

My Book of Favorite Fairy Tales eBook

My Book of Favorite Fairy Tales

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Page 1

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

THE WHITE FAWN

HANSEL AND GRETHEL

SNOW-WHITE AND ROSE-RED

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

Zelie and the fairy Candide

BLUEBEARD

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

The beautiful princess

[Illustration: From “*Princess Goldenhair*”]

[Illustration: From “*Cinderella*”]

THE OLD, OLD STORIES

Here they are again, the old, old stories, the very best; dear Cinderella, wicked old Bluebeard, tiny Thumbling, beautiful Beauty and the ugly Beast, and a host of others. But the old stories, I may tell you, are always new, and always must be so, because there are new children to read them every day, and to these, of course, these old tales might have been written yesterday.

But the stories in this book are new in another way. Look how they are clothed, look at their beautiful setting, the wonderful pictures! Have you ever seen such charming princes and lovely princesses, such dainty grace and delicate feeling?

What would our grandfathers and grandmothers have said of such a book! They would have thought there was magic in the brush and pencil.

Surely we are favoured in this generation when we see before us, the old, old fairy tales, which are ever new, dressed in such a beautiful and splendid fashion!

EDRIC VREDENBURG.

[Illustration: From "*Hansel and Grethel*"]

[Illustration]

THE GOOSE GIRL

An old queen, whose husband had been dead some years, had a beautiful daughter. When she grew up, she was betrothed to a prince who lived a great way off; and as the time drew near for her to be married, she got ready to set off on her journey to his country. Then the queen, her mother, packed up a great many costly things—jewels, and gold, and silver; trinkets, fine dresses, and, in short, everything that became a royal bride; for she loved her child very dearly: and she gave her a waiting-maid to ride with her, and give her into the bridegroom's hands; and each had a horse for the journey. Now the princess's horse was called Falada, and could speak.

When the time came for them to set out, the old queen went into her bed-chamber, and took a little knife, and cut off a lock of her hair, and gave it to her daughter, and said, "Take care of it, dear child; for it is a charm that may be of use to you on the road." Then they took a sorrowful leave of each other, and the princess put the lock of her mother's hair into her bosom, got upon her horse,

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and set off on her journey to her bridegroom's kingdom. One day, as they were riding along by the side of a brook, the princess began to feel very thirsty, and said to her maid, "Pray get down and fetch me some water, in my golden cup, out of yonder brook, for I want to drink." "Nay," said the maid, "if you are thirsty, get down yourself, and lie down by the water and drink; I shall not be your waiting-maid any longer." Then the princess was so thirsty that she got down, and knelt over the brook and drank, for she was frightened, and dared not bring out her golden cup; and then she wept, and said "Alas! what will become of me?" And the lock of hair answered her, and said—

"Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly her heart would rue it."

But the princess was very humble and meek, so she said nothing to her maid's ill behaviour, but got upon her horse again.

Then all rode further on their journey, till the day grew so warm, and the sun so scorching, that the bride began to feel very thirsty again; and at last, when they came to a river, she forgot her maid's rude speech, and said, "Pray get down and fetch me some water to drink in my golden cup." But the maid answered her, and even spoke more haughtily than before, "Drink, if you will, but I shall not be your waiting-maid." Then the princess was so thirsty that she got off her horse and lay down, and held her head over the running stream, and cried, and said, "What will become of me?" And the lock of hair answered her again—

"Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly her heart would rue it."

And as she leaned down to drink, the lock of hair fell from her bosom and floated away with the water, without her seeing it, she was so frightened. But her maid saw it, and was very glad, for she knew the charm, and saw that the poor bride would be in her power now that she had lost the hair. So when the bride had drunk, and would have got upon Falada again, the maid said, "I shall ride upon Falada and you may have my horse instead;" so she was forced to give up her horse, and soon afterwards to take off her royal clothes, and put on her maid's shabby ones.

At last, as they drew near the end of the journey, this treacherous servant threatened to kill her mistress if she ever told anyone what had happened. But Falada saw it all, and marked it well. Then the waiting-maid got upon Falada, and the real bride was set upon the other horse, and they went on in this way till at last they came to the royal court. There was great joy at their coming, the prince hurried to meet them, and lifted the maid from her horse, thinking she was the one who was to be his wife; and she was led upstairs to the royal chamber, but the true princess was told to stay in the court below.



[Illustration]

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But the old king happened to be looking out of the window, and saw her in the yard below; and as she looked very pretty, and too delicate for a waiting-maid, he went into the royal chamber to ask the bride who it was she had brought with her, that was thus left standing in the court below. "I brought her with me for the sake of her company on the road," said she. "Pray give the girl some work to do, that she may not be idle." The old king could not for some time think of any work for her to do, but at last he said, "I have a lad who takes care of my geese; she may go and help him." Now the name of this lad, that the real bride was to help in watching the king's geese, was Curdken.

Soon after, the false bride said to the prince, "Dear husband pray do me one piece of kindness." "That I will," said the prince. "Then tell one of your slaughterers to cut off the head of the horse I rode upon, for it was very unruly, and plagued me sadly on the road." But the truth was, she was very much afraid lest Falada should speak, and tell all she had done to the princess. She carried her point, and the faithful Falada was killed; but when the true princess heard of it she wept, and begged the man to nail up Falada's head against a large dark gate in the city through which she had to pass every morning and evening, that there she might still see him sometimes. Then the slaughterer said he would do as she wished; cut off the head, and nailed it fast under the dark gate.

Early the next morning, as she and Curdken went out through the gate, she said sorrowfully—

"Falada, Falada, there thou art hanging!"

and the head answered—

"Bride, bride, there thou art ganging!
Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly her heart would rue it."

Then they went out of the city, and drove the geese in. And when she came to the meadow, she sat down upon a bank here, and let down her waving locks of hair, which were all of pure gold; and when Curdken saw it glitter in the sun, he ran up, and would have pulled some of the locks out; but she cried—

"Blow, breezes, blow!
Let Curdken's hat go!
Blow, breezes, blow!
Let him after it go!
O'er hills, dales, and rocks.
Away be it whirl'd,
Till the golden locks
Are all comb'd and curl'd!"

[Illustration]

Then there came a wind, so strong that it blew off Curdken's hat, and away it flew over the hills, and he after it; till, by the time he came back, she had done combing and curling her hair, and put it up again safe. Then he was very angry and sulky, and would not speak to her at all; but they watched the geese until it grew dark in the evening, and then drove them homewards.

The next morning, as they were going through the dark gate, the poor girl looked up at Falada's head, and cried—

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“Falada, Falada, there thou art hanging!”

and it answered—

“Bride, bride, there thou art ganging!
Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly her heart would rue it.”

Then she drove on the geese and sat down again in the meadow, and began to comb out her hair as before, and Curdken ran up to her, and wanted to take hold of it; but she cried out quickly—

“Blow, breezes, blow!
Let Curdken’s hat go,
Blow, breezes, blow!
Let him after it go!
O’er hills, dales, and rocks,
Away be it whirl’d,
Till the golden locks
Are all comb’d and curl’d!”

Then the wind came and blew his hat, and off it flew a great way, over the hills and far away, so that he had to run after it; and when he came back, she had done up her hair again, and all was safe. So they watched the geese till it grew dark.

In the evening, after they came home, Curdken went to the old king, and said, “I cannot have that strange girl to help me to keep the geese any longer.”

“Why?” said the king.

“Because she does nothing but tease me all day long.”

Then the king made him tell all that had passed.

And Curdken said, “When we go in the morning through the dark gate with our flock of geese, she weeps, and talks with the head of a horse that hangs upon the wall, and says—

““Falada, Falada, there thou art hanging!””

and the head answers—

““Bride, bride, there thou art ganging!
Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly her heart would rue it.””



And Curdken went on telling the king what had happened upon the meadow where the geese fed; and how his hat was blown away, and he was forced to run after it, and leave his flock. But the old king told him to go out again as usual the next day, and when morning came, the king placed himself behind the gate, and heard how she spoke to Falada, and how Falada answered; and then he went into the field and hid himself in a bush by the meadow's side, and soon saw with his own eyes how they drove the flock of geese, and how, after a little time, she let down her hair that glittered in the sun; and then he heard her say—

“Blow, breezes, blow!
Let Curdken's hat go!
Blow, breezes, blow!
Let him after it go!
O'er hills, dales, and rocks,
Away be it whirl'd,
Till the golden locks,
Are all comb'd and curl'd!”

[Illustration: “*Then there came A wind so strong that it blew off Curdken's hat.*”]

And soon came a gale of wind, and carried away Curdken's hat, while the girl went on combing and curling her hair.

All this the old king saw: so he went home without being seen; and when the little goose girl came back in the evening, he called her aside, and asked her why she did so: but she burst into tears, and said, “That I must not tell you or any man, or I shall lose my life.”

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But the old king begged so hard that she had no peace till she had told him all, word for word: and it was very lucky for her that she did so, for the king ordered royal clothes to be put upon her, and gazed on her with wonder, she was so beautiful.

Then he called his son, and told him that he had only the false bride, for that she was merely a waiting-maid, while the true one stood by.

And the young king rejoiced when he saw her beauty, and heard how meek and patient she had been; and without saying anything, ordered a great feast to be got ready for all his court.

The bridegroom sat at the top, with the false princess on one side, and the true one on the other; but nobody knew her, for she was quite dazzling to their eyes, and was not at all like the little goose-girl, now that she had her brilliant dress.

When they had eaten and drunk, and were very merry, the old king told all the story, as one that he had once heard of, and asked the true waiting-maid what she thought ought to be done to anyone who would behave thus.

"Nothing better," said this false bride, "than that she should be thrown into a cask stuck round with sharp nails, and that two white horses should be put to it, and should drag it from street to street till she is dead."

"Thou art she!" said the old king; "and since thou hast judged thyself, it shall be so done to thee."

And the young king was married to his true wife, and they reigned over the kingdom in peace and happiness all their lives.

[Illustration]

LITTLE SNOW-WHITE

It was in the middle of winter, when the broad flakes of snow were falling around, that a certain queen sat working at the window, the frame of which was made of fine black ebony; and as she was looking out upon the snow, she pricked her finger, and three drops of blood fell upon it. Then she gazed thoughtfully upon the red drops which sprinkled the white snow, and said, "Would that my little daughter may be as white as that snow, as red as the blood, and as black as the ebony window-frame!" And so the little girl grew up: her skin was as white as snow, her cheeks as rosy as blood, and her hair as black as ebony; and she was called Snow-White.



But this queen died; and the king soon married another wife, who was very beautiful, but so proud that she could not bear to think that any one could surpass her. She had a magical looking-glass, to which she used to go and gaze upon herself in it, and say,

“Tell me, glass, tell me true!
Of all the ladies in the land.
Who is fairest? Tell me who?”

And the glass answered, “Thou, Queen, art fairest in the land.”

But Snow-White grew more and more beautiful; and when she was seven years old, she was as bright as the day, and fairer than the queen herself. Then the glass one day answered the queen, when she went to consult it as usual:

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"Thou, Queen, may'st fair and beauteous be,
But Snow-White is lovelier far than thee!"

When she heard this she turned pale with rage and envy; and calling to one of her servants said, "Take Snow-White away into the wide wood, that I may never see her more." Then the servant led her away; but his heart melted when she begged him to spare her life, and he said, "I will not hurt thee, thou pretty child." So he left her by herself, and though he thought it most likely that the wild beasts would tear her to pieces, he felt as if a great weight were taken off his heart when he had made up his mind not to kill her, but leave her to her fate.

[Illustration]

Then poor Snow-White wandered along through the wood in great fear; and the wild beasts roared about her, but none did her any harm. In the evening she came to a little cottage, and went in there to rest herself, for her weary feet would carry her no further. Everything was spruce and neat in the cottage: on the table was spread a white cloth, and there were seven little plates with seven little loaves and seven little glasses with wine in them; and knives and forks laid in order, and by the wall stood seven little beds. Then, as she was very hungry, she picked a little piece off each loaf, and drank a very little wine out of each glass; and after that she thought she would lie down and rest. So she tried all the little beds; and one was too long, and another was too short, till at last the seventh suited her; and there she laid herself down and went to sleep. Presently in came the masters of the cottage, who were seven little dwarfs that lived among the mountains, and dug and searched about for gold. They lighted up their seven lamps, and saw directly that all was not right. The first said, "Who has been sitting on my stool?" The second, "Who has been eating off my plate?" The third, "Who has been picking at my bread?" the fourth, "Who has been meddling with my spoon?" The fifth, "Who has been handling my fork?" The sixth, "Who has been cutting with my knife?" The seventh, "Who has been drinking my wine?" Then the first looked round and said. "Who has been lying on my bed?" And the rest came running to him, and every one cried out that somebody had been upon his bed. But the seventh saw Snow-White, and called upon his brethren to come and see her; and they cried out with wonder and astonishment, and brought their lamps to look at her, and said, "Good heavens! What a lovely child she is!" and they were delighted to see her, and took care not to waken her; and the seventh dwarf slept an hour with each of the other dwarfs in turn, till the night was gone.

