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PRINCE SILVERWINGS

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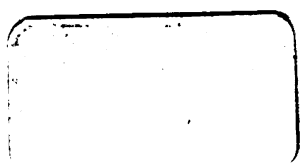


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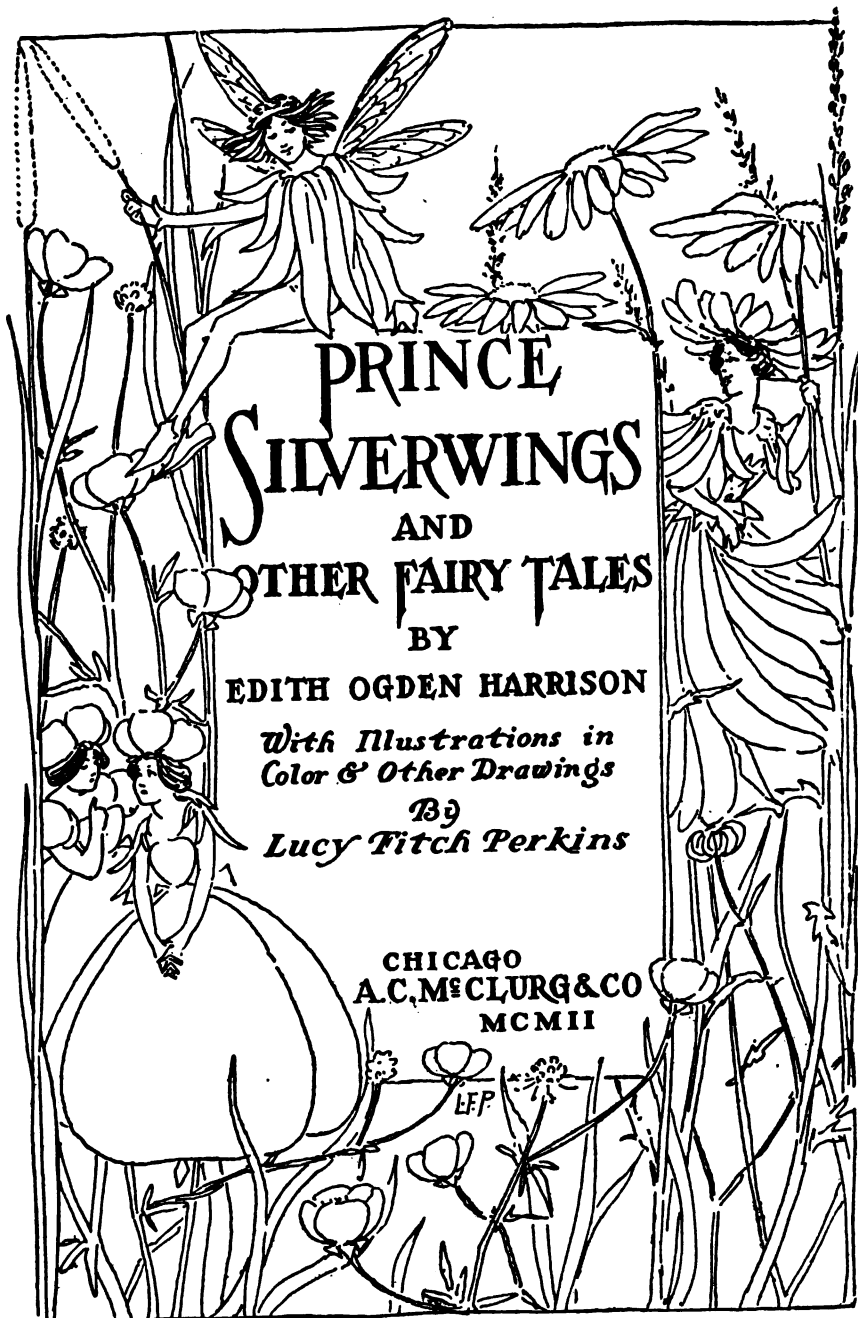


PRINCE
SILVERWINGS
AND
OTHER FAIRY TALES



I CAN go back to my own country," said the Princess.

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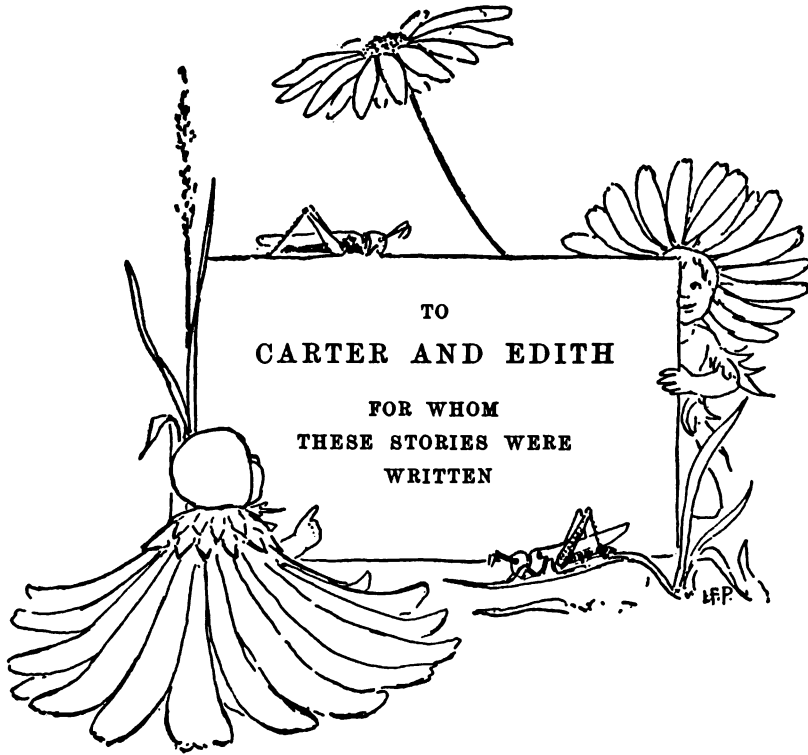
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1902

Published October 11, 1902

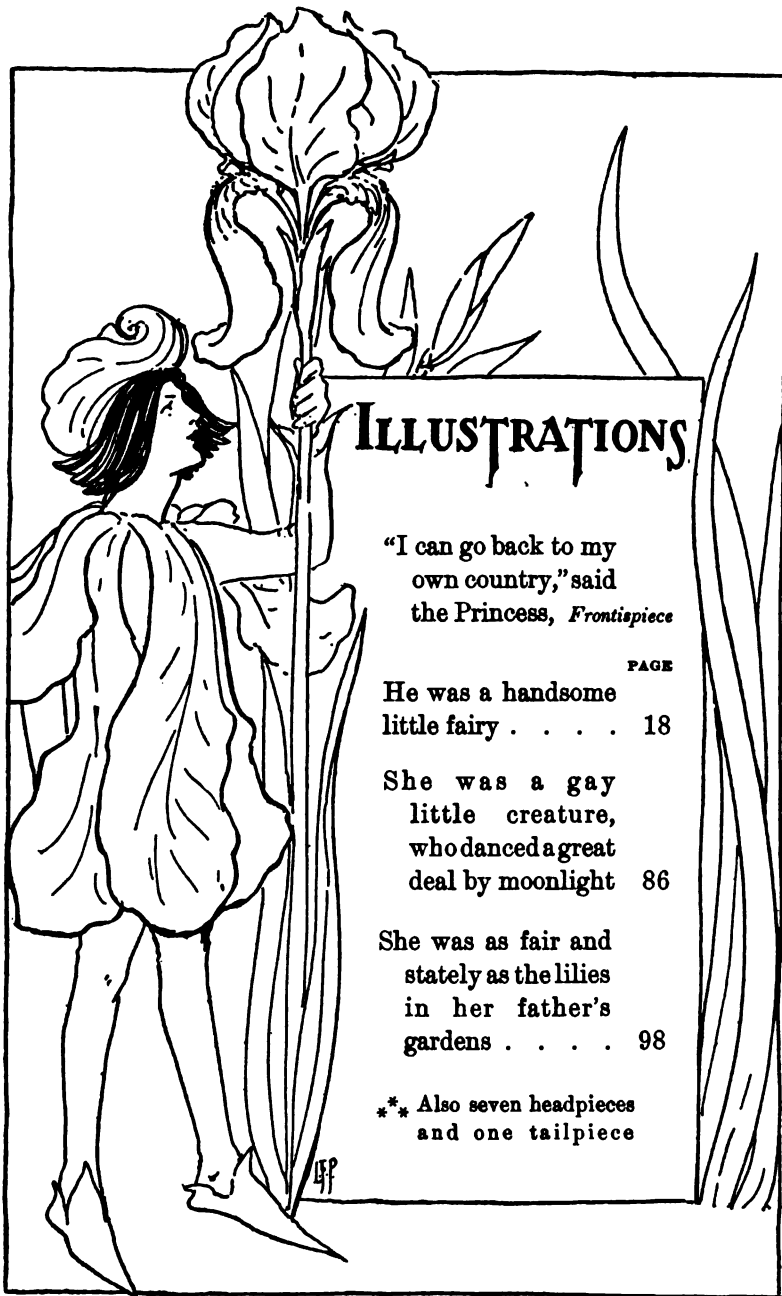
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own country," said
the Princess, *Frontispiece*

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stately as the lilies
in her father's
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** Also seven headpieces
and one tailpiece

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PRINCE SILVER WINGS

FAR, far away in a beautiful southern land, where the sky has nearly always the deep blue tint of the ocean, and the sun seems brighter than anywhere else in the world, — far away in the midst of a great magnolia grove dwelt a little band of fairies. Now a fairy is a tiny creature, you know; one could stand on the tip of your smallest finger and you would not feel its weight. So this band of fairies, though there were hundreds and hundreds of them, could all creep into the heart of a great white magnolia blossom, and sleep there as comfortably as you do in your own white

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bed. The fairies, wonderful little people that they are, live just one thousand years. Then when their work is done, instead of dying as mortals must, they turn into bright little stars, and from their places in the heavens they look down upon us, and watch over us forever. So you can understand why it is that the fairies deserve all the love that the world offers them.

Now the grove where these particular fairies lived was very famous. Its trees were hundreds of years old. They would stretch their long bodies and lift their great heads until sometimes they seemed to reach upwards nearly to the skies. They were very beautiful trees, with great branching arms laden with creamy sweet-scented flowers. The petals of these flowers were as white and sensitive in their purity as snowflakes. Touch one of them ever so lightly with your finger, or even breathe upon it, and its snowy beauty was gone. But the touch of the fairies had no such effect; they danced around the yellow centre in the heart of the blossom, or ran across the petals, and did not even stain the loveliness.

Hundreds upon hundreds of years had the fairies dwelt in this grove. Each year the trees grew taller

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and handsomer. Men brought their wives and children from strange cities to view the wonderful sight of the trees in flower. The perfume from the thousands of sweet white blossoms was often carried on the breeze to the sandy beach where the curling waves of the Gulf rolled in, — and that Gulf was a good long journey away, even for the fairies.

Late in the fall, when the flowers were gone and the cold winter was setting in, the fairies had a busy time of it with the birds, who were very fond of the red magnolia berries. Now these berries, if one eats very many of them, make one feel very lively; and sometimes when the fairy Queen arose in the morning, she would find dozens of little drunken birds lying around, who had been up all night eating the berries. Then she would order the fairies to help these naughty birds to their homes. This was no easy task, as the frisky little fellows acted very much like drunken men, and would topple over and behave very badly indeed.

But the fairies had other duties quite as important as watching the birds. They must see that on certain nights every flower and every blade of grass received a tiny drop of dew. And so the fireflies, who are really

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the policemen of fairyland, would light their thousands of little lanterns and guide the fairies over the dark places. The children of these southern lands would watch for the bright signals of the fireflies, and they knew when they saw them that the little people were at work.

The Queen of the fairies was very beautiful and kind, but also very strict. One thing she required without fail, and would never excuse her subjects for missing. This was that each day every fairy of her realm must perform one good deed. Should any subject fail once in this duty, he was not allowed to join in the nightly revel or dance. Should he fail more than once, he was made to pass the night in an ugly marsh near by, under the leaf of a tiger-lily. Now the tiger-lily grows out of the cold, dreary marsh ; the slime oozes up, the snakes crawl around, and the bugs and mosquitoes buzz and quarrel all night long. No sensible fairy would care to spend the night in such a horrid place. But one little chap had to go there a great deal. He was not exactly bad, but he was awfully lazy ; he wanted to play and have an easy time. He would chase butterflies all the summer day, or lie under a rosebush watching the sun-

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beams, or go down to the sandy beach and try to steal the color from the scales of the fishes that were darting through the bright waters. Idling thus, the day would pass, and at night he would remember, too late, that he had not done his good deed. He was a handsome little fairy, too, with wings more beautiful than any save the Queen's; indeed, so brilliant and flashing were they that he was called "Silver Wings."

