at great length: "H-e-e-e-e!"

Giddy sprang to his feet. "Yes," he cried eagerly, "it is I!"

An awkward, feathered creature flopped down out of the tree overhead. Giddy knew immediately that it was the owl, though he had never seen him before.

"Where did *you* come from?" asked the owl.

"I've been over with — with all the others,"

LOST

said Giddy. "But I don't believe I've seen you before."

"You mean the elephant, and that crowd?"

Giddy could not approve of this manner of referring to his friends. He replied a bit sharply: "Of course!"

"No," said the owl, "I don't mix with them. A body can't sleep all day along with *them* — they make such an outlandish noise. And if you want to stir around a little at the proper time, after the sun has set, they think you're out of your mind. I never saw such creatures."

"And so you live alone?" asked Giddy.

"My family and I live not far from here. I've been after a rabbit." He sharpened his bill deliberately on a hard root that stuck out of the ground.

At the mention of rabbits Giddy was tempted to say something about how unreasonable they were; but after all, it was not a pleasant topic. So he said, instead: "I'd like to go back to them — to the elephant and the others, I mean."

"Well, why not? — it's only a short distance."

Here was good news, certainly! So great a

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

load was removed from Giddy's heart by these few words that he tried to regain a manner of confidence — or even indifference. "I think after I've taken a short nap, I shall," he said; "I'm rather tired."

Even the fact that he did not quite know what the owl meant by a "short distance" did not trouble him very much.

"It's a funny time to go to sleep," said the owl, "but if you feel you really must, I could show you a fine place to sleep."

"I'm sure I'm obliged to you," said Giddy cordially. And then, as he regarded the owl intently through the gloom, he added: "Is it — is it a bird's nest?"

"Not at all. It's the sort of bed you've been used to: in a house — a proper house, built of stone and wood. It was built by missionaries ever so long ago — a hundred years or more. I believe the missionaries thought of doing something with the cannibals, but they gave it up long ago. The house . . . I call it the house with the intoxicated staircase. Come, I'll show you the way."

LOST

“It’s certainly very kind of you,” said Giddy. He was wondering how he should be able to follow the owl, and he began to move away in a dubious manner.

“Not at all,” declared the owl. “I might find a mouse there, as likely as not. The missionaries brought them. Once in a while you can find one yet. I’m very glad to go. In fact, I meant to stop there a little later, in any case.”

And so Giddy and the owl set out to find the house with the intoxicated staircase.

CHAPTER XV

THE HOUSE WITH THE IN- TOXICATED STAIRCASE

IT was not easy for Giddy to follow the owl, when they set out to find the house with the intoxicated staircase. In the first place, Giddy was almost completely worn out; and besides, it was pretty dark in the forest.

But they hit upon a plan which worked out very well. The owl agreed to fly on ahead a hundred feet or so and then stop and call until Giddy overtook him — and then fly ahead again. This process was to be repeated until they found what they were looking for.

Giddy supposed the house they were seeking would prove to be a mere hut — though he felt that even a hut would be welcome. Indeed, the thought came to him for the first time that a house was really a very good thing.

He was still picturing to himself a little hut, and wondering vaguely about the staircase,

INTOXICATED STAIRCASE

when the owl took an extra long flight and then cried out cheerfully: "There it is!"

Giddy hurried forward, forgetting for the moment how tired he was, until he came to an opening, with a great plain stretching before him. And near at hand a hill rose, and on top of the hill stood the house with the intoxicated staircase.

Imagine his surprise to behold a great castle!

Gloomy and lonely it stood, frowning down upon the forest; but Giddy was delighted to see that two of the upper windows blazed with light.

"Whose house is it?" asked Giddy. He spoke quite solemnly.

"I've been told," replied the owl, "that it was built by Trappist monks a very long time ago. No one seems to know just how long. But there . . . I'm going on ahead. I want to see if I can catch a mouse or two. You'll be able to find your way now. And make yourself at home. Good night!"

Giddy wished very much to ask more questions, but he could not think just what it was

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

he wanted to ask; and in another moment the owl was gone: a dark streak across the night sky.

He stood for a brief interval, looking up at that lonely castle. For a moment he wished that some one would come forward to meet him. But he could see no one at all about the house or the grounds — there was no hint of movement, even, about those lighted windows. And everything was fearfully quiet.

He was thinking how he had never entered so grand a house before, and he felt that he must be on his best behavior. He must be rather dignified, and very polite. It would be delightful — being a guest in such a wonderful house. The people who lived there would give him a chair to sit on, and they would talk to him, and at last they would say: “Well, Giddy, I expect you are tired; you’ll find your room the third door to the right . . .” or something like that. And in the morning he would have his breakfast at a table, with a knife and a fork, and possibly there would be biscuits and honey.

INTOXICATED STAIRCASE

He smoothed his rabbit-skin suit with his hands, and held his head high, and began to climb the hill. He walked as if he were marching — though it did not seem likely that any one would see him right away.

Nearer and nearer he approached — and still he could see no one, nor could he hear the faintest sound. It seemed to him that perhaps a dog would come out and bark, and then the people would come, and exclaim: “Down, Fido!” But no dog appeared.

He came quite to the house, and halted, and looked up to the immense gallery. And now he felt chilled a little when he found that all the lower part of the house was in darkness; and it did not help matters any when he found, upon mounting to the gallery, that the great doors were open, and that the windows were mere gaping caverns, without any curtains or shades before them. And finally he realized that the stone steps he mounted were broken and neglected. Moreover, the whole place was dreadfully still. He could not even hear the owl. And for one anxious moment he won-

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

dered if the owl might have planned to lure him into this strange house, only to fly away and leave him to his doom.

But he was not really afraid, of course; and after one moment of faltering he crossed the gallery and tapped at the casing of the door.

He felt that it would be impolite to look into the house until some one had come to welcome him; but when he had waited a moment, and no one had appeared, he ventured to glance into the great hall before him.

Much to his amazement he saw that it was quite empty. The moonlight streamed across the stone floor, revealing only dust and decay.

So, then, the people lived altogether on the upper floor?

He entered the hall, and then passed into the vast room to his left. He walked as noisily as he could, so that the people above might hear him. And then he listened intently for sounds above. But he could hear nothing.

He advanced a few steps farther, and then to his great delight he made a discovery. Near at hand stood a little chair: a wicker chair

INTOXICATED STAIRCASE

covered with white-and-gold enamel. It was quite new, seemingly — a very fine chair.

He tried it and found that he fitted it exactly. Indeed, it would have seemed that it had been chosen specially for him and placed there for him. He must have been seen approaching, after all!

He sat in the chair and rocked contentedly. And at length he lifted his voice a little and said: "Good evening!"

There was no response; and after waiting a reasonable time he added: "I am here, waiting!"

They must surely hear him now, and come down and turn on the light, and make him welcome. Or they would escort him up-stairs, to where the light was.

But the same strange silence prevailed!

He forced himself to look about more carefully, and in an instant he had made another startling discovery: there were other wicker chairs scattered about the place. They were of all sizes, including one which was the largest chair he had ever seen. And they were all covered with white-and-gold enamel.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

This discovery was startling enough; but what was his surprise to note, presently, that all the chairs were moving to and fro, as if there were persons in them!

A wind had risen, to be sure, and the place was all open. But Giddy did not think about the wind. He arose uncomfortably. He felt that he simply could not wait any longer. He would go up-stairs and let the people know that he had come.

There was a moment during which he wished the owl would appear. It seemed to him that it would be a good plan to ask the owl to go up-stairs and tell the people about his being there. But if the owl had really entered the house, he certainly had gone away again. Nothing like the sound of wings, nor the guttural voice of the owl, could be heard.

Well . . . he would simply have to go up-stairs. He coughed discreetly as he crossed the vast room. He thought of singing, or of shouting. It was most uncomfortable, being in a house without the people knowing anything about it!

INTOXICATED STAIRCASE

He looked nervously over his shoulder, back at the chairs. They were still placidly rocking to and fro, to and fro. . . .

He reached the foot of the great staircase, and, looking up, he knew right away why the owl had called this the house of the intoxicated staircase. Giddy had never seen anything like it. It was the banister, mostly. In some places it leaned inward, and then it leaned outward. In a dozen places it seemed about to fall down completely — though it still held on, as if its strength were not quite gone even yet. It rose and fell. As high as Giddy could see, up through the gloom, that banister curved and leaned strangely, and then it lost itself in the shadows.

Giddy wondered if it had been built so to keep the boys from sliding down. Or had there been a battle fought on the stairway, so that the banister had been wrecked? Or had the people run up and down so fast that this strange result had come about?

When he began to mount the steps he found, further, that it was not the banister alone that

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

was strange. The steps were uneven and some of them were loose. They leaned in every direction. Indeed, Giddy felt quite nervous lest at any moment he might find himself stepping into space and tumbling.

He stopped once more and made a last effort to make himself heard. "Excuse me," he called, "I'm coming up." And the sound of his own voice comforted him so much that he added: "You needn't take the trouble to come down — I'm coming up. I can see well enough. You needn't trouble to bring a light." It seemed to him that if there really was any danger, they would surely come now and speak to him.

But nothing broke the silence save his own voice.

For a moment it seemed to him that he had better go back. He could go quietly, and leave the house, and find a place in the forest to sleep.

But it seemed the most difficult thing of all to turn back now. Suppose at the last moment he were seen slipping out of the house? Suppose he were to meet some one coming in? How

INTOXICATED STAIRCASE

could he explain what he had been doing there? Would they not suppose he was a thief, perhaps?—or maybe a spy, or something like that?

He cautiously advanced a dozen steps or more, doing his best to make sure of his footing. He must be close to the top now. Surely a door would open somewhere, and there would be voices, and a light. . . .

Again he stopped and looked up toward the top of the stairs.

He caught his breath swiftly. A man was standing by the banister post, at the top of the stairway: an immense man, wearing a long cloak, and a great chain of beads that came nearly to the floor, with a cross at the end.

Giddy tried to put his hand on the banister for support; but at this point it leaned out so far that it was beyond his reach. Instead, he leaned against the wall on the other side. He was standing still now, gazing at that looming figure above him. He could not tell why it was so difficult for him to speak. But at last he managed to say, a little unsteadily:

“Good evening!”

CHAPTER XVI

ROOM NO. 77

ALTHOUGH Giddy had spoken as politely as he knew how, he received no answer at all.

He tried again: "I hope you are quite well?" And then he waited with an increasing sense of uneasiness; but there was still no answer, and the great, dark figure never moved. Giddy could not even hear the slightest rustle of that long black cloak: there was not a movement of the heavy chain with the cross at its end.

"Strange!" thought Giddy. It was most inhospitable. Should he turn about and go away? It seemed the only proper thing to do; and yet he found such a course quite out of the question.

He mounted the last few steps and held out his hand; and even now he might not have read the answer to the riddle save for a slight accident. He stepped on an uneven stone which

gave slightly, and he would have lost his balance and fallen, had he not grasped that unresponsive figure for support.

He could not suppress a low cry of dismay. *His hands came into contact with a very hard, rigid substance!* This, then, was only the image of a man, after all!

It was a figure wonderfully carved in wood, he decided; and then he perceived that the face and hands were covered with painted wax, which gave an impression, even in the dim light, of actual flesh.

He held his breath and hurried forward; yet even after he had passed that motionless figure he had the feeling that it must certainly turn to watch him as he advanced, and warn him to go no farther. But glancing back he perceived, of course, that the image had not stirred.

He felt a trifle shaken for just a minute or two. It was difficult to decide what to do next. He moved stealthily toward the front windows; and now he understood how he had been deceived into believing that the rooms had been lighted. The full moon was riding above the

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

trees in the distance, and it was clearly the moonlight falling upon the glass that had created that misleading glow.

He turned about for a further inspection of the place he was in. It was a very large room — almost as large as a church, Giddy thought. And the moonlight streamed across the dusty floor in a flood.

There was no furniture: or at least, this was his first impression, though he was to find out, later, that this conclusion was a mistaken one.

He walked the entire length of the room and found, somewhat to his delight, that it opened at the back upon a kind of rampart. Through an open window he stepped out upon this rampart — and again he was destined to be pleasantly surprised. Away before him the glorious sea lay rippling placidly under the beautiful moonlight. It found a natural harbor where it touched the land; but the harbor was empty now — as, indeed, the sea was also.

He re-entered the vast room he had quitted; and now he made the discovery that it was not wholly barren of furniture, after all. Along

one of the walls where the shadows were not touched by the moonlight he perceived a row of beds.

He approached these curiously. Like the chairs on the floor below, the beds were of various sizes; beginning with a tiny one, which made Giddy feel almost drowsy, it looked so inviting, and ending with an immense one, which would have done very nicely, Giddy reflected, for — well, for the butcher.

What was his surprise to find, also, that they were all clean and neat. They must have been made quite recently.

After making sure that there was no one in any of the beds, he climbed into the smallest one; and without being quite conscious of the fact, he sighed deeply with relief — it felt so good to be lying down again in a real bed!

He had meant only to try the bed; but now he decided he could do no better than to remain where he was until morning. He lay quite a long time, breathing tranquilly, and wondering who would come in to sleep in those other beds, and hoping that the little bed had

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

been meant specially for him, when something occurred which amazed him so greatly that he quickly sat up, rubbing his eyes.

A very bright light had filled the room, just as if some one had turned on the electricity in a hundred places. But it had passed as quickly as it had come, and now the room seemed darker than ever.

Giddy sat on the edge of the bed and mused. He could not have been mistaken — and yet, if the light really had been turned on, why had it been turned off right away? And if there was somebody in the house to turn on the lights, why had he not heard them, and why had they not made themselves known to him? It was very mysterious, to say the least.

Well, he would go to sleep and try to think it all out in the morning. It was always easier to understand things in the morning than at night. . . . But just as he was about to fall asleep again the light came back, stronger than ever. It passed quickly, just as before; but not before he had opened his eyes wide and seen it as bright as day.