[Illustration: *The magic mirror—"Little snow-white"*]

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In the morning Snow-White told them all her story; and they pitied her, and said if she would keep all things in order, and cook and wash, and knit and spin for them, she might stay where she was, and they would take good care of her. Then they went out all day long to their work, seeking for gold and silver in the mountains; and Snow-White remained at home: and they warned her, and said, "The queen will soon find out where you are, so take care and let no one in." But the queen, now that she thought Snow-White was dead, believed that she was certainly the handsomest lady in the land; and she went to her glass, and the glass answered,

"Thou, Queen, thou art fairest in all this land;
But over the hills, in the greenwood shade.
Where the seven dwarfs their dwelling have made.
There Snow-White is hiding her head; and she
Is lovelier far, O Queen, than thee."

Then the queen was very much alarmed; for she knew that the glass always spoke the truth, and was sure that the servant had betrayed her. And she could not bear to think that anyone lived who was more beautiful than she was; so she disguised herself as a pedlar and went her way over the hills to the place where the dwarfs dwelt. Then she knocked at the door, and cried, "Fine wares to sell!" Snow-White looked out of the window, and cried, "Good-day, good woman; what have you to sell?" "Good wares, fine wares," said she; "laces and bobbins of all colours." "I will let the old lady in; she seems to be a very good sort of a body," thought Snow-White; so she ran down, and unbolted the door. "Bless me!" said the woman, "how badly your stays are laced. Let me lace them up with one of my nice new laces." Snow-White did not dream of any mischief; so she stood up before the old woman; but she set to work so nimbly, and pulled the lace so tight, that Snow-White lost her breath, and fell down as if she were dead. "There's an end of all thy beauty," said the spiteful queen, and went away home.

[Illustration: "*There's an end to all thy beauty' said the spiteful queen, and she went away home.*"]

In the evening the seven dwarfs returned; and I need not say how grieved they were to see their faithful Snow-White stretched upon the ground motionless, as if she were quite dead. However, they lifted her up, and when they found what was the matter, they cut the lace; and in a little time she began to breathe, and soon came to life again. Then they said, "The old woman was the queen herself; take care another time, and let no one in when we are away."

When the queen got home, she went to her glass, and spoke to it, but to her surprise it said the same words as before.

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Then the blood ran cold in her heart with spite and malice to see that Snow-White still lived; and she dressed herself up again in a disguise, but very different from the one she wore before, and took with her a poisoned comb, When she reached the dwarf's cottage, she knocked at the door, and cried, "Fine wares to sell!" but Snow-White said, "I dare not let anyone in." Then the queen begged, "Only look at my beautiful combs;" and gave her the poisoned one. And it looked so pretty that she took it up and put it into her hair to try it; but the moment it touched her head the poison was so powerful that she fell down senseless.

"There you may lie," said the queen, and went her way. But by good luck the dwarfs returned very early that evening; and when they saw Snow-White lying on the ground, they thought what had happened, and soon found the poisoned comb. And when they took it away, she recovered, and told them all that had passed; and they warned her once more not to open the door to anyone.

[Illustration]

Meantime the queen went home to her glass, and trembled with rage when she received exactly the same answer as before; and she said "Snow-White shall die, if it costs me my life." So she went secretly into a chamber, and prepared a poisoned apple; the outside looked very rosy and tempting, but whosoever tasted it was sure to die. Then she dressed herself up as a peasant's wife, and travelled over the hills to the dwarfs' cottage, and knocked at the door; but Snow-White put her head out of the window, and said, "I dare not let anyone in, for the dwarfs have told me not to." "Do as you please," said the old woman, "but at any rate take this pretty apple; I will make you a present of it." "No," said Snow-White, "I dare not take it." "You silly girl!" answered the other, "what are you afraid of? Do you think it is poisoned? Come! do you eat one part, and I will eat the other." Now the apple was so prepared that one side was good, though the other side was poisoned. Then Snow-White was very much tempted to taste, for the apple looked exceedingly nice; and when she saw the old woman eat, she could refrain no longer. But she had scarcely put the piece into her mouth, when she fell down dead upon the ground. "This time nothing will save thee," said the queen; and she went home to her glass, and at last it said,

"Thou, Queen, art the fairest of all the fair."

And then her envious heart was glad, and as happy as such a heart could be.

When evening came, and the dwarfs returned home, they found Snow-White lying on the ground; no breath passed her lips, and they were afraid that she was quite dead. They lifted her up, and combed her hair, and washed her face with wine and water; but all was in vain, for the little girl seemed quite dead. So they laid her down upon a bier, and all seven watched and bewailed her three whole days; and then they proposed to bury her; but her cheeks were still rosy, and her

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face looked just as it did while she was alive; so they said, "We will never bury her in the cold ground." And they made a coffin of glass so that they might still look at her, and wrote her name upon it in golden letters, and that she was a king's daughter. And the coffin was placed upon the hill, and one of the dwarfs always sat by it and watched. And the birds of the air came too, and bemoaned Snow-White. First of all came an owl, and then a raven, but at last came a dove.

And thus Snow-White lay for a long, long time, and still only looked as though she were asleep; for she was even now as white as snow, and as red as blood, and as black as ebony. At last a prince came and called at the dwarfs' house; and he saw Snow-White, and read what was written in gold letters. Then he offered the dwarfs money, and earnestly prayed them to let him take her away; but they said, "We will not part with her for all the gold in the world." At last, however, they had pity on him, and gave him the coffin; but the moment he lifted it up to carry it home with him, the piece of apple fell from between her lips, and Snow-White awoke, and said, "Where am I?" And the prince answered, "Thou art safe with me." Then he told her all that had happened, and said, "I love you better than all the world; come with me to my father's palace, and you shall be my wife." And Snow-White consented, and went home with the prince; and everything was prepared with great pomp and splendour for their wedding.

To the feast was invited, among the rest, Snow-White's old enemy, the queen; and as she was dressing herself in fine, rich clothes, she looked, in the glass, and the glass answered,

"Thou, lady, art the loveliest *here*, I ween;
But lovelier far is the new-made queen."

When she heard this, she started with rage; but her envy and curiosity were so great, that she could not help setting out to see the bride. And when she arrived, and saw that it was none other than Snow-White, who she thought had been dead a long while, she choked with passion, and fell ill and died; but Snow-White and the prince lived and reigned happily over that land many, many years.

[Illustration]

[Illustration]

CINDERELLA

The wife of a rich man fell sick: and when she felt that her end drew nigh, she called her only daughter to her bedside, and said, "Always be a good girl, and I will look down



from heaven and watch over you.” Soon afterwards she shut her eyes and died, and was buried in the garden; and the little girl went every day to her grave and wept, and was always good and kind to all about her. And the snow spread a beautiful white covering over the grave: but by the time the sun had melted it away again, her father had married another wife. This new wife had two daughters of her own, that she brought home with her: they were fair in face but foul at heart, and it was now a sorry time for the poor little girl. “What does the good-for-nothing thing want in the parlour?” said they; “they who would eat bread should first earn it; away with the kitchen maid!” Then they took away her fine clothes, and gave her an old frock to put on, and laughed at her and turned her into the kitchen.

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Then she was forced to do hard work; to rise early, before daylight, to bring the water, to make the fire, to cook and to wash. Besides that, the sisters plagued her in all sorts of ways and laughed at her. In the evening, when she was tired, she had no bed to lie down on, but was made to sleep by the hearth among the ashes; and then, as she was of course always dusty and dirty, they called her Cinderella.

It happened once that the father was going to the fair, and asked his wife's daughters what he should bring them. "Fine clothes," said the first: "Pearls and diamonds," said the second. "Now, child," said he to his own daughter, "what will you have?" "The first sprig, dear father, that rubs against your hat on your way home," said she. Then he bought for the two first the fine clothes and pearls and diamonds they had asked for: and on his way home as he rode through a green copse, a sprig of hazel brushed against him, and almost pushed off his hat; so he broke it off and brought it away; and when he got home he gave it to his daughter. Then she took it and went to her mother's grave and planted it there, and cried so much that it was watered with her tears; and there it grew and became a fine tree. Three times every day she went to it and wept; and soon a little bird came and built its nest upon the tree, and talked with her and watched over her, and brought her whatever she wished for.

Now it happened that the king of the land held a feast which was to last three days, and out of those who came to it his son was to choose a bride for himself; and Cinderella's two sisters were asked to come. So they called her up and said, "Now, comb our hair, brush our shoes, and tie our sashes for us, for we are going to dance at the king's feast." Then she did as she was told, but when all was done she could not help crying, for she thought to herself, she would have liked to go to the dance too; and at last she begged her mother very hard to let her go. "You! Cinderella?" said she; "you who have nothing to wear, no clothes at all, and who cannot even dance—you want to go to the ball?" And when she kept on begging—to get rid of her, she said at last, "I will throw this basinful of peas into the ash heap, and if you have picked them all out in two hours' time you shall go to the feast too." Then she threw the peas into the ashes; but the little maiden ran out at the back door into the garden, and cried out—

"Hither, hither, through the sky.
Turtle-doves and linnets, fly!
Blackbird, thrush, and chaffinch gay,
Hither, hither, haste away!
One and all, come help me quick,
Haste ye, haste ye—pick, pick, pick!"

[Illustration]

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Then first came two white doves flying in at the kitchen window; and next came two turtle-doves; and after them all the little birds under heaven came chirping and fluttering in, and flew down into the ashes; and the little doves stooped their heads down and set to work, pick, pick, pick; and then the others began to pick, pick, pick; and picked out all the good grain and put it in a dish, and left the ashes. At the end of one hour the work was done, and all flew out again at the windows. Then Cinderella brought the dish to her mother, overjoyed at the thought that now she should go to the feast. But she said, "No, no! Girl, you have no clothes and cannot dance, you shall not go." And when Cinderella begged very hard to go, she said, "If you can in one hour's time pick two of these dishes of peas out of the ashes, you shall go too." And thus she thought she should at last get rid of her. So she shook two dishes of peas into the ashes; but the little maiden went out into the garden at the back of the house, and cried as before—

"Hither, hither, through the sky.
Turtle-doves and linnets, fly!
Blackbird, thrush, and chaffinch gay,
Hither, hither, haste away!
One and all, come help me quick,
Haste ye, haste ye—pick, pick, pick!"

Then first came two white doves in at the kitchen window; and next came the turtle-doves; and after them all the little birds under heaven came chirping and hopping about, and flew down about the ashes; and the little doves put their heads down and set to work, pick, pick, pick; and then the others began to pick, pick, pick; and they put all the good grain into the dishes, and left all the ashes, Before half-an-hour's time all was done, and out they flew again. And then Cinderella took the dishes to her mother, rejoicing to think that she should now go to the ball. But her mother said, "It is all of no use, you cannot go, you have no clothes, and cannot dance, and you would only put us to shame:" and off she went with her two daughters to the feast.

Now when all were gone, and nobody left at home, Cinderella went sorrowfully and sat down under the hazel-tree, and cried out—

"Shake, shake, hazel tree,
Gold and silver over me!"

Then her friend the bird flew out of the tree and brought a gold and silver dress for her, and slippers of spangled silk; and she put them on, and followed her sisters to the feast. But they did not know her, and thought it must be some strange princess, she looked so fine and beautiful in her rich clothes; and they never once thought of Cinderella, but took for granted that she was safe at home in the dirt.

[Illustration: *Painted by Jennie Harbour Cinderella*]

[Illustration]



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The king's son soon came up to her, and took her by the hand and danced with her and no one else; and he never left her hand; but when any one else came to ask her to dance, he said, "This lady is dancing with me." Thus they danced till a late hour of the night, and then she wanted to go home: and the king's son said, "I shall go and take care of you to your home;" for he wanted to see where the beautiful maid lived. But she slipped away from him unawares, and ran off towards home, and the prince followed her; but she jumped up into the pigeon-house and shut the door. Then he waited till her father came home, and told him that the unknown maiden who had been at the feast had hidden herself in the pigeon-house. But when they had broken open the door they found no one within; and as they came back into the house, Cinderella lay as she always did, in her dirty frock by the ashes, and her dim little lamp burnt in the chimney; for she had run as quickly as she could through the pigeon-house and on to the hazel-tree, and had there taken off her beautiful clothes, and laid them beneath the tree, that the bird might carry them away, and had seated herself amid the ashes again in her little old frock.