One evening he started back to the magnolia grove feeling very sorrowful indeed, for as usual he had no good action to report. Twice already in that week had the Queen sent him to spend the night under the tiger-lily, and he shivered when he thought of the green-eyed lizards that had crawled around him. Then those awful frogs, — they kept up such an endless croaking for rain (as if there was n't water enough in the old marsh anyway) that he had not been able to get a wink of sleep the night before. But when one does wrong there is no help for it but to take his punishment like a man, and little Silver Wings pulled himself together and went home.

The fairy Queen had never looked so lovely as she did that night, sitting upon her throne of yellow buttercups.

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Our naughty prince had always a warm place in his heart for her, and if he had had the courage he would have asked her this very night to marry him. But he knew she would never give her heart to him until he had done away with his careless habits and love of idleness. The Queen no sooner laid eyes upon Silver Wings than she knew that he was again in trouble. Her eyes flashed angrily, and with her shining wand she beckoned him to approach. When he admitted that he had no good deed to report for the day, she lost all patience and told him that he was banished from court for one whole month, and if, on his return, he could not tell of thirty good deeds done during the month she would sentence him to banishment forever.

This was terrible! Never before had a fairy been banished; the very worst punishment had been the tiger-lily over in the marsh. But this was far worse than anything Silver Wings had ever dreamed of. For a few minutes he was overcome; but after a while he recovered himself, and, forlorn and unhappy, he slowly walked away, his bright wings trailing behind him.

But where could he go? He wandered sadly along until he found himself again by the shores of the Gulf.



HE was a handsome little fairy

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Then he flitted out across the waters toward a great steamer whose lights were shining brightly. But he had no heart for brightness that night, so passing the glittering steamer with a sigh he sailed away towards the distant city. Only the stars saw him on his journey, and he knew those watchful little eyes were fairies and that they were very much displeased with him.

It was a weary fairy that finally reached a dirty house-top in the city, and curling himself up close to a chimney fell asleep, too tired and sad to look further for a more comfortable resting-place. Now fairies sleep from midnight until noon, and never wake before twelve o'clock in the day. When Silver Wings opened his eyes the next day, he was surprised for a moment at not seeing the snow-white magnolia blossoms, or hearing the rustle of his companions' wings. Then he remembered his unhappy lot, and he knew that he must commence upon his task without delay.

He was just about to fly away when he heard beneath him a sigh. Peeping over the edge of the roof, he saw sitting near a window below him a pale, sad-faced little boy. A pair of crutches stood near by, and the room in which he sat was dark and poorly furnished. The boy

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had climbed upon a chair, and was trying to get in the path of a sunbeam that struck across the window.

“Oh, if I could get a little sunlight on my face!” he murmured.

Silver Wings watched a few moments.

“Dear me,” he said to himself, “I wish that I could help him, but I can hardly change the course of the sun.”

Suddenly an idea came to him. Did you ever have any one catch the sun in a piece of looking-glass and throw it in your eyes? Well, that is just about what our little fairy did. He opened his beautiful wings, that shone like spun silver, and waved them gently in the sun. Back they flashed the golden sunlight in a perfect flood over the child's face, and the little cripple laughed with joy.

Silver Wings soon found out that the boy's mother worked hard all day long, and that the child must await her return at night to be taken out for fresh air in a wheel-chair. By day he could only hobble about in his room with his crutches. But at night the mother would take him out and he could see the bright flowers in the florists' windows, and the carriages with fine ladies so

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beautifully dressed. And then all night he would dream of what he had seen. He had heard of the wonderful grove where the magnolias grew. But, alas! he could never hope to see that, for it was many miles away. If he could have but one rose, a real red rose, — he would be so happy!

Silver Wings saw all these things in the boy's heart, as only fairies can, and he longed to help him. But evening was not far off, and his work for the day must be done. So reluctantly he sailed away over the city. He had gone but a little way when he noticed a dainty little girl, who, with her governess, was climbing up the broad stone steps of a fine house. In her arms she carried a big bunch of red roses.

“ I must get one of those flowers for my little cripple,” thought the fairy; “ but how am I to do it ? ”

The little girl would no doubt have given a rose to the boy if the fairy could have asked her for it, but fairies cannot talk as we do, — they can only make us think. So Silver Wings waited patiently until the little girl had been put to bed and was fast asleep. Then he whispered in her ear a lovely dream about the crippled boy. For several nights afterwards the fairy whispered

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dreams to her; and every day when she would walk or drive, Edith and her governess would search the crowded streets for a little crippled boy, of whom she was always dreaming.

Two weeks went by in this way, and Silver Wings began to lose heart. He had done but one good deed of the thirty that he must report to his Queen. Each day he would go to the boy's window, and flash the sunlight over his face.

"I cannot desert him," he would say to himself; "perhaps, after all, I may be able to do thirty good deeds in one day, and that will make everything right."

It happened one evening, as the mother and son were passing the florist's window, that they saw a little girl tripping out with her arms full of red roses. It was Edith, and she knew at once that the white-faced boy in the wheel-chair who stared so eagerly at her roses was the little cripple of her dreams. She walked right up to him and laid the flowers in his lap. Then, waiting only to ask where he lived, she hurried away with her governess.

Edith and her mother came often to the bare little attic room after this, and soon they took the boy to a

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famous surgeon, who straightened his poor twisted limbs, and told him that he would soon be well and strong again.

So busy had Silver Wings been with all this good work that he had altogether forgotten that his month of banishment was now up and that he must return to his Queen in the magnolia grove. He was sad, indeed, as he thought that he could tell of but one good deed done during his absence; but even if he was to be banished forever from the realms of fairyland, he was still proud of this one. He reached the grove near midnight — and such a night! The moon shone in full glory as bright as the day. Hundreds of fairies flitted about, their silver dresses shining and glittering like diamonds. Dewdrops, sparkling as the stars, crowned their heads, and in their hands they carried dazzling wands of moonbeams. A splendid feast of rose leaves and honey awaited them after the ball. But, alas! in all this splendor our little prince felt like an exile. He dared not join them, but stood off under a dark tree watching the happy throng.

Suddenly a great firefly tumbled against him and made him come out from his hiding-place. Slowly and

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sadly he approached his Queen. Never had she looked so beautiful. Clad in a dress of moonbeams, ornamented with golden stars, she stood in the centre of her brilliant court. She commanded silence from her subjects with a wave of her wand. Then bidding Silver Wings to give an account of his deeds, she awaited his answer.

“Alas!” he said, “I have only one to tell of.”

Then he told them of the little cripple, and how he had helped him and made his life more happy. This was all, and he was almost overcome with shame as he thought that he had spent the whole month in doing only this. But the next moment the Queen spoke.

“Oh, my prince,” she said, “you have done nobly indeed. You have brought health and happiness to one poor mortal, and your one great deed is worth many, many times thirty smaller ones. Before all of fairyland, I choose you to be my wedded husband, to share my throne, and to be our king.”

And so Silver Wings was rewarded, and he and his lovely Queen reigned over fairyland long and happily, and their subjects always loved their kind and wise rulers.

THE VEILED LADY



THE VEILED LADY

ONCE upon a time there lived a king who ruled over the most beautiful country in the world. Never were greener fields or yellower grain ; and the bright sun seemed to shine into the hearts of all the people, making them happy and kind and gentle. Life was always joyous here, and the sky was never clouded. Each one did what he could to make life pleasant for his neighbor. The little kingdom was known far and wide by the name of the Happy Valley.

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You would never suppose that the king of such a country could have anything to worry him ; nevertheless he did. He had but one son, — a fine, handsome young fellow, whom he loved dearly, and who returned his father's love. Yet this son was the cause of all the trouble. His father was growing old, and wished before he died to see his son married and settled in life. But the young man had an idea that he must fall in love before he could marry any one, and somehow he had never seen a girl that took his fancy.

The months and the years crept by, and the young Prince showed no desire to choose a queen from among the maidens of his country. The old King worried a great deal over this. He sent to all the neighboring kingdoms for pictures of the unmarried princesses ; but his son found fault with them all. One was too tall, another too short, while a third was too fat, and a fourth too thin. Then one was too dark, or perhaps too fair ; one squinted a little, or the other's eyes had a straight bold stare in them. In short, young Prince Sarus could not be pleased. But he was at heart a pretty good sort of chap, and he hated to worry his dear old father, especially about such a trifle as choosing a wife ; so

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finally he began to feel a little down-hearted himself. Surely, he thought, there must be some good-looking young princess in the world whom he could learn to love.

Following the example of some great ancestor of his, Prince Sarus had chosen twelve of the bravest young nobles of his court for a body-guard. These youths were sworn to protect the weak and defend the right, whenever necessary; and they were famous throughout the country for their courage. The Prince was very fond of hunting, and often followed the chase through the forests with his knights. Returning one afternoon from this pursuit, the party suddenly saw running before them a beautiful white deer with silver-tipped horns. They made every effort to capture it, but the graceful creature sprang into a thicket and escaped. Several times afterwards, when out hunting, the Prince saw the same deer, but it always escaped from him. At last, one day he made up his mind that he would follow it alone until he overtook it. Through fields and woods he went, sometimes almost losing sight of the little animal, but still trying harder than ever to overtake it. Towards sunset, when he was just on the point of giving up the

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chase, the deer stopped suddenly before a little cottage. Sarus was astonished to see a building like this out in the heart of the woods, especially as he did not remember ever to have noticed it before. He was even more surprised when he saw the door of the cottage open and a lady, wrapped from head to foot in a long white veil, step out. She caressed and fed the deer, and then, though Sarus was not close enough to hear what was said, she spoke a few words to it. The little animal bowed three times before her, and ran off. The lady then went back into the cottage and closed the door.

Surprised as he was at all this, there was nothing for Prince Sarus to do but return home. His curiosity had got the better of him, however, and the next afternoon he slipped away from the hunters again. After a long search he found the little cottage, and hid himself under a rose-bush just below the steps where the lady would appear, and where he could see and hear all that passed without being seen. About sundown the white deer came bounding up to the cottage. The door opened as before, and the veiled lady appeared. This time Sarus heard her voice very plainly as she said, —

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“ Faithful friend,
How will this end ?
When comes the knight,
Bold and bright,
Who will bring the Magic Ring ? ”

The deer, bowing three times, replied, —

“ When the moon shines, three nights old,
Then comes a prince, brave and bold.”

Then it disappeared in the forest, and the lady went back into the cottage as before.

Three times the Prince saw and heard this strange thing. On the third night, no longer able to conceal his curiosity, he came out quickly from his hiding-place, just as the deer was disappearing, and stood before the lady. “ Tell me,” he cried, “ what is the Magic Ring ? ”

Startled at the sudden appearance of so handsome a stranger, it was several moments before she could reply.

“ The Ring,” she said at last, “ is the magic charm for good in my family. To those who rightfully own it, it brings all the blessings of life. But the owner must live in the ways of truth, — he must have great love and

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charity for all mankind ; otherwise the magic powers of the Ring are useless to him. This Ring has been an heirloom in my family for many years, but, alas ! at my christening it was stolen from us by a wicked fairy, who was angry because she had not been invited to the party. Feeling that the Ring was not quite safe with her, this fairy gave it to the Demon of Unrest, an ugly monster living in the Haunted Mountain. He who attempts to regain the treasure will meet with many difficulties and dangers ; but if any knight is willing to undertake the task, he has only to take with him twelve brave soldiers and three charms that I will give him, and he cannot fail to be successful. And I have made a vow to marry the man who restores to me the Magic Ring.”

Prince Sarus was eager for just such an adventure as this. He hesitated, however, when he thought that, if successful, he would have to marry a person whose face he had never seen. “ But,” he said to himself, “ my father is anxious to see me married. I do not love any one else, and perhaps, after all, this lady may be very lovely ; she certainly has a queenly air about her.”

So he decided that he would take the risk. When he

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had pledged himself to the task, the lady opened a locket that she wore about her throat and gave him a pretty little acorn of gold and green. Then going into the cottage she returned in a moment and put into his hands a sword, the hilt of which was set with hundreds of flashing diamonds. Last of all she unpinned from the bosom of her gown a tiny golden rose, and this also she gave him.

