

The YELLOW DWARF.

WALTER
CRANE'S
TOY BOOKS

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THE YELLOW DWARF.

ONCE upon a time there was a Queen who had an only daughter, and she was so fond of her that she never corrected her faults; therefore the Princess became proud, and so vain of her beauty that she despised everybody. The Queen gave her the name of Toubelle; and sent her portrait to several friendly kings. As soon as they saw it, they all fell in love with her. The Queen, however, saw no means of inducing her to decide in favour of one of them, so, not knowing what to do, she went to consult a powerful Fairy, called the Fairy of the Desert: but it was not easy to see her, for she was guarded by lions. The Queen could have had little chance if she had not known how to prepare a cake that would appease them. She made one herself, put it in a little basket, and set out on her journey. Being tired with walking, she lay down at the foot of a tree and fell asleep; and on waking, she found her basket empty, and the cake gone, while the lions were roaring dreadfully. "Alas, what will become of me!" she exclaimed, clinging to the tree. Just then she heard, "Hist! Ah!" and raising her eyes, she saw up in the tree a little man not more than two feet high. He was eating oranges, and said to her, "I love you well, Queen; you have good reason to be afraid of the lions, for they have devoured many before you, and—you have no cake." "Alas," cried the poor Queen, "I should die with less pain if my dear daughter were but married!" "How! you have a daughter!" exclaimed the Yellow Dwarf. (He was so called from the colour of his skin, and his living in an orange-tree.) "I am delighted to hear it, for I have sought a wife by land and sea. If you will promise her to me, I will save you from the lions." The Queen looked at him, and was scarcely less frightened at his horrible figure than at the lions. She made no answer until she saw them on the brow of a hill, running towards her. At this the poor Queen cried out, "Save me! Toubelle is yours." The trunk of the orange-tree immediately opened; the Queen rushed into it; it closed, and the lions were balked of their prey.

The unfortunate Queen then dropped insensible to the ground, and

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while she was in this state she was transported to the palace, and placed in her own bed. When she awoke and recollected what had befallen her, she tried to persuade herself that it was all a dream and that she had never met with this dreadful adventure: but she fell into a melancholy state, so that she could scarcely speak, eat, or sleep.

The Princess, who loved her mother with all her heart, grew very uneasy. She often begged her to say what was the matter, but the Queen always put her off with some reason that the Princess saw plainly enough was not the real one. Being unable to control her anxiety, she resolved to seek the famous Fairy of the Desert, whose advice as to marrying she was also desirous of obtaining, for everybody pressed her to choose a husband. She took care to knead the cake herself, and pretending to go to bed early one evening, she went out by a back staircase, and thus, all alone, set out to find the Fairy. But on arriving at the orange-tree, she was seized with a desire to gather some of the fruit. She set down her basket and plucked some oranges; but when she looked again for it, it had disappeared. Alarmed and distressed, she suddenly saw beside her the frightful little Dwarf. "What ails you, fair maid?" said he. "Alas!" replied she, "I have lost the cake which was so necessary to insure my safe arrival at the abode of the Desert Fairy." "And what do you want with her?" said the Dwarf. "I am her kinsman, and as clever as she is." "The Queen, my mother," replied the Princess, "has lately fallen into despair. I fancy I am the cause of it; for she wishes me to marry; but I have not yet seen any one I think worthy of me. It is for this reason I would consult the Fairy." "Don't give yourself that trouble, Princess," said the Dwarf; "I can advise you better than she. The Queen is sorry that she has promised you in marriage." "The Queen promised me!" cried the Princess. "Oh, you must be mistaken." "Beautiful Princess," said the Dwarf, flinging himself at her feet, "it is I who am destined to enjoy such happiness." "My mother have you for her son-in-law!" exclaimed Toubelle, recoiling; "was there ever such madness!" "I care very little about the honour," said the Dwarf, angrily. "Here come the lions; in three bites they will avenge me." At the same moment the poor Princess heard the roars of the savage beasts. "What will become of me?" she cried. The Dwarf looked at her, and laughed contemptuously. "Be not angry," said the Princess; "I would rather





marry all the dwarfs in the world than perish in so frightful a manner." "Look at me well, Princess, before you give me your word," replied he. "I have looked at you more than enough," said she. "The lions are approaching; save me!" She had scarcely uttered these words, when she fainted. On recovering, she found herself in her own bed, and on her finger a little ring made of a single red hair, which fitted her so closely that the skin might have been taken off sooner than the ring. When the Princess saw these things, and remembered what had taken place, she became very despondent, which pained the whole Court.