ROOM NO. 77

Could it be possible the people did not know he was there, after all? It seemed almost certain; and yet — well, he must find out.

He got up and began to look about him. Perhaps they were all in the dining-room — but where was the dining-room? He walked slowly along the walls, seeking for a door. But for a long time it seemed that there was no door at all, save that at which he had entered. And he did not like to go back to that door again, because it was a bit uncomfortable, looking at that grim figure at the top of the stairs. Still, that seemed the only way out of the room, unless. . . . His heart began to beat fast. He had found a door; and he knew right away that there was something strange about that door. It was set so cunningly into the wall that you might not have seen it at all.

He tried the knob a little nervously; and he felt that he had known from the first that it would not turn. The door was locked — or possibly it was only an imitation of a door. He looked up and down, hoping to find some key to the mystery; but he could find none.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

But stay — that number over the door might mean something. He read the number carefully — 77. He put his fingers to his forehead and thought hard. What could that mean — 77? It was very perplexing. Perhaps that, too, was one of the things he should have to think out in the morning.

For the present, he must find open doors: he must find the people who lived in the house. There was nothing to do but to go past that figure on the landing, and go down the intoxicated staircase.

. . . On the lower floor he found a number of doors that would open; and after entering one after another, without discovering any sign of life, he came at last upon a scene which made him wonder more than ever. He was in the dining-room at last, and before him stretched a long table. At a glance it might have seemed empty; but Giddy's quick eyes took in the fact that it was not really empty. On one side there was a row of plates, with knives and forks beside them, and on a big platter apart there was a great heap of cold roasted rabbit.

ROOM NO. 77

All this was strange enough; but the strangest thing of all was that the plates and knives and forks were all of different sizes. There was, at one end, a nice little plate, with a little knife and fork; and then they all got larger until at the far end there was a very large plate indeed, and an immense knife and fork.

But still there was not a human being in sight; and Giddy began to be convinced that the house was really deserted. As to why there were chairs and beds and places at the table — well, he should simply have to give it up, at least until something happened.

In the meantime he was quite tired out, and he made up his mind to go back up-stairs and go to sleep, no matter what happened.

He had just reached the upper floor again when the mysterious light was turned on again; but this time, fortunately, he perceived something which had escaped him before: The light came from *outside* the house, and not from the *inside*. It was shining through those windows which opened out upon the ramparts.

He went to that end of the room hurriedly

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

and looked out. For an instant he was blinded by the glare in his eyes; and then the mystery was explained.

What was his amazement to see that a great ship had appeared and now lay at anchor out in the harbor? A hundred lights were beaming along her decks; but most striking of all was an immense search-light which had been turned upon him, and which was now searching out the line of the harbor and the forest beyond. It continued to play about slowly, making everything as plain as the sun would have done. Once it climbed upward to the sky, and Giddy could see a great fleecy cloud as clear as if it had been noonday.

He did not stop to wonder what the ship could be doing in the harbor, or whether its being there might mean good or ill to him. He only thought that it was rather comfortable, knowing that the ship was out there, and that he now knew where the bright light had come from.

At least he could go to bed in comfort now. And this he proceeded to do. In a very few minutes he was sound asleep.

CHAPTER XVII

THE KEY TO ROOM 77

HE awoke only once during the night. The light from the ship fell upon his face so strongly that it disturbed him, and he lay awake a little while. He could tell that the people who were handling that bright light were very curious about the great house in which he had found refuge. They continued to hold the light upon it for a long time, shifting it slowly, so that they could inspect everything from top to bottom.

But at last they seemed to be satisfied; for the light travelled on in search of other objects, and it fell upon the castle no more. And again Giddy went to sleep.

When next he opened his eyes he knew that it was very early in the morning: too early to get up, in fact. The dim light of dawn was stealing into the room, and not a sound was to be heard. It seemed strange that there were

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

not a few birds to sing the sun up, but there did not seem to be a single one.

Giddy thought he would take one more nap; but really, there were a great many things to find out; and the more he thought of these the wider awake he got.

With an eager movement he sprang out to the floor. First, he meant to see if the ship was still in sight. But before he could reach the window overlooking the ramparts and the distant harbor, he was fixed fast where he stood by a startling discovery.

There in the shadows against the wall . . . surely there was a beautiful lady standing there!

He went closer, hoping that at last he had found his hostess, and that he might thank her for her hospitality. But once more he was to be disappointed. It was not a beautiful lady, really, but only the picture of one. She was painted upon a deep-set panel in a place where the darkness had fallen heaviest the night before. She was painted in delicate blues and pinks. Her hair was flowing free, and so

was her drapery. She wore sandals, which seemed barely to touch the ground. She stood as if she were poised in mid-air, though there was grass beneath her, and poppies.

But it was her attitude, and also the expression on her face, which made Giddy wonder deeply.

The forefinger of one hand was pressed against her lips, as if she were saying, "I have a secret!" The other was lifted high, as if she were pointing to something.

"Hum-m!" mused Giddy. "What is the meaning of this?"

He looked intently to where that finger seemed to be pointing; and at first he could see nothing unusual at all. But suddenly he exclaimed: "I have it!"

There were four little enamelled tiles set into the wall, just above that pointing finger.

He decided immediately that a secret lay behind those tiles. If only he could get at them, and examine them. . . .

They were quite beyond his reach; but when his glance roved about the room, seeking for

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

a suggestion, it fell upon the bed he had occupied during the night. Could he move it over against the wall, where the picture was, so he could stand upon it?

A slight effort, and the bed was moving noiselessly. A moment later he was standing on it, feeling about on those enamelled tiles, to see if they would yield their secret.

He remembered certain stories that his Uncle William had told him, or read to him, and he knew very well that when you tap on secret places, to find out anything, it is always the third one you tap on that rewards you with *a hollow sound*.

He tapped on the first tile, and found it to be quite solid. The second tile, too, gave back no answer. The third tile — ah, there was a hollow sound when he struck it!

So far, so good. He picked at it with his fingers. He did not expect to move it immediately; yet he was not surprised, after a minute or two, when it opened outward. It was, in effect, a cunning little door.

Giddy thrust his hand into the little cup-

THE KEY TO ROOM 77

board-like aperture back of the tile and after he had felt about carefully his fingers came into contact with something loose and hard. He drew it forth. It was a key! And — oh, joy! — there was a number on it: *the number 77!*

It was the key to the secret chamber, of course.

He sprang down from the bed. Could he unlock the secret chamber? He took two or three eager steps toward the door of room 77; and then upon second thought he halted. It occurred to him that the thing in which he was engaged was a great mystery, and he concluded that it would be the part of wisdom to push the bed back into its proper place, so that if by chance any one came into the room there would be no means of guessing what he had been doing.

Then he took the final precaution of looking about him, to make sure that he was not being watched. He crept to the window overlooking the ramparts. The ramparts were empty. And now he made another discovery: the ship which had been in the harbor the night before

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

was there no longer. The sea was as placid and empty as if a ship had never passed that way.

“Strange!” reflected Giddy. Where had it gone — and why had it come? But here was a mystery which, as it proved, he was not to solve until later. Just now there was the fascinating prospect of looking into room 77 — the secret chamber.

He tiptoed to the front of the room, past the open door through which he could see the solemn image on the landing, and to the windows overlooking the distant forest. The green leaves were still glistening with dew — the sun had not yet touched them. But far and wide there was not a soul in sight.

So! — now for the testing of the key in the lock!

His fingers were undoubtedly trembling a little; and besides, the key was an immense, old-fashioned affair which at best might not have gone into the keyhole easily. Thus it was that Giddy was unable at first to adjust the key in the proper place; and once in place, it refused

THE KEY TO ROOM 77

to turn. Clearly, it could not have been in that place for many a year.

But Giddy believed that perseverance was all that was necessary; and in this he proved to be right — for after repeated efforts, the key slowly turned.

His hand was on the knob in an instant. The door gave slowly, with a great noise of rusty hinges. And now Giddy was standing on the threshold.

It was so dark in the room before him that he could not see anything at first; but little by little his eyes began to widen with wonder. Amid the shadowy depths he could see rows of bags on the floor and from rents in the bags gold coins were spilling. And then he saw a great dark table, covered with delicate and costly caskets standing side by side.

He advanced cautiously and touched the caskets, one after another. They were locked; but he reflected that they could be carried away just as they were, and opened afterward — perhaps broken open, if necessary. It did not occur to him that he had no right to these trea-

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

tures. Had he not found out the secret of the hidden chamber, and was not the house deserted?

Still, he thought it would be nice to find the keys to the caskets; and he was looking high and low when he heard a sound which caused his heart to stand still.

Some one was slowly coming up the intoxicated staircase! In the distance he could hear, quite plainly, the sound of advancing feet.

For an instant it seemed to him that he was wholly lost. It was the owner of the house coming home at last, of course. And he had taken the greatest liberties. He had even penetrated into the treasure-chamber, which had been hidden from all the world.

Tramp, tramp — those footsteps were coming closer. They would be on the landing in a moment, and then they would be in the room.

Quick as lightning, and at the last moment, he hit upon a plan of action. With trembling fingers he removed the key from the lock *and inserted it on the inside.*

He stepped into the secret chamber and

THE KEY TO ROOM 77

pulled the door to cautiously. He could have cried out in protest when the hinges creaked again. Had he been heard?

But the door was securely closed — and not an instant too soon. The sound of footsteps approached steadily. And now some one was standing just outside the closed door. And finally he heard voices.

CHAPTER XVIII

ZOOK AND ZUKIZMIC

GIDDY could feel his heart pounding when those footsteps paused just outside the door at which he listened. He experienced the most extraordinary sensations. For one instant he felt impelled to throw the door wide open and stand, revealed — to greet those individuals on the other side of the door with dignity and politeness. But he was restrained from doing this by the sense of mystery which almost overwhelmed him.

Who were these individuals who had climbed the intoxicated staircase and now stood so near to him? How many were there? Were they the owners of the castle, or were they, like himself, intruding?

At first he had believed that only one individual had come into the room. But the sound of shuffling feet had taken on a new quality at last, and something told him that he should

ZOOK AND ZUKIZMIC

have to reckon with at least two persons, and possibly more. If they would only speak! He could scarcely endure the unexplained silence.

He tried to look through the keyhole; but while he could see part of a bed, and a small open area where a window was, he could discern nothing that moved or lived.

And then, at last, there was a voice. Two words were blurted out:

“Nothin’ doin’!”

Giddy started. He had never heard a voice like that. It was a man’s voice — deep, rumbling, brutal.

And then, as if they were an echo of the first speaker’s words, came the same words again, in a wholly different voice:

“Nothin’ doin’!”

This time Giddy actually shrank back a little. For this second voice, while high and penetrating, was even less pleasing than the first. It was cold and cruel; it was as if some one were breaking up some fragile toy you were very fond of.

The first voice was heard again: “I tell you,

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

Zukizmic, if those wicker chairs don't attract somebody, we might as well decide to go over and work the other coast."

The reply to this came ponderingly: "The chairs *were* a good idea, Zook, but I had more faith in the beds. If the beds don't catch 'em — why, then, nothing will."

Giddy was all attention now. He had learned their names, at least. The one with the bass voice was called Zook; the other was Zukizmic.

It was Zook who spoke next: "I felt sure some one would come ashore from that ship last night. They must have been afraid of something, the miserable cowards!"

"They might come back later," suggested Zukizmic. "They'll not find a better harbor than this. When they find that out, they'll come back."

There was another silence, and then a shuffle of feet. Suddenly Zook cried out excitedly: "Look here, Zukizmic, doesn't it look to you as if that bed had been disturbed — the little one?"

ZOOK AND ZUKIZMIC

A new kind of silence, now; and then a more purposeful shuffling of feet. Giddy tried again to look through the keyhole, and again he failed.

Zukizmic's voice came back excitedly: "It's a fact, by Heck!"

There was a loud sniffing, and then: "I smell *child!*" said Zook.

More sniffing followed, and then: "Child it is!" said Zukizmic.

"Then some one *did* come ashore!" exclaimed Zook.

"And they will come back, when they find out there's no other harbor as fine as this!" declared Zukizmic.

There was the sound of wild laughter, and Giddy heard them both slapping their thighs.

The next words (by Zook) were: "I'll tell you what I'll do, Zukizmic: I'll cut you the cards, to see which of us gets the heart."

"Good!" responded Zukizmic.

Giddy could hear them shuffling a pack of cards. And then:

"You cut," said Zook.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

"A knave!" cried Zukizmic. "It's your cut."

"A deuce," said Zook. "That's a horse on me."

But Zukizmic cried out angrily: "You didn't say the best two out of three!"

"But that's always understood," declared Zook. "Come, cut again."

There was the sound of cards being shuffled again, and then: "It's your first cut this time," said Zukizmic.

A brief silence, and then: "A king!" cried Zook.

"A queen," said Zukizmic an instant later. "Now it's horse and horse."

The cards were shuffled once more.

"An ace!" cried Zukizmic triumphantly.

"Well, wait a minute," said Zook. "So — I've cut an ace, too!"

"Curses!" cried Zukizmic. He added in a grumbling tone: "Well, I'll shuffle them again."

An interval of silence, and then:

"A beastly four!" cried Zook in disgust.

A tense silence, and then, "Curses!" cried Zukizmic, "mine is a trey!"

ZOOK AND ZUKIZMIC

There was a savage whoop by Zook. "The heart shall be mine!" he said.

It was all very puzzling to Giddy. And had it not been for the fact that he knew he need not be afraid, he should have been decidedly uneasy. At best he could not bring himself to open the door and step out into the room and say: "Good morning, gentlemen!" He simply could not do it. On the contrary, he found himself nervously trying the key on the inside of the lock. And now he decided that since he could see so little through the keyhole, he might as well leave the key where it was. He might even wish to lock himself in at a moment's notice.

He experimented with the key quietly to see if it would turn; and what was his dismay to learn that it would not do so!