“These three charms, Sir Knight,” she said, “will protect you and your followers through the enchanted forest which you must pass before you come to the Haunted Mountain where the wicked demon lives. Take them, and on the day that you return successful I will meet you in your father’s palace.”

That night the Prince called together his twelve followers, and asked them if they were willing to undertake the journey with him. They consented joyfully, for of late they had not had much fighting to do, and they longed for a little excitement. Having made all arrangements, Sarus went alone to bid farewell to the veiled lady of the forest. His surprise was great, however, to find no trace whatever of the cottage. He rubbed his eyes, thinking it must all have been a dream ;

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but there was the sword, the acorn, and the rose, which had been given him the day before, so he knew he could not have been dreaming.

Next he went to his father, and told him of his plans. The King pleaded with Sarus to give up so foolish an idea, and told him of a picture he had received that very morning of a beautiful princess whom he had hoped would win his son's affection, and so brighten his own life forever. The young man's heart was touched by his father's grief, and, though he would not give up his journey, he promised to stop on his way and see this lovely Princess Martine, whose picture was certainly charming.

At last Prince Sarus set forth with his twelve comrades, each mounted on a snowy-white horse. After several days they came to the kingdom of the Princess Martine, and, remembering his promise, Sarus sent a messenger to say that he would be pleased to wait on the Princess if she would permit him to do so. An answer came at once, saying that she would receive him that night, in the great hall of the palace. So, early in the evening Sarus dressed himself as became a prince of royal blood, and, with his followers gayly attired, set out to greet the Princess Martine.

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As they approached her palace, the building and grounds seemed ablaze with light and splendor. Tiny lanterns were thickly scattered over the lawns, and the windows and halls of the palace were lit with thousands of colored lamps. Nightingales were singing sweetly from golden cages hung everywhere about. On a gorgeous throne in the great hall sat the Princess Martine, with twelve lovely maidens grouped about her. She was far lovelier than anything Sarus had ever dreamed of, and at first sight he was completely overcome by her beauty. She was very much like the portrait he had seen, and yet a thousand times more attractive. No artist could have painted her bewitching mouth, or caught the glint of fire in her golden hair or the beautiful blue of her eyes.

Before the night had passed, Sarus was so much in love that he joyfully accepted the Princess's invitation to spend several days as her guest. All thought of the Magic Ring, of his father, and of his country, had left his mind. Nor did his followers think to remind him of his duty, for they too were just as much in love with the Princess's twelve maidens. With hunting parties by day, and balls and banquets by night, the

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time passed all too swiftly. At the close of one very happy day, when they had ridden together, and Sarus had told her of his love, the Princess wished to know how it was that he had come to her kingdom. Then he told her the story of the Magic Ring, and how he had engaged to rescue it and bring it back to the lady of the forest. But he added that his love had now overcome every other desire, and that if the Princess would return with him to his father's kingdom he would ask for no greater joy.

"No, no," she replied earnestly, "I could not love you as I would, unless I felt that you loved your own honor above all else. The word of a prince is sacred, and must not be broken. Restore the Magic Ring to its rightful owner ; then tell her that you love another and wish to be released from your vow. If she is willing to set you free, return to me."

Sarus knew that this was the only honorable course for him to follow. So, hard as it was, he quickly made up his mind ; and early the next morning the little party, sad at heart, set out once more on their journey. For three days they travelled through trackless wastes and hot desert sands. On the fourth day they came

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in sight of the enchanted forest, just beyond which stood the Haunted Mountain. The great trees of the forest nodded invitingly to them, and after the scorching sand of the desert the green shade seemed heavenly. Little streams of cool water bubbled among the trees, and beautiful wild flowers made a soft carpet beneath their feet. The forest seemed filled with birds, whose sweet singing lulled the knights almost to sleep. The gentle swaying of the trees made them dizzy, also, and, worn out as they were, it was with great difficulty that they could resist the temptation to lie down and rest.

They had gone but a little way in the wood when they saw before them a group of beautiful young girls dancing and making merry. Feeling sure that such lovely creatures could do them no harm, the knights approached, and were about to accept the drinks of cooling water offered them by the maidens. But something aroused Sarus's suspicions, and drawing his diamond-hilted sword he threw it among the group of girls. Instantly they changed to ugly old witches, and fled wildly in every direction.

The Prince and his men were now wide awake, and their brains were clear once more. Strange to say, they

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could now understand what the birds were singing. How clear it sounded, and how well they understood !

“Alack a day !
Turn not that way.
Back again we pray.
Turn to the right ;
There you must fight,
Fight till dawn of day.”

They guessed that these birds were no other than knights who had been bewitched in the forest, and they knew that their advice should be followed. So taking a long path which led to the right, Sarus and his party were going along very quietly, when they noticed just ahead of them a queer-looking old man hobbling along as if in great pain. The Prince felt sorry for the poor fellow, and starting forward to help him placed his hand very kindly on the old man's shoulder. He had hardly done so, however, when he heard shouts of wild laughter, and found himself and his companions struggling in a slimy marsh. Snakes and other hideous things crawled around them, and they felt themselves sinking deeper and deeper in the mire. Suddenly a bird above them

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sang out, "Touch the acorn, Prince Sarus." By a mighty effort the young man did so, and in an instant he and his companions were safe on sound land and their horses' backs once more.

They now found themselves at the foot of a great iron mountain, the only entrance to which was by means of a huge gate guarded by two fierce dragons, whose roar could be heard for miles around. Brave as the knights were, they felt a thrill of horror at the sight of these awful creatures. But remembering his sword, Sarus drew it forth and swung its flashing blade in the faces of the dragons. Instantly their roaring ceased, and they crouched on the ground like huge dogs, permitting the party to pass safely through. Once inside, Sarus made his way straight to the palace of the Demon of Unrest, which stood at the very top of the mountain. They found the entrance to the palace guarded by a witch with one eye in the middle of her forehead, and claws instead of hands. At sight of the magic acorn, she meekly unlocked the great door and ushered the party into a long hall. This was a damp and mouldy place; toads hopped about the floor, owls hooted from above, and groans and cries echoed from all directions. Through this hall they

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passed into a large room with no windows at all. In the dim light they could just manage to see a chair in the middle of the room, on which perched a queer old dwarf about two feet in height and as broad as he was long. This was the Demon of Unrest, the ruler of the Haunted Mountain. His eyes, deep set in his head, were formed of balls of fire that flashed out red and yellow, and when he spoke his voice actually shook the whole palace. Black bats flew about his head; and around his feet, so thick that it was impossible for any one to approach him, were hundreds and hundreds of frogs, which kept up a continual croaking. At his side stood two other dwarfs, even smaller than himself, each with one hand resting on a tiny trunk or box, inside of which, on a red velvet cushion, glittered the Magic Ring.

The Prince and his men had barely time to notice all these things when the room suddenly swarmed with little imps, who quickly overpowered the knights by mere force of numbers, and bound and gagged them.

“Well, well,” laughed the Demon, “you thought to get the Ring, did you? That Ring never leaves my sight, for I sleep with one eye open, and, day or night, it is always before me. Now of all those who have tried

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to take it from me, your fate shall be the worst. You have actually entered my palace, while none of the others ever got beyond the enchanted forest. You shall be cast into the dungeon of torture until I can think of some more terrible punishment.”

When our little company of knights found themselves bound hand and foot, and lying in the bottom of a dark slimy dungeon beneath the palace, they lost all hope. But Sarus now remembered the words of the Veiled Lady: “When you are helpless and in great need, press the centre of the golden rose.” With difficulty the Prince managed to reach the rose and to press its centre. In a moment a wonderful thing happened, — the fetters that bound them fell away, and a great blaze of light filled the dungeon. In the midst of this light stood a fairy with golden wings, who spoke in a sweet voice, saying, —

“Master of the golden rose, command me, and I will obey.”

Dazed at his sudden delivery, the Prince replied, —

“Show me how I may secure the Magic Ring.”

He had hardly said the words when he and his followers found themselves in the bedchamber of the

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Demon of Unrest. The awful dwarf was asleep, but with one eye open, as usual. With her brilliant light the fairy completely dazzled this eye, and he was helpless. The two guardians of the Ring started up in astonishment, and for an instant forgot to hold the box containing their treasure. They, too, were now blinded by the light, and in a moment Sarus had the Ring on his own finger.

“Now,” said the fairy, “your power is greater than mine ; see that you use it well.”

Slowly the light about her grew fainter and fainter, and with her finally disappeared.

From the moment of slipping the Ring on his finger, the Prince felt a strange new feeling of unlimited strength and power. As he stood facing the dwarf, who was slowly recovering from his stupor, he felt that he could easily conquer him. But the Demon had also undergone a great change. His eyes were no longer fire, but dull and heavy, and he could only move with great difficulty. He crawled to where Sarus stood, and fawned like a dog before him.

“Wretch!” cried the Prince, “I would that I had the power to restore all of your victims, and to make you suffer as they have suffered.”

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At these words the dwarf uttered a cry of rage ; there was a terrific crash, and the palace walls seemed to be falling. The wish of the Prince had been fulfilled. All the enchanted people had been restored to their human forms, and the Demon of Unrest had vanished forever.

The crash and tumbling of the palace had caused Sarus to close his eyes for a moment. When he opened them again, he found himself and his companions lying at the foot of a green hill not far from his father's palace. He felt of the Ring on his finger, and knew with joy that the object of his journey had been accomplished. His next thought was of the Princess Martine. What should he do if the Veiled Lady insisted on claiming him for her husband ? But surely she would listen to reason and would release him.

Sarus and his men were welcomed home with great joy, and there was general rejoicing throughout the kingdom. But the Prince was sad at heart, and could think only of the Veiled Lady. It was late in the afternoon, when Sarus and his father had about made up their minds that this mysterious person had forgotten the engagement, that a herald announced her arrival.

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She was admitted at once, and Sarus placed within her hands the long-lost Magic Ring. Then, before she could thank him for his great bravery, he told her the story of his love for the Princess Martine, and begged that he might be allowed to marry her.

“Brave Sarus,” replied the lady, “you have given me your pledge, and it must be fulfilled. But if at the altar, when you see my face, you still desire to be released, your wish will be granted.”

Though he could not possibly guess the meaning of these strange words, the Prince was satisfied. The marriage had been set for that evening, and the hour was now at hand. The whole court was assembled in the chapel; and here at the altar, dressed in his finest robes of silk and ermine, the Prince sadly awaited the arrival of his unwelcome bride. It was not long before a blast of trumpets announced her entrance. Twelve lovely maidens attended her, and after each maiden walked two little pages carrying the trains. Following these were two handsome boys bearing the soft white cushion on which the couple were to kneel. Last of all came the bride, a heavy veil of soft fine lace falling to the hem of her lovely gown and completely hiding her features.

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She reached the altar, and then, before the ceremony could begin, she raised her hand and spoke.

“I have something to say to you all. Though he has never seen my face, Prince Sarus has kept his word of honor and fulfilled his pledge, as a brave knight should. Know you all that I now release him from his vow, if he so wishes it, and hold him no longer bound to me.”

As she finished speaking she threw back the veil which covered her head, and there, smiling with love and happiness, stood the Princess Martine.

“Forgive me,” she whispered to the Prince, who stood before her quite overcome by this sudden turn of affairs. “I am the Veiled Lady of the forest. I had heard of your indifference to all maidens, and so I took this way of winning your love and of regaining the Magic Ring. If you do not wish to make me your queen, I can go back to my own country.”

But, needless to say, she did not go back; and Prince Sarus and the Princess Martine lived in great happiness for many years after.

THE SICK PRINCESS



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ONCE upon a time there lived a king and queen who had but one child, a beautiful daughter. Her parents allowed her everything that her heart could wish, and her youth was passed in happiness and contentment. Being very fond of companionship, a great many little children came often to play with her in her younger days. But as she grew to maidenhood the King gradually separated her from her comrades, saying that a princess had many things to learn, and must begin at an early age to cultivate queenly dignity and proper reserve toward her subjects.

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Among the playmates of the Princess Lalla was the son of a poor nobleman, a handsome boy a few years older than the little Princess, and so well favored with intelligence that he was chosen from among all the others to share her studies. These two were together a great deal, and it is not surprising, therefore, that they fell in love with each other. When the King decided, after some years, that the Princess was old enough to continue at her books alone, the boy and girl were very unhappy indeed. The youth Roland returned to his father's quiet castle, where he tried to forget his sorrow in deep study.