Toutebelle had now lost much of her pride. She saw no better way of getting out of her trouble than by marrying some great king with whom the Dwarf would not dare to dispute. She, therefore, consented to marry the King of the Gold Mines, a very powerful and handsome Prince, who loved her passionately. It is easy to imagine his joy when he received this news. Everything was prepared for one of the grandest entertainments that had ever been given. The King of the Gold Mines sent home for such sums of money that the sea was covered with the ships which brought them. Now that she had accepted him, the Princess found in the young King so much merit that she soon began to return his affection, and became very warmly attached to him.

At length the day so long wished for arrived. Everything being ready for the marriage, the people flocked in crowds to the great square in front of the palace. The Queen and Princess were advancing to meet the King, when they saw two large turkey-cocks, drawing a strange-looking box. Behind them came a tall old woman, whose age and decrepitude were no less remarkable than her ugliness. She leaned on a crutch. She wore a black ruff, a red hood, and a gown all in tatters. She took three turns round the gallery with her turkey-cocks before she spoke a word; then, stopping and brandishing her crutch, she cried, "Ho! ho! Queen!—Ho! ho! Princess! Do you fancy you can break your promises to my friend the Yellow Dwarf! I am the Fairy of the Desert! But for him and his orange-tree, know you not that my great lions would have devoured you?" "Ah! Princess," exclaimed the Queen, bursting into tears, "what promise have you made?" "Ah! Mother," cried Toutebelle, sorrowfully, "what promise have *you* made?" The King of the Gold Mines,