He tried to reassure himself. Perhaps if he remained quietly where he was, Zook and Zukizmic would go away before long. He stepped farther back into the shadowy room, and presently he found himself feeling quite confident again. He even forgot the two men out there

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

in the big room for a little while, because he had gotten interested in counting the sacks of gold coins and the number of caskets. He said to himself: "No matter what happens, I must manage to lock this room up again before I go away. I can hide the key — or possibly I shall take it with me."

Then he turned quickly toward the door again: for Zook and Zukizmic were now walking and talking.

"I suppose there's no chance of getting a glimpse of that ship," said Zook.

"We might have a look," said Zukizmic.

The shuffling steps moved out toward the ramparts; and a moment later Giddy heard voices in the distance. Indeed, those voices became, little by little, quite far away, and finally inaudible.

Minutes passed; and once or twice an echo of those voices out on the ramparts drifted into the big room; but Giddy knew that Zook and Zukizmic were still giving all their attention to the harbor.

A plan of action suggested itself to him. Now

ZOOK AND ZUKIZMIC

was the time for him to leave the castle. He could do so, perhaps, without being seen and without having to explain to any one why he had made himself at home there.

A moment later he was standing outside the door of the secret chamber, the key in his hand; and then he was fitting the key into the lock. It now turned on this side, he found, without any difficulty. He hurried away from the door, so that if the men on the ramparts came back they would not know he had been in that room — or that there was a room there.

There was no time now to replace the key in its hiding-place. He would have to take it with him. He could come back another time and replace the key.

Once, before he left the room, he looked toward those windows overlooking the ramparts. Neither Zook nor Zukizmic was to be seen.

He had an idle wish to see how these strange creatures looked; but it would be folly to linger, he decided; and, dropping the key into his pocket, he hurried past the painted image at

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

the top of the stairs. With eager feet he descended the staircase. A few minutes more and he would be out of the castle.

But at the last moment he happened to think that he had had no breakfast, and that he was very hungry — and he remembered the table and its plates and baked rabbit. Should he venture to stop long enough to go back into the dining-room and have breakfast before he went away?

He would do it!

He almost forgot Zook and Zukizmic as he stole back into the dining-room; and he had no sooner crossed the threshold than he saw that nothing had been disturbed. There was the place with the little plate and the little knife and fork invitingly waiting.

On tiptoe he approached the table and took his place. With fingers which trembled a little he helped himself to the rabbit. He raised a morsel to his lips — and a contented sigh escaped him. Was there ever anything so good?

No doubt he forgot himself for the time being. At any rate, he was eating with the greatest

ZOOK AND ZUKIZMIC

relish some minutes later, when he was horrified by something which took place.

There was the sudden loud rushing of feet — though there had not been even a hint of a footfall up to that instant; there was a great roar of voices — though there had not been so much as a whisper until then.

He turned, and there in the doorway stood the two cannibals he had seen in the dark pool, back in the forest where the animals were. And when they spoke he felt himself shiver. For the voices he heard were the voices of Zook and Zukizmic.

“Ah — ha!” roared Zook.

And “Ah — ha!” screamed Zukizmic.

And in another instant each of these two creatures had Giddy by an arm and he was being held fast.

CHAPTER XIX

A PRISONER

“**I**T was the table that did the trick!” said Zook, looking eagerly at Zukizmic.

“I thought the table might do it!” replied Zukizmic.

Giddy’s heart was pounding violently. “I — I thought maybe nobody would care,” he said. “I thought maybe it was put here for me.” He glanced at the rabbit on the little dish, and then at the cannibals.

“So it was!” said Zook.

“Right you are!” said Zukizmic.

A great load was lifted from Giddy’s heart. They meant to be kind to him, after all. Perhaps they couldn’t help looking a little . . . well, homely. “I’m sure I’m very much obliged to you,” he said.

Whereupon both Zook and Zukizmic laughed until Giddy thought they must explode.

A PRISONER

“He’s obliged to us!” Zook managed to say after a time.

And Zukizmic, with one hand on his side, sputtered, between shrieks of laughter: “He’s — *obliged* — to us!”

And Giddy really thought the ceiling would fall.

They both became quite sober, after a while; and first Zook and then Zukizmic began to feel Giddy’s arms and his chest and even his legs.

“He’s skinny!” growled Zook, pursing his lips horribly.

“There’s nothing to him at all!” cried Zukizmic, scowling darkly.

Giddy held his head a little haughtily. They were being very impolite, he thought. His mother had always spoken of him as a very fine child. Nobody had ever called him skinny before.

“If you’ll excuse me I’ll finish my rabbit,” he said coldly.

Zook and Zukizmic looked at each other and winked slowly. And then, without a word,

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

they let go of his arms and stepped back, as if they meant to go away.

Giddy felt a bit sorry that he had not been more friendly, then. He turned toward them with a new effort to be polite. "Won't you sit down?" he asked. "The rabbit is very nice, and I'm sure there is enough for all of us."

They laughed again at this. Giddy could not understand why. "We'll not eat — just yet," said Zook.

"No, not *just yet*," echoed Zukizmic; and each nudged the other in the ribs with his elbow.

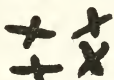
"Just as you please," said Giddy, again speaking coldly.

Zook evidently thought it was a time to show his good manners. "We want to see you eat," he said in a friendly tone. "You look as if you need it. There's no hurry about us."

Giddy ate more comfortably after that. He even took time to study the two cannibals more closely. He could not say that they were to be admired. Now that they were close to him he saw a number of things which he had not seen when they first appeared to him in the

A PRISONER

dark pool. They wore large brass rings in their ears and in their noses, which Giddy thought in very questionable taste. They had lost their clothes, too, it seemed, and had nothing on but a kind of sashes and aprons. And they had their faces and bodies decorated with black smudges which crossed each other, so —



They had not combed their hair for weeks — you could see that at a glance; and they had thrust sharpened sticks into it. It was really quite unbecoming.

But Giddy pretended not to notice these things. He thought it might not be polite to seem to regard them as different from other people. He ate the last of his rabbit and turned away from the table, smiling pleasantly. “I’ve certainly enjoyed it,” he said. “It’s ever so nice, having a plate and a knife and fork, you know. But you’ll excuse me now — won’t you? — I think I ought to be getting back to the forest.”

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

He stood quite still and turned a little pale at what followed.

“He wants to go back to the forest!” shouted Zook, nudging Zukizmic in the ribs.

“Oh! — who ever heard of anything so funny!” shrieked Zukizmic. “He *wants to go back to the forest!*” And he thrust his elbow into Zook’s ribs.

“I don’t believe I understand,” said Giddy, looking from one of them to the other.

They tried to straighten their faces. “It’s nothing,” said Zook, “except that we want you to go home with us just now. You see, we have an idea it would be nice to have you in our midst.”

Zukizmic screamed: “*In our midst!* Oh, don’t, Zook — I shall certainly die!” And he held both sides, and hung his head, and looked at Zook with the greatest admiration.

But Zook now assumed a severe, business-like air. “Come,” he said, “we ought to be off.” And he approached Giddy with outstretched hand.

Giddy was beginning to feel really anxious

A PRISONER

about the animals back in the forest. What would they think of him, remaining away so long? Yet he felt he could scarcely reject the invitation of the cannibals. They were rough fellows, certainly, but it was plain that they meant well, and they might feel grieved if he told them he had no time to stay with them. Yes, he would go with them, if only for a brief call.

They had both approached him now and were standing, one on either side of him. It was Zook who first had the idea of lifting him. He lifted him and then shook his head with disapproval. "There's nothing to him at all," he said.

Then Zukizmic lifted him too. "Nothing at all," he echoed. "We'll have to give him something to eat."

Zook plucked at his lower lip thoughtfully, without removing his glance from Giddy; and finally he asked: "What is your favorite dish?"

Giddy reflected a moment. "I think it's honey and biscuits," he said at length. He added politely: "What's yours?"

Oddly enough, this set them off laughing

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

loudly again. "What's my favorite dish, Zukizmic?" asked Zook.

And Zukizmic, gasping for breath, exclaimed: "Oh! what is our favorite dish?"

"Well," repeated Giddy with dignity, "mine is biscuits and honey."

Zook drew a solemn face. "Biscuits!" he snorted, and he pursed his lips again horribly.

"And honey!" sneered Zukizmic, his brow like thunder.

"I think they're very nice," insisted Giddy, a delicate frown on his forehead.

"Well, maybe we can get them for you," said Zook.

"I shouldn't wish to trouble you," Giddy hastened to say. "I like other things too. The rabbit was delicious. And if we are going where there are any figs, or grapes. . . ." He paused and sighed. He had always thought figs and grapes were the nicest things in the world, but he had to admit now that you could have too many of them. "And nuts are very nice," he said more cheerfully. "But I'll be very glad to eat anything you happen to have."

A PRISONER

“Well, we’ll go into all that later,” said Zook in a decisive tone. “The important thing right now is to get you home, and find a good place to put you in.”

Giddy was almost at the point of repeating, wonderingly, “to put me in?” but he checked himself. He had found that it was pretty hard to understand the ways of the cannibals, and he realized that he might offend them by asking them too many questions.

And so he said, amiably: “Yes, of course, that is the important thing.”

He gave one hand to Zook then, and the other to Zukizmic, and between the two he was led away from the dining-room and out of the house.

CHAPTER XX

GIDDY AND THE CANNIBALS

IT was so they walked until they came to the hut of the cannibals; and when they halted in front of this mean structure, Giddy's one thought was that he certainly would not remain in such a place a moment longer than politeness demanded.

It was not simply that the hut was gloomy and mean in appearance; but it had also the aspects of a hiding-place. You came upon it without suspecting it was there; and when you stood in front of it you could see nothing but dwarfed trees and uneven ground strewn with rough rocks.

The building itself was like a small and very substantial barn, of that grayish color which wood takes on when it is never painted. Worst of all, it had that deserted air which suggests evil deeds and furtive ways. Not a living thing

GIDDY AND THE CANNIBALS

stirred anywhere about — not even a bird nor an insect.

Giddy was slowly taking in all these facts when he was further dismayed by the action of the cannibals. In a manner by no means considerate they drew him to the very door of the closed hut; and without deferring to him in any particular they opened the door and thrust him across the threshold. Then the door was closed and barred. He could hear the bar falling into place on the outside. Then the muttered words of the cannibals became more and more indistinct until they could be heard no more. It was evident that Zook and Zukizmic had gone away.

This part of Giddy's experience was so unpleasant that I do not care to describe it too much in detail; yet it must be admitted that in certain ways the cannibals seemed bent upon being as hospitable as possible.

For one thing, they seemed even more eager than the animals had been to have him eat heartily. During the first day of his visit he was served with food a dozen times. Either

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

Zook or Zukizmic — and often both together — came into the hut at intervals of an hour or so, invariably bringing fresh fruit of every kind. It seemed strange that they did not manifest any wish to remain inside the hut with him, or to leave the door open, so that he could mingle with them; and though this was a relief to Giddy at first, he soon felt so lonesome that he would have welcomed friendly attentions of any sort.

When, after spending an hour or two in the hut, he suggested that he ought to be getting back to the forest, both Zook and Zukizmic seemed not to hear what he said. And when he repeated this suggestion from time to time during the day, he got no response save grumbling and murmuring — though once, when both his hosts had withdrawn and barred the door behind them, he heard them laugh unpleasantly, as if his wishes were to be considered very lightly.

It was in this manner that Giddy spent the entire day; and by sundown he believed his patience had been tried to the utmost. But

GIDDY AND THE CANNIBALS

he had yet to learn the true nature of a cannibal. What was his amazement and dismay to be detained a second day, and a third — and a fourth? He became, by the end of the fourth day, almost frantic to be gone. There were moments when he almost wished he had never seen the cannibals at all. Of course, having seen them would be a very interesting thing to tell his Uncle William; still, it was far from pleasant, being cooped up in their hut, with nothing but food on all sides of him. There were moments, indeed, when the long hours of silence became almost unbearable.

Yet the kindly inclination of the cannibals was most evident. They actually found biscuits and honey for him somewhere, and the kind of cakes that come in packages. They surrounded him with fruit and nuts, including as many as a bushel of cocoanuts.

They were forever coming to the door, on the fourth day, and calling to him: “Are you eating?”

And to this question he always made the reply: “I have everything I wish, thank you.”

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

He was afraid they would put so much food in the hut in time that he would no longer be able to stir. There were times when he felt that he should never feel like eating again.

It was toward the end of the fifth day that an interesting event occurred.

For two or three hours Giddy had sat alone, unable to hear a sound. The cannibals seemed to have gone away for the time being — perhaps, he concluded, to find more food for him.

And then at last there was a very stealthy sound at the door — so faint that Giddy thought at first it must be only the wind. But it was repeated again and again, and at last it was plain that the bar was being taken down from before the door.

A moment later the door opened slowly, and the face of Zukizmic appeared.

It was a face all crooked with anxiety, even with terror; but Giddy did not remark this. He only called out heartily: "Come in!" He felt that it would be a great relief to talk a while, even to Zukizmic.

GIDDY AND THE CANNIBALS

But Zukizmic lifted his finger to his lip as a sign of warning. "Not so loud!" he whispered. And then he carefully closed the door behind him and advanced.

He drew a chair close to Giddy's and sat down; and for a moment it seemed that he had something special to say. But, instead of speaking, he only took his head in both his hands and leaned forward, looking very downhearted.

Giddy looked at him uncomfortably for a time; but at length Zukizmic lifted his head and exclaimed, in a low voice: "I am a very unhappy man!"

Giddy could only look at him in amazement.

"A very unhappy man," repeated Zukizmic. And then, fixing Giddy with an appealing look, he added: "You can see that Zook is unkind to me, can't you?"

Giddy stirred uneasily. He really hadn't noticed it.

But Zukizmic seemed to require no answer. He continued: "However, that is not all. The truth is, I have always been unhappy."

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

He paused so long here that Giddy felt compelled to say: "I shouldn't have guessed it."