A few years went by, and the Princess reached the age of eighteen. She had grown more beautiful with each year, so that now she was a delight to behold. With her long black hair, lovely brown eyes, pearly teeth, rosy cheeks, and fine good health, she certainly made a most charming picture. The King decided that it was time to choose a husband for his daughter. So he gave a great tournament, and invited all the young princes and nobles from far and near to take part in it, hoping that among so many brave men his daughter might make her selection. But the Princess was in-

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different to them all, and in spite of her father's urgent wish she declined to choose a husband.

While the subject of her marriage was being hotly argued in the royal family, the wilful young Princess went about her pleasures as usual. One day, while hunting, a wild boar attacked her, and as her attendants were not close enough at hand to protect her, she would undoubtedly have lost her life had it not been for the sudden appearance of an unknown knight, who charged bravely upon the furious animal, killed it after a struggle, and then disappeared in the forest. The King, learning of this gallant act, made every effort to discover the knight and properly reward him, but the young man could not be found.

From that day in the forest a great change came over the Princess Lalla. She was no longer a happy, light-hearted girl. She became quiet and thoughtful, and a fixed melancholy seemed to have settled upon her. She would not allow her father to mention the subject of marriage; and as for the suitors themselves, she absolutely refused even to see them.

Days and weeks went by, and the Princess got no better, — in fact, she grew paler and thinner all the time.

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The King and Queen, who loved her dearly, were wild with anxiety when they saw their only child gradually fading away before their eyes. They could do nothing for her. She did not complain at all, but only became steadily whiter and weaker. The King summoned all the court doctors and the famous men of science in his kingdom, promising them gold and silver in plenty if they would restore the roses to his daughter's cheeks. But the doctors were powerless, their medicines and advice had no effect whatever, and the sick Princess continued to grow worse. At last, in despair, the King issued a proclamation to his people, stating that whoever would bring about the cure of his beloved child should be given one half of his entire kingdom.

A few days after this an old man came to the palace, and asked the privilege of a private interview with the Princess. His request was granted, and after a few moments in the sick girl's room he returned to the anxious King and Queen. He had made a close study of scientific works for many years, he said, and believed he understood their daughter's case perfectly. There was but one thing in all the world that would cure her. She must have a salad made from the tender leaves of a

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white lily growing in the heart of a glass mountain which stood at the foot of the rainbow. Now, every one knows that a pot of gold is buried at the end of the rainbow, but the King and Queen had never heard of the glass mountain. To reach this mountain, the old man said, one must travel nine days and nights, straight as the crow flies; at the end of that time he would come to the Rainbow City, and in the heart of the glass mountain near this city the famous lily could be seen growing. After giving these directions, the old man went his way.

Strange as this advice was, the King determined to follow it. He sent his herald at once throughout the town to announce that whoever would secure the leaves of the white lily should be crowned a prince and receive in addition one half of the kingdom. The offer was a tempting one, but the young men hesitated about accepting it. It was a very dangerous undertaking. The end of the rainbow is really the end of the world, and of all the people who had gone forth to secure the pot of gold, not one had ever returned to tell the tale. It was not until the next day that young Roland, who had been able to see his beloved playmate only at long intervals, heard of the King's proclamation. Without losing a

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moment, he hastened to the palace and announced that he was ready to start at once in search of the lily, provided only that in case he was successful he should be rewarded with the hand of the Princess Lalla. At first the King was highly indignant at the young man's presumption, and was on the point of turning him out of the palace. But the Queen fell upon her knees, and begged him to consent to the proposal, saying that if he did not they would surely lose their daughter by death. Reluctantly the King gave way, and at last made the promise.

That same evening young Roland started out on his nine days' journey. He travelled steadily day and night, stopping occasionally only for an hour's sleep. On the third day, as he was passing through a meadow, he came to a stream of water, on the edge of which sat a beautiful white cat with large green eyes. She seemed to be in great distress, and every now and then would start to cross the rivulet; but as soon as her white paws touched the water, she would shrink back, mewing piteously. Cats do not like to get their feet wet, you know, and do not like to cross muddy places. The next time you see a cat try to cross the street, watch

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her. No lady was ever daintier in saving her skirts than Miss Pussy her paws. Knowing that she wished to reach the other bank, Roland picked her up and carried her safely across. His surprise was great when she thanked him in words for his kindness.

“You have conferred a great favor upon me,” she said. “I am an enchanted queen, condemned by a wicked witch to remain in a cat’s form until three things have been accomplished. One of these, which you have just enabled me to do, was to cross a stream of water without wetting my feet and without stone, stick, or iron to assist me. Many people have passed the stream, but you are the first that has taken pity on me. As a token of my gratitude I will give you a valuable glass, which will aid you in climbing the mountain you are now seeking.”

So saying, she jumped upon his arm, and putting her head in his hand dropped into it one of her sparkling green eyes. Upon examination he found it to be a sun-glass of great clearness and strength. He turned to thank the cat, but she had disappeared.

On the sixth day, in passing through a forest, Roland noticed a stork with a broken wing fluttering before him.

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He lifted the suffering bird, and bound up the wing with strips torn from his handkerchief. When he had finished the operation, to his amazement the stork spoke,—

“Kind stranger, you have just done the second good act required for the enchanted Queen. Many travellers have passed here in search of the pot of gold which lies at the foot of the rainbow, but you are the first to consider a poor suffering bird worthy of notice. Take this reed, and should you find yourself confronted with any great obstacle on your journey, whistle upon it three times, and you will receive help at once.”

Placing the reed in his hands, the stork then flew off.

Roland continued his journey, and on the morning of the ninth day he came to a large body of water lying like a great turquoise beneath the sun. Close in toward the shore the shallow places lightened in color, losing the wonderful blue shade, and lay a mass of shimmering green against the white sand. It was a glorious sight, and for some moments the young adventurer stood admiring it. Then it suddenly occurred to him that this water lay directly in his path, and that he must cross it somehow. He realized in despair that he could not possibly swim so far. What was he to do? Then he

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remembered the reed which the stork had given him, and taking it from his pocket he blew loudly upon it three times. At the third note he saw far out in the sea a sudden splashing of water, and in a few moments a beautiful dolphin swam up close to the shore where he stood. It was a large strong fish, exquisitely colored. Sometimes it looked all shining green, then its scales would turn to gold in the sunlight; paling again, the brilliant tints would become almost silver, shot with dark spots of blue. Every second the color of its beautiful scales would change as it played and splashed about in the water.

“Trust yourself to me,” said the fish. “I am one of the Queen’s enchanted slaves, and will bear you safely to the Rainbow City, which was her kingdom before she was changed into a white cat.”

Without hesitation Roland placed himself on the frisky dolphin’s back, and in a few moments they were plunging through the water toward the other shore. During this singular ride the dolphin confided to the young man some of the white cat’s history. She had been a very beautiful and talented queen, governing her subjects kindly and sensibly, but she had an ambition to

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be considered very wise. So she wrote several books, among which was one on how to climb glass mountains without slipping backwards, and another to prove that the mountain in her city was not glass. These books were laughed at a great deal by her subjects. Finally she got into an argument with an ugly old witch, who considered herself an authority on such matters. Both lost their tempers in the quarrel which followed, and the witch, in revenge, changed the Queen into a white cat and put all her subjects to sleep under a magic spell.

By the time this story was finished, the travellers had reached the other side of the water, and the dolphin bade Roland good-bye. To his delight, the young man saw the marvellous colors of the rainbow directly overhead, the delicate lights and colors seeming to blend together right in the centre of the little city beneath it. The city was built along the water's edge, and presented a charming appearance. The various hues of the rainbow shone down upon it in such a way as to make it appear to be painted in many colors, the whole effect being very curious. For instance, one section of the town would be bright crimson, and all the people lying asleep there would have the ruddy complexions of rose

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leaves. Another part would be of a brilliant golden glow, and there everything would look as yellow as an orange.

Roland saw no one in the streets, but in the houses and gardens he noticed people sitting in groups, with books and papers in their hands, as if they had been reading and discussing grave matters just when the wicked witch cast her spell upon them. They were in such deep slumber that he made no effort to awaken them; but he opened the books which they held, hoping to find information that would be of use to him. The volumes were written in a clear, concise style, and he was surprised to find so much knowledge contained in such small space. The people of the city had evidently spent a great deal of time in theorizing about the best way of climbing glass mountains, and must have had great discussions on the subject. In spite of all these books, however, Roland did not gain any especial information, except that the mountain was about a half-hour's walk from the Rainbow City. So he resumed his journey through the silent, many-colored streets. It seemed very strange to be walking in such profound quiet. Nothing whatever could be heard but the faint lapping of the waves on the beach beyond and the echo of his own footsteps.

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But the young man was too happy at reaching the end of his journey to think much of his queer surroundings. He had gone but a little way, it seemed to him, when a sudden turn brought him face to face with the glass mountain. It stood in a city of crystal lights; the streets, the houses, and the sleeping people about it were all deathly pale. The mountain itself was a magnificent sight. Its polished surface shone and glittered as though it were an immense diamond. Roland approached it rapidly, and examined it more closely. There seemed to be an opening in its centre, for a small plateau or meadow could be seen. In the middle of this green level space, its yellow centre and tender green leaves tantalizingly close, bloomed the beautiful white lily, — the object of his journey.

How could he ever obtain that precious flower, which seemed so close and yet might just as well be hundreds of miles away? There seemed to be no possibility of reaching it. Every attempt he made to climb the mountain was useless; the steep polished surface gave not the least foothold, and he only slipped backwards at each trial. Roland felt that he was facing a great problem. It certainly was discouraging to think that the

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people of the Rainbow City had studied the subject for years without success. But he did not lose heart, for he knew that it is not always the wisest who achieve success.

It was now evening, and as he felt very tired after his long journey, he wrapped his cloak about him and lay down at the foot of the mountain. He soon fell asleep, and dreamed that the Princess Lalla appeared before him.

“My beloved Roland,” she said, “your plans for climbing the mountain are all wrong. It is a very simple thing to do if you go about it in the right way. First of all, you must know that the mountain is not glass but ice. Take the sun-glass that the white cat gave you, and with it burn small holes at regular intervals in the ice. This will give you hollows for your feet to rest in, and you can thus mount easily to the top. Once there, the rest will be simple.”

As soon as the sun was up, Roland set to work to do as he had been directed in his dream. The glass was so powerful that he burned the holes very rapidly, and in a short time had reached the top. Here he discovered that the mountain sloped gently in on all sides towards

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the centre, forming the level meadow he had seen from the outside. There in the midst of the plain stood the white lily. He hurried down, and plucked it with trembling fingers, carefully protecting the delicate leaves from injury. As he lifted it from the ground, he caught the gleam of gold in the earth where the flower had grown, and looking closer he found that just below the surface of the ground were many thousands of gold pieces. The pot of gold at the foot of the rainbow was found at last! At the same moment the mountain split and opened up, allowing him to walk safely out. The whole path before him now seemed to be paved with gold coin. The people of the city awoke from their sleep, and came running toward him from all directions. The plucking of the lily had been the third deed to be accomplished, and the witch's spell was now broken. A beautiful woman with a crown of gold upon her head stood in Roland's path.

“Brave and gentle knight,” she said, “I was the white cat and the ruler of this city. Your kindness and valor have removed the awful curse put upon me and my people. We thank you with all our hearts. Knowing your love for the sick Princess and your desire to

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return to her as quickly as possible, I have ordered twelve ships to be filled with gold and fitted out ready to sail with you at once. We wish you all the happiness your good deeds deserve.”

She pointed to the sea as she spoke, and there in the harbor, their sails all spread, were twelve fine vessels, lying like white swans on the water. In a few words Roland thanked the Queen and her people for their great kindness, and then embarked without delay.