The next day, when the feast was again held, and her father, mother, and sisters were gone, Cinderella went to the hazel tree, and said—

"Shake, shake, hazel tree,
Gold and silver over me!"

And the bird came and brought a still finer dress than the one she had worn the day before. And when she came in it to the ball, every one wondered at her beauty; but the king's son, who was waiting for her, took her by the hand, and danced with her; and when any one asked her to dance, he said as before, "This lady is dancing with me." When night came she wanted to go home; and the king's son followed her as before, that he might see into what house she went; but she sprang away from him, all at once, into the garden behind her father's house. In this garden stood a fine large pear tree full of ripe fruit; and Cinderella, not knowing where to hide herself, jumped up into it without being seen. Then the king's son could not find out where she was gone, but waited till her father came home, and said to him, "The unknown lady who danced with me has slipped away, and I think she must have sprung into the pear tree." The father thought to himself, "Can it be Cinderella?" So he ordered an axe to be brought; and they cut down the tree, but found no one upon it. And when they came back into the kitchen, there lay Cinderella in the ashes as usual; for she had slipped down on the other side of the tree, and carried her beautiful clothes back to the bird at the hazel tree, and then put on her little old frock.

The third day, when her father and mother and sisters were gone she went again into the garden, and said—

"Shake, shake, hazel tree,
Gold and silver over me!"



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Then her kind friend the bird brought a dress still finer than the former ones, and slippers which were all of gold; so that when she came to the feast no one knew what to say for wonder at her beauty; and the king's son danced with her alone; and when any one else asked her to dance he said, "This lady is my partner." Now when night came she wanted to go home; and the king's son would go with her, and said to himself, "I will not lose her this time;" but, however, she managed to slip away from him, though in such a hurry that she dropped her left golden slipper upon the stairs.

[Illustration: "*She sprang away from him, all at once, into the garden behind her father's house.*"]

So the prince took the shoe, and went the next day to the king his father, and said, "I will take for my wife the lady that this golden shoe fits." Then both the sisters were overjoyed to hear this; for they had beautiful feet, and had no doubt that they could wear the golden slipper. The eldest went first into the room where the slipper was, and wanted to try it on, and the mother stood by. But her great toe could not go into it, and the shoe was altogether much too small for her. Then the mother gave her a knife, and said, "Never mind, cut it off; when you are queen you will not care about toes, you will not want to go on foot." So the silly girl cut her great toe off, and squeezed the shoe on, and went to the king's son. Then he took her for his bride, and set her beside him on his horse and rode away with her. But on their way home they had to pass by the hazel tree that Cinderella had planted and there sat a little dove on the branch singing—

"Back again! back again! look to the shoe!
The shoe is too small, and not made for you!
Prince! prince! look again for thy bride,
For she's not the true one that sits by thy side."

Then the prince got down and looked at her foot, and saw by the blood that streamed from it what a trick she had played him. So he turned his horse round and brought the false bride back to her home, and said, "This is not the right bride; let the other sister try and put on the slipper." Then she went into the room and got her foot into the shoe, all but the heel, which was too large. But her mother squeezed it in till the blood came, and took her to the king's son; and he set her as his bride beside him on his horse, and rode away with her. But when they came to the hazel tree the little dove sat there still, and sang—

"Back again! back again! look to the shoe!
The shoe is too small, and not made for you!
Prince! prince! look again for thy bride,
For she's not the true one that sits by thy side."

[Illustration]

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Then he looked down and saw that the blood streamed so from the shoe that her white stockings were quite red. So he turned his horse and brought her back again also. "This is not the true bride," said he to the father; "have you no other daughters?" "No," said he; "there is only a little dirty Cinderella here, the child of my first wife; I am sure she cannot be the bride." However, the prince told him to send her. But the mother said, "No, no, she is much too dirty, she will not dare to show herself;" still the prince would have her come. And she first washed her face and hands, and then went in and curtsied to him, and he handed to her the golden slipper.

Then she took her clumsy shoe off her left foot and put on the golden slipper; and it fitted her as if it had been made for her. And when the Prince drew near and looked at her face he knew her, and said, "This is the right bride."

But the mother and both the sisters were frightened and turned pale with anger as he took Cinderella on his horse, and rode away with her. And when they came to the hazel tree, the white dove sang—

"Home! home! look at the shoe!
Princess! the shoe was made for you!
Prince! prince! take home thy bride.
For she is the true one that sits by thy side!"

And when the dove had done its song, it came flying and perched upon her shoulder, and so went home with her.

PRINCESS GOLDENHAIR

There was once a King's daughter who was the most beautiful thing in the world, and as her hair was fair and reached to her feet she was called the Princess Goldenhair.

A handsome young King in the neighbourhood, although he had never seen this Princess, fell so deeply in love with her from what he had heard, that he could neither eat nor sleep.

So an ambassador was sent with a magnificent chariot, more than a hundred horses, and fifty pages, to bring the Princess to the King, and great preparations were made for her reception.

[Illustration: "An ambassador was sent with more than A hundred horses, and fifty pages to bring the princess to the king."]

But whether the Princess Goldenhair was in an ill humour when the ambassador arrived at her Court, or whatever was the reason, certain it is that she sent a message to the young King thanking him but saying that she did not wish to marry.

When the King heard of her refusal he wept like a child.

Now at his Court there was a young man called Avenant. He was as beautiful as the sun, and a more finely made fellow than any in the kingdom; everybody loved him except a few envious people, who were angry because the King favoured and confided in him, and in the presence of these, one day, Avenant incautiously remarked,

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"If the King had sent me to fetch the Princess Goldenhair, I am certain she would have come," and these words were repeated to the King in such a manner that they made him very angry, and he ordered Avenant to be shut up in a high tower, to die of hunger.

In this sad plight, Avenant exclaimed one day, "How have I offended his Majesty? He has no more faithful subject than I."

The King who happened to be passing by the tower, heard this; he called for Avenant to be brought forth who, throwing himself on his knees, begged to know in what way he had offended his royal master.

"You mocked me," said the King, "you said that you would have succeeded with the Princess Goldenhair where I have failed."

"It is true, sir," replied Avenant, "I did say so, for I would have represented your noble qualities in such a way, that she could not help being persuaded."

The King was convinced of the young man's sincerity, and with a letter of introduction, Avenant set out for the Court of the goldenhaired beauty, riding alone, according to his wish, and thinking as he went how he best could woo the Princess for his beloved master.

One day, alighting from his horse to write down some suitable words that had come into his mind, he saw a golden carp who, leaping from the water to catch flies, had thrown herself upon the river bank, and was now nearly dead.

Avenant pitied the poor thing, and put her carefully back into the water. Recovering directly, the carp dived to the bottom, but returning to the edge of the river, said,

"Avenant, I thank you; you have saved my life, I will repay you;" then she swam off leaving the young man in great astonishment.

Another day as Avenant journeyed he noticed a raven who was pursued by an eagle. "What right has that eagle to persecute the raven? thought Avenant, and he drew his bow and shot the fierce bird. The raven perched on a bough and cried.

"Avenant you have saved my life, I will not be ungrateful, I will repay you."

[Illustration]

Not long after this, Avenant found an owl caught in a snare, he cut the strings, and freed the trembling captive. "Avenant," said the owl, "you have saved my life, I will repay you."

These three adventures were the most important that befell Avenant, and he went on his way, shortly before he arrived at his destination purchasing a beautiful little dog named Cabriole.

When Avenant reached the Palace of the Princess Goldenhair, and saw the Princess seated upon her throne, she looked so lovely that at first all his fine speeches forsook him, and he could not utter a word; however, taking courage, he addressed her in exquisitely chosen language, begging her to become the King's bride.

To this the Princess replied most graciously, saying that his petition moved her more than any other could do, "but know," she added, "as I was walking by the river a month ago, as I took off my glove, a ring, that I greatly value, fell into the water, and I have vowed that I will not heed any proposal of marriage, except from the ambassador who brings me back my ring."

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Sad at heart Avenant left the Palace, but his little dog, Cabriole, said, "My dear master, do not despair, you are too good to be unhappy. Early to-morrow morning let us go to the river-side." Avenant patted him, but did not answer, and, still sad, fell asleep.

As soon as it was day, Cabriole awoke him saying, "Dress yourself, my master, and come out."

They wandered down to the river, and there Avenant heard a voice calling him, and what should he see but the golden carp, with the Princess's ring in her mouth. "Take it, dear Avenant," said she, "I promised to repay you for saving my life, and now I can fulfil my promise."

Thanking her a thousand times, Avenant, going at once to the Palace, said, "Princess, your command is fulfilled; may it please you to receive the King, my master, as your husband."

The Princess thought she must be dreaming when she saw the ring, but she set Avenant another task.

"Not far from here there is a prince named Galifron," said she; "he wishes to marry me, and threatens to ravish my kingdom if I refuse; but how can I accept him? He is a giant, taller than my highest tower, he eats a man as a monkey would eat a chestnut, and when he speaks, his voice is so loud that it deafens those who hear him. He will not take my refusal, but kills my subjects. You must fight and bring me his head."

[Illustration]

"Well, madam," replied Avenant, "I will fight Galifron; I expect I shall be killed, but I shall die a brave man." And, taking Cabriole, Avenant set out for Galifron's country, asking news of the giant as he went along, and the more he heard the more he feared him, but Cabriole reassured him. "My dear master," said the little dog, "while you are fighting him I will bite his legs, then he will stoop to chase me, and you will kill him." Avenant admired the bravery of the little dog, but he knew his help would not be sufficient.

Presently they perceived how the roads were covered with the bones of the men that Galifron had eaten, and soon they saw the giant coming towards them through a wood. His head was higher than the highest trees, and he sang in a terrific voice:

"Where are the children small, so small,
With my teeth I will crush them all,
On so many would I feed, feed, feed.
The whole world can't supply my need."

Using the same tune, Avenant began to sing:

“Look down, here is Avenant beneath, beneath
He will draw from your head, the teeth, the teeth
Although he is not very big, 'tis true,
He is able to fight with such as you.”

The giant put himself into a terrible passion, and would have killed Avenant with one blow, only a raven from above flew at his head, and pecked him straight in the eyes, so violently that he was blinded. He began striking out on all sides, but Avenant avoided his blows, and with his sword pierced him so many times that at last he fell to the ground. Then Avenant cut off his head, and the raven, who had perched on a tree, said,

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"I have not forgotten how you rescued me from the eagle; I promised to repay you, I think I have done so to-day."

"I owe everything to you, Mr. Raven," responded Avenant, as, holding Galifron's head, he rode off.

When he entered the town, crowds followed him crying, "Here is the brave Avenant who has slain the monster."

Avenant advanced to the Princess, and said, "Madam, your enemy is dead. I hope you will no more refuse the King, my master."

"Although it is so," answered the Princess, "I shall refuse him unless you will bring me some water from the Grotto of Darkness. At the entrance there are two dragons, with fire in their eyes and mouths; inside the grotto there is a deep pit into which you must descend, it is full of toads, scorpions, and serpents. At the bottom of this pit there is a little cave where flows the fountain of beauty and health. Positively I must possess the water; all who wash in it, if they are beautiful, continue so always, if they are ugly they become beautiful; if they are young they remain young, if they are old they regain their youth. You cannot wonder, Avenant, that I will not leave my kingdom without taking it with me."

So once more Avenant and Cabriole set out; they journeyed on until they came to a rock, black as ink, from which smoke was issuing, and a moment later there appeared one of the dragons belching forth fire from his eyes and mouth. He was a frightful looking creature with a green and yellow body, and his tail was so long that it went into a hundred curves. Avenant saw all this, but resolved to die, he drew his sword, and, carrying the flask the Princess had given to him to hold the water, he said to Cabriole:

"My days are ended, I can never obtain that water the dragons are guarding; when I am dead, fill this flask with my blood and carry it to the Princess, that she may know what it has cost me, then go to the King, my master, and tell him of my misfortune."

As he was speaking, a voice called, "Avenant, Avenant," and looking around he saw an owl. "You saved my life from the fowlers," said the owl. "I promised to repay you, the time has now come. Give me your flask. I will bring you the water of beauty."