"You do not know all," said Zukizmic. "But I want to speak of my grief to you, now that Zook is away getting the knives sharpened."

"The knives?" echoed Giddy, sitting much more erect; but Zukizmic paid no heed to him.

"You see, it was the loss of my brother that made me unhappy first."

"Your brother?"

"My dear brother Zukumzic. Such a promising lad . . . but of course you'll see that it was necessary to separate us, almost from the beginning."

Giddy was frowning with perplexity. "But why?" he asked.

"Why? Because of our names, of course — because of their being so much alike. You can imagine what must have happened. We were forever both running when only one of us was called. Or neither of us would go, thinking it was the other. Don't you see? How often I remember how, when Zukumzic was called to receive a tidbit from the table, I ran

GIDDY AND THE CANNIBALS

eagerly, thinking it was for me, only to be cruelly disappointed. And often when there was a bit of work to be done, and there was a call, I used to say: 'Alas! they are always calling Zukumzic!' And I would not stir — and then later it would develop that it was I who had been summoned. It was bitter — bitter! And so it was necessary to separate us. And at last we got so used to being separated that we couldn't find each other any more. Even our mother couldn't find both of us toward the last. And so I was left alone."

"And you never saw him any more?" asked Giddy solicitously.

"Would that I never had! I *did* see him once more, and was the cause of his undoing. You see, he came home once, at a time when I was very ill; and when night came he was put into my bed, with me, while a doctor was summoned. We both dozed before the doctor came; and when at last he did come, he could not speak distinctly, because of a thirst. I know now that Zukizmic was the name he uttered. I did not know it then; and it was dear Zu-

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

kumzic who leaned forward to receive the mixture of herbs in the spoon."

"You mean, he took your medicine?" said Giddy.

But Zukizmic only regarded him reproachfully, and then hung his head.

"And what happened?" asked Giddy.

Zukizmic clenched his hand firmly, and then permitted his fingers to relax. His hand fell upon his knee. "Zukumzic died," he said at last, nodding his head despondently. "And all because of that cursed resemblance. . . . But enough!"

"I'm afraid it isn't altogether clear to me," declared Giddy. He was trying very hard to think clearly. "And your mother?" he suggested delicately at last.

A tear shone in Zukizmic's eye. "My dear mother! There came a long period of famine, and I was compelled to — but there, it pains me even yet to think of it. She was so *very* tough!"

Giddy was more and more perplexed. He could not understand at all.

GIDDY AND THE CANNIBALS

“And then,” continued Zukizmic, “then came the fatal day when I took up with Zook. There are many things I do not choose to tell you about him, but this I will say: He always insists upon having the heart. By fair or unfair means, he *always* insists upon having it. He’s got a hundred different ways of beating me out of it, and if one scheme doesn’t work, he tries another. It is humiliating — but what can I do? I always try to please him, and there are times when he pretends to be merry. But whenever there is a good dinner in sight, it is the same old story — he *will* have the heart.”

“It doesn’t seem fair,” said Giddy indignantly.

“It isn’t; yet it will be the same way to-night. I know it will.”

Giddy brightened a little. “Are you to have a good dinner to-night?” he asked.

Zukizmic had lapsed into a dreamy mood. “We hope it will be so-so,” he said. He aroused himself. “We do not speak frankly to you,” he explained, “because we feel you ought not to have anything on your mind. But

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

it will be the old story. I *know* he'll get the heart." And at the last word he rested his head on his hand again, and presently he was sobbing softly.

Giddy put forth a hand and touched Zukizmic on the arm. "I'm very sorry," he said.

But Zukizmic only blubbered the more loudly. "And it's such a tender heart!" he said. He repeated this again and again: "It's such a tender heart!"

It occurred to Giddy that he might be able to think of some way of making Zook good-natured, when he came back from getting the knives sharpened. Perhaps he could be persuaded to give Zukizmic the heart, after all. It seemed fearfully selfish that he should claim it always, especially as Zukizmic cared so much about it.

He was turning this problem over in his mind when there was an interruption of such an amazing character that he looked eagerly at Zukizmic, while Zukizmic looked at him.

Some one was approaching through the woods outside, singing a gay song. The air was of a

GIDDY AND THE CANNIBALS

fine, swinging kind, and every word was perfectly distinct:

“Give me the heart: I care not for the drumstick;
I scorn the gizzard and I spurn the thigh.
The heart’s rich juices may perchance make *some* sick,
But ’tis a feast, as no one can deny.”

Giddy and Zukizmic arose, still looking into each other’s eyes searchingly. Zukizmic became pale.

“Zook!” whispered Giddy.

“Zook!” echoed Zukizmic. He glanced about as if for a hiding-place. But at that instant the door was dashed open and Zook, a shining knife in either hand, stood on the threshold.

CHAPTER XXI

AN INTERRUPTED DINNER

ZOOK frowned terribly when he discovered that Zukizmic was in the hut with Giddy.

“What are you doing here?” he demanded in thunder tones.

Zukizmic stood on one foot and then on the other. “I came to see if I could get him to eat a little more,” he said. He was smiling in a sickly fashion.

“He has been very good about wanting me to eat as much as I wished,” said Giddy.

Zukizmic, standing with his back to the wall, nodded many times when Giddy had spoken, and then looked anxiously at Zook.

“So!” said Zook. “Well, now *we’ll* eat.” He spoke with a return of his boisterous good humor. He lifted his right hand and hurled one of the knives toward Zukizmic. There was a flash of light across the room, and the knife

AN INTERRUPTED DINNER

fastened itself in the wall just above Zukizmic's shoulder.

Zukizmic turned and drew the knife out of the wall. "Good!" he exclaimed. "Now we'll eat!"

They set about clearing the rough wooden table in the hut, and Giddy watched them closely. What were they going to eat? Not the fruits and nuts. These they were throwing carelessly through the open doorway. Perhaps it was a rabbit they meant to eat. But, if so, where was the rabbit? Or possibly they were going to have a chicken dinner. But Giddy had seen no chickens anywhere. It was to be something with a heart — so much was certain. But what?

Well, he would just have to wait and see. As for himself, he did not feel hungry at all. But he would not let them know this. They would expect him to share their dinner with them, of course, and they would be disappointed if he told them he had no appetite.

Of course, they would not offer him the heart. Zook would claim the heart. And then he remembered Zukizmic's bitter complaint against

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

Zook, and he felt it was a shame for Zook always to claim the heart. He must be a very overbearing kind of fellow, in spite of his good humor.

As these thoughts filled his mind he was standing away from the table so he should not be in the way while it was being cleared. And now it began to seem strange to him that the dinner had not made its appearance. He could not even smell a single thing.

No doubt they were planning a pleasant surprise for him. He could see that they felt very happy about something. Perhaps he ought to enter into their cheerful mood as far as possible.

Catching Zook's eye, he asked pleasantly: "Am *I* to be at the dinner?" He smiled as he spoke, as if he knew the question was a little absurd.

But he was not prepared for the outbreak which followed.

Zook's laughter really shook the walls. He prodded Zukizmic in the ribs and shouted: "Is *he* to be at the dinner, Zukizmic?"

AN INTERRUPTED DINNER

And Zukizmic laughed until it seemed he might fall down in a fit. "Oh, ho-he, he — is *he* to be at the — oh, spare me! Ho, ho, ho, ho! Is *he* to be at the dinner!" And he leaned against the wall, his hand pressed heavily against his side.

Giddy tried to smile — though it really seemed impolite of them not to give him any answer. Still, he was pleased to see Zook in such a good humor. Perhaps he would treat Zukizmic more fairly, if nobody crossed him.

They had now cleared the table, and indeed the entire hut, of all the fruits and nuts.

Zook pulled the table out into the middle of the room. The setting sun, sending its light in through the open door, fell across it in a very cheerful way. But still there was no sight of the dinner.

And then Zook stuck his knife into the edge of the table and, turning to Giddy with a broad smile, said: "Now!"

And Zukizmic stuck his knife into the edge of the table, and echoed Zook's word: "Now!"

"Is everything ready?" asked Giddy a little wonderingly.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

"Everything is ready," said Zook. And as he spoke he took Giddy up under the arms and sat him down in the middle of the table.

Giddy laughed aloud. "Am I to sit here?" he asked.

"Right you are," said Zook.

"If there aren't enough chairs, I could stand up," said Giddy, rather uncomfortably.

For some strange reason this, too, seemed comical to both Zook and Zukizmic. They laughed long and loud. "No, you'll do very nicely where you are," said Zook at last.

And then Zook and Zukizmic drew their chairs up to the table and sat down side by side.

It was Zook — of course — who took the first amazing and unexpected step. He laid hands on Giddy's coat of rabbit-skins and exclaimed: "Off with it!"

This was really going too far. Giddy could not help being a little dignified. "Excuse me," he said, almost coldly, "I never take my coat off at the table."

Zook's brows lowered darkly. "We want you to take it off," he exclaimed.

AN INTERRUPTED DINNER

Giddy held his head high. "I will *not!*" he said. He had no wish to teach them a lesson in good manners, but there were certain things which he owed to himself.

Zook turned to Zukizmic. "Take off his coat," he said.

But it seemed that Zukizmic could be stubborn when he chose. "Take it off yourself," he retorted. "You started — go ahead and finish."

A growl arose in Zook's throat. He looked angrily at Giddy, but his eyes fell before the proud, serene gaze which they encountered.

"I'll tell you," he said, again speaking to Zukizmic, "we'll cut the cards to see who takes off his coat."

"*I've* got no cards," said Zukizmic in a weak yet resentful tone. "I left them in the castle."

But Zook was not to be beaten so easily. "Then we'll throw our knives at a mark," he declared.

For an instant Zukizmic turned pale. He knew very well that nine times out of ten Zook could beat him at the game of throwing their

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

knives at a mark. And then he hit upon a plan by which he might be the gainer, after all.

"I'll do it," he said, "on one condition. "The loser shall take the coat off, and *the winner shall have the heart*. That's a fair offer. You know very well you had the heart the last time."

"Yes, and you know very well it was a tough heart. It ought not to count."

"Well, I've made my offer. You can take it or leave it," said Zukizmic. His manner had become quite firm.

Zook got up from the table with decision. "All right, it's a go," he decided.

In another instant a small circle had been drawn on the wall, and Zook and Zukizmic had taken their places at the opposite side of the room, their knives in their hands.

Giddy watched with fascinated eyes. He hoped that Zook would lose. He had begun to feel really unfriendly toward Zook.

But when Zook, claiming the right to throw first, set one foot in advance of the other, and sent his knife flying across the room, his heart

AN INTERRUPTED DINNER

sank. Zook's knife was there, sticking in the wall, precisely in the centre of the circle.

Nevertheless, Zukizmic claimed the right to throw his knife, too, though it seemed that he was surely beaten. He set his foot forward carefully; he seemed to be weighing his knife in his hand; and then — a streak of light flashed across the room.

The two knives were there, side by side, so that each seemed to be precisely in the centre of the circle.

The two cannibals crossed the room excitedly.

"I win!" cried Zook.

"*I* win!" cried Zukizmic.

"It's as plain as day!" exclaimed Zook. He pointed with his finger. He measured the distance between the knife-blade and the line of the circle.

But Zukizmic was pointing and measuring too. They were both looking intently at the knives and at the circle.

And just at that instant the floor of the hut moved ever so slightly and Giddy felt something soft touch his hand.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

He looked down. The tiger was standing beside him.

“Get on my back — quick!” whispered the tiger. His tone was such that Giddy had only one thought: that he must obey promptly.

Without making a sound, he threw one leg over the tiger's back and caught fast hold of the loose fur about the animal's neck.

Once more he heard Zook's voice exclaiming: “I win!” And for the last time he heard Zukizmic speak: “No, I win!”

And then he knew he was riding away from the hut, into the shadows of the evening, at a pace which almost made his heart stand still.

CHAPTER XXII

THE RETURN

HE felt painfully bewildered for the first few minutes. Why should he be going away so unceremoniously — and why at such breakneck speed? It was not at all pleasant — riding so rapidly. . . .

He heard a fierce shout behind him — a shout which thrilled him so that he could not help looking over his shoulder. He tried to be careful — to hold on firmly; but the sight he saw unnerved him slightly.

Zook and Zukizmic were standing outside the door of their hut. They were beating their breasts, they were tearing their hair. And it was just at that instant that Giddy lost his balance and went tumbling to the ground. He rolled over and over, unable to control himself.

It was when he had gotten to his hands and knees, still a bit unsteady, that he perceived

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

how Zook and Zukizmic were now rushing toward him, their knives in their hands, their eyes blazing like fire.

“Shall I — ” began Giddy: and he was about to ask the tiger if he should climb back upon his back, when the tiger amazed him still more greatly by springing toward him almost savagely. Indeed, the tiger had put aside all polite manners. He seized Giddy by the back of his rabbit-skin coat, precisely as a cat seizes a mouse, and, carrying him so, resumed his mad gallop into the forest.

Giddy simply did not know *what* happened during the next ten or fifteen minutes. He heard Zook's voice once more, but now it was far behind. And at length the tiger stopped to get his breath. He had been running like a streak. He stretched himself on a bed of moss and lay for a moment, his sides rising and falling rapidly.

Giddy, seated beside him, did not speak for a moment. He was adjusting his rabbit-skin coat a little ruefully. He was thinking what a strange ride it had been, and how his Uncle



Indeed, the tiger had put aside all polite manners

THE RETURN

William's eyes would open when he heard about it. *This* was something to talk about, certainly! Then his thoughts travelled back to the hut, now miles away, and he wondered how that contest between Zook and Zukizmic had resulted.

At last the tiger spoke: "What were they doing, those fellows, when I came in? With their knives?"

"They were trying to find out who should have the heart," said Giddy. He added, with some feeling: "I hope Zook don't get it."

The tiger regarded him queerly, his eyes almost half closed. "I can tell you," he said with emphasis, "that Zook *won't* get it."