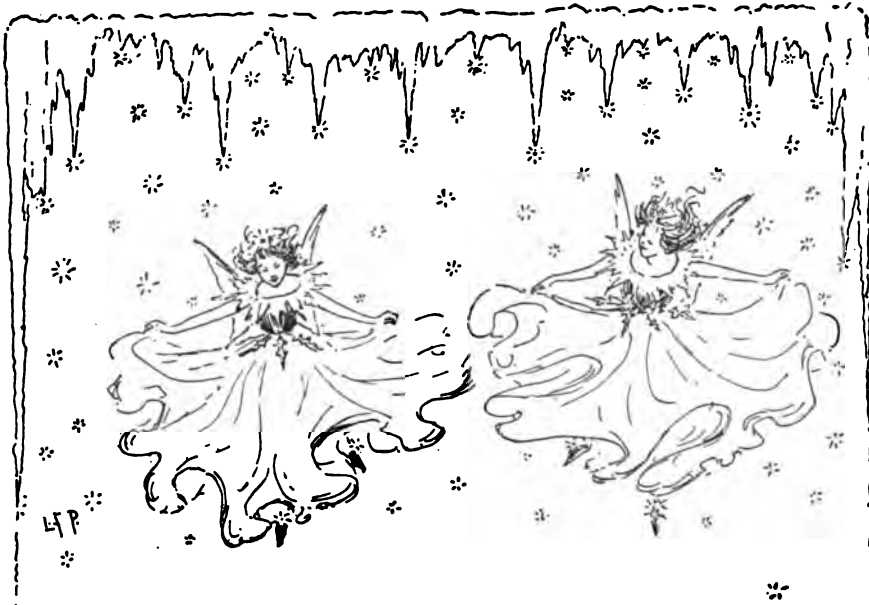
He reached home after a quick voyage, and delivered the precious lily into the hands of the Princess Lalla. Now that he was wealthy and powerful, the King no longer opposed the marriage with his daughter. The salad of lily leaves was prepared; the Princess ate it with great relish, and was at once restored to perfect health. Of course there were some jealous people in the kingdom who claimed that the Princess was never really ill, but only pretended to be so that she might marry young Roland, who had saved her from the boar in the forest. They said, also, that it was Roland who had come to the palace disguised as the old man, and had prescribed the salad.

Be all this as it may, the marriage was celebrated at

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once with great splendor. Prince Roland and Princess Lalla lived in happiness all their lives; and after the old King's death, they ruled over his kingdom wisely and well, and were beloved by every one to the end of their days.

THE ICE QUEEN'S PALACE



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THE snow was falling fast. Great flakes of it drifted against the window-pane. What a beautiful sight it was, too! Nuna sat in the comfortable cushioned seat in the bay-window watching the big storm. It certainly was the biggest snow-storm she had ever seen; really, it made that old story about Mother Goose picking the feathers from her chickens quite impossible to believe. Nuna had had some doubts of its truth lately, anyway, and to-day she was convinced that it was only a fairy tale invented to amuse small

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children. There simply could not be so many feathers in the world; and even if there were, no one person could pick them all. Now that she was six years old, she was quite able to decide some things for herself; and this, which she saw with her own eyes, was surely a subject upon which she was able to judge. So that question was settled forever.

How Nuna did long to go out and play in the snow, — dig it, toss it, roll about in it, anything just to be out! But nurse was cross, and had work to do, and could not be bothered. Besides, it was too cold for any sensible person to be out, she said. Such nonsense! But what could you expect of an old woman, anyway? Nurse Mary must be thirty if she was a day, and women of that age are usually rheumatic and full of aching bones. Of course Mary did n't wish to go out, but it was quite different with a little girl of six. It would be a good lesson to cross old nurse to slip out by herself and have a good time, without saying a word to anybody. Besides, the warm room made her drowsy; she could hardly keep her eyes open. The more Nuna thought of it, the better she liked the idea; and in a few moments a very naughty little girl had slipped downstairs and put on

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her warm red coat, mittens, and fur cap. It was an easy matter to pull back the bolt of the door and let herself out. Once outside, the crisp cold air sent the blood tingling to her cheeks, and soon they were as bright as her red cloak. Oh, how fine it was to be free!

Nuna thought she would begin by digging a hole in the big snow-drift that had piled up against the fence. So she set to work with her wooden shovel. Her little arms worked hard and fast, and it was not long before she had scooped out a cave so large that she could stand upright in it. Still she did not stop working. Now it would be great fun to make a tunnel. Farther and farther she dug, until at last, looking back, she could just see the opening of the cave, shining far off like a big lantern. She must be miles underground, she thought. How delightful it was! She clapped her hands with joy, and laughed aloud. As she returned to her work, she was suddenly startled by a small voice close by her, which said, —

“Don't pound so hard, little girl; I will open the door for you.”

Nuna looked around to find the owner of the voice, but she could see nothing. Just then a great mass of

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snow in front of her fell backwards, and there in the opening stood a beautiful little creature not much larger than Nuna's hand. The small girl's heart thumped and then almost stood still, but the fairy looked smilingly at her.

"What do you wish in the Ice Queen's palace?" she asked.

"Oh, I did not know that any one lived here," said Nuna. "Is there really a palace?"

"Yes," replied the pretty creature. "Hundreds and hundreds of us live here, and our Queen has great power. Would you like to visit the palace?"

"Yes, indeed, I would," answered the little girl. "But I don't think I will have time. Nurse might miss me, and then there would be trouble."

"Oh, that will be all right. I will see that you are back in time for dinner."

So saying, the fairy took Nuna's hand and led her down a long passage-way of snow and ice which opened up from the place where the fairy had first appeared. At the end of this hall they found themselves in a great open space, not unlike a meadow, except that it was covered with green ice instead of grass. Running

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through it were streams of clear water, on which dozens of large white swans were lazily swimming. Not far off could be seen the Ice Queen's palace, its glistening domes and towers all carved and decorated in the most delicate patterns, and looking at a distance as though made of cobwebs and fine lace. A clear bright light shone over the sparkling landscape. Altogether Nuna had never seen anything half so strange and beautiful.

When they reached the palace they found the entrance guarded by two large birds, whose plumage, with the exception of the breast and a single spot under each eye, was of jetty black. These were the only birds of their kind in the world, and were called the Great Auk. It was on a trip to Iceland, to consult with one of the wise men of that country, that the Queen had secured them, and ever since they had guarded her palace door with great dignity. The birds now threw open the doors, and the little visitor with her guide entered the hall of the palace. Nuna was quite dazzled at the magnificence of the inside. All of the furniture was carved out of precious rock crystal. Great masses of rare minerals in the form of huge icicles hung from the ceilings, and shone like millions of diamonds. Showers of sparkling white

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spray shot up from many fountains, in the basins of which gold and silver fish swam about. After passing through a great many halls and apartments, they finally reached the throne-room where the Ice Queen's court was assembled. Here the fairy was obliged to leave Nuna alone for a moment, while she asked permission to bring the little stranger in ; but she soon returned, and together they entered the presence of the Queen.

Nuna could never forget the scene that now met her eyes. The room was an octagon in shape, and from each of the eight sides flashed the reflected light of countless rare jewels set in patterns on the walls. Over one side stretched a perfectly shaped and brightly colored rainbow, and beneath the very centre of the rainbow's arch, seated on a chair of gold with crimson hangings, was the Queen of the Ice World. Her dress was of a pale blue material, the color of the summer sky, and embroidered with tiny stars of silver. A soft white light filled the room, shining on the sparkling costumes of hundreds of fairies, who stood about in tiny groups, busily talking. They were all dressed very much alike, though Nuna noticed that some wore crowns set with diamonds, while others had plain gold bands upon their

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foreheads. Her guide explained that those who wore the crowns were the leading fairies of the court, while the less important members were allowed to wear the gold band only.

The Queen was very kind to Nuna, and seemed much pleased to receive a visit from so pretty a mortal. She at once invited her to attend a supper and court ball that was to be given that night. In the mean while, as there was some little time to spare, she suggested that Nuna might enjoy a trip through some foreign countries on the back of her great swan, — the swiftest messenger she possessed. This was an honor indeed, and the little girl did not hesitate to accept the invitation. After the Queen had warned them not to fail to return in time for supper, Nuna and her companion hastened out to where the swan awaited them. They settled themselves on the soft feathery back, and the huge bird spread its wings and floated upwards. Nuna nestled down among the feathers, feeling that it was the warmest and most comfortable spot she had ever known. The fairy sat very close beside her, explaining all the wonderful things that they saw. As they flew swiftly along, the domes of the Ice Palace grew smaller and smaller, and were

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soon mere specks in the distance. The rivers and lakes and the big mountains of ice gradually disappeared also. It was not long before they found themselves high up over a great body of water, so large that Nuna's eyes fairly popped. She did not know that there could be so much water in the world. The fairy whispered that they were crossing an ocean, and when they peeped over the sides of the swan's wings they could see the pretty mermaids with long golden hair rise out of the water to watch their flight.

Soon the ocean was left behind, and they were darting swiftly over strange foreign countries. They skirted a great desert, and caught a glimpse of the pyramids and the Arab mosques and palaces. Nuna would have liked to watch more closely the crocodiles and the funny-looking boats on the Nile, and the queer people on the streets with their white-turbaned heads and black skins. But they could not linger. The Chinese, with their long pig-tails and curious pagodas, came into view. They saw elephants with tusks of ivory, lions and tigers, strange tribes of people, beautiful birds, and horrid reptiles. Forgetting time and place, Nuna thought only of the enjoyment of the present moment. Nurse would

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scold dreadfully, she knew ; but was n't it worth a scolding to be flying through the world like this ? And then perhaps she could get the swan to take nurse along on such a trip some day.

Though perfectly warm and comfortable herself, Nuna could tell by the various animals and birds beneath and about her that they were reaching a much colder country than any they had yet passed. The reindeer trotted awkwardly by ; the big white polar bear went diving down under the water, trying to make a dinner off the fat baby seals that were swimming about. The little guide told Nuna that they would soon reach the home of a wonderful Wizard, who lived in a great mountain and was tremendously wise. He knew of everything that was going on in the world, and had control over all things beneath the earth's surface. He kept a wonderful book by his side, and now and then wrote down his thoughts and experiences, which he intended to publish some day. In a short time the swan had reached the mountain in which the Wizard lived, and after alighting they entered an underground passage at the foot of the mountain. All was dark at first, but as they went in deeper and deeper they could see

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lights twinkling, and could hear noises in regular order like the pounding of many hammers. As they went along, the lights grew brighter and the pounding noise increased, until finally a sudden turn in the passage brought them out into what seemed to be an immense workroom, where hundreds of tiny figures were hammering away and flames were darting out of many small furnaces. The workmen were too busy to notice the strangers, and they walked about the room undisturbed. The fairy explained to Nuna that all the gold and silver in the world was controlled by the great Wizard, and that it was the duty of these little workmen to melt the precious metals and make them into large bricks, to be stored away in the caverns of the mountain as a reserve for future generations. The waste pieces of gold and silver cut from the bricks were thrown into a stream flowing through the centre of the room, and this stream, filtering through the earth in all directions, carried the metals to every part of the world. So now when you hear of the discovery of some wonderful mine of gold or silver, you will know that the owner has only happened to open up one of the veins leading to the mountain of the great Wizard.

THE ICE QUEEN'S PALACE

Nuna would have liked to stay in this wonderful workshop a long while, but their time was limited. The fairy now led her into a large room where sat the Wizard himself, — a very old man with a long white beard, bending over his book of wisdom. Three times every day the Wizard received news from the four quarters of the world. His messengers, who flooded the earth, were made invisible by a magic band worn around the forehead. In the centre of this band was a little white light, which in the outside world could not be seen, but inside the mountain it became very brilliant indeed. All through the dark caves Nuna saw these lights darting back and forth, and she knew that the messengers of the wise man were busy on their errands. The Wizard never left the room in which they now saw him, yet from this dark vault he issued orders which controlled many of the earth's greatest forces. He let Nuna peep into the book of knowledge, in which he had been reading for many ages, and there she read of things which quite took away her breath. One statement in particular made a great impression on her; this was that the sun became sixteen inches smaller each day. She knew that the earth was kept warm by the heat of the sun, and she

THE ICE QUEEN'S PALACE

thought with horror that if the sun faded away at this rate it would not be long before the world would be frozen up entirely. But the Wizard smiled and told her that even though the sun did get about four miles smaller each year, it was large enough to last at least forty thousand years longer, so there was no need of worrying yet.

Evening had now come, and it was time to return to the Ice Queen's palace. So bidding good-bye to the Wizard, Nuna and her guide hastened back to the entrance of the mountain. Here the swan was awaiting them, and they were soon upon its back floating swiftly homeward. It was great fun to sail along so near the sky and watch the stars come out. First one tiny light peeped out, twinkling and smiling, then another trembled into view, and finally a saucy third appeared. Then they seemed to rush out pell-mell, so fast that Nuna could not possibly count them; and soon the sky was spread with little flashing golden points. All this time they were coming nearer and nearer to the Ice Queen's palace. Soon they could see the beautiful lace-like domes and towers of ice, and in another moment they were before the doors, which the Great Auks swung back for them with much ceremony.