And carrying the flask, the owl entered the grotto, unhindered, returning in less than a quarter of an hour with it full to the brim. Avenant thanked the owl heartily, and joyously started for the town, where he presented the flask to the Princess, who immediately gave orders to prepare for her departure.



But as she considered Avenant altogether charming, before she set out, she several times said to him: "If you wish, we need not go, for I will make you king of my country." But Avenant made reply:

"I would not displease my master for all the kingdoms of earth, although your beauty I consider greater than that of the sun."

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Thus they arrived at the King's capital, and the wedding took place amidst great rejoicings; but Princess Goldenhair, who loved Avenant from the depths of her heart, was not happy unless she could see him, and was for ever singing his praises. "I should not have come, had it not been for Avenant," she told the King, "you ought to be very much obliged to him." Then the envious courtiers counselled the King, and Avenant was cast once more into the tower, chained hand and foot. When Princess Goldenhair heard of this imprisonment, she fell on her knees before the King, and begged for Avenant's release; but he would not heed her, so that she became saddened and would speak no more.

Then the King thought: "Maybe I am not handsome enough to please her!" so he determined to wash his face in the water of beauty.

Now it had happened that a chamber-maid had broken the flask containing this wonderful water, so that it was all spilled; then, without saying anything to anyone, she had replaced it by a similar flask taken from the King's apartment, but the liquid in this flask was really that which was used when the princes or great lords were condemned to death, for, instead of being beheaded, their faces were washed with this water and they fell asleep and did not wake again. And so the King using this water one evening, thinking it to be the beauty water, and hoping and expecting to be made more handsome, went to sleep and awoke no more. Upon hearing what had occurred, Cabriole at once went and told Avenant, who asked him to go to the Princess Goldenhair and beseech her to remember the poor prisoner. When the Princess received this message, she went straight to the tower, and, with her own hands, struck off the chains that bound Avenant, and placing a crown of gold upon his head, and a royal mantle upon his shoulders, said: "Come, dear Avenant, I will make you King, and take you for my husband." Then there was a grand wedding, and Princess Goldenhair and Avenant, with Cabriole, lived long, all of them happy and contented.

[Illustration]

[Illustration]

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

Many years ago there lived a dear little girl, who was beloved by everyone who knew her; but her grandmother was so very fond of her that she never felt that she could think and do enough for her.

On her grand-daughter's birthday she presented her with a red silk hood; and as it suited her very well, she would never wear anything else; and so she was called Little Red Riding Hood. One day her mother said to her, "Come, Red Riding Hood, here is a nice piece of meat, and a bottle of wine: take these to your grandmother; she is weak



and ailing, and they will do her good. Be there before she gets up; go quietly and carefully; and do not run, or you may fall and break the bottle, and then your grandmother will have nothing. When you go into her room, do not forget to say 'Good-morning'; and do not pry into all the corners." "I will do just as you say," answered Red Riding Hood, bidding good-bye to her mother.

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[Illustration: *Painted by Jennie Harbour little red riding hood*]

The grandmother lived far away in the wood, a long walk from the village, and as Little Red Riding Hood came among the trees she met a wolf; but she did not know what a wicked animal it was, and so she was not at all frightened. "Good-morning, Little Red Riding Hood," he said.

"Thank you, Mr. Wolf," she said.

"Where are you going so early, Little Red Riding Hood?"

"To my grandmother's," she answered.

"And what are you carrying under your apron?"

"Some wine and meat," she replied. "We baked the meat yesterday, so that grandmother, who is very weak, might have a nice strengthening meal."

"And where does your grandmother live?" asked the Wolf.

"Oh, quite twenty minutes' walk further in the forest. The cottage stands under three great oak trees; and close by are some nut bushes, by which you will at once know it."

The wolf was thinking to himself, "She is a nice tender thing, and will taste better than the old woman; I must act cleverly, that I may make a meal of both."

[Illustration: *"Where are you going so early, little red riding hood."*]

Presently he came up again to Little Red Riding Hood and said. "Just look at the beautiful flowers which grow near you; why do you not look about you? I believe you don't hear how sweetly the birds are singing. You walk as if you were going to school; see how cheerful everything is around you in the forest."

And Little Red Riding Hood opened her eyes; and when she saw how the sunbeams glanced and danced through the trees, and what bright flowers were blooming in her path, she thought, "If I take my grandmother a fresh nosegay she will be much pleased; and it is so very early that I can, even then, get there in good time:" and running into the forest she looked about for flowers. But when she had once begun she did not know how to leave off, and kept going deeper and deeper among the trees looking for some still more beautiful flower. The Wolf, however, ran straight to the house of the old grandmother, and knocked at the door.

"Who's that?" asked the old lady.



“Only little Red Riding Hood, bringing you some meat and wine; please open the door,” answered the Wolf.

“Lift up the latch,” cried the grandmother; “I am much too ill to get up myself.”

So the Wolf lifted the latch, and the door flew open; and without a word he jumped on to the bed and gobbled up the poor old lady. Then he put on her clothes, and tied her night-cap over his head; got into the bed, and drew the blankets over him.

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All this time Red Riding Hood was gathering flowers; and when she had picked as many as she could carry, she thought of her grandmother, and hurried to the cottage. She wondered very much to find the door open; and when she got into the room, she began to feel very ill, and exclaimed, "How sad I feel! I wish I had not come to-day." Then she said, "Good morning," but received no reply; so she went up to the bed, and drew back the curtains, and there lay her grandmother as she imagined, with the cap drawn half over her eyes and looking very fierce.

"Oh, grandmother, what great ears you have!"

"All the better to hear you with," was the reply.

"And what great eyes you have!"

"All the better to see you with."

"And what great hands you have!"

"All the better to touch you with."

"But, grandmother, what very great teeth you have!"

"All the better to eat you with;" and hardly were the words spoken when the Wolf made a jump out of bed and swallowed down poor Little Red Riding Hood also.

As soon as he had thus satisfied his hunger, he laid himself down again on the bed, and went to sleep and snored very loudly. A huntsman passing by overheard him, and said, "How loudly that old woman snores! I must see if anything is the matter."

So he went into the cottage; and when he came to the bed, he saw the Wolf sleeping in it.

"What! are you here, you old rascal? I have been looking for you," exclaimed he; and taking up his gun, he shot the old Wolf through the head.

But it is also said that the story ends in a different manner; for that one day, when Red Riding Hood was taking some presents to her grandmother, a Wolf met her, and wanted to mislead her; but she went straight on, and told her grandmother that she had met a Wolf, who said good-day; but he looked so hungrily out of his great eyes, as if he would have eaten her up had she not been on the high road.

So her grandmother said, "We will shut the door, and then he cannot get in."

Soon after, up came the Wolf, who tapped, and exclaimed, "I am Little Red Riding Hood, grandmother; I have some roast meat for you." But they kept quite quiet, and did

not open the door; so the Wolf, after looking several times round the house, at last jumped on to the roof, thinking to wait till Red Riding Hood went home in the evening, and then to creep after her and eat her in the darkness.

The old woman, however, saw what the villain intended. There stood before the door a large stone trough, and she said to Little Red Riding Hood, "Take this bucket, dear: yesterday I boiled some meat in this water, now pour it into the stone trough." Then the Wolf sniffed the smell of the meat, and his mouth watered, and he wished very much to taste.

At last he stretched his neck too far over, so that he lost his balance, and fell down from the roof, right into the great trough below, and there he was drowned.

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[Illustration: “Without A word he jumped on to the bed and gobbled up the poor old lady.”]

[Illustration]

THE WHITE FAWN

There was once upon a time a King and Queen who were perfectly happy, with one exception, and that was that they had no child.

One day when the Queen was staying in a watering-place, some distance from home, she was sitting by a fountain alone, sadly thinking of the daughter she longed to have, when she perceived a crab coming in her direction, who, to the Queen's surprise, addressed her thus:

“Great Queen, if you will condescend to be conducted by a humble crab, I will lead you to a Fairies' palace and your wish shall be fulfilled.”

“I would certainly come with you,” replied the Queen, “but I am afraid that I cannot walk backwards.”

The crab smiled, and transforming herself into a beautiful little old woman, said:

“Now, madam, it is not necessary to go backwards. Come with me, and I beg of you to look upon me as your friend.” She then escorted the Queen to the most magnificent palace that could possibly be imagined, it was built entirely of diamonds.

In this superb place dwelt six Fairies who received the Queen with the greatest respect, and each one presented her with a flower made of precious stones—a rose, tulip, an anemone, a columbine, a violet, and a carnation.

“Madam,” they said, “we have pleasure in telling you that soon you will have a daughter whom you will name Desiree. Directly she arrives, do not fail to call upon us, for we will bestow all sorts of good gifts upon her. You have only to hold this bouquet, and mention each flower, thinking of us, and be assured that we shall at once appear in your chamber.”

The Queen, transported with joy, and overcome with gratitude, threw herself upon their necks, and warmly embraced them; she then spent several hours admiring the wonders of the palace and its gardens, and it was not until evening that she returned to her attendants, who were in a serious state of anxiety at the prolonged absence of Her Majesty.

[Illustration]

Not very long afterwards, when the Queen was once more at home in her Royal Palace, a baby Princess was born, whom she named Desiree. Then taking the bouquet into her hand, the Queen, one by one, pronounced the names of the flowers, when there immediately appeared, flying through the air in elegant chariots drawn by different kinds of birds, the six Fairies who entered the apartment, bearing beautiful presents for the little baby. Marvellously fine linen, but so strong that it could be worn a hundred years without going into holes, lace of the finest, with the history of the world worked into its pattern, toys of all descriptions that a child would love to play with, and a cradle ornamented with rubies and diamonds, and supported by four Cupids ready to rock it should the baby cry. But, best of all, the Fairies endowed the little Princess with beauty, and virtue, and health, and every good thing that could be desired.

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The Queen was thanking the Fairies a thousand times for all their favours, when the door opened, and a crab appeared.

“Ungrateful Queen,” said the crab, “you have not deigned to remember me, the Fairy of the Fountain; and to punish your ingratitude, if the Princess sees daylight before she is fifteen years old, she will have cause to repent it, and it may cost her her life. It was well I took the form of a crab, for your friendship instead of advancing has gone backwards.” Then in spite of all the Queen and the Fairies could say, the crab went backwards out of the door, leaving them in the saddest consternation, and it was long before they could decide what was best to be done.

Then, with three waves of a wand, the Fairies caused a high tower to spring up; it had neither door nor window, an underground passage was made, through which everything necessary could be carried, and in this tower the little Princess was shut up and there she lived by candlelight, where never a glimpse of the sun could come.

When the Princess Desiree was fourteen years old, the Queen had her portrait painted, and copies of it were carried to all the Courts in the world. All the Princes admired it greatly, but there was one Prince, named Guerrier, who loved it above everything; he used to stand before the picture and avow his passion, just as if it heard what he said, and at last he told the King, his father.

“You have resolved that I shall marry the Princess Noire, but this I can never do, so great is my love for the Princess Desiree.”

“But where have you seen her?” enquired the King.

The Prince hastened to fetch her portrait, and the King was so greatly struck by Desiree’s beauty that he agreed to follow his son’s wishes and break off his engagement with the Princess Noire, that he might wed the Princess Desiree. So the King despatched as ambassador a rich young lord named Becafigue.

Becafigue was devoted to Prince Guerrier, and he fitted out a most splendid retinue to visit the Princess Desiree’s Court. Besides numerous magnificent presents, Becafigue took with him the Prince’s portrait, which had been painted by such a clever artist that it would speak; it could not exactly answer questions, but could make certain remarks. It was truly a speaking likeness of the young Prince. Desiree’s father and mother were delighted when they heard that the Prince Guerrier was seeking their daughter’s hand in marriage, for they knew him to be a brave and noble young man. But as it still wanted three months to the Princess’s fifteenth year, warned by the Fairy Tulip, who had taken Desiree under her special care, they refused to let him see their daughter or to let her yet marry the Prince Guerrier, but they showed her the Prince’s portrait, with which she was greatly pleased, and particularly when it said, “Lovely Desiree, you cannot imagine

how ardently I am waiting for you; come soon into our Court to make it beautiful by your presence.”

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[Illustration]

When Prince Guerrier saw the ambassador return without Desiree, he was so terribly disappointed that he could neither eat nor sleep, and before long fell dangerously ill.