"I'm really glad," said Giddy. "You see, poor Zukizmic has had a pretty hard time since he lost Zukumzic."

"Lost *who*?" asked the tiger, suddenly opening his eyes much wider.

"Zukumzic — his brother."

"But — but what did you say *his* name was?"

"Zukizmic."

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

The tiger's forehead wrinkled in a comical fashion. "Well, let's let it go at that," he said. "It makes my head swim. Come, we'd better be getting started again." And while Giddy was climbing on his back he added: "I've had the awfulest time finding you. I thought I never *should*. I've been on the go every minute since I lost you. I've been back with the family several times, to see if you'd got back by yourself: and the elephant would scarcely speak to me."

And with this they were off.

It did not seem a very long journey, after all. The tiger knew the way perfectly, and he moved in a direct line. The moon had not yet arisen, and to Giddy it seemed very dark, but it did not seem so to the tiger. Not once did he miss his footing; not once did he have to pause to give a thought to where he was going. Indeed, he seemed as placid as a lamb until he had come within a mile or so of the end of his journey, when there was a sudden change in his manner.

He stopped short and jerked his ears forward.

THE RETURN

Giddy was just framing a question when the necessity of asking a question no longer existed. A great bellowing sound had shaken the forest.

It seemed almost dreadful to Giddy. He regarded the tiger anxiously. "What was it?" he whispered at last.

"It was the elephant trumpeting," replied the tiger.

"And why does he do that?" asked Giddy.

The tiger continued to listen a moment. His body was very tense. But finally he relaxed somewhat. "We never know until he explains," he said, in reply to Giddy's question. "Sometimes he has a feeling that something is about to happen, and then he makes that loud noise so that all the other animals will keep their eyes and ears open. He may have that feeling now. It may be that he knows you are coming back and are getting near. It may be that he is worrying about *you*."

Again that noise, like deep thunder, sounded, and the tiger quickened his pace.

Giddy could not conquer his uneasiness. He had supposed he would be very happy when he

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

got to the end of his journey; but the tiger's evident anxiety was communicated to him, and he paid almost no attention at all when his surroundings began to seem familiar. Indeed, he gave only a passing glance to the illumination above the monkeys' section — which would have gladdened him at any other time, under the circumstances:

*Monkey, monkey, bottle of beer,
How many monkeys are there here?
10,000!*

He was back with the family again! But he perceived instantly, by the tense attitudes of the animals, and the strange silence, that a great change had occurred since he had left this peaceful spot.

The tiger dashed silently into a group of half a dozen animals and came to a halt close beside the elephant. And Giddy marvelled that he should not receive a hearty welcome. The animals were standing stock-still, their heads held high, their attention concentrated upon — what? You could not have said they

THE RETURN

were afraid, for of course fear was unknown to them. But — well, Giddy could think of no other words: they seemed to be all on edge. And even when the elephant saw Giddy beside him, safe and sound, he paid almost no attention to him at first, but thrust forth his trunk and trumpeted again. He seemed very unlike the tranquil creature who, only a little while ago, had told Giddy that delightful story about why the elephant is afraid of a mouse.

“Is anything wrong?” Giddy ventured to ask.

The elephant did not move. “Something is going to happen,” he said darkly. Then he added, in a lighter tone: “But there, we mustn’t worry. Everything will come out all right.”

He had scarcely finished speaking when Giddy heard a sharp, familiar sound overhead. Up on the side of the mountain, above the pool, the raucus was beating the old telescope on the rock; and in the darkness he could be heard exclaiming doggedly: “I’m going to see this thing through!”

But Giddy did not feel like laughing at the

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

raucus this time. It seemed strange that he should be working at night. His doing so seemed to bear out what the elephant had said — that something was going to happen.

“I think we'll all go to sleep now,” declared the elephant broodingly. “I think we ought to get quieted down.”

As if a spell had been broken, the other animals relaxed somewhat and began to move away into the deeper darkness; but they moved more stealthily than Giddy had ever seen them move before. Clearly, all was not right with them.

The elephant called up to the raucus: “You'd better let that work go for to-night.” There was a low note of warning in his tone. And then, turning to Giddy, he added: “Come, you'd better sleep in the bed the birds made for you again to-night. I'll give you a lift.”

His manner was almost impatient, and he seemed to realize this. “You see,” he explained, “I want to step over into the monkeys' section and ask them to keep a little quiet to-night.”

Giddy could not shut one searching question

THE RETURN

out of his mind: "What is wrong with them? Are they *afraid*?"

He was pondering deeply when the elephant broke in upon his reverie. "Come," he said; and he had just taken Giddy into his trunk and was about to hoist him up into the bed in the tree, when something very amazing happened.

The forest became as light as day: so light, in fact, that both Giddy and the elephant were blinded for the moment.

The elephant instantly released Giddy and lifted his head and trumpeted savagely.

"Sh-h-h!" whispered Giddy warningly.

"What is it?" asked the elephant. He was trembling slightly.

"It is a search-light," said Giddy. "There is a ship lying out at sea."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE GOOD SHIP *ARK*

GIDDY felt that he should never forget that long, uneasy night. Before being lifted up into his bed he had assured the elephant that the great object out on the water was only a ship, and that it could not leave the water. But the elephant had not seemed to be more than half satisfied with what Giddy had said.

He had asked, reasonably enough, why the people on the ship were making that great light, which shone into the very heart of the forest and made it seem like day. And Giddy could not answer this question.

Throughout the entire night, then, the animals were strangely disturbed. Giddy could hear them prowling about here and there, talking in low tones among themselves. He even suspected that sentries had been posted along the edge of the forest, facing the sea, to give

THE GOOD SHIP ARK

warning to the entire family if the ship came any closer, or if there were any suspicious movements on board.

And even when the last muttered word had been spoken, and no other sound was to be heard, Giddy had a sort of *feeling* that every member of the family was lying wide-eyed, with his head toward the sea and every muscle strained.

When sleep came to him at last he slept very soundly; but he was wide-awake before the sun came up, and from the moment he opened his eyes he was eager to be astir, to inquire if anything out of the ordinary had occurred during the night. And even when the sunlight began to sift through the leaves at last, he could not get wholly rid of a feeling of uneasiness.

He had been waiting a long time, it seemed to him, when the elephant finally appeared from some hiding-place in the forest and lifted him down from his place in the tree.

The birds were beginning to fly anxiously overhead, and the noise in the monkeys' section had begun again, when the elephant trumpeted

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

in a special way as a sign that the animals were to assemble.

They came eagerly enough; and Giddy knew by the manner in which they kept their eyes fixed steadily on the elephant that they were looking to him for words of wisdom and comfort.

The elephant began speaking as soon as the family had drawn near. "It is lucky for us," he said, "that Giddy is with us just at this time. He tells me that the strange thing out on the sea is a ship. We shall now ask him to tell us what a ship *is*."

Giddy cleared his throat. He felt that all eyes were on him now, and he could not help being slightly nervous.

"A ship," he explained, "is a — a ship. It comes and goes on the water. It has a captain and a mate and — and sailors. It has a compass, too!" He looked at the elephant to make sure that he was saying what he was expected to say. He added, with more assurance: "And a cook."

"But what does it come and go for?" asked the elephant.

THE GOOD SHIP *ARK*

Giddy was glad the question was such an easy one. "To get from one place to another," he replied.

The elephant frowned, and there was a low murmur throughout the family. "But . . . but why?" asked the elephant.

Giddy thought hard for a moment. Then he knew just what to say. "To carry things," he replied. "Figs and dates — and tea." He thought a moment later, and then added: "And sometimes it carries people."

Strangely enough, this did not seem altogether clear to the elephant. "What I'd like to know," he said, "is why the ship has come here. But, of course, you couldn't tell us that."

Giddy put his fingers to his forehead and reflected. In a moment his face brightened. "If the Superstork would carry me out to the ship I could ask," he said.

But it was plain right away that the elephant would not approve of this. "No," he said, "it might carry you away. We'll have to think of some other plan."

"Anyway, I'm sure it doesn't mean any

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

harm," declared Giddy. "Maybe if we'd all go down to the beach we could find out what it's there for. One of the sailors might land and tell us."

This did not seem a very hopeful suggestion, but as nobody had a better one to offer the elephant slowly agreed that they might all go down to the beach.

But when, presently, they all came to the edge of the forest and looked out to sea, the ship was as much a mystery to the animals as ever. Giddy alone observed it calmly. It was the same ship he had seen in the harbor back of the house with the intoxicated staircase — he felt quite sure of this. But it was so far away he could see nothing clearly. He strained his eyes for any sign of movement about the deck, but so far as he could tell there was none. The only thing he could make out was that the deck did not seem to be the sort of place where you could walk, as a deck ought to be. It was filled up with something: it might be boxes. Giddy could not tell.

"I've seen it before," he said at length. "I

THE GOOD SHIP ARK

saw it when I went to reason with the rabbits. But it was night-time and I couldn't see any more than I can now."

This statement evidently impressed the elephant. He said in a musing tone, as if he were speaking to himself: "It's looking at us from one point, and then from another. Bad—very bad."

The lion pressed closer to him as he spoke, but the only comfort he had to offer was a remark which Giddy did not quite understand: "If the thing *does* come into the forest . . . well, I wonder if it can run very fast."

The elephant answered in a rather severe tone: "We'll not talk of harming it until we find for certain that it means to harm us."

He had just finished speaking when a flock of sea-gulls alighted on the sand-bar; and when the elephant noticed them he seemed to come to a swift decision.

"Suppose you birds fly out a little way and see what you can make of it," he said. "And mind you don't go too close." He tried to speak quite naturally, but Giddy could tell that he was deeply troubled.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

The gulls, however, were only too glad to obey; and in a twinkling there was the clatter of many wings, and the birds were wheeling out to sea. Again and again they circled about, getting closer to the ship all the time. At length they were circling completely about the great black funnel; and again and again they checked their flight, and seemed to be taking careful note of all that could be seen.

Giddy took comfort from the fact that though the gulls finally approached to within a few yards of the ship's deck, and seemed to hang suspended in the air, to get a good view of the strange object, nothing whatever happened. Indeed, it seemed very strange to him that the sailors did not appear, now that there was somebody close by to see them. He knew very well that it is the part of a sailor, when there is anybody about, to take his place on the deck, by the side of other sailors, and sing and dance. But perhaps, after all, you couldn't expect a sailor to pay very much attention to a flock of gulls.

And now — the gulls were coming back! Straight and swift they flew while the elephant

THE GOOD SHIP ARK

watched them with lowered brows; for it seemed certain, by their manner, that they were bringing important news.

When they had again alighted on the beach the elephant asked nervously: "Well, what did you find out?"

"Not very much," confessed the gull which had led the flight. "There are some letters painted in one place: *A, R, K.*"

"The *Ark*," said Giddy lightly. "That would be the name of the ship. You know, you always name them."

"And there are some strange things up near the top," continued the gull. "They are like boxes, except that they are all open, and they are made of iron instead of wood. There are a lot of them, big and little, piled one on top of another."

Giddy had nothing to say in explanation of this; but he was thinking to himself: "That would be those things on deck — whatever they are." And he was beginning to feel a vague fear. If those things on the deck were. . . .

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

There was an interruption here. The raucus came running toward them, shouting and giving every evidence of being greatly excited.

"I've seen this thing through!" he cried, as soon as he came to where Giddy and the elephant stood. "I've seen this thing through." And he held forth the old telescope.

He had remained behind when the others had gone down to the beach; and at last, after long effort, he had succeeded in displacing the seaweed and sand which had filled the telescope, stopping it up.

Giddy took the telescope with trembling hands, without saying a word. He levelled it toward the distant ship. And when he removed it from his eyes his face had become very pale. He spoke to the elephant in a voice which was little more than a whisper:

"Those iron boxes on the deck — they are *empty cages!*"

The elephant looked at him sharply. "Are you sure?" he asked.

"I am positive," said Giddy.

A fearful stillness came over the elephant.

THE GOOD SHIP *ARK*

For a moment he seemed unable to move; and then he turned toward the forest.

“Come!” he said, “all of you. There is work for us to do, and not a moment to lose!”

CHAPTER XXIV

A TIME OF PERIL

THE one thing which seemed plainest of all to Giddy was that fear had come into the forest at last; and he felt the deepest pity for the poor simple creatures that knew no better than to be afraid when there was really nothing to be afraid of. Those empty cages on the ship's deck . . . well, they were there for no good, certainly. But the family in the forest had only to be watchful and no one could capture them or harm them.

He was deeply impressed by the firm, brisk manner in which the elephant began to speak as soon as they were all back in the heart of the forest again. He was soon to be surprised at the extent of the elephant's wisdom, and he was also soon to be convinced that the great beast knew just what to do in this crisis which had arisen.

The elephant measured his words a long time

A TIME OF PERIL

before he spoke. It was plain that he did not wish to make matters look worse than they really were. At last he said:

“The time has come for us to be very careful. The ship we have seen is dangerous. It carries empty cages. For what purpose? That we may be made prisoners and taken away from the forest to strange lands and cities. The creatures who hunt animals are cruel beyond belief. They know nothing about how gentle and tender-hearted we are. They care nothing. They would put us in cages and separate us, one from another, and we should grow old and die without ever seeing our forest again, without hearing a word from those who are our dear brothers and sisters.”

A low murmur, deepening almost to a growl, went round the circle of those who listened to him.

“But we have been warned in time. It will now be our duty to be very watchful by day. But our most difficult task will be to protect ourselves at night, when we are asleep. There is but one safe thing for us to do. We must

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

find a hiding-place to enter at night where we cannot be found."

There were many interruptions here, almost all of the animals believing they knew the best hiding-place.

The elephant spoke again: "My own idea is that the safest place is the den of the wolves, under the mountain. If any one can suggest a better place, let him speak."

But it seemed that there was instant agreement that the den of the wolves was the best hiding-place of all.

A chorus arose: "We will all sleep with the wolves."