THE ICE QUEEN'S PALACE

The Ice Queen and her court were just gathering in the large supper room when Nuna appeared. She was at once led to the place of honor beside the Queen, at the head of a long table covered with the most delicious dainties that could be imagined. Tiny gold plates inlaid with jewels, and sparkling glasses cut out of single diamonds stood before each guest. Fat little brownies dressed in funny costumes ran back and forth serving the food, and all the while lovely voices were singing to the accompaniment of enchanting music. Nuna sat for some time in silent admiration of the beauty of the scene. Then, just as she was turning to speak to the Queen, she heard a loud noise like the ringing of a door-bell; some one pulled her rudely by the arm, and a voice said,—

“I declare! she has fallen sound asleep at this cold window.”

Nuna opened her eyes to find Mary standing over her, and her father and mother just come in for dinner.

“Where are the fairies and brownies?” she asked, rubbing her eyes.

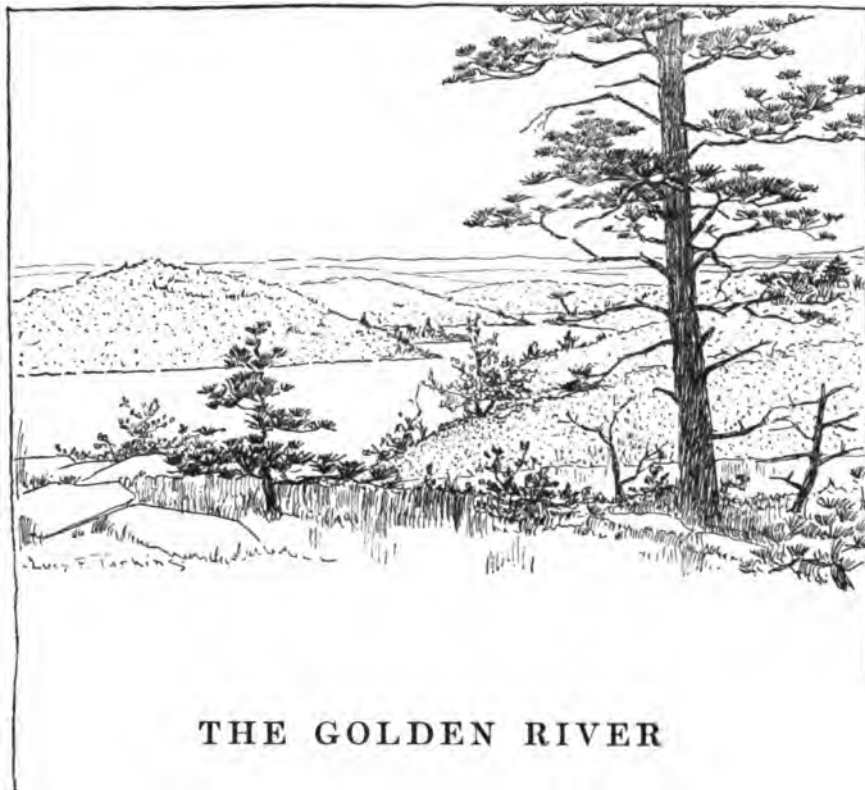
Her father laughed outright.

“Why, the child is still dreaming!”

THE ICE QUEEN'S PALACE

Dreaming! Nuna was quite provoked. The Ice Queen's palace, the fairies, her trip through the world, her visit to the Wizard of the mountain, — all this a dream? She knew better than that, of course; and, what was more, she intended to go back to the Ice Queen's palace again the very first chance she had.

THE GOLDEN RIVER



THE GOLDEN RIVER

EACH of the bands or tribes of little people who inhabit fairyland — the elves, brownies, wood nymphs, water sprites, and many others — has its own king and queen, as you know. But over them all rules one mighty monarch, whose power is unlimited. This is the Sun King. He drives through the sky in a golden chariot, holding in his right hand the great ball of fire that warms and brightens the earth. From his

THE GOLDEN RIVER

high place he watches, day by day, over his many subjects, and rewards or punishes them without favor.

The favorite resting-place for the Sun King was a beautiful spot where the purple hills reach up nearly to the clouds, their sloping sides thickly covered with wild flowers and delicate ferns. At the foot of the hills lay shining silver lakes, where the water sprites made their home. All about were thick woods in which no sound could be heard but the voice of the wind playing among the branches of the trees. The floor of the forest was carpeted over with soft gray moss, studded with red wintergreen berries. Here the elves and wood nymphs loved to play, delighting in the cool springs of crystal water. Sometimes they would come across some tiny stream and tease and torment it until, to escape them, it would rush swiftly toward the lake, tumbling headlong over the rocks and shooting up showers of white spray. The fairies kept to the hilltops, where they led a joyous life. Just beyond the hills lay the home of the brownies, — queer little fellows, with fat round bodies, spindle legs, big heads, and bulging eyes. In spite of their funny appearance, the brownies were a happy, rollicking, good-natured set, well liked by every one.

THE GOLDEN RIVER

Every now and then a brownie prince would fall in love with a fairy princess, and once in a great while the princess would return his love. But more often she would only laugh at her fat little lover, and instead of giving him her hand would only give him the mitten. At the particular time of which I am telling, it happened that one of the brownie princes had long been paying his court to the prettiest Princess in all fairyland. She was a gay little creature, who danced a great deal by moonlight and did not take a serious view of life at all. But she was kind of heart, and for a wonder was just a little bit in love with the brownie. As for him, he was too happy for words, and threw out his chest with pride at the thought of winning such a lovely creature.

Now a beautiful golden river, famous for its glorious color at sunset, ran through this country. It wound in and out among the trees like a snake, turning and twisting until it emptied itself into the big bay outside. The waters of the bay were of many colors, — green, blue, opal, all in one, — and so clear that you could see the tiny pebbles at the bottom, fifteen or twenty feet down. Two jagged points of land ran out from the shore, en-

THE GOLDEN RIVER

closing the bay and protecting it from the storms that sometimes raged there. At sunset these high points of red sandstone shone like fire, and in the calm surface of the bay and river were reflected the brightly colored clouds, — purple, gray, pink, golden, and crimson, — blending together in glorious confusion. There was no more beautiful sight in fairyland.

The Golden River and the country about it were owned by the water sprites, the wood nymphs, and the elves, who were all very jealous of the fairies because the latter received so much attention from the brownies, while they were neglected entirely. When they heard of the engagement of the fairy Princess they decided to revenge themselves. So they invited the Princess and her court to come down from the hilltop on a certain afternoon to attend a banquet on the banks of the Golden River, where they could watch the sun go down. The invitation was accepted at once, and on a lovely evening the party assembled, just at sunset. After the feast was over, and the health of the Princess had been drunk, an innocent little nymph spoke of the news which they had just heard, and inquired if the Princess had set the day for her wedding.



***S**HE was a gay little creature, who danced a great deal by moonlight.*

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THE GOLDEN RIVER

“Not yet,” she replied, blushing; “but I am to give the brownie Prince his answer to-morrow.”

Then a water sprite spoke, so sweetly that her voice sounded like the murmur of a tiny brook, —

“Do you not hold yourself too lightly, to consent so easily to a marriage with the brownie? One of your high station should make a suitor prove himself worthy to win your hand. You should test his love by setting some great task for him to perform. Tell him that he must steal the ball of fire which the Sun King carries, and hide the rays from the great King’s eyes. Could he do such a thing as this, he would indeed be worthy of your love.”

Such was the advice of the false water sprite, and the foolish but innocent little fairy fell at once into the trap. She promised she would make the demand of her lover.

When the brownie Prince came next day, radiant with happiness, and eager to have his sweetheart name their wedding day, he was told of what he must do before he could hope to win the hand of the Princess. He tried to show her what a dangerous and almost impossible task this was; but the wilful young fairy was not to be

THE GOLDEN RIVER

moved by argument, and would only promise to marry him on the day that he returned successful from his exploit. So there was nothing for our little brownie to do but to undertake the dreadful task.

After many days of watching, a favorable opportunity to carry out his plan came at last. The Sun King had had a hard day's work and was very tired. The afternoon was warm, and he said to himself: "I will just slip behind this big cloud with my chariot, and take a short nap. Nobody will miss me." Here was the brownie's chance. Making sure that the King was fast asleep, he crept up the highest mountain peak (you know the clouds often lie below the tops of the mountains), and stealing through the cloud to where the King lay, he seized the great ball of fire. Then he crept softly down the mountain with his treasure, and hid it in a cave under the mountain-side. The King still slept on. In a few minutes a cold fog arose. Slowly the white mist curled above the lake and floated over the valleys; then, creeping higher, it chilled the green ferns on the hillsides. With this damp garment covering it, the earth grew darker and darker, and colder and colder.

THE GOLDEN RIVER

Suddenly the Sun King shivered, and awoke with a start. The world below him was shrouded in darkness. Thunder and lightning and hail were already pouring from the heavens; a strong wind was rising, and the waters of the lakes dashed up in fury. Terrible disasters must surely follow as the storm and darkness increased. For a moment the King was quite overcome by this awful state of affairs. Who could have stolen his golden ball, and where was it now? Unless he could find it again, the earth would gradually freeze, flowers and vegetation would die, and all the people would perish of cold and hunger. He searched from north to south and from east to west for the offender. Dark as it was, his all-powerful eye penetrated seas and mountains at a glance. At last he noticed just beneath him the terror of the inhabitants of fairyland. The elves and water sprites were trembling behind the rocks and trees, every fairy had hidden itself beneath a rose-leaf, and the brownies were shaking in fright under the tops of the mushrooms. This aroused the King's suspicions, and glancing closer he soon spied beneath the big mountain his missing ball of fire. With one great sweep of his arm he seized the lost treasure and restored it to its place

THE GOLDEN RIVER

in the heavens. Beneath the flood of golden sunshine which poured down the next moment, the fog gathered up her misty skirts and fled, the flowers raised their drooping heads and took a long breath, and the ferns peeped out fresh and tender from the rocks. The earth awoke from her cold sleep, and smiled back joyously at the heavens.

But the Sun King still frowned, a dark cloud resting on his brow. His missing fire had been restored, but he had yet to find and punish the guilty. Sternly he ordered all the little people of fairyland to assemble on the mountain-top. When they stood before him, a shame-faced and sorry-looking crowd, he cried in a voice of thunder, —

“ Who stole my golden fire ? ”

The brownie Prince stepped forward. He could not help trembling a little, but his voice was firm as he said, —

“ Your Majesty, I am the guilty one.”

How brave he looked, standing there and taking all the blame upon himself? So thought the unhappy fairy Princess; and she felt that she loved him now a hundred times more than she ever did before. She

THE GOLDEN RIVER

hesitated a moment, then ran forward and threw herself on her knees before the King.

“Spare the Prince, great Sun King,” she cried, “for what he did was done for love of me. I forced him to do it, to prove his affection, and I alone am really guilty.”

The King could not help feeling a good deal of pity for the two young lovers, as they stood before him, each trying to take the blame from the other. But so great a crime could not be forgiven, and the guilty must be punished in a way that would never be forgotten. Therefore he decreed that for one hundred years the lovely region of fairyland should be haunted by the presence of man. Houses should rise among the quiet hills, boats appear upon the lakes, and the forests echo with the axes of the woodmen. Then all the people of fairyland must take other forms. The water sprites should become frogs, to croak along the banks of the Golden River. (I am sure you have often heard these enchanted water sprites. They croak at all times, but on dark rainy days or in foggy weather they are especially noisy. They seem to fear that some one is trying to steal the sun again.) The elves should be the fish

THE GOLDEN RIVER

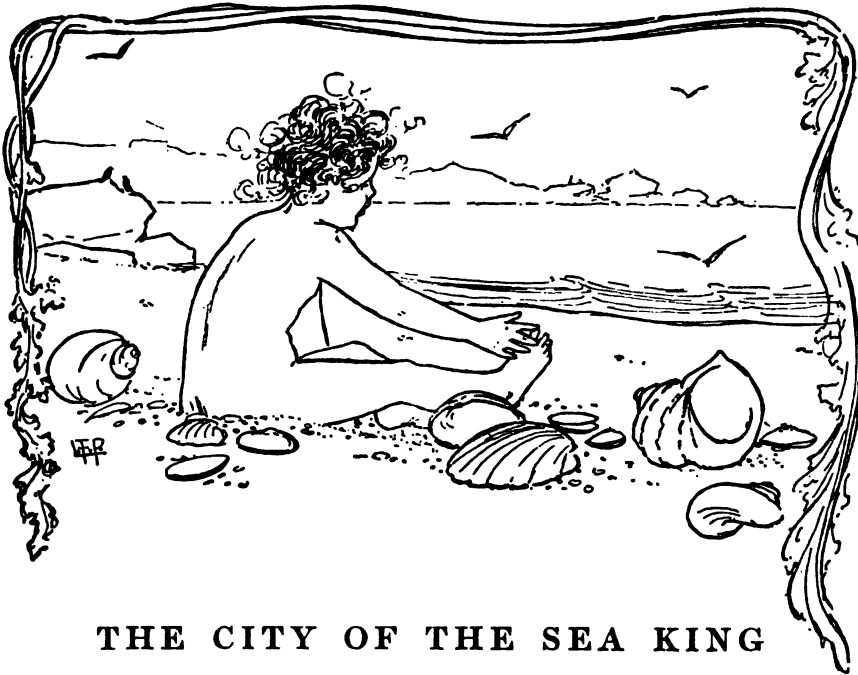
swimming about in the lakes, and the wood nymphs the graceful deer roving in the thick woods. The foolish little Princess and the other fairies should become squirrels, to play about the oak-trees on the hills ; and the brownies must take the form of that sad-voiced bird, the loon, whose mournful cry would well express the sorrow and repentance which they felt for their crime.