Meanwhile Desiree had no less pleasure in looking at the Prince's portrait than he had had admiring hers, and this was soon discovered by those around her, and among others Giroflee and Longue Epine, her maids of honour. Giroflee loved her passionately and faithfully, but Longue Epine was full of envy of the Princess who was so good and beautiful, and, besides Longue Epine, Desiree had another enemy, and that was the Princess Noire, to whom Prince Guerrier had been betrothed. This Princess Noire now went to the Fairy of the Fountain, who was her best friend, and begged her to take revenge upon Princess Desiree, and this the Fairy promised to do. Meanwhile once more Becafigue came to the capital where Desiree's father lived, and throwing himself at the King's feet, besought him in most touching words to let his daughter go with him at once to the Prince, who would surely die if he could not behold her.

When Princess Desiree heard of the Prince's illness, she suggested that she should set out without delay, but in a dark carriage, that only at night should be opened to give her food. This plan was approved of; the ambassador was told, and he departed full of joy. So in a carriage like a large dark box, shut up with her Lady in Waiting and her two Maids of Honour, Giroflee and Longue Epine, Princess Desiree departed for Prince Guerrier's Court.

Perhaps you will remember that Longue Epine did not like Princess Desiree, but she greatly admired Prince Guerrier, for she had seen his portrait speaking, and she had told her mother, the Lady in Waiting, that she should die if he married Desiree.

The King and Queen had begged the Lady in Waiting to take the greatest of care of their dear daughter, and above all to be heedful that she did not see the light of day until her fifteenth birthday, saying that the ambassador had promised that until then she should be placed where there was no other light than that of candles. But now as they drew near their destination, while it was broad daylight the wicked woman, urged by her envious daughter, Longue Epine, all at once took a large knife which she had brought for the purpose, and with it cut the covering of the carriage.

Then, for the first time, the Princess Desiree saw the light of day!!! Hardly had she perceived it when, uttering a deep sigh, she threw herself from the carriage, and in the form of a white fawn fleetly fled into a forest near by.

The Fairy of the Fountain, who was the cause of this disaster seeing that all who were accompanying the Princess were about to hasten to the town to tell the Prince Guerrier what had happened, called up a great thunderstorm and scattered them in every direction. Only the Lady in Waiting, Longue Epine and Giroflee were left, Giroflee, who



ran after her mistress, making the trees and rocks echo with her mournful calls. Then Longue Epine clothed herself in the rich bridal robes provided for Desiree. She placed the crown upon her head, the sceptre and orb she carried in her hands, so that all should take her for the Princess. With her mother bearing her train she gravely walked in the direction of the town.

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[Illustration: *"A great thunderstorm scattered them in every direction."*]

They had not gone far when a brilliant procession came towards them, amongst whom was the sick Prince in a litter, and to those in advance Longue Epine announced that she was the Princess Desiree, with her Lady in Waiting, but that a jealous Fairy had sent a thunderstorm which had destroyed her carriage and scattered her other attendants. When the Prince was told of this, he could not refrain from saying to the messengers: "Now acknowledge, is she not truly a miracle of beauty, a Princess beyond compare?"

No one replied at first, and then one of the boldest said,

"Sir, you will see; apparently the fatigue of the journey has somewhat changed her." The Prince was surprised, but when he saw Longue Epine words fail to express what he felt.

She was so tall that it was alarming, and the garments of the Princess hardly came to her knees. She was frightfully thin, and her nose, which was more hooked than a parrot's beak, shone like a danger signal. Then her teeth were black and uneven, and, in fact, she was as ugly as Desiree was beautiful.

At first the Prince could not speak a word, he simply gazed at her in amazement. Then he said, turning to his father, "We have been deceived, that portrait was painted to mislead us. It will be the death of me."

"What do I hear, they have deceived you," fiercely exclaimed Longue Epine.

"It is not to be wondered at," remarked the King, "that your father kept such a treasure shut up for fifteen years."

Then he and the Prince turned towards the town, and the false Princess and the Lady in Waiting, without any ceremony, were mounted each behind a soldier and taken to be shut up in a castle.

[Illustration: *Painted by Jennie Harbour the white fawn*]

Soon after his terrible disappointment, Prince Guerrier, unable to bear any longer the life at court, secretly departed from the palace with his faithful friend Becafigue, leaving a letter for his father saying he would return to him as soon as his mind was in a happier state, and begging him meanwhile to keep the ugly Princess prisoner, and think of some revenge upon the deceitful king, her father.

After three or four days' journeying, the wanderers found themselves in a thick forest. Quite wearied out, the Prince threw himself upon the ground, while Becafigue went on further in search of fruit wherewith to refresh his royal master.

It is a long time since we left the White Fawn, that is to say the charming Princess.

Very desolately she wept when in a stream she saw her figure reflected, and when night came she was in great fear, for she heard wild beasts about her, and sometimes forgetting she was a fawn she would try to climb a tree. But with morning dawn she felt a little safer, and the sun appeared a marvellous sight to her from which she could hardly turn her eyes. But now the Fairy Tulip, who had always loved the Princess guided Giroflee's feet in her direction, and when the White Fawn saw her faithful Maid of Honour her delight was boundless.

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It did not take Giroflee long to discover that this was her dearly-loved mistress, and she promised the White Fawn never to forsake her, for she found she could hear all that was said although she could not speak. Towards night the fear of having no shelter made the two friends so dreadfully dismayed that the Fairy Tulip suddenly appeared before them.

[Illustration]

"I am not going to scold you," she said, "although it is through not following my advice that you are in this misfortune, for it goes to my heart to see you thus. I cannot release you altogether from this enchantment, but I have power to shorten the time, and also to say that during the night you may regain your rightful form, but by day again must you run through the forest as a Fawn." The fairy also told them where they could find a little hut in which to pass the nights. Then she disappeared. Giroflee and the Fawn walked in the direction the Fairy had pointed out, and arrived at a neat little cottage where an old woman showed them a room which they could occupy.

As soon as it was night Desiree came to her rightful form, but when day appeared she was once more a Fawn and, escaping into the thicket, commenced to run about in the ordinary way.

You have heard how Prince Guerrier rested in the forest while Becafigue searched for fruit; quite late in the evening Becafigue arrived at the cottage of the good woman who had given shelter to Giroflee and the White Fawn. He addressed her politely and asked for the things he required for his master. She hastened to fill a basket, and gave it to him, saying, "I fear that if you pass a night without shelter some harm may come to you. I can offer you a poor one, but at any rate it is secure from the lions."

Becafigue went back to the Prince and together they returned to the cottage, where they were led into the room next to that occupied by the Princess.

Next morning the Prince arose early and went out; he had not long been in the forest when he saw a beautiful little Fawn. Hunting had ever been his favourite pastime, and now he pursued the little creature. All day long hither and thither he chased, but did not succeed in capturing her, and as evening fell the Fawn slipped away and gained the little hut where Giroflee anxiously awaited her, and on hearing her adventure the Maid of Honour told her she must never again venture out, but the Princess replied:

"It is no use talking thus, when I am a Fawn this room is stifling to me and I must depart from it."

The next day the young Prince sought in vain for the White Fawn, and finally tired out threw himself upon the grass and fell asleep.

While he lay there the little Fawn drew near and looking at him quietly, to her astonishment she recognised his features as those of the Prince Guerrier. Coming nearer and nearer she presently touched him and he awoke.

His surprise was great at seeing close by the shy little Fawn, who stayed not an instant longer but fled away, the Prince following.

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"Stay, dear little Fawn," he cried, "I would not hurt you for the world." But the wind carried off the words before they reached her ears. Long he chased the poor creature, till at last worn out the Fawn sank down on the ground and the Prince came up to her.

"Beautiful Fawn," said he, "do not fear me, I shall lead you with me everywhere." Then he covered her with roses and fed her with the choicest leaves and grasses.

But as evening drew near the Fawn longed to escape, for what would happen should she suddenly change into a Princess there in the forest. Presently the Prince went to fetch some water for her, and while he was gone she ran homewards. The next day for a long time she hid from the Prince, but at last he found her, and as she dashed off he shot an arrow which wounded her in the leg.

Sad that he should have done so cruel a thing, the Prince took herbs and laid them upon the wound, and at last he went to fetch Becafigue to help him carry her to the house. He tied her to a tree.

Alas! Who would have thought that the most beautiful Princess in the world would be treated thus? While she was straining at the ribbons trying to break them, Giroflee arrived, and was leading her away when the Prince met them and claimed the Fawn as his.

"Sir," politely replied Giroflee, "the Fawn was mine before it was yours," and she spoke to the Fawn, and the Fawn obeyed her in such a way that the Prince could not doubt that what she said was true. Giroflee then went on, and, to the surprise of the Prince and Becafigue, entered the old woman's house where they themselves lodged. Then Becafigue told the Prince that unless he was much mistaken the owner of the Fawn had lived with the Princess Desiree when he went there as ambassador.

"I mean to see her again," said Becafigue, "there is only a partition between her room and ours." And soon he had made a hole large enough to peep through, and through it he saw the charming Princess dressed in a robe of brocaded silver, with flowers embroidered in gold and emeralds, her hair falling in heavy masses on the most beautiful neck in the world. Giroflee was on her knees before her, bandaging up one arm from which the blood was flowing. They both seemed greatly concerned about the wound: "Let me die," the Princess was saying, "death would be better than the life which I lead. To be a Fawn all the day, to hear him speaking, and not to be able to tell him of my sad fate."

One can guess the astonishment of Becafigue and of the Prince. Guerrier would almost have died of pleasure had he not thought that it must be some enchantment, for did he not know that Desiree and her Lady in Waiting were shut up in the castle.

He went softly and knocked at the chamber door, which Giroflee opened, thinking it was the old woman, for she required help for the wounded arm.

The Prince entered, threw himself at Desiree's feet, and found she was indeed his Princess.

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Great was their joy thus at last meeting, and while they were talking to each other the night passed, and the day dawned, and daylight came, and the morning sun shone brightly before Desiree had time to notice that she had not again taken the shape of a Fawn, but was her own beautiful self.

Then it was found that it was the Fairy Tulip in disguise of the old woman who had provided that sheltering cottage in the forest.

The joy of the King upon once more seeing his son can well be imagined, and the marriage of the Prince and Desiree, and Becafigue and Giroflee took place on the same day, the Fairies giving their diamond palace as their wedding present to Princess Desiree, and Fairy Tulip presenting four gold mines in the Indies to Giroflee.

[Illustration]

And, in accordance with the wish of Princess Desiree, Longue Epine and her mother, the false Lady in Waiting, were set at liberty.

[Illustration]

HANSEL AND GRETHEL

Once upon a time there dwelt near a large wood a poor wood cutter, with his wife, and two children by his former marriage, a little boy called Hansel, and a girl named Grethel. He had little enough to break or bite; and once, when there was a great famine in the land, he could hardly procure even his daily bread; and as he lay thinking in his bed one night, he sighed, and said to his wife, "What will become of us? How can we feed our children, when we have no more than we can eat ourselves?"

"Know then, my husband," answered she, "we will lead them away, quite early in the morning, into the thickest part of the wood, and there make them a fire, and give them each a little piece of bread, then we will go to our work, and leave them alone, so they will not find the way home again, and we shall be freed from them."

"No, wife," replied he, "that I can never do; how can you bring your heart to leave my children all alone in the wood; for the wild beasts will soon come and tear them to pieces?"

"Oh, you simpleton!" said she, "then we must all four die of hunger; you had better plane the coffins for us." But she left him no peace till he consented, saying, "Ah, but I shall miss the poor children."

The two children, however, had not gone to sleep, for very hunger, and so they overheard what the stepmother said to their father. Grethel wept bitterly, and said to Hansel, "What will become of us?"

"Be quiet, Grethel," said he; "do not cry—I will help you." And as soon as their parents had gone to sleep, he got up, put on his coat, and, unbarring the back door, went out. The moon shone brightly, and the white pebbles which lay before the door seemed like silver pieces, they glittered so brightly. Hansel stooped down, and put as many into his pocket as it would hold; and then going back he said to Grethel, "Be of good cheer, dear sister, and sleep in peace; God will not forsake us." And so saying, he went to bed again.

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The next morning, before the sun arose, the wife went and awoke the two children. "Get up, you lazy things; we are going into the forest to chop wood." Then she gave them each a piece of bread, saying, "There is something for your dinner; do not eat it before the time, for you will get nothing else." Grethel took the bread in her apron, for Hansel's pocket was full of pebbles; and so they all set out upon their way. When they had gone a little distance, Hansel stood still, and peeped back at the house; and this he repeated several times, till his father said, "Hansel, what are you looking at, and why do you lag behind? Take care, and remember your legs."