The elephant's voice broke in sharply: "Not so loud! Even now there may be spies within hearing. We must act in secret. And I wish to point out to you one great difficulty. The entrance to the den of the wolves is now too small for many of us to enter. It must be made larger, or a new opening must be made. The question is, Can we make it?"

There was a ready response to this: "We can!"

A TIME OF PERIL

It was the lion who spoke first, and his words were echoed by the tiger, the leopard, the lynx, the panther, and many other animals having sharp, powerful claws.

There was a ring of pride in the elephant's voice as he replied: "Very well, then — to work!"

The raucus was directed to take his telescope to the beach and hide in some spot from which he could watch the ship closely. He was instructed to bring word of the first suspicious movement. And then the others all moved in a band toward the entrance to the wolves' cave under the mountain.

Giddy watched with the keenest interest. He had not learned as yet where the wolves slept; and now, following the eager animals, he came upon an opening in the mountain, not far from where the dark pool ran away to the sea. It was cunningly hid by a great screen of vines, and it was on a side of the mountain which you would scarcely have thought of passing.

He was looking with fascinated eyes at this

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

opening when he heard the elephant, speaking to him in confidential tones: "Suppose you go in and look around a little, will you? I've never been inside, of course. The wolves have had a good deal to say about how big and grand their house is, but I've always supposed they made things appear bigger than they really were. You know, there's a good deal of innocent rivalry among the animals. Do you mind going in?"

Giddy was very glad indeed to go in; and when he stepped forward, an ancient wolf joined him. "I'll show you the way," he said simply. "The path is a bit rough, and there isn't very much light."

"It's a very good idea," agreed Giddy; and when the wolf disappeared through the low opening, he followed, dropping for the moment to his hands and knees.

His first wonderful discovery was that he was almost immediately in a vast cavern, the ceiling of which was as high as the ceiling of a church. There were many partitions, some of them rising from below, and some descending

A TIME OF PERIL

from above, and in the dim light they looked like purest marble. At first it seemed, indeed, quite dark; but little by little Giddy began to see more clearly. It seemed that here and there, at distant, high points, there were crevices in the ceiling of stone, and a certain amount of light was admitted to the various chambers.

There was a rough path which led from one chamber to another; and there were times when you had to stoop to follow this path, while at the very next minute it was hundreds of feet to the ceiling. There were places where the partitions between the chambers looked like enormous icicles hanging from the ceiling or arising from the floor; but when Giddy went close to these he perceived that they were of beautiful white rock, very much like onyx. They seemed very wonderful.

And then the path ran along the edge of a little stream, beginning and ending in places which you could not see at all. Most wonderful of all, perhaps, were the great benches of stone, now on one side of the path and now on the other. Each of these was large enough

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

for a hundred men or beasts to sleep on. They were perfectly dry, though Giddy thought they might not be very clean.

The ancient wolf led the way, without speaking, until it was plain there was no end to this strange cave. And then Giddy stopped. "I think," he said, "we've gone far enough. I'm sure I shall be able to tell the elephant all that he wishes to know."

They made their way back then; and already the opening was much larger than it had been. Certain of the animals were clawing the earth away, and now and again the elephant was grasping a great stone in his trunk and removing it. And all the time they were very careful not to disturb the cunning screen of vines.

Later, the stones which had been loosened were carried into the cave, so that they might be used in sealing up the entrance, if this hiding-place, upon which so much depended, were discovered.

Giddy was able to make a wholly favorable report to the elephant, whose eyes beamed

A TIME OF PERIL

when he heard the description of the great benches, and when he was told of the running water in the cave. He did not admit that they might all be compelled to remain in the cave for days at a time, but he *did* say it was a very good thing that there was fresh water to be had.

There was a parley when the work was all done. It was agreed that the monkeys might continue to live in their section, and of course it was conceded that the birds were in no danger. It was suggested that the birds might notify the monkeys, in the event anything unusual happened. And then it was decided that everything that could be done had been done.

Giddy made a trip to the beach then, moving as carefully as possible. He talked to the raucus, who reported that the ship had not moved, and that he had seen no signs of life.

“Um-m!” said Giddy. “That’s very suspicious. By the way, would you mind lending me the telescope?”

He observed the ship through the telescope. And at that very instant a man appeared at

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

the door of the cabin and stepped out upon the deck.

Giddy lowered the telescope and rubbed his eyes. "No, no — it cannot be!" he cried.

"What is it?" asked the raucus.

But Giddy believed his eyes had played him a trick. "It is nothing," he said. But he adjusted the telescope carefully to his eyes again. The man was bending over the rail now, evidently examining the ship's boats. He turned away without lifting his face again, and Giddy could see him no more. And Giddy repeated, again and again, "No, it cannot be." Nevertheless, a dark conviction had taken possession of him.

He left the raucus and returned to the forest, and to the mouth of the cave, where the animals were just finishing their task.

"I think," he said, a little sharply, "we shall all do well to turn in a little early to-night. I have seen certain movements on board of the ship."

The elephant looked at him intently without asking any questions just then. But after re-

A TIME OF PERIL

flecting a moment he announced to all the members of the family: "I'm sure that is good advice. I shall expect you all to be ready to pass into the cave whenever the word is given."

And then he and Giddy went apart and were seen talking in low, anxious tones.

CHAPTER XXV

A FACE IN THE MOONLIGHT

IF you had passed through the forest that day, about an hour before sundown, you would have found all the animals behaving very much as if nothing had happened. And yet it was plain to Giddy that every one of them was thinking about the ship with the empty cages, and the cave in the mountain, and the danger they had all been called upon to meet.

Many of the animals had wandered away in search of something for their supper; and he observed that certain of them were pondering deeply, as if they had other problems to solve — though just what these could be he was not to discover until afterward. It had not yet occurred to him that he had not seen any of the mother animals, or the baby animals. A sight of these members of the family was, indeed, one of the pleasant experiences still awaiting him.

A FACE IN THE MOONLIGHT

About an hour before sundown, however, a sudden alarm was sounded. The raucus came running up from the beach, dragging his telescope with him, and crying: "It's coming closer! It's moving!"

A glance of comprehension passed between Giddy and the elephant, and then Giddy hurried cautiously away toward the beach. The elephant uttered only one word: "Steady!" And all the animals remained in their places.

At the edge of the forest Giddy stationed himself behind a large tree and furtively observed the ship. Smoke was pouring from its funnels, and for the first time there was the sight of sailors on the deck. The *Ark* was slowly nosing her way toward the beach and was already fully a mile closer shore than she had been that morning.

Giddy had seen enough. He hurried back into the forest. He tried to smile reassuringly at the elephant, yet his voice trembled when he said: "The raucus is right. She is approaching. The time has come to hide."

Only once did the elephant trumpet; and

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

then, much to Giddy's surprise, many of the animals, instead of moving toward the mouth of the cavern, disappeared swiftly into the depths of the forest. The others waited, as if for a second signal.

But in a little while the animals that had disappeared began to return; and then Giddy understood. They were bringing with them the mother animals and the baby animals. And it was then that a general movement toward the mouth of the wolves' den began.

Giddy stood on one side and watched. An anxious lioness, with two fine little cubs, passed him. She glanced at him in passing, but said nothing. It was plain that she was giving all her attention to the cubs — innocent creatures who did not have the slightest idea why they were going into a place which was not their own.

A tigress with her young passed, and a bear; and, almost before Giddy could observe them, a number of mother deer and elk went by with their young by their side.

After all the mothers and their young had

A FACE IN THE MOONLIGHT

been permitted to pass into the cavern the others began to follow. There was a very large number of them — it seemed to Giddy that the cavern might not be large enough, after all. Yet they continued to disappear, and the sound of their footsteps and hushed voices could be heard no more.

The raucus was among the last to go in. He was lugging his precious telescope and chuckling gleefully: "I have seen this thing through!" And then he was gone.

Giddy and the elephant waited until the last, one standing on either side of the cavern's mouth. And at last the elephant said, in calm, unshaken tones: "It is your turn, Giddy." And Giddy passed into the cavern.

Once inside he turned and waited; and when the elephant entered he detained him.

"Just a minute," he said; and his voice was so solemn that the elephant regarded him anxiously.

"I have a key here," continued Giddy. "It opens one of the doors in the house with the intoxicated staircase. I had hoped to be able

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

to put it back into its hiding-place; but that chance may never come, now. I will put it here on this ledge — see?" He took the key from his pocket and placed it on a little shelf of rock over his head. "And I ask you to remember that it is there. I may get it again myself. But . . . if anything should happen to me, I want you to remember that it is there. And if any other boy ever comes into the forest, I ask you to give it to him. There is a number on it. It is the number of the door it will unlock. And he who opens that door will find much treasure. That is all."

"I promise," said the elephant. There was a little tremor in his voice. And then they two continued their way into the cavern.

But if Giddy had felt the weight of that solemn moment, he was soon able to place his mind on pleasanter things.

All the animals seemed quite happy — as if they were having a great lark of some sort. An immense lion approached him proudly and said: "I want you to see my babies." And he allowed himself to be conducted away to one

A FACE IN THE MOONLIGHT

of the great ledges of rock; and there he found the lioness and her cubs.

“They are very fine cubs, indeed,” declared Giddy. If there was a note of patronage in his voice, neither the lion nor the lioness noticed it. “Can they — er — talk yet?”

The lion and the lioness looked at each other with amusement. “Oh, no — they’re too young,” said the lioness.

But Giddy smoothed over the awkward moment by taking one of the cubs into his arms. He loved it the instant he touched it — it was so soft and warm and helpless.

There were other mothers and babies to be visited, and Giddy might have forgotten such things as caution and danger had not one of the wolves come to him with word that the elephant wished to speak to him. The wolf was a proud and happy creature that night, for was he not entertaining all the members of the family?

Giddy found the elephant near the entrance. “I’m thinking it might be best to wall up part of this entrance,” said the elephant. “Would you advise it? You see, if by any chance we

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

should be found . . . well, I think it would be better if they had to come in on all-fours instead of standing."

"I'm sure you're right," said Giddy, though he had only a vague idea of what the elephant had in mind.

It was then that the elephant summoned the lion and the tiger and gave them their instructions: "I shall expect you two to remain on guard here near the entrance. And if any one attempts to enter the cavern during the night — *destroy him!*"

Giddy felt a thrill of excitement run through his body; but he said nothing. And for a time he stood and watched, while the elephant lifted large stones and piled them about the entrance to the cavern.

He realized that it had grown dark out in the forest; and little by little the murmuring voices back in the cavern were hushed as one animal after another fell asleep. It began to seem rather terrible, hiding there in the wolves' den, while that ship crept closer to the beach and the darkness fell more heavily.

A FACE IN THE MOONLIGHT

And then, through the small opening into the cavern which the elephant had left, Giddy saw a blinding flash of light fall through the forest. The search-light was being used again!

He tried to conquer his excitement as he turned to the elephant. "If you don't object," he said, "I'll step out long enough to see what's going on. I won't venture beyond the screen of vines."

"Well . . . perhaps it would be a wise thing to do," said the elephant; and in another moment Giddy had climbed out over the barrier of stones and was peering out through the screen of vines.

The search-light had been turned off again, but the full moon was rising, and a pale light fell upon objects outside the cavern. A deep silence reigned throughout the forest. Even the monkeys had become quiet.

Giddy stood for a long time, looking about him cautiously. And at last he began to feel weighted down with a sense of fear, because of the silence and because he realized that he

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

was all alone. He was just about to turn back into the cavern again when he heard a sound which caused him to stand as stiff as a rock. *He had heard a man's voice!*

Again he peered intently through the screen of vines. He had not been mistaken. A man was approaching: a man in a captain's uniform. And then Giddy saw that the captain was being followed by a number of sailors.

He stood fixed to his place while that group of intruders approached. He felt that he would have given worlds to be back inside the cavern. But now he dared not move, lest he be heard and discovered.

The captain still approached, and now Giddy could almost have touched him. He paused; he seemed to listen; and then he passed on.

But Giddy was standing with clenched fists, looking after that retreating figure. His heart was beating violently. He knew who the man was! He had not been mistaken, then, when he had seen the figure on the ship come out onto the deck. He knew the man, beyond a doubt; for the light of the moon had shone on

A FACE IN THE MOONLIGHT

his face when he stood for a fatal instant outside the cavern.

The man who stood there in the moonlight was one whom he had once loved well — whom he never would have suspected of cruelty or deceit.

It was his Uncle William!

CHAPTER XXVI

DISASTER

WHEN Giddy crept back into the cavern again he was trembling, and there was an expression of great anxiety in his eyes.

The elephant seemed to realize that he was greatly disturbed; for, after waiting a moment for a report of what Giddy had seen, he said:

“Speak out, Giddy! It is better that I should know the worst.”

But Giddy felt that he could not say that his own uncle was the captain of the ship which had driven the spirit of contentment and security out of the forest. It was too terrible. He replied falteringly:

“The captain of the ship passed me as I stood behind the vines—the captain and some of the sailors. But they did not find out where we are. They passed on.” He felt that he could not speak more frankly just then.

And so the long night set in.

DISASTER

For hours, it seemed, Giddy listened for the sound of voices outside the cavern — for the one voice he had never expected to hear in such a place; and for hours he strained his eyes to catch sight of the warning light in the forest, but it remained invisible. Now and again, indeed, it seemed to him that strange sounds were audible; and more than once he noted that the lion or the tiger lifted his head sharply and listened intently. But perhaps imagination was playing its part. Perhaps there really was no sound at all.

And so the hours passed, and it seemed to Giddy that the day would never break: yet if he had been able to foresee what the next day was to bring it might well have been that he would have wished the night might last forever.

Time and again he drowsed; but only to stir almost immediately, and to cast his eyes anxiously over the silent figures about him.

There lay the lion and the tiger, on either side of the mouth of the cavern: their paws outstretched, their heads resting on them. The

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

ghostly light from without touched them faintly. And a little to the rear stood the elephant, his eyes closed, his great body swaying slightly to and fro. He was asleep, and yet he seemed to be on guard.