Such was the sentence of the Sun King. But he still loved his subjects, and not wishing to seem altogether without mercy he added that for three hours each night they could resume their natural forms. So it now and then happens that when one of the human inhabitants of the place steps out some night in front of his comfortable cabin, or strolls to the hilltop to admire the flood of moonlight over the trees and lakes, he sees a wonderful sight. The wood nymphs come forth, crowned with flowers and leaves, and join the water sprites on the banks of the Golden River. The fairies, with star-tipped wands and dresses of gossamer web, steal out of the forest, followed by the elves and the brownies. Then begins a gay dance and merry frolic in the moonlight, which no mortal pen could describe. For three hours they dance and sing and feast without interruption. But

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as the first streak of dawn appears in the east, the fairy Princess sadly takes up her squirrel skin, her little brownie lover tenderly bids her good-bye and stretches forth his wings. In a moment the place is silent and deserted. Then on the early morning air breaks that loneliest and saddest of all sounds, — the loon's unhappy cry.

THE CITY OF THE SEA KING



THE CITY OF THE SEA KING

OF course you have heard of the mermaids, — those queer creatures with a young girl's head and body and the tail of a fish instead of legs. You have read of how they rise up out of the sea and sit all day upon the rocks, combing their shining hair and singing strange sweet songs to charm the ears of passing sailors whom they wish to carry down to their wonderful palaces of coral and shells at the bottom of the ocean. But I doubt if you ever heard the story of the *first* mermaid, and why it is that they are half human and half fish. This is the way it all happened :

THE CITY OF THE SEA KING

There once lived a king and queen who ruled over a stately city built upon the shores of the sea. The beautiful hills on which the city stood sloped gently down to the water's edge, so that the groves of lemons and olives and the gardens of flowers nearly touched the sandy beach. The King and Queen had but one child, — the Princess Selpan. She was a lovely girl, as fair and stately as the lilies in her father's gardens, and as pure and sweet as the dew on the roses. Beloved by all, envied by none, she was the pride of the entire country. The people loved her as they did their own children, and to be as good and beautiful as the Princess was the wish of every young girl in the kingdom.

Far out in the depths of the ocean lived the Sea King, who controlled the winds and the waters of the world. He was a powerful ruler, and one of many moods. When he did not happen to feel just right, he would seize some great struggling ship and toss it in his giant arms, tormenting and teasing it, and finally breaking it to pieces in his fierce grasp. Then, again, in a happier mood, he would protect some tiny canoe, caressing and petting it, and bearing it safely on his broad bosom to its destination. One of the favorite haunts of the Sea



SHE was as fair and stately as the lilies in her father's gardens.

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THE CITY OF THE SEA KING

King was a certain blue grotto or cave on an island near the shores of the city. Here he often spent the day, stretched out in the yellow rays of the sun ; or at night he would lie and watch the volcano behind the city belching forth its fire and flame and throwing down rocks and lava.

In spite of his immense duties and responsibilities, the Sea King led a lonely life. Often when lying in the blue grotto the laughter of the Princess Selpan and her gay comrades, as they played on the sunny beach, would be carried to his ears on the breeze ; and then he would envy their careless happy life and wish that he too were mortal. Sometimes he would steal up close to the beach in a big wave, and watch the girls at play. He always watched the Princess longest ; and on these days he went back to his lonely green palace beneath the water feeling very sad and ill-humored. Even the slow old maiden crab who kept house for him lost her temper at such times, and hinted that it was about time he found a wife to manage his household affairs. On one occasion she lost her temper completely, and was about to give her master notice on the spot ; but when she saw him sitting so sadly, with his head in his hands, her con-

THE CITY OF THE SEA KING

science troubled her, and she decided to stay a while longer. Perhaps he would yet wed one of the daughters of the sea, the lovely nereids ; certainly he was reaching an age where he ought to think seriously of marriage.

Time went on, and the Sea King grew sadder and crosser than ever. He took no interest in his work, and would shut himself up in his palace for days at a time, only floating out now and then to visit the blue grotto. He forgot to give the winds their orders, and they, like naughty children, did not do their duty, but spent their time idly playing about in the ocean caves. While the winds were misbehaving in this way, the days of course became very warm. At last it grew terribly hot, and a great pestilence visited the city. The people died at a frightful rate. No breeze blew in from the ocean to cool the suffocating air. It was said that the Sea King was sulking, and no longer took an interest in anything. He had shut himself up in his palace, refusing to see any one. The King and Queen of the city sent messengers to lay the complaints of the suffering people before the monarch of the deep, but he would not receive them. Fish swam boldly out toward the green walls of the palace, but they got no farther than the coral

THE CITY OF THE SEA KING

reefs outside the gates. Lobsters crawled slowly and painfully to the palace, feeling that their age and dignity would surely entitle them to a private audience, only to be met at the entrance by a solemn old porpoise, who reported his master too ill to attend to business. Those were fearful days! The groans of the sick and dying became louder and louder; but the Sea King was indifferent, and would not leave his palace.

At last one day in despair the King and Queen assembled their subjects on the beach, and with pale faces and gasping breath implored the hard-hearted Sea King to send them a cooling breeze, and thus relieve their great misery. If he would only do this, they declared they would give him all the jewels in their kingdom, or anything else that he might wish. Then his Majesty of the sea rolled out of his palace, and rose to the surface of the ocean on a big white-crested wave, the water-drops on his long beard sparkling like diamonds in the sun. He spoke in a voice of thunder, —

“ I want but one jewel in your crown, O King, — the Princess Selpan for my bride! ”

At these terrible words the Queen fell to the ground in a faint, the King turned deathly pale, and the people

THE CITY OF THE SEA KING

looked at each other in horror. The King's only daughter, the pride of all the kingdom, become the wife of the Sea King! No, they would prefer death to this. In the midst of the excitement the Princess Selpan herself arose among her maidens, tall and stately, but colorless as a Snow Queen.

"My father," she said, "if it will remove the sickness from our dear subjects, let the Sea King's wish be granted. I am willing, and have no fear."

The King and Queen wept, the people begged for mercy, but all to no avail. The Sea King's heart was not to be touched; only the Princess would satisfy him. So at last it was decided that the sacrifice should be made.

On the day appointed for the marriage the Princess dressed herself in garments of white, and bidding her father and mother a sad farewell, went down to the beach to greet her bridegroom. The sea was in a great commotion. Whales spouted up water, making fountains of sparkling color in the sun. Great schools of happy little fish frisked about, a half-holiday having been granted all the public schools of the ocean in honor of the event. Graceful dolphins, in bewildering colors

THE CITY OF THE SEA KING

of green and gold, dived down into the depths of the water, and suddenly came up again, a mass of sparkling fire. Clumsy porpoises plunged around just ahead of the bridal procession, making a pathway of white foam. The King himself at last appeared, seated in a great pink sea-shell, drawn by two sea-horses with arching necks. Driving to the edge of the shore where the Princess Selpan stood, the monarch of the sea lifted her to a seat at his side, and placed upon her head a crown of woven seaweed embroidered with rare shells. Then he spoke to the King and Queen, who stood trembling on the shore, —

“Have no fear for your daughter’s happiness and safety. I love her with all my heart, and as long as she lives she shall receive all the honor and respect due to the Queen of the Sea.”

Saying these words, he motioned to his horses, and the car disappeared beneath the waves. At the same moment a delicious cool breeze sprang up over the water. The plague-stricken city was at last relieved.

The Sea King told the truth when he said that he loved his human wife, and the two lived very happily together. In time they had many children, all of whom

THE CITY OF THE SEA KING

were half human and half fish, — that is, they were born with the body of a human being and the tail of a fish in place of legs. At regular intervals of several years the King would allow one of his little daughters to return to that human world from which he had taken his wife. The grief of the mother at parting would be lost in joy at the knowledge that her child would become human and receive a soul. When the mother and sisters had bade the little girl farewell, they would lull her into a deep sleep, and then lay her on the breast of a great broad wave. While sleeping, the fish's tail would disappear, and in its place two little white legs grow out. Then the wave would bear her gently to the shore, where she would soon be found and cared for. When next you hear of some baby girl being rescued from the ocean, you may know that just as likely as not it is the little sister of the mermaids.

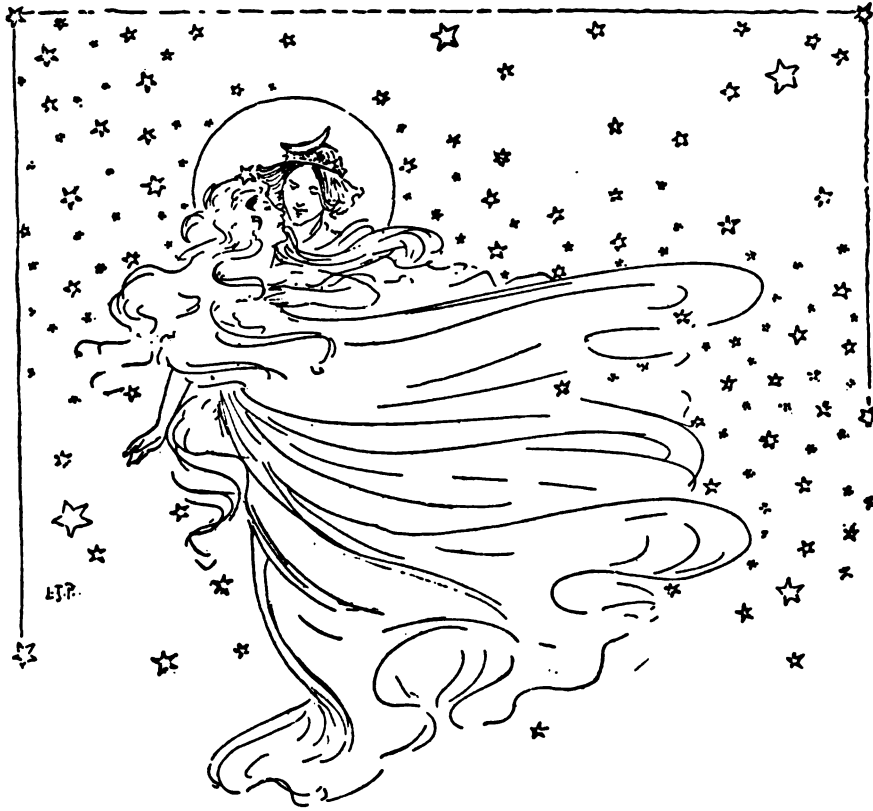
The Sea King and his wife watch carefully every coast, choosing the spot where their beloved child shall land. I know of a place on the shore of a great lake where at night the Northern Lights come and go, shifting in great curtains from whitest silver to deepest pink, where if you stand watching by day you will often

THE CITY OF THE SEA KING

see queer objects in the sky, or perhaps notice rising from the depths of blue waters the Sea King's city. His palaces and domes, his castles and spires, his crystal streets and jewelled gates, come slowly but plainly to the surface. Rising in royal splendor is a marvellous city on the water's edge, far away, yet perfectly distinct.

Those who do not know may call it a mirage, but we are wiser. It is the City of the Sea King, and there he lives happily with his human wife and his little mermaid daughters.

THE CLOUD MAIDENS



THE CLOUD MAIDENS

THE Cloud Maidens are beautiful beings who dwell close up to the stars just under the blue ceiling of the heavens. They are the daughters of the old Storm King, and lovely as they are, they have a great deal of work to do.