"Ah, father," said Hansel, "I am looking at my white cat sitting upon the roof of the house, and trying to say good-bye."

"You simpleton!" said the wife, "that is not a cat; it is only the sun shining on the white chimney." But in reality Hansel was not looking at a cat; but every time he stopped, he dropped a pebble out of his pocket upon the path.

When they came to the middle of the forest, the father told the children to collect wood, and he would make them a fire, so that they should not be cold. So Hansel and Grethel gathered together quite a little mount of twigs. Then they set fire to them; and as the flame burnt up high, the wife said, "Now, you children, lie down near the fire, and rest yourselves, whilst we go into the forest and chop more wood; when we are ready we will come and call you."

Hansel and Grethel sat down by the fire, and when it was noon, each ate the piece of bread; and because they could hear the blows of an axe they thought their father was near; but it was not an axe, but a branch which he had bound to an old tree, so as to be blown to and fro by the wind. They waited so long, that at last their eyes closed from weariness, and they fell fast asleep. When they awoke, it was quite dark, and Grethel began to cry. "How shall we get out of the wood?" But Hansel tried to comfort her by saying, "Wait a little while till the moon rises, and then we will quickly find the way." The moon shone forth, and Hansel, taking his sister's hand, followed the pebbles, which glittered like new-coined silver pieces, and showed them the way. All night long they walked on, and as day broke they came to their father's house. They knocked at the door, and when the wife opened it, and saw Hansel and Grethel, she exclaimed, "You wicked children! Why did you sleep so long in the wood? We thought you were never coming home again." But their father was extremely glad, for it had grieved his heart to leave them all alone.

[Illustration: "*Hansel and Grethel sat down by the fire.*"]

Not long afterwards there was again great scarcity in every corner of the land; and one night the children overheard their mother saying to their father, "Everything is once more consumed; we have only half a loaf left, and then the song is ended: the children must

be sent away. We will take them deeper into the wood, so that they may not find the way out again; it is the only means of escape for us."

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But her husband felt heavy at heart, and thought, "It were better to share the last crust with the children." His wife, however, would listen to nothing that he said, and scolded and reproached him without end.

He who says A must say B too; and he who consents the first time must also the second.

The children, however, had heard the conversation as they lay awake, and as soon as their parents went to sleep Hansel got up, intending to pick up some pebbles as before; but the wife had locked the door, so that he could not get out. Nevertheless he comforted Grethel, saying, "Do not weep; sleep in quiet; the good God will not forsake us."

Early in the morning the stepmother came and pulled them out of bed, and gave them each a slice of bread, which was still smaller than the former piece. On the way Hansel broke his in his pocket, and stopping every now and then, dropped a crumb upon the path. "Hansel, why do you stop and look about?" said the father, "keep in the path." "I am looking at my little dove," answered Hansel, "nodding a good-bye to me." "Simpleton!" said the wife, "that is no dove, but only the sun shining on the chimney." But Hansel kept still dropping crumbs as he went along.

The mother led the children deep into the wood, where they had never been before, and there making a gigantic fire, she said to them, "Sit down here and rest, and when you feel tired you can sleep for a little while. We are going into the forest to hew wood, and in the evening, when we are ready, we will come and fetch you again."

When noon came, Grethel shared her bread with Hansel, who had strewn his on the path. They then went to sleep; but the evening arrived and no one came to visit the poor children, and in the dark night they awoke, and Hansel comforted his sister by saying, "Only wait, Grethel, till the moon comes out, then we shall see the crumbs of bread which I have dropped, and they will show us the way home." The moon shone and they got up, but they could not see any crumbs, for the thousands of birds which had been flying about in the woods and fields had picked them all up. Hansel kept saying to Grethel, "We will soon find the way;" but they did not, and they walked the whole night long and the next day, but still they did not come out of the wood; and they got very hungry, for they had nothing to eat but the berries which they found upon the bushes. Soon they were so tired that they could not drag themselves along, then they lay down under a tree and again went to sleep.

[Illustration: *Painted by Jennie Harbour Hansel and Grethel*]

It was now the third morning since they had left their father's house, and they still walked on; but they only got deeper, and deeper, and deeper into the wood, and Hansel felt that if help did not come very soon they must die of hunger. As soon as it was noon



they saw a beautiful, snow-white bird sitting upon a bough, singing so sweetly that they stood still and listened to it. It soon ceased, and spreading its wings flew off; and they followed it until it arrived at a cottage, upon the roof of which it perched; and when they went close up to it they saw that the cottage was made of bread and cakes, and the window-panes were of clear sugar.



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"We will go in here," said Hansel, "and have a glorious feast. I will eat a piece of the roof, and you can eat the window. Will they not be sweet?" So Hansel reached up and broke a piece off the roof, in order to see how it tasted; while Grethel stepped up to the window and began to bite it. Then a sweet voice called out in the room, "Tip-tap, tip-tap, who knocks at my door?" and the children answered, "The wind, the wind, the child of heaven;" and they went on eating without interruption. Hansel thought the roof tasted very nice, and so he tore off a great piece; while Grethel broke a large round pane out of the window, and sat down quite contentedly. Just then the door opened, and a very old woman, walking upon crutches, came out. Hansel and Grethel were so much frightened that they let fall what they had in their hands; but the old woman nodding her head, said, "Ah, you dear children, what has brought you here? Come in and stop with me, and no harm shall come to you;" and so saying she took them both by the hand, and led them into her cottage. A good meal of milk and pancakes, with sugar, apples and nuts, was spread on the table, and in the back room were two nice little beds, covered with white, where Hansel and Grethel laid themselves down, and were happy as could be. The old woman behaved very kindly to them, but in reality she was a wicked old witch who way-laid children, and built the breadhouse in order to entice them in; but as soon as they were in her power she killed them, cooked and ate them, and made a great festival of the day. Witches have red eyes, and cannot see very far; but they have a fine sense of smelling, like wild beasts, so that they know when children approach them. When Hansel and Grethel came near the witch's house she laughed wickedly, saying, "Here come two who shall not escape me." And early in the morning, before they awoke, she went up to them, and saw how lovingly they lay sleeping, with their chubby red cheeks; and she mumbled to herself, "That will be a good bite." Then she took up Hansel with her rough hand, and shut him up in a little cage with a lattice-door; and although he screamed loudly it was of no use. Grethel came next, and shaking her till she awoke, she said, "Get up, you lazy brat, and fetch some water to cook something good for your brother, who must remain in that stall and get fat; and when he is fat enough I shall eat him." Grethel began to cry, but it was all useless, for the old witch made her do as she wanted. So a nice meal was cooked for Hansel, but Grethel got nothing else but a crab's claw.

Every morning the old witch came to the cage and said, "Hansel, stretch out your finger that I may feel whether you are getting fat." But Hansel used to stretch out a bone, and the old woman, having very bad sight, thought it was his finger, and wondered very much why he did not get fat. When four weeks had passed, and Hansel still kept quite lean, she lost all her patience, and would not

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wait any longer. "Grethel," she cried in a passion, "get some water quickly; be Hansel fat or lean, this morning I will kill and cook him." Oh, how the poor little sister grieved, as she was forced to fetch the water, and fast the tears ran down her cheeks! "Dear good God, help us now!" she prayed. "Had we only been eaten by the wild beasts in the wood, then we should have died together." But the old witch called out, "Leave off that noise; it will not help you a bit."

So early in the morning Grethel was compelled to go out and fill the kettle, and make a fire. "First, we will bake, however," said the old woman; "I have already heated the oven and kneaded the dough;" and so saying, she pushed poor Grethel up to the oven, out of which the flames were burning fiercely. "Creep in," said the witch, "and see if it is hot enough, and then we will put in the bread," but she intended when Grethel got in, to shut up the oven and let her bake, so that she might eat her as well as Hansel. Grethel perceived her wicked thoughts and said, "I do not know how to do it; how shall I get in?" "You stupid goose," said she, "the opening is big enough. See, I could even get in myself!" and she got up, and put her head into the oven. Then Grethel gave her a push, so that she fell right in, and shutting the iron door bolted it. Oh! how horribly the witch howled; but Grethel ran away, and left her to burn to ashes.

[Illustration]

Now she ran to Hansel, and, opening the door, called out, "Hansel we are saved; the old witch is dead?"

So he sprang out, like a bird from his cage when the door was opened; and they were so glad that they fell upon each other's neck, and kissed each other over and over again. And now, as there was nothing to fear, they went back to the witch's house, where in every corner were caskets full of pearls and precious stones. "These are better than pebbles," said Hansel, putting as many into his pocket as it would hold; while Grethel thought, "I will take some home too," and filled her apron full.

"We must be off now," said Hansel, "and get out of this enchanted forest;" but when they had walked for two hours they came to a large piece of water.

"We cannot get over," said Hansel; "I can see no bridge at all." "And there is no boat either," said Grethel, "but there swims a white duck, I will ask her to help us over;" and she sang,

"Little Duck, good little Duck,
Grethel and Hansel, together we stand;
There is neither stile nor bridge,
Take us on your back to land."



So the Duck came to them, and Hansel sat himself on, and bade his sister sit beside him. "No," replied Grethel, "that will be too much for the Duck, she shall take us over one at a time." This the good little bird did, and when both were happily arrived on the other side, and had gone a little way, they came to a well-known wood, which they knew the better every step they went, and at last they

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perceived their father's house. Then they began to run, and rushing into the house, they fell upon their father's neck. He had not had one happy hour since he had left the children in the forest; and his wife was dead. Grethel shook her apron, and the pearls and precious stones rolled out upon the floor, and Hansel threw down one handful after the other out of his pocket. Then all their sorrows were ended, and they lived together in great happiness.

[Illustration]

[Illustration]

SNOW-WHITE AND ROSE-RED

A poor widow once lived in a little cottage. In front of the cottage was a garden, in which were growing two rose trees; one of these bore white roses, and the other red.

She had two children, who resembled the rose trees. One was called Snow-White, and the other Rose-Red; and they were as religious and loving, busy and untiring, as any two children ever were.

Snow-White was more gentle, and quieter than her sister, who liked better skipping about the fields, seeking flowers, and catching summer birds; while Snow-White stayed at home with her mother, either helping her in her work, or, when that was done, reading aloud.

The two children had the greatest affection the one for the other. They were always seen hand in hand; and should Snow-White say to her sister, "We will never separate," the other would reply, "Not while we live," the mother adding, "That which one has, let her always share with the other."

They constantly ran together in the woods, collecting ripe berries; but not a single animal would have injured them; quite the reverse, they all felt the greatest esteem for the young creatures. The hare came to eat parsley from their hands, the deer grazed by their side, the stag bounded past them unheeding; the birds, likewise, did not stir from the bough, but sang in entire security. No mischance befell them; if benighted in the wood, they lay down on the moss to repose and sleep till the morning; and their mother was satisfied as to their safety, and felt no fear about them.

Once, when they had spent the night in the wood, and the bright sunrise awoke them, they saw a beautiful child, in a snow-white robe, shining like diamonds, sitting close to the spot where they had reposed. She arose when they opened their eyes, and looked kindly at them; but said no word, and passed from their sight into the wood. When the

children looked around they saw they had been sleeping on the edge of a precipice, and would surely have fallen over if they had gone forward two steps further in the darkness. Their mother said the beautiful child must have been the angel who watches over good children.

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Snow-White and Rose-Red kept their mother's cottage so clean that it gave pleasure only to look in. In summer-time Rose-Red attended to the house, and every morning, before her mother awoke, placed by her bed a bouquet which had in it a rose from each of the rose-trees. In winter-time Snow-White set light to the fire, and put on the kettle, after polishing it until it was like gold for brightness. In the evening, when snow was falling, her mother would bid her bolt the door, and then, sitting by the hearth, the good widow would read aloud to them from a big book while the little girls were spinning. Close by them lay a lamb, and a white pigeon, with its head tucked under its wing, was on a perch behind.

[Illustration]

One evening, as they were all sitting cosily together like this, there was a knock at the door, as if someone wished to come in.

"Make haste, Rose-Red!" said her mother; "open the door; it is surely some traveller seeking shelter." Rose-Red accordingly pulled back the bolt, expecting to see some poor man. But it was nothing of the kind; it was a bear, that thrust his big head in at the open door. Rose-Red cried out and sprang back, the lamb bleated, the dove fluttered her wings and Snow-White hid herself behind her mother's bed. The bear began speaking, and said, "Do not be afraid: I will not do you any harm; I am half-frozen, and would like to warm myself a little at your fire."