For himself, Giddy spent the night on a ledge of rock; but he was not comfortable, and he gave a great sigh of relief when the light of day began to steal into the cavern, and the lion and the tiger stirred, and the elephant said at last: "Well! — I do believe I must have fallen asleep. It is morning!"

Giddy was the first to leave the cavern. The fresh air rejoiced him and brought his courage back to him. The forest was a place of wonderful beauty in the early morning. There was nothing in sight which even hinted of danger. The monkeys had begun to chatter in the most cheerful fashion, and the birds were flying about with perfect freedom. Indeed, there was a moment during which he wondered if that picture of evil which he had seen the night before had not been only a dream.

He ran back to the mouth of the cavern.

DISASTER

“It’s all right!” he called. And then, to be doubly sure, he ran off to the beach to have a look at the ship.

Here again he made an agreeable discovery. The ship was lying farther out to sea again, and there was no sign of life about her. The surface of the water was as calm as a pond, as green as the very greenest carpet. The sun shining on it made him think of pleasant things rather than of dangers.

Still, he jumped a little when he heard a voice behind him. But it was only the raucus, who had come down to the beach, lugging the telescope. “Do you want to see this thing through?” he asked.

Giddy was very glad indeed to observe the ship through the telescope. And it was well that he did so, too; for he could discern certain movements which he had not seen with the naked eye. There were a number of sailors working about the deck, partly hidden by the empty cages. Giddy could not be sure, but he thought they must be making ready for a voyage. There was something in the way they moved

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

about which made you think they were very much in earnest.

Still, he knew very well that his Uncle William and the sailors would not dream of coming into the forest in the daytime. They would know that by doing so they would frighten the animals. They would know, too, that the animals would be able to see them in time to make their escape.

However, he felt that he ought to make a faithful report, to the elephant, of what he had seen. He wished very much that he might have gone down on the beach and taken his bath; but this, of course, was not to be thought of.

The animals were coming out of the cavern when he got back into the forest; indeed, most of them had already come out. And it delighted him to see how joyous they were. It was just as if they had been in school and had now been allowed to put aside their books and play a while.

They began to scatter — many of them, of course, going to find something for breakfast;

DISASTER

and the mother animals, he supposed, were taking their young back into the forest hiding-places from which they had come the night before.

Giddy could not quite recall, afterward, what he was doing when the first great disaster befell. Indeed, it came so suddenly, and it so completely changed the aspect of all about him, that he was fairly staggered. All had seemed promising and bright, and then . . .

There was a fearful crashing noise, followed by the dull sound of trumpeting. There was also a sudden sense of chaos and terror everywhere. And Giddy, trying to obtain a grasp upon the situation, looked about him in dismay, only to discover that the elephant had vanished completely from sight.

Some of the other animals were wildly racing toward a certain spot in the forest, and Giddy ran in that direction to learn what had happened.

It was all frightfully plain in an instant. A great pit had been dug in the earth, and it had been covered with branches and earth. The

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

elephant, without suspecting, had followed an accustomed path and had come upon this pit. The covering had given way beneath his weight, and he was now a prisoner, as helpless as if he had been bound with chains.

Giddy, his face quite pale, approached the edge of the pit. But before he could think of a word to say he was terrified by the noises which began to arise all about him. There was the sound of crashing and falling, and then there were roars of anger and terror. In every direction the larger animals were disappearing into pits similar to the one into which the elephant had fallen.

Only a moment later there was a chorus of screams from the monkeys' section — the most frantic cries imaginable.

Giddy wrung his hands helplessly; and then his eyes met the brooding eyes of the elephant. "A coward's trick," the elephant was saying; but he spoke more despondently than angrily. He seemed to be pondering for a moment, and then the increased din throughout the forest aroused him. He looked at Giddy apprehensively.

DISASTER

Giddy replied to that look. "Yes," he said, "the others have been trapped, too." He turned toward one part of the forest, and then another. "They are disappearing, one by one," he said. "Even the monkeys . . ."

The elephant exclaimed incredulously: "But the monkeys couldn't be caught in a trap like this!"

"No, they're still in the trees. I can't think what's happened to them. But — just listen to them!"

But he soon ceased to listen to the monkeys. He was scanning the forest in every direction; and at different points one animal after another seemed suddenly to stumble and disappear. Almost before he could realize it, Giddy was the only living creature in sight.

He turned toward the elephant, his body stiffening with determination. "We — we must *do* something!" he declared.

But the elephant was hanging his head. "Yes," he said despondently. "We must do something; but . . . what?"

A strange expression of stern determination

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

came into Giddy's eyes. "There is only one way," he said at last. "There is only one hope for us. The time has come for me to act. I shall do my best; and if I fail. . . . But I must not fail!"

"What do you mean?" asked the elephant.

"Do not ask me that. I must leave you now. And if I never see you again, I shall always remember the funny story you told me — about the mouse, you know — and how kind you have been to me. But I shall hope to the very end to succeed. I *must* succeed!"

And with that he turned away.

Once he heard the elephant trumpet long and loud; and he knew that somehow that message was carrying comfort and hope to the other trapped animals. And then he began running rapidly through the forest. He was going straight toward the beach.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE WHITE FLAG

WHEN he reached the beach he was a little out of breath; and when he stopped to rest a moment it occurred to him that the thing he had planned to do might prove to be quite impossible. At best it would prove a most difficult and perhaps dangerous task.

The thing that Giddy had determined to do was this: he meant to see his Uncle William and plead with him to go away without capturing the animals. He could not imagine why his uncle should have come to the forest upon so heartless a mission; but he meant to explain how gentle and happy the animals were, and what good friends they had been to him. He would prove to his uncle that there would be no pleasure at all in living in the forest if the animals were to be taken away.

It would be a simple task, he thought, if he could only reach his Uncle William. But how

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

was he to reach him? He might have to pass a score of sailors: rough fellows who would not know him, and who might consider him an enemy, since he came out of the forest from among the animals.

. . . Well, he must run the risk of being treated as an enemy by the sailors. Once let him get the attention of his uncle, and he believed that he would be protected from the anger of the sailors.

He wondered what had become of the raucus and his telescope. The telescope would have been very useful now. But of course he must do the best he could without it.

The ship was quite far away; but it did not have that idle and purposeless appearance it had had on other occasions. Smoke was pouring freely from the funnels, and Giddy thought he caught a glimpse now and again of a sailor working energetically on the deck. It seemed to him, too, that something had been done to the empty cages. He thought they had been rearranged and gotten ready for use.

If he could only attract the attention of his

THE WHITE FLAG

Uncle William! He could make a sign, in that case, showing that he wished to talk to him. Then a boat could be sent out to get him and he would be taken on board, and he could reason with his uncle.

He began the long walk across the white sand-bar. If he walked quite down to the beach perhaps he would be seen, and they would know that he wanted to have a talk with them.

But when he reached the point where the waves broke restlessly at his feet he really seemed no closer to the ship than he had been when he was back at the edge of the forest. It seemed useless to cry out. His voice would never carry half the distance. Indeed, the waves were making so much noise that he might not even have heard himself, if he had shouted.

He must try other means. He waved his arms. He ran to and fro along the beach. He stopped and looked so intently at the ship that he felt they *must* look at him, and understand what it was he wanted.

And then he heard a sound which made his heart ache anew. During a brief lull in the

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

washing sound of the waves, he heard the elephant trumpet mournfully. He looked back toward the forest where he had been so happy, and he thought of all the kind animals, trapped in the earth, and all depending upon him to be rescued.

Oh, *why* would not his Uncle William see him and send one of the boats out after him?

As if in answer to his question there was a strange stirring of the waters, only a short distance out at sea. A great jagged fin, like a new sort of sail, was moving toward him. And in a minute or two an old acquaintance of Giddy's appeared. It was the shark.

"I saw you running back and forth, as if you'd taken leave of your senses," said the shark, grinning a bit mischievously all the while. "What is the matter?"

"I want my — I want them out on the ship to see me."

"Why don't you want to see *them* instead?"

"Well, I do. It's the same thing."

"Nothing could be simpler. Get on my back and I'll take you out."

THE WHITE FLAG

Giddy regarded him eagerly. Was that the solution of his problem, after all? But little by little the remembrance of the shark's trickery came back to him. Or if not his trickery, at least his uncertain ways.

It occurred to him to ask a question. "Have you seen all your brothers lately?" he asked.

The shark lowered his eyes guiltily, though he seemed to be grinning. But in a moment he looked directly into Giddy's eyes. "I have," he declared. "Every one of them."

"I'm certainly glad to hear that," said Giddy. He pondered earnestly. Something told him not to trust the shark. Still, there seemed no other way of getting at his Uncle William.

"Come on," said the shark, almost tauntingly. "What are you afraid of?"

Giddy hesitated. "What would the sailors say, when they saw you and me coming out together?" he asked.

It was on the tip of the shark's tongue to say, truthfully, "I'd take a dive"; but he realized that this would not suit Giddy at all. And so he said, instead, in a somewhat drawling

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

voice: "Oh, they're not going to get ugly. Why should they?"

And then a bright idea occurred to Giddy. "I think it might be managed," he said, with sudden determination. "Will you wait a minute?"

He walked a few steps away from the beach and waited until a flock of gulls passed near him, overhead. By a gesture of his hand he gave one of them to understand that he wished to speak to him.

It was a very old and wise gull that fluttered down to him; and when the bird caught the expression on the shark's face he said to Giddy, with an air of saying some trifling thing about the weather, perhaps: "Look out for that fellow, Giddy. You know the old saying, 'If a shark fools you once, shame on *him*. If he fools you twice, shame on *you!*' "

"I have to run the risk," declared Giddy. "I *must* reach that ship. But I mean to be careful. That is why I called you. I want you to fly to the tree where my bed is and look in the pocket of my rompers and bring me my handkerchief."

THE WHITE FLAG

“But why?” asked the gull, plainly puzzled.

“I mean to use it as a flag of truce.”

And when the gull flew away toward the forest, Giddy turned to the shark, fearful that he might have suspected something of what the gull had said. But the shark had heard nothing, seemingly. He was lashing the water with his tail, and turning over partly on his side, with all the innocence of a kitten or a puppy.

“I’ve decided to go with you,” said Giddy, “if you’ll wait until the gull brings my handkerchief. You see, I simply *must* speak to my — to the sailors on the ship.”

The gull returned almost immediately, bringing Giddy’s handkerchief, which was a white one, in his bill. And Giddy lost no time in choosing a long straight wand from a little heap of driftwood, and fixing the handkerchief to one end, like a flag.

He gave no further thought to danger now. He turned to the shark with determination. “I am ready,” he said. And without another word he climbed carefully upon the shark’s back.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

And almost immediately he began to reproach himself for having doubted the shark's honest intention. The strange creature was swimming with the greatest circumspection through the green sea. He was extremely careful that Giddy should not be upset. In truth, the most elegantly appointed boat would not have served Giddy's purpose a bit better.

They had gotten up pretty fair speed before they were well away from the beach; and it seemed only a few minutes before the ship began to come more plainly into view.

Giddy was holding his staff well aloft, and the white handkerchief was fluttering bravely in the wind.

It was so that they moved nearer and nearer to the good ship *Ark*.

CHAPTER XXVIII
FACE TO FACE

GIDDY could see them now — the sailors on the main deck. Yes, and there was his Uncle William, too. His Uncle William was standing a little apart, and the sun was shining on his captain's uniform. He looked very well, indeed — though Giddy realized at the same time that he wore a very severe expression.

And when Giddy got close enough to them to read the expression in their eyes he could not help marvelling, for they did not seem at all surprised that he should be coming out to them, riding on a shark. It might almost have seemed that they were expecting him, and that they knew he would come in just this way.

They threw a rope ladder down to him without saying a word, and the shark swam carefully and slowly until Giddy was in a position to seize hold of the end of the ladder. He pulled

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

himself up with both hands until he could place his foot on the bottom rung of the ladder; and then he turned to speak to the shark.

"I suppose you will be here when I am ready to go back?" he asked.

But the shark was beginning to act very queerly. "Have you got a good hold on the ladder?" he asked.

"Of course!" said Giddy.

"Then . . . will you excuse me? I just caught sight of one of my *sisters*."

Giddy could have sworn that he heard a gurgling laugh; and then there was a sudden commotion in the water, and the shark was gone.

It was an anxious moment. Giddy had not burned his bridges behind him, exactly; but it seemed plain that he had lost his shark. But he had no time to think of the shark just then, or to consider how he was to get back to land when his talk with his Uncle William was over. He was thinking, instead, of those moments which lay just ahead of him, and the duty he had to perform. He was ascending the ladder, rung after rung.

FACE TO FACE

And then he heard his Uncle William's voice quite close to him: "Giddy, how often has your mother told you not to make friends with sharks?" The voice was petulant, unpleasant.

Giddy could not remember that his mother had ever said a word to him about making friends with sharks; and moreover, it was not at all like his Uncle William to scold him. But he knew that he must not cross his Uncle William now. Instead, he put out his hand so that he could be helped over the railing; and the next instant he was safe on the deck.

He stood, regarding his Uncle William intently, and trying not to mind the severe expression in the eyes which were turned toward him. And finally he said, trying to speak very politely: "Could I have a few words with you, Uncle William?"

His uncle was behaving very strangely. "I can give you only a few minutes," he said. He spoke in a sharp, businesslike manner. "I am very busy to-day. What did you wish to say?"

Still, he led the way to a part of the deck

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

which was open, and pointed to a chair. It did not seem at all strange to Giddy that the chair should be a little red rocking-chair, precisely like the one he had at home. He took the chair, and his Uncle William sat down on a deck-chair near by.

"Please be brief," said his Uncle William.

"I should like to ask you," began Giddy, choosing his words with great care, "why you have come to the Sandman's Forest."

"I will tell you. We have decided to have a fine zoo at home, and I was chosen to come here to collect animals."