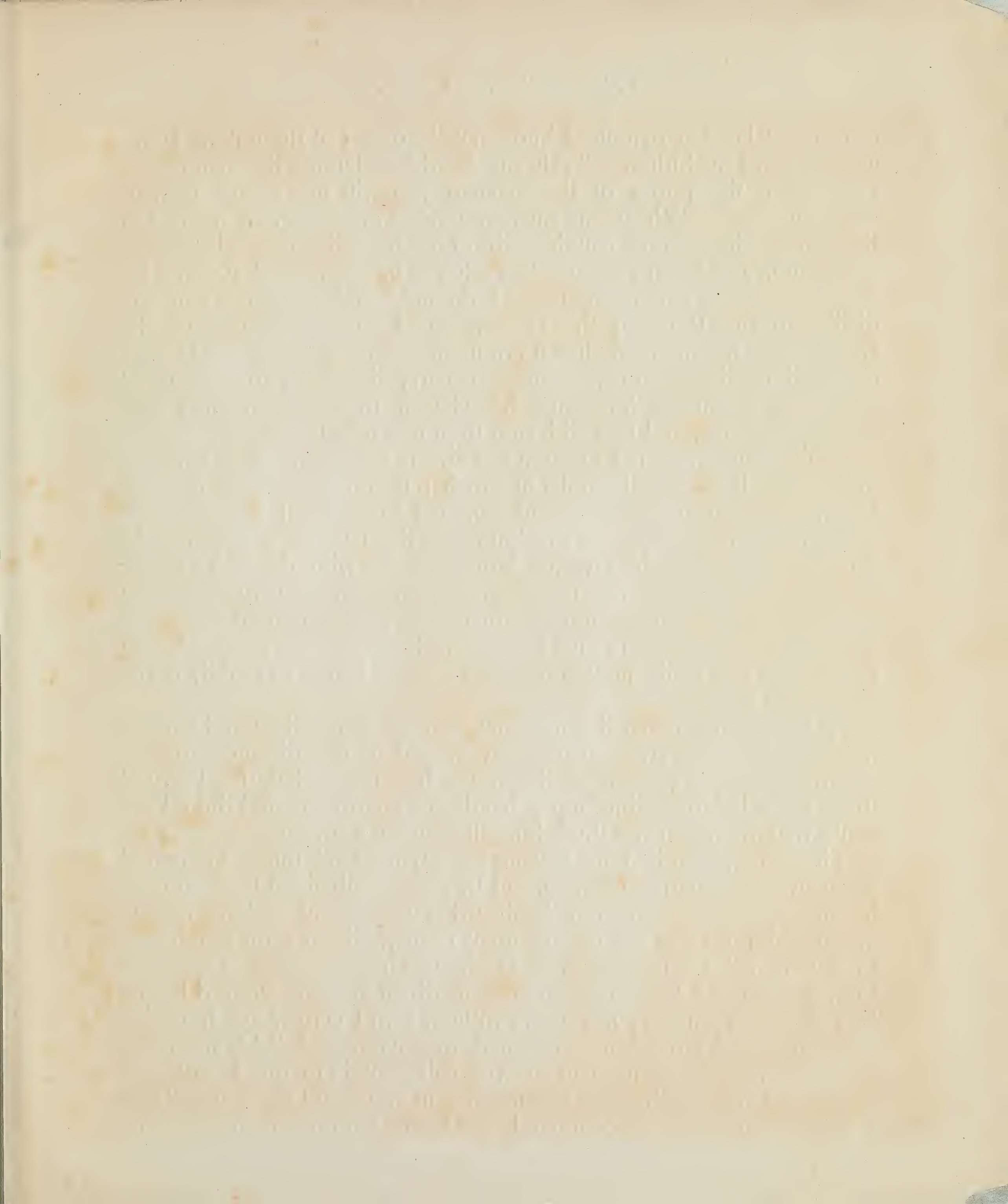
enraged at this interruption, advanced upon the old woman, sword in hand, and cried, "Quit this palace for ever, or with thy life thou shalt atone for thy malice!"

Scarcely had he said this when the lid of the box flew up as high as the ceiling, with a terrific noise, and out of it issued the Yellow Dwarf, mounted on a large Spanish cat, who placed himself between the Fairy of the Desert and the King of the Gold Mines. "Rash youth!" cried he, "think not of assaulting this illustrious Fairy: it is with me alone thou hast to do! The faithless Princess who would give thee her hand has plighted her troth to me, and received mine. Look if she have not on her finger a ring of my hair." "Miserable monster," said the King to him, "hast thou the audacity to declare thyself the lover of this divine Princess?" The Yellow Dwarf struck his spurs into the sides of his cat, which set up a terrific squalling, and frightened everybody but the King, who pressed the Dwarf so closely that he drew a cutlass, and defying him to single combat, descended into the court-yard, the enraged King following him. Scarcely had they confronted each other, the whole Court being in the balconies to witness the combat, when the sun became as red as blood, and it grew so dark that they could scarcely see themselves. The two turkey-cocks appeared at the side of the Yellow Dwarf, casting out flames from their mouths and eyes. All these horrors did not shake the heart of the young King; but his courage failed when he saw the Fairy of the Desert, mounted upon a winged griffin, and armed with a lance, rush upon his dear Princess, and strike so fierce a blow that she fell into the Queen's arms bathed in her own blood. The King ran to rescue the Princess; but the Yellow Dwarf was too quick for him: he leaped with his cat into the balcony, snatched the Princess from the arms of the Queen, and disappeared with her.