"Poor bear!" the mother replied; "come in and lie by the fire; only be careful that your hair is not burnt." Then she called Snow-White and Rose-Red, telling them that the bear was kind, and would not harm them. They came, as she bade them, and presently the lamb and the dove drew near also without fear.

"Children," begged the bear; "knock some of the snow off my coat." So they brought the broom and brushed the bear's coat quite clean.

After that he stretched himself out in front of the fire, and pleased himself by growling a little, only to show that he was happy and comfortable. Before long they were all quite good friends, and the children began to play with their unlooked for visitor, pulling his thick fur, or placing their feet on his back, or rolling him over and over. Then they took a slender hazel twig, using it upon his thick coat, and they laughed when he growled. The bear permitted them to amuse themselves in this way, only occasionally calling out, when it went a little too far, "Children, spare me an inch of life!"

[Illustration]

When it was night, and all were making ready to go to bed, the widow told the bear, "You may stay here and lie by the hearth, if you like, so that you will be sheltered from the cold and from the bad weather."

The offer was accepted, but when morning came, as the day broke in the east, the two children let him out, and over the snow he went back into the wood.

After this, every evening at the same time the bear came, lay by the fire, and allowed the children to play with him; so they became quite fond of their curious playmate, and the door was not ever bolted in the evening until he had appeared.

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When springtime came, and all around began to look green and bright, one morning the bear said to Snow-White, "Now I must leave you, and all the summer long I shall not be able to come back."

"Where, then, are you going, dear bear?" asked Snow-White. "I have to go to the woods to protect my treasure from the bad dwarfs. In winter time when the earth is frozen hard, they must remain underground, and cannot make their way through; but now that the sunshine has thawed the earth they can come to the surface, and whatever gets into their hands, or is brought to their caves, seldom, if ever, again sees daylight."

Snow-White was very sad when she said good-bye to the good-natured beast, and unfastened the door, that he might go; but in going out he was caught by a hook in the lintel, and a scrap of his fur being torn, Snow-White thought there was something shining like gold through the rent; but he went out so quickly that she could not feel certain what it was, and soon he was hidden among the trees.

One day the mother sent her children into the wood to pick up sticks. They found a big tree lying on the ground. It had been felled, and towards the roots they noticed something skipping and springing, which they could not make out, as it was sometimes hidden in the grasses. As they came nearer they could see it was a dwarf, with a shrivelled up face and a snow-white beard an ell long. The beard was fixed in a gash in the tree trunk, and the tiny fellow was hopping to and fro, like a dog at the end of a string, but he could not manage to free himself. He stared at the children, with his red, fiery eyes, and called out, "Why are you standing there? Can't you come and try to help me?"

"What were you doing, little fellow?" enquired Rose-Red.

"Stupid, inquisitive goose!" replied the dwarf; "I meant to split the trunk, so that I could chop it up for kitchen sticks; big logs would burn up the small quantity of food we cook, for people like us do not consume great heaps of food, as you heavy, greedy folk do. The bill-hook I had driven in, and soon I should have done what I required; but the tool suddenly sprang from the cleft, which so quickly shut up again that it caught my handsome white beard; and here I must stop, for I cannot set myself free. You stupid, pale-faced creatures! You laugh, do you?"

In spite of the dwarf's bad temper, the girls took all possible pains to release the little man, but without avail; the beard could not be moved, it was wedged too tightly.

"I will run and get someone else," said Rose-Red.

"Idiot!" cried the dwarf. "Who would go and get more people? Already there are two too many. Can't you think of something better?"

“Don’t be so impatient,” said Snow-White. “I will try to think.” She clapped her hands as if she had discovered a remedy, took out her scissors, and in a moment set the dwarf free by cutting off the end of his beard.

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Immediately the dwarf felt that he was free he seized a sackful of gold that was hidden among the tree roots, and, lifting it up, grumbled out, "Clumsy creatures, to cut off a bit of my beautiful beard, of which I am so proud! I leave the cuckoos to pay you for what you did." Saying this, he swung the sack across his shoulder and went off without even casting a glance at the children.

Not long afterwards the two sisters went to angle in the brook, meaning to catch fish for dinner. As they were drawing near the water they perceived something, looking like a large grasshopper, springing towards the stream, as if it were going in. They hurried up to see what it might be, and found that it was the dwarf. "Where are you going?" said Rose-Red. "Surely you will not jump into the water?"

"I'm not such a simpleton as that!" yelled the little man. "Don't you see that a wretch of a fish is pulling me in?"

The dwarf had been sitting angling from the side of the stream when, by ill-luck, the wind had entangled his beard in his line, and just afterwards a big fish taking the bait, the unamiable little fellow had not sufficient strength to pull it out; so the fish had the advantage, and was dragging the dwarf after it. Certainly he caught at every stalk and spray near him, but that did not assist him greatly; he was forced to follow all the twistings of the fish, and was perpetually in danger of being drawn into the brook.

The girls arrived just in time. They caught hold of him firmly, and endeavoured to untwist his beard from the line, but in vain; it was too tightly entangled. There was nothing left but again to make use of the scissors; so they were taken out, and the tangled portion was cut off.

When the dwarf noticed what they were about, he exclaimed, in a great rage, "Is this how you damage my beard? Not content with making it shorter before, you are now making it still smaller, and completely spoiling it. I shall not ever dare to show my face to my friends. I wish you had missed your way before you took this road." Then he fetched a sack of pearls that lay among the rushes, and saying not another word, hobbled off and disappeared behind a large stone.

Soon after this it chanced that the poor widow sent her children to the town to purchase cotton, needles, ribbon and tape. The way to the town ran over a common on which in every direction large masses of rocks were scattered about. The children's attention was soon attracted to a big bird that hovered in the air. They remarked that after circling slowly for a time, and gradually getting nearer to the ground, it all of a sudden pounced down amongst a mass of rock. Instantly a heart-rending cry reached their ears, and, running quickly to the place, they saw, with horror, that the eagle had seized their former acquaintance, the dwarf, and was just about to carry him off. The kind children did not hesitate for an instant. They took a firm hold of the little man, they strove so stoutly with the eagle for possession of his contemplated prey, that, after much rough treatment on

both sides, the dwarf was left in the hands of his brave little friends, and the eagle took to flight.



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As soon as the little man had in some measure recovered from his alarm, his small, squeaky, cracked voice was heard saying, "Couldn't you have held me more gently? See my little coat; you have rent and damaged it in a fine manner, you clumsy, officious things!" Then he picked up a sack of jewels, and slipped out of sight behind a piece of rock.

The maidens by this time were quite used to his ungrateful, ungracious ways; so they took no notice of it, but went on their way, made their purchases, and then were ready to return to their happy home.

[Illustration: *Painted by Jennie Harbour snow-white and rose-red*]

On their way back, suddenly, once more they ran across their dwarf friend.

Upon a clear space he had turned out his sack of jewels, so that he could count and admire them, for he had not imagined that anybody would at so late an hour be coming across the common. The setting sun was shining upon the brilliant stones, and their changing hues and sparkling rays caused the children to pause to admire them also.

"What are you gazing at?" cried the dwarf, at the same time becoming red with rage; "and what are you standing there for, making ugly faces?"

It is probable that he might have proceeded in the same complimentary manner, but suddenly a great growl was heard near by them, and a big bear joined the party. Up jumped the dwarf in extremest terror, but could not get to his hiding-place, the bear was too close to him; so he cried out in very evident anguish—

"Dear Mr. Bear, forgive me, I pray! I will render to you all my treasure. Just see those precious stones lying there! Grant me my life! What would you do with such an insignificant little fellow? You would not notice me between your teeth. See, though, those two children, they would be delicate morsels, and are as plump as partridges; I beg of you to take them, good Mr. Bear, and let me go."

But the bear would not be moved by his speeches. He gave the ill-disposed creature a blow with his paw, and he lay lifeless on the ground. Meanwhile, the maidens were running away, making off for home as well as they could; but all of a sudden they were stopped by a well-known voice that called out, "Snow-White, Rose-Red, stay! Do not fear. I will accompany you."

The bear quickly came towards them, but as he reached their side, suddenly the bear-skin slipped to the ground, and there before them was standing a handsome man, completely garmented in gold, who said, "I am a king's son, who was enchanted by the wicked dwarf lying over there. He stole my treasure, and compelled me to roam the

woods transformed into a big bear until his death should set me free. Therefore he has only received a well-deserved punishment.”

[Illustration: “*The Bearskin slipped to the ground.*”]

Then Rose-Red and Snow-White and the Prince all went back to the cottage, and some time afterwards Snow-White married the Prince, and Rose-Red, his brother, who shared between them the enormous treasure which the dwarf had collected in his cave.

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The old mother spent many happy years with her children. The two rose-trees she took with her when she left the cottage, and they grew in front of her window, where they continued to bear each year the most beautiful roses, red and white.

[Illustration]

[Illustration]

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

Once upon a time there lived a king and queen who had no children; and this they lamented very much. But one day, as the queen was walking by the side of the river, a little fish lifted its head out of the water, and said, "Your wish shall be fulfilled, and you shall soon have a daughter."

What the little fish had foretold soon came to pass; and the Queen had a little girl who was so very beautiful that the king could not cease looking on her for joy, and determined to hold a great feast. So he invited not only his relations, friends, and neighbours, but also all the fairies, that they might be kind and good to his little daughter. Now there were thirteen fairies in his kingdom, and he had only twelve golden dishes for them to eat out of, so that he was obliged to leave one of the fairies without an invitation. The rest came, and after the feast was over they gave all their best gifts to the little princess; one gave her virtue, another beauty, another riches, and so on till she had all that was excellent in the world. When eleven had done blessing her, the thirteenth, who had not been invited, and was very angry on that account, came in, and determined to take her revenge. So she cried out, "The King's daughter shall in her fifteenth year be wounded by a spindle, and fall down dead." Then the twelfth, who had not yet given her gift, came forward and said that the bad wish must be fulfilled, but that she could soften it, and that the king's daughter should not die, but fall asleep for a hundred years.

[Illustration]

But the king hoped to save his dear child from the threatened evil, and ordered that all the spindles in the kingdom should be bought up and destroyed. All the fairies' gifts were in the meantime fulfilled; for the princess was so beautiful, and well-behaved, and amiable, and wise, that everyone who knew her loved her. Now it happened that on the very day she was fifteen years old the king and queen were not at home, and she was left alone in the palace. So she roved about by herself, and poked at all the rooms and chambers, till at last she came to an old tower, to which there was a narrow staircase ending with a little door. In the door there was a golden key, and when she turned it the door sprang open, and there sat an old lady spinning away very busily.

“Why, how now, good mother,” said the princess, “what are you doing there?”

“Spinning,” said the old lady, and nodded her head.

“How prettily that little thing turns round!” said the princess, and took the spindle and began to spin. But scarcely had she touched it before the prophecy was fulfilled, and she fell down, as if lifeless, on the ground.

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However, she was not dead, but had only fallen into a deep sleep; and the king and queen, who just then came home, and all their court, fell asleep too, and the horses slept in the stables, and the dogs in the court, the pigeons on the house-top, and the flies on the walls. Even the fire on the hearth left off blazing, and went to sleep; and the meat that was roasting stood still; and the cook, who was at that moment pulling the kitchen-boy by the hair to give him a box on the ear for something he had done amiss, let him go, and both fell asleep; and so everything stood still, and slept soundly.

[Illustration]

A large hedge of thorns soon grew around the palace, and every year it became higher and thicker, till at last the whole place was surrounded and hidden, so that not even the roof or the chimneys could be seen. But there went a report, through all the land, of the beautiful sleeping Briar Rose (for so was the king's daughter called) so that from time to time several kings' sons came, and tried to break through the thicket into the palace. This they could never do; for the thorns and bushes laid hold of them as it were with hands, and there they stuck fast and died miserably.

[Illustration: "*All was so quiet that he could hear every breath he drew.*"]

After many years came yet another king's son into that land, and an old man told him the story of the thicket of thorns, and how a beautiful palace stood behind it, in which was a wondrous princess, called Briar Rose, asleep with all her court. He told, too, how he had heard from his grandfather that many, many princes had come, and had tried to break through the thicket, but had stuck fast and died.

Then the young prince said, "All this shall not frighten me; I will go and see Briar Rose." The old man tried to dissuade him, but he persisted in going.