"Just so," said Giddy. He nodded his head thoughtfully. "Well," he continued, "I wish to tell you that I have made a — a treaty with the animals." He looked steadily into his Uncle William's eyes.

But if he had hoped these words would prove impressive, he was doomed to be disappointed. His Uncle William reflected a moment and then laughed very impolitely. "Why, Giddy," he said, "I don't believe you know what the words mean."

FACE TO FACE

Giddy crossed his legs, just as his uncle had done. "Let me explain. If I treat anybody all right, and that's all there is to it, that's not a treaty. That's just *treating*. But if they treat me right, too — I mean, if we all treat one another right, why, that's a — a treaty."

His Uncle William turned slightly pale. "I didn't suppose you knew," he said uneasily. He was very much chagrined.

"And so, of course," continued Giddy, "I don't want you to take the animals away from the forest. I think you have been very unkind to them — trapping them, the way you have. And the monkeys: what have you done to them? You couldn't make *them* fall into holes in the ground, could you?"

His Uncle William cleared his throat impatiently. "We managed differently with the monkeys," he admitted. "We took a great many pairs of little handcuffs into the forest and tied them to trees. Then we used larger handcuffs on ourselves — putting them on and closing them and then taking them off. We pretended to be having great fun doing this.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

And then we went away. We knew the monkeys would come right away and put on the little handcuffs. But of course theirs were different. *They wouldn't come off.*"

"You tricked them," said Giddy.

"Well," said his Uncle William uncomfortably, "we've got to have a zoo. And that was the best way."

Giddy looked away across the ship's rail for a moment. The sea, under the bright sun, was wonderfully beautiful, and the forest in the distance presented a most charming picture. But presently he arose and began pacing to and fro on the deck. He was trying not to be angry. At length he said: "Uncle William, if you knew what I know, you would go back and leave the animals alone."

His Uncle William gave a short laugh. "I couldn't think of it," he said.

It was then that Giddy's face became very stern. He turned slowly upon his Uncle William and stood still. "Uncle William," he began, "do you remember the night I was five years old?"

FACE TO FACE

“Perfectly.”

“I am very glad you do. And do you remember that on the night I was five years old you made me a promise?”

“A promise?” echoed his Uncle William; but the pallor of his cheeks proved that he had not forgotten.

“A promise. You promised that the first favor I asked of you should be granted.”

“Well?”

“Well, the time has come for me to ask that favor. I want you to sail home and leave the animals where they are.”

It was now his Uncle William’s turn to pace the deck. For long moments he struggled with himself; and at last he turned and in a hoarse voice whispered: “Don’t ask it of me, Giddy!”

But Giddy stood with his head erect, his hands clenched. “I must!” he replied; and his voice was almost as hoarse as his uncle’s had been.

His Uncle William staggered to the rail, a broken man. For a time he stood with his chin on his breast, battling with himself. But at

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

last he turned, as if he were very weary. In a hopeless voice he said:

“Very well — I must keep my promise. I will go back.”

Giddy felt that he had never been so sorry for any one in his life; yet he knew he had asked only what was right. He approached his Uncle William with outstretched hand. “Spoken like a man!” he said, pressing the proffered hand earnestly. And then he turned away a little sadly. “Good-by,” he said.

But his Uncle William aroused himself. “Stay, Giddy!” he cried. “Won’t you go home with me?”

Giddy turned and stood with bowed head. “I cannot,” he said:

“Well . . . so be it. But you must let me send the men with a boat to land you safely. I cannot bear to have you riding on a shark.”

Giddy was deeply touched. “I accept your offer,” he said, “and thank you. And I promise I shall ride on the shark no more.”

“And there is one more thing,” said his Uncle William. He fumbled in his pocket and brought

FACE TO FACE

forth a little key. "It will open the handcuffs," he said, avoiding Giddy's eye. "You will want to set them free. And now leave me. I—I wish to be alone."

A moment later there was the screaming of pulleys as one of the ship's boats was lowered. And then Giddy was rowed ashore.

Only once he looked back; but his Uncle William had disappeared.

CHAPTER XXIX

SAVED !

AT the beach Giddy got out of the boat and politely thanked the sailors who had rowed him ashore; and he was not surprised when they replied somewhat sullenly. Poor fellows, they must have been sadly disappointed, too. He heard the grinding of their oars as they turned about; but already he was running across the wide sand-bar, straight for the forest. It was good news he had to take to the elephant — the best, no doubt, that had been taken into the forest in many a year.

Of course, there still remained the task of getting the animals out of the holes in the ground, and he had no idea how this was to be done. But he and the elephant would talk the matter over and a way might be found. It occurred to him that it would have been only fair if he had asked his Uncle William to assist in this work; but he could understand

SAVED !

that this would have been very humiliating. At the last moment his Uncle William might even have changed his mind. No, it was better not to wish that any one from the ship had come ashore.

. . . He was somewhat out of breath when he reached the spot where the elephant was a captive. Indeed, he could not speak for a moment or two. But there was no need of words. The elephant had only to look into his eyes to read a message of victory. And yet he refused to be too confident.

“Well, Giddy?” he asked hopefully.

And then Giddy found his voice. “We are saved!” he cried. “The ship is going to sail away.” He paused then, and a delicate frown gathered on his forehead. “If we could only think of some way of getting you out of those holes!” he added sadly.

“But we mustn’t allow ourselves to be worried about that!” declared the elephant vigorously. “A way will be found. . . .”

And then both of them put their whole attention upon the task which yet remained to

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

be solved. For the moment perfect silence reigned.

It was just then that the Superstork came sailing along through the avenues of the forest and fluttered to the earth close to Giddy's side. And at that instant Giddy cried out sharply: "I have it!"

"What is it?" asked the elephant, his eyes growing brighter.

"I am not quite sure it will do," admitted Giddy, "but it will be worth trying. If all the birds would begin right away and carry sticks and drop into the hole you're in, they could fill the hole little by little, and then you could — could walk out!"

"The very thing!" agreed the elephant; and the Superstork, who had listened, echoed: "The very thing!" And with this he flew away.

"The monkeys could help, too," said Giddy, becoming much more animated. "I shall ask them to set to work, too."

"But the poor monkeys . . . they are helpless, just as we are," suggested the elephant.

But Giddy drew a little key from his pocket.

SAVED !

“They shall be set free,” he declared; and without waiting to explain, he ran away into the monkeys’ section.

He had forgotten, for the moment, the piteous cries of the monkeys; but now it seemed to him that he had never heard such an uproar. Still, he succeeded in quieting them when he held up his hand to let them know that he had come to help them; and in a minute he was unlocking the handcuffs, one pair after another, and the monkeys were running free with cries of joy.

One after another he instructed them to carry branches and drop them into the hole where the elephant was; and it pleased him greatly to perceive how quickly they understood.

It took him a very long time to unlock all the handcuffs, and when the task was finished, and he returned to the elephant, he clapped his hands eagerly to see what fine progress was being made.

Already a part of the elephant’s body could be seen above the level of the ground, and the birds in great flocks were coming and going,

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

each carrying a large twig, which was dropped into the hole. The monkeys were accomplishing even more than the birds.

And as the great mass of twigs increased, the elephant steadily tromped* them down under his feet.

It was not accomplished speedily, of course; yet before the afternoon had ended there came a moment when a thousand shrill cries arose from the birds and the monkeys: for the elephant walked forth out of his trap, a free creature. Only once he trumpeted, to let the other animals know that all was well, and then he turned to Giddy with eager eyes. "Now for the others!" he said.

You would have shouted with joy to see how easily the rest of the work was done. The elephant simply went from pit to pit and wrapped his trunk about the trapped animals, lifting them out with almost no effort at all. As the work progressed, the spirit of gloom gave way to a feeling of pleased excitement; and before

* If any large person does not know the meaning of this word, let him ask any small person, and the definition will be readily supplied.

SAVED !

sundown you would have supposed that the animals were all celebrating some sort of holiday.

It was after the last of the animals had been restored to freedom that the elephant called them all together and proposed three cheers for Giddy, who had been the means of saving them.

They were not cheers, really; but thrice a great din sounded through the forest until you might have feared the trees would fall.

When silence was restored, Giddy made a little speech, in which he said that he had only done his duty, and that he should always remember with pleasure that he had had the chance to do a good turn to those who had shown their good-will for him in so many ways.

It had become quite like a regular ceremony: so much so that there was general surprise shown when the raucus, from his place up on the mountain, gave a loud cry of joy. The others looked up and perceived that he was looking through his telescope, which was trained on the sea. He removed the telescope from his

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

eyes suddenly and called to Giddy to come to him. And before Giddy had gone more than half-way up the steep slope he saw what it was that had pleased the raucus.

The good ship *Ark* had put out to sea, and was now but a faint speck on the sunset waters. There was a little smudge of smoke on the far horizon; and even as Giddy looked, the vessel seemed to pass from sight.

He was very glad, of course; and yet the thought of his Uncle William moving far away from him, homeward bound, made his heart ache a little. His Uncle William had really behaved very well. He would remember that, in days to come, and perhaps there would be ways of repaying him.

"It is the ship," he said, as he climbed down the mountain. "It has gone."

He tried to enter into the spirit of thanksgiving which filled every heart about him; but as the light faded, and the forest began to be more and more shadowy, he knew that a strange feeling had come over him. He was homesick. He was picturing his mother, wondering where

SAVED !

he was and grieving because he was away. And when he thought of her he had a sudden deep longing to see her.

He was aroused from his deep reverie by the elephant, who asked gently: "What is it, Giddy?"

He replied instantly: "I want to go home." He was afraid his voice broke a little on the last word, and it was necessary for him to remind himself sternly: "I must not forget that I am five years old!"

But the elephant seemed to understand instantly. "I thought perhaps you would want to go home sooner or later," he said. "Of course, we shall expect you to come back again. But we wish you to be altogether free, just as we like to be ourselves. If you wish to go home to-night, it shall be managed."

It seemed very sudden, certainly; but in a moment the Superstork was summoned, and almost before Giddy knew what had happened he was telling all the animals good-by, and climbing up on the Superstork's back.

A hundred voices in the forest began exclaim-

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

ing: "What! is he going? Is he going?" And then there was a great gathering, and one sentence repeated over again and again: "You must come back to see us another time, Giddy!" And Giddy felt his heart swell with happiness and pride when he heard all those friendly voices.

He called good-by again as the Superstork arose; he waved his hand to the figures in the shadows, he heard the chorus of voices calling after him; and then he was out of the forest, and the calm sea was below him, and the peaceful sky was overhead. The Superstork's great, powerful wings were bearing him swiftly away, and he felt a thrill run through his body as he whispered the one word:

"Home!"

CHAPTER XXX

THE NEXT MORNING

GIDDY'S mother was standing by the breakfast-table pretending to be very much interested in the way the table was set; and Giddy's father was sitting in the bay-window pretending to care a great deal for something he was reading in the newspaper. But both of them were really thinking about Giddy.

They did not speak of him. They wanted it to appear not to be at all remarkable that Giddy was getting ready for breakfast by himself, without his mother's aid — without even having her in the room with him. Was it a matter to be talked about, that a child five years old could take his bath without assistance, and then put his own clothes on?

Giddy's mother looked critically at the dish of strained honey; and at the same time there was the vigorous rattling of the newspaper over in the bay-window.

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

It was a very beautiful morning. The sun was shining brightly out on the lawn, and the robins were hopping about with great eagerness. A gentle wind was blowing; and the wind and the sunlight came into the dining-room just enough to be pleasant.

Giddy's mother lifted her face a little and listened. She was thinking: "Why doesn't the child come down-stairs? I'm sure I heard him moving fully half an hour ago."

She thoughtfully moved a dish here and there; and then her eyes brightened, because she heard Giddy's feet pattering across the floor overhead. And Giddy's father rattled his newspaper again; but he was not reading, really, for he distinctly heard Giddy open and close the bathroom-door. He was thinking: "The young gentleman will be down in a minute, now!"

Both the mother and the father looked toward the staircase smilingly when Giddy came down, after another minute or two had passed; and then his mother went to meet him. She stooped down and put her arms about him and kissed

THE NEXT MORNING

him. She said: "You are just in time, Giddy." She had heard the kitchen-door open, and she knew that the cook had come in with the plate of biscuits.

And then Giddy went to his father and told him good morning.

"I believe the family are now all present," said Giddy's father, speaking a little crisply. He put his paper aside and took his place at the head of the table.

And Giddy's mother took her son by the hand and would have led him to his place at the table; but he held back strangely, and it was easy to be seen that something needed explaining. He was looking about as if he were bewildered, and then he burrowed about his eye with his clenched hand. Although his mother was waiting to lead him to the table, he did not seem to want to go.

"What is it, dear?" asked his mother. She had noticed that delicate frown, which she knew so well, on her son's forehead.

But Giddy still held back and gazed into space. He did not seem to see either his father

THE SANDMAN'S FOREST

or his mother just now; nor the table. And then he said:

“I — I’ve forgot why it is that the elephant is afraid of a mouse!” He spoke quite forlornly.

“Well . . . never mind now, dear. The biscuits will get cold.”

He went to his place and stood by the table, still a little absent-mindedly. And then he looked at his mother almost with alarm. There was a look of earnest appeal in his eyes. “I — I’d like to see if my compass is all right,” he said.

“Well, you may go. But you’ll hurry, won’t you?”

There was the eager patter of his feet across the floor; he climbed the stairs.

There was a twinkle in his father’s eyes. He repeated, in a voice which was mainly down in his throat: “He has forgotten why it is that the elephant is afraid of a mouse!”

But Giddy’s mother did not seem to hear. She was looking up the staircase, where Giddy had disappeared. And although she could

THE NEXT MORNING

not see him now, she continued to sit with her face turned toward the staircase. A tender light was beaming in her eyes; a wistful smile was on her lips. She sat so a little time in silence; and then, without moving, she said, in a voice like low music:

“I do think Giddy is the *funniest* child!”





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