The King was gazing in despair on this extraordinary scene, when he felt his eyesight fail; and by some irresistible power he was hurried through the air. The wicked Fairy of the Desert had no sooner set her eyes on him than her heart was touched by his charms. She bore him off to a cavern, where she loaded him with chains; and she hoped that the fear of death would make him forget Toubelle. As soon as they had arrived there, she restored his sight, and appeared before him like a lovely nymph. "Can it be you, charming Prince?" she cried. "What misfortune has befallen you?" The King







replied, "Alas, fair nymph, I know not the object of the unkind Fairy who brought me hither." "Ah, my Lord," exclaimed the nymph, "if you are in the power of that woman you will not escape without marrying her." Whilst she thus pretended to take great interest in the King's affliction, he caught sight of her feet, which were like those of a griffin, and by this at once knew her to be the wicked Fairy. He, however, took no notice of it. "I do not," said he, "entertain any dislike to the Fairy of the Desert, but I cannot endure that she should keep me in chains like a criminal." The Fairy of the Desert, deceived by these words, resolved to carry the King to a beautiful spot. So she made him enter her chariot, to which she had now harnessed swans, and fled with him from one pole to the other.

Whilst thus travelling through the air, he beheld his dear Princess in a castle all of steel, the walls of which, reflecting the rays of the sun, became like burning-glasses, and scorched to death all who ventured to approach them. She was reclining on the bank of a stream. As she lifted her eyes, she saw the King pass by with the Fairy of the Desert, who, through her magic arts, seemed to be very beautiful; and this made her more unhappy than ever, as she thought the King was untrue to her. She thus became jealous, and was offended with the poor King, while he was in great grief at being so rapidly borne away from her.

At length they reached a meadow, covered with a thousand various flowers. A deep river surrounded it, and in the distance arose a superb palace. As soon as the swans had descended, the Fairy of the Desert led the King into a handsome apartment, and did all she could that he might not think himself actually a prisoner.

The King, who had his reasons for saying kind things to the old Fairy, was not sparing of them, and by degrees obtained leave to walk by the sea-side. One day he heard a voice, and looking rapidly around him, he saw a female of great beauty, whose form terminated in a long fish's tail. As soon as she was near enough to speak to him, she said, "I know the sad state to which you are reduced by the loss of your Princess; if you are willing, I will convey you from this fatal spot." As the King hesitated, the Syren said, "Do not think I am laying a snare for you; if you will confide in me, I will save you." "I have such perfect confidence in you," said the King, "that I will do whatever you command." "Come with me then," said the



Syren; "I will first leave on the shore a figure so perfectly resembling you that it shall deceive the Fairy, and then convey you to the Steel Castle."

She cut some sea-rushes, and, making a large bundle of them, they became so like the King of the Gold Mines that he had never seen so astonishing a change. The friendly Syren then made the King seat himself upon her great fish's tail, and carried him off. They soon arrived at the Steel Castle. The side that faced the sea was the only part of it that the Yellow Dwarf had left open. The Syren told the King that he would find Tutebelle by the stream near which he had seen her when he passed over with the Fairy. But as he would have to contend with some enemies before he could reach her, she gave him a diamond sword, with which he could face the greatest danger, warning him *never to let it fall*. The King thanked the Syren warmly, and strode on rapidly towards the Steel Castle. Before he had gone far four terrible sphinxes surrounded him, and would quickly have torn him in pieces, if the diamond sword had not proved as useful to him as the Syren had predicted. He dealt each of them its death-blow, then advancing again, he met six dragons, covered with scales. But his courage remained unshaken, and making good use of his sword, there was not one that he did not cut in half at a blow. Without further obstacle, he entered the grove in which he had seen Tutebelle. She was seated beside the fountain, pale and suffering. At first she indignantly fled from him. "Do not condemn me unheard," said he. "I am an unhappy lover, who has been compelled, despite himself, to offend you." He flung himself at her feet, but in so doing he unfortunately let fall the sword. The Yellow Dwarf, who had lain hidden behind a shrub, no sooner saw it out of the King's hands than he sprang forward to seize it. The Princess uttered a loud shriek, which luckily caused the King to turn suddenly round, just in time to snatch up the sword. With one blow he slew the wicked Dwarf, and then conducted the Princess to the sea-shore, where the friendly Syren was waiting to convey them to the Queen. On their arrival at the palace, the wedding took place, and Tutebelle, cured of her vanity, lived happily with the King of the Gold Mines.

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