Now that very day were the hundred years completed; and as the prince came to the thicket he saw nothing but beautiful flowering shrubs, through which he passed with ease, and they closed after him, as firm as ever. Then he came at last to the palace, and there in the court lay the dogs asleep, and the horses in the stables, and on the roof sat the pigeons fast asleep with their heads under their wings; and when he came into the palace, the flies slept on the walls, and the cook in the kitchen was still holding up her hand as if she would beat the boy, and the maid with her pail in her hand was going a-milking.

Then he went on still further, and all was so quiet that he could hear every breath he drew; till at last he came to the old tower and opened the door of the little room in which Briar Rose was, and there she lay fast asleep, and looked so beautiful that he could not turn his eyes away, and he stooped down and gave her a kiss. But the moment he kissed her she opened her eyes and awoke, and smiled upon him. For the spell was broken.



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Then they went out together, and presently the king and queen also awoke, and all the court, and they gazed on each other with great wonder. And the horses got up and shook themselves, and the dogs jumped about and barked; the pigeons took their heads from under their wings, and looked around and flew into the fields; the flies on the walls buzzed; the fire in the kitchen blazed up and cooked the dinner, and the roast meat turned round again; the cook gave the boy the box on his ear so that he cried out, and the maid went to milk the cows. And then was the wedding of the prince and Briar Rose celebrated, and they lived happily together all their lives long.

[Illustration: *Painted by Jennie Harbour* THE SLEEPING BEAUTY]

[Illustration:

More close and close his footsteps wind:
The Magic Music in his heart
Beats quick and quicker, till he find
The quiet chamber far apart.

Tennyson]

PRINCE CHERI

There was once a king who was such an honourable man that his subjects called him "The Good King."

One day while he was out hunting, a little rabbit that his dogs were about to kill, threw itself into his arms. The King caressed the little creature, and said:

"As you have put yourself under my protection nobody shall harm you," and he carried the rabbit to his palace, and ordered a pretty little hutch to be made for it.

That night when he was alone in his room, there appeared a lovely lady. She wore a robe as white as snow, and a wreath of white roses on her head. She addressed him thus:

"I am the Fairy Candida; I wished to see if you were as good as everybody declares you are, and for this reason I changed myself into the little rabbit, and ran to you in my distress, for I know that those who have pity for dumb creatures have still more pity for mankind. I have come to thank you for what you did and to say that I shall always be your friend, and will grant any request you would now like to make."

[Illustration]



“Madam,” replied the King, “I have one only son whom I love devotedly; he is named Prince Cheri; if you have any good will for me, be a friend to my son.”

[Illustration]

“Willingly,” responded the Fairy, “I will make your son the most handsome prince in the world, or the richest, or the most powerful; choose which you will for him.”

“I desire none of these things,” replied the King, “but I shall be very much obliged if you will make him the best of all princes, for what good would it do to him to be handsome, rich, or powerful if he were wicked? You know he would be unhappy, for it is only goodness which brings content.”

“You are right,” answered the Fairy, “but that I cannot do; Prince Cheri must himself strive to become good. All that I can promise is that I will give him good advice, and punish him for his faults, if he will not himself correct them.”

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And with this the father had to rest content.

Not long afterwards the good King died, and two days later the Fairy appeared to Prince Cheri.

"I promised your father to be your friend," she told him; "here is a little gold ring, take care of it, for it is worth more than diamonds. Every time that you are about to do any wrong action it will prick you. If, in spite of the pricks, you continue your bad actions, you will lose my friendship and I shall become your enemy."

Saying this the Fairy vanished, leaving the Prince very much astonished.

For some time Cheri behaved so well that the ring did not prick at all, but one day when he returned from the chase, having caught nothing, he felt so ill-humoured, that when his dog Bibi came fawning upon him, he kicked the poor, faithful creature from him. At that moment the ring pricked like a pin running into his finger.

"What is this?" he exclaimed: "the Fairy must be mocking me, surely I've done no great harm in kicking an animal that annoyed me. What's the use of being ruler of a great empire if I may not treat my dog as I will?"

"I am not mocking you," he heard in reply to his thoughts; "you have been bad tempered, and you have behaved unkindly to a poor animal who did not deserve such treatment. I know you are higher than a dog, but the advantage of being ruler of a great empire is not in doing all the harm one wishes, but in doing all the good one can."

Cheri promised to be better, but he did not keep his word, and so the ring often pricked him, sometimes until his finger bled, and at last, in anger, he threw it away.

Now he thought he would be truly happy, and he gave way to any foolish fancies and wrong wishes that came into his head, until he really became very wicked and was disliked by everyone.

One day when he was out walking he saw a girl named Zelig, who was so beautiful that he resolved to marry her.

But Zelig was as good as she was beautiful, and said to him:

"Sir, I am only a shepherdess and have no fortune, but, in spite of that, I will never marry you, for although I should be a Queen, and you are handsome and rich, your evil behaviour would make me hate you."

Upon this, Cheri flew into a passion, and ordered his officers to carry Zelig to the Palace, but she was not used unkindly there, for the Prince loved her.

However, after a while, urged by his foster-brother, a bad man who encouraged Cheri in his wickedness, the young man rushed in a rage to the room in which Zelig was confined, determined that, if she still refused to marry him, the very next day she should be sold as a slave.

Great was his surprise, on entering the apartment, to find the captive had disappeared, for he carried the key of the door in his pocket.

[Illustration: *Painted by Jennie Harbour* ZELIE AND THE FAIRY CANDIDE "PRINCE CHERI"]

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Amongst those at the Royal Court was a Councillor named Suliman, a man of a noble mind, who had often dared to tell the Prince of his faults, and had at first been thanked for this, but later on Cheri grew angry that anyone should presume to blame him while all others at the Court were full of flattery and praise, but in his heart of hearts the Prince respected this good man, and this the wicked flatterers knew full well, and therefore feared lest he should come into the Prince's favour.

So now they falsely said, that it was Suliman who had helped Zelig to escape, and beyond himself with fury, Cheri commanded his foster-brother to send soldiers to bring Suliman to him in chains, like a criminal.

After giving these orders Cheri retired to his chamber, but scarcely had he entered, when the earth trembled, there came a great clap of thunder, and the Fairy Candide appeared before him.

"I promised your father," said she in a stern voice, "to give you good advice, and to punish you if you refused to follow it. You have despised my counsels and your crimes have converted you into a monster, the horror of heaven and earth. Now it is time to fulfill my promise of punishment. I condemn you to take the resemblance of the beasts you are like in disposition—A lion, because of your fury—a wolf, on account of your greediness—a serpent, for destroying him who has been your second father—a bull, by reason of your brutality."

[Illustration]

Hardly had the Fairy pronounced these words, when Cheri perceived with horror that his body had been transformed.

He had a lion's head, a bull's horns, the feet of a wolf, and the tail of a viper. At the same moment he found himself in a forest, and there, after roaming about miserably for some time, he fell into a pit dug by hunters. He was captured and led into the capital of his Kingdom.

On the way thither instead of acknowledging that he had brought this evil plight upon himself, he bit at his chains, and cursed the Fairy. As he was nearing the city great rejoicings were seen on every side, and, on the hunters enquiring the reason, they were told that Prince Cheri, whose only pleasure it was to torment his people, had been crushed to death in his chamber by a thunder-bolt, a just punishment for his offences. Four of his wicked companions had tried to partition the Kingdom between them, but the people would have none such to rule, and they had offered the crown to the good and wise Suliman. Cheri panted with rage on hearing this, and in the Palace Square he saw Suliman on a superb throne, and all the people who shouted with joy, and wished him a long life to repair the evil brought about by their former sovereign. "I accept the throne," said Suliman, "but it is to preserve it for Prince Cheri. A fairy has revealed to me that he

is not dead, and possibly will return to you as virtuous as in his earliest years. Alas!" cried Suliman, bursting into tears, "his flatterers have ruined him, I know that at heart he is good." These words moved Cheri to sorrow for his crimes, and he felt that he had not been punished as severely as he deserved, and he now resolved to amend his faults.

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[Illustration]

Therefore he obeyed the man who had charge over him, and who constantly cruelly beat him, and one day when this keeper lay asleep, and a tiger who had broken loose was about to devour him, Cheri fought the fierce beast, and saved the man's life.

Then a voice was heard saying, "a good action shall be rewarded!" and, to Cheri's joy he was instantaneously transformed into a pretty little dog which the keeper carried to the Queen.

The Queen was delighted with him, but, for fear he should grow bigger, she gave him only small pieces of bread to eat, so that poor Cheri nearly died of hunger.

One day he carried his little piece of bread into the garden to eat it there, but wandering with it in his mouth, still further on, he saw a young girl pale and thin, and almost fainting for want of food.

"I am hungry," thought Cheri, "but if I give my breakfast to this poor thing, perhaps I shall save her life." He placed his bread in the girl's hand, and she ate it hungrily. Just then he heard loud cries, and saw that it was the beautiful Zelig struggling to free herself from four men who were carrying her into a house near by.

Cheri, longing to help her, followed them barking, and although the men kicked him savagely, he would not leave the place. Presently from a window was thrown a plateful of tempting-looking food. Cheri was just about to devour it, when the girl to whom he had given the bread, rushed forward and throwing her arms around him cried,

[Illustration: "COME, MY CHILDREN, I AM GOING TO TRANSPORT YOU TO YOUR PALACE."]

"Poor little dog, do not touch that food, it is poisoned." Just then a voice was heard saying, "You see that a good action meets with reward," and at the same time Cheri was changed into a pretty white pigeon. For several days he flew around hoping to catch sight of Zelig, and at last, seated by a hermit, outside a cave, he found her. Fluttering down he alighted upon her shoulder. Zelig stroked his feathers whispering that she now accepted his gift and would love him always, and at that moment Cheri regained his natural figure, and Fairy Candide appeared in place of the hermit whose form she had taken. "Come, my children," said she, "I am going to transport you to your Palace, that Cheri may receive his crown of which he has now become worthy," and hardly had she ceased speaking, when they found themselves in Suliman's presence. The worthy Governor was delighted to behold his dear master, and gladly resigned the throne to him. Cheri and Zelig reigned long and happily, and we are told that the ring, which the Prince now wore again, never once severely pricked him.

[Illustration]

THE WHITE CAT

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There was once a King who had three sons, all handsome and brave, but it came to his ears that they wished to reign now instead of waiting until he died, he therefore determined to divert their minds by making promises the fulfilment of which he would always be able to evade. So he called them to his room and spoke: "You must agree with me, my dear children, that at my great age I cannot manage the business of my kingdom as I used to do, and as I am intending retiring into the country, it seems to me that a clever, faithful dog would be very good company, and I promise you that whichever brings me the most beautiful little dog at once succeeds to the kingdom."

The Princes were much surprised to hear their father's wish for a little dog, but agreed with pleasure to go in search of one. They said goodbye to the King, who gave them money and jewels, announcing that in a year he should expect them to return, all on the same day and at the same hour, bringing to him their little dogs.

[Illustration: "ON A CERTAIN NIGHT, DURING A STORM OF THUNDER AND RAIN, HE LOST HIS WAY."]

Then the Princes set out, each by a different road, agreeing in a year's time to meet at a certain place a short distance from their home.

The two elder met with many adventures, but it is only the youngest that we shall follow.

This youngest Prince was very courteous, merry, clever and accomplished, he was tall, handsome, and all that a prince should be.

Very seldom a day passed without his buying dogs, little dogs, big dogs, sporting dogs, spaniels, hounds, dogs of all sorts. When he found a beautiful one and then came across a still better, he let the first one go, for being alone—the Princes had declined to take any attendants—he could not take charge of thirty or forty thousand dogs.

He travelled on, keeping to one road, until on a certain night, during a storm of thunder and rain, he lost his way, and after some wandering arrived at a most superb castle where nobody was to be seen but about a dozen hands all holding torches. Other hands pushed him forwards, and guided him through one apartment after another, all so rich in precious stones and beautiful paintings, that it was like enchantment.

After passing through sixty rooms, the hands stopped him, and here the wet garments of the Prince were taken away, and he was clad in raiment of the most exquisite description. The hands then conducted him into a banqueting hall, where entered a little figure, not two feet high, covered with a long black crepe veil, followed by a great procession of cats.

The Prince was too much astonished to move. The little figure approached him, raising the veil, and he saw the most beautiful White Cat he had ever beheld.

Addressing the Prince she said:

“King’s son! welcome! my Feline Majesty sees you with pleasure!”

“Madame Cat,” replied the Prince, “it is very good of you to receive me thus, but you are not an ordinary cat; being able to speak, and possessing this superb castle, are proof of that.”

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After they had conversed a little while, supper was served to them, during which the Prince entertained the