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THE CLOUD MAIDENS

The Storm King is a stern father, and requires strict obedience from his daughters. The slightest neglect of their work makes him very angry, and then his voice thunders and his eyes flash lightning glances through the sky. So you can see he is not a pleasant old gentleman to provoke, and the maidens are cautious of making him angry. But when he is good-natured he sends the nice gentle rain to cool the earth, so he is not altogether bad.

Now all those lovely drops falling from the sky are drawn up first from the earth, and these charming maidens I am going to tell you about have that hard work to perform. They let down great golden buckets, held by long silken ribbons of color, from the cloud palaces, and draw them slowly up again, filled with water. Day in and day out the Cloud Sisters draw up their jewelled pails until the cloud palaces are filled to overflowing, and then, carefully locking and closing the gates, they await the old Storm King's orders for rain. Sometimes it is a mild little sprinkle with millions of tiny drops deluging the world, and again, maybe, he orders a cloud-burst of water and hail in a furious storm. The cloud palaces are very beautiful. They lie white

THE CLOUD MAIDENS

against the blue sky like great mountains of snow, or shimmer, at noonday, in little fleecy patches of wool across the heavens. Toward sunset they are quite gorgeous and put on their festal robes, and then every color of the rainbow seems to mingle with them.

Now the Cloud Maidens live in these glowing regions during the day, and their long streaming skirts float behind them when they sail across the sky. They are always busily at work drawing up water, and often you can watch them and plainly see the long ribbon streamers lowered. At night, however, when they have locked the palace gates and given the keys into the keeping of the Storm King, they rest from their labors, and choosing a pretty spot in which to sleep, they wait there until morning. Their bright faces shine out from the heavens like stars, and people on the earth looking up and seeing the sparkling cluster, call them the Seven Sisters.

Well, the brightest and prettiest of these seven little sisters fell in love with the Man in the Moon! He sailed by in his splendid silver palace every night, and he always stopped and chatted with the lovely Cloud Sisters. He was known to be a flirt, to be sure, but he was very handsome, and the innocent little Cloud Maiden

THE CLOUD MAIDENS

believed in him. The other maidens smiled to themselves and sympathized with their youngest sister in her love affair, and at last when the Man in the Moon proposed to marry the little Cloud Maiden and take her away to his home in the mountains of the moon, they did not object.

But the old Storm King, who now heard for the first time of the love affair, raged and tore his beard at the bare suggestion, and declared his child should not become the wife of such a flirt as the Man in the Moon. His daughter was terribly frightened at her father's words, but she was very much in love, and she said she could not give up her sweetheart. Then the Storm King became very angry, and banished her forever from her place in the heavens beside her shining sisters. No one knew where she was sent, but the next evening only six sisters appeared in the star cluster. The Man in the Moon was very sorrowful at losing the little maiden, but he made up his mind never to stop searching until he should find her. The Cloud Sisters could not help him, because they did not know themselves where to find the lost one. But the Man in the Moon did not give up, and continued to plead with the old King.

THE CLOUD MAIDENS

At last, wearied with his prayers, the Storm King said: "If you succeed in finding her, I will consent, and that is the only hope I will give you. But she is so securely hidden from your eyes that your search will be useless; and as you can never discover her hiding-place, you had better choose another bride and forget her."

But the Man in the Moon could not forget, and night after night he continued to wander through the heavens looking for his lost darling. Time passed, and still the six sisters were alone in the sky; and the moon, floating splendidly through the blue vault, contained but a sad, pale-faced lover. The brook and the ocean smiled up at him, the trees and the flowers beckoned to him, but, gloomy and unhappy, he gave no response to their invitation. He had lost all desire for amusement, for this time he was really in love. As he looked down upon the earth, he suddenly made up his mind to look for his sweetheart there. So wrapping himself in a long dark cloak, he slid down upon a moonbeam.

When he arrived, Mother Earth received him with open arms, hoping he had at last come to court one of

THE CLOUD MAIDENS

her own lovely daughters, for the maidens of the earth were then as now very beautiful and fair to look upon. The Man in the Moon had flirted for so many years with members of her family that the old lady had despaired of his ever proving serious in his attentions, but this sudden visit gave her confidence again, and she wondered which one of her daughters he would woo.

But she was sadly disappointed in her hopes when she learned that, after all, he had not come to ask for one of her children in marriage. Pride kept her from showing her feelings, however, although she could not help being a trifle haughty in her manner when she extended to him the hospitality of the world. He looked among the lovely maidens of the earth, trying to find the pretty Cloud Sister, but it was a useless search. After walking many miles he reached a dense forest where the air was heavy and damp, and, feeling very tired, he chose a low stump and sat down to rest awhile.

All of a sudden a stone flew out of a tree and hit him right on the nose. He jumped up to find who had thrown it, and saw, sitting in the branches over his head, a black, grinning old monkey.

“What do you wish in monkeyland?” said the ape.

THE CLOUD MAIDENS

“Is this monkeyland?” replied the Man in the Moon. “Well, I wonder if you have seen a beautiful creature with long silken hair, and exquisite eyes, and the fairest of faces, passing this way? I am searching for my lost bride, and I can never be happy until I find her.”

“Yes, indeed,” replied the funny old monkey, swinging himself down by his long arms to the ground. “You surely have come to the right place for her; but it will be useless to try to get her back, for our King has fallen madly in love with her, and intends to marry her himself.”

Then he told the Man in the Moon how, just a few days before, they had found a beautiful creature wandering around alone, lost in the woods. They thought she must have dropped from the clouds. When their little band had captured her among the rocks, they had at once brought her before their King, and he had determined to marry her and make her his Queen, in spite of the fact that she could not climb a tree. They were now all busy preparing for the wedding, which would take place in a week.

Thousands of busy chattering monkeys were bounding about, leaping from tree to tree, swinging themselves

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clear across great wide branches, gathering cocoanuts to store away, and draping with moss lovely bowers for the King and his bride to go to housekeeping in.

But they did not seem to be accomplishing much, for monkeys are great thieves, and as soon as a little moss was draped over a tree by one of them, another would come and steal it away. It certainly looked as if the house for the bridal couple would never be finished. The pile of cocoanuts, too, would disappear in the same mysterious way. At last the older monkeys put sentinels to watch for the thieves, and when the robbers appeared there was a regular battle. They tumbled over one another, yelling with anger and almost tearing each other to pieces.

So you can see it was rather slow work preparing for the wedding feast. They had hidden the bride for safety, fearing because of her great beauty she might be stolen. The Man in the Moon felt it was useless to search for her, because he knew how well monkeys hide everything, and he thought the best way to get her back would be to wait for the day of the wedding and seize her just as she was brought out for the ceremony. So he determined to find the red dwarfs, and ask them to

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aid him in his fight with the monkeys. They are great enemies of the monkeys, because it is their duty to watch the trees and grasses and flowers, destroying insects that would injure them, and curing the sick roots, while the monkeys tear and destroy everything, and thus are always at war with the dwarfs. He was not long in interesting them in his love affair, and they armed themselves and returned with him to monkey-land.

Concealing themselves among the low bushes and shrubs, they kept out of sight until the wedding day. Then they crept as near the monkey village as they could without being seen, and awaited the bridal procession. At last it was seen approaching, and the impatient Man in the Moon could hardly wait to see his beloved. He felt so angry with the ugly and conceited old monkey king, who came first, dancing with joy, that he could scarcely keep from whipping him right on the spot.

The bride appeared at last, covered with leaves and grasses and crowned with yellow swamp lilies. But the Man in the Moon nearly died of fright when he caught sight of her. Instead of his dainty little Cloud Maiden, he beheld a hideous creature. She had tiny bead-like

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eyes and a hairy black face, and was a dreadful sight to behold.

“ Shall we seize her ? ” whispered one of the dwarfs, breathless with excitement.

“ Alas, no ! ” sadly replied the Man in the Moon, “ it is a mistake. She is not my beautiful bride at all, but only an ugly old baboon.”

Well, the disheartened lover was greatly disappointed, of course, but was much encouraged by the red dwarfs, who begged him to consult an old owl who lived on a mountain near by. She was a cousin of the cat, and was known to be very wise and always to give good advice. She was most highly thought of by the birds, and was often consulted by them in difficult matters.

The owl was quite delighted to meet the Man in the Moon because, as she told him, he was such a surprise ! She had always heard the moon was made of green cheese, and to find a handsome tall young man before her was a great pleasure indeed. She promised she would do all she could to help him, and she said that on this particular occasion she felt it was almost her duty to solve the mystery of the lost Cloud Maiden.

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But it seemed such a useless task for a quiet old owl to try to fathom a mystery which had puzzled the great Man in the Moon. Still she determined to try, and she lay awake all night planning what she would do.

One evening, very late indeed, she got down from her nest, leaving her babies with their father, and thought she would take a walk, just to quiet her nerves. She walked down the mountain-side until she came to a cave at its base. She was standing there thinking hard when she heard a deep moan. She listened attentively and heard it again, and at the same time a fine white veil seemed to issue from a crack in the rock and slowly rise like a thread of smoke. Then she remembered that she had lately noticed this fine mist and had wondered what it was. Sometimes it had lain close to the valley, which it covered like a white veil, then again it had risen higher and hid the trees. The birds had talked of its mysterious appearance, too, but they had not been able to account for it.

She was quite interested, therefore, in her discovery, and was closely watching the mist spread over the valley in little soft waves of white when she heard a voice singing, —

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“ Though my heart may grieve,
Here must I sit and weave,
While now I have found my doom.
For I feel that no lover
Can ever discover
The Maid of the Mist at her loom ! ”

The owl was astonished, and called out, “ Who, who are you ? ”

The voice replied, “ I am a little Cloud Maiden banished from the heavens for loving the Man in the Moon, and now I am only the Maid of the Mist. Here must I sit weaving the fog and the mist until my lover finds me. That he can never, never do, for I am locked in so tightly with rocks and stones that even his bright eye cannot enter my dark prison.”

The owl, of course, was overjoyed to discover the little maiden so near, and begged her not to despair, saying, “ I will get all the owls in the world to come and help me, and we will scratch under the rock until we make a tunnel for you to escape.”

“ Oh, thank you, kind-hearted friend,” replied the Maid of the Mist. “ If you can free me from this dungeon, I will be grateful to you forever.”

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The owl flew back to her nest, and the next day gathered all the owls in the world and told them what had happened. Gladly they began scratching a tunnel, but it was hard work. They could only work at night, fearing if they did so in the day they might be seen by the Storm King. So they were obliged to sleep all day so as to work all night, and they became so accustomed to this that from that day they never again slept at night.

At last they had a hole big enough, and the little maid squeezed her way out. What a beautiful vision she was! The owls were quite awed by her splendor, and bowed down and worshipped her then and there. No wonder the Man in the Moon wanted to marry her. Her face shone like a star, and her large eyes were clear and bright, and as blue as a flower. Her long hair hung around her in a golden cloud, while her dress was white and soft as the mist she was weaving. A bright light floated about her, and she stood out in the dark night as brilliant as the moon itself.

She thanked the owls over and over again for their kindness in setting her free, and removing the curse put upon her for her disobedience to her father, and it only

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remained to call the Man in the Moon to greet his love. You may be sure the owls were not long in finding him. Soon his white palace was shining brilliantly over the hills, and he was clasping the maiden in his arms. After thanking the solemn little owls for the good work they had done for him, he sailed away with his bride to get her father's consent to their marriage.

The Storm King's heart was somewhat softened at the sight of the charming pair before him, and so he consented to the wedding. But still he never quite forgave the Man in the Moon for stealing his little daughter's affections.

They had a grand wedding. The Cloud Maidens took their brooms and swept the sky clear of all the black clouds. Then they polished the stars until they shone like diamonds in a blue setting. One of the little maidens, in her excitement and pleasure at seeing her lost sister again, dropped one she was rubbing, and away it fell through the air, and with it her long trailing brush of ribbons. She was many days and weeks getting it back and placing it where it belonged. Wise men on the earth looked up and saw the falling star, and called it a comet.

The owls were the bridesmaids and the stars the witnesses for the marriage. Then the Man in the Moon

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and the Maid of the Mist sailed away on a fleecy white cloud, on their wedding journey to the silver mountains of the moon, and if some night you look closely you can see beside the Man in the Moon a woman's face. And the owls (awake every night since) still watch for the face of the beloved maid they saved from the dreary dungeon under the rock.

And when they see her there they rejoice, knowing she is happy and contented beside her husband. But from that day to this you will find only six stars in that shining cluster in the sky, for the seventh, as you know, is married to the Man in the Moon.



**PRINTED FOR A. C. McCLURG & CO. BY
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, JOHN WILSON
AND SON (INC.), CAMBRIDGE, U. S. A.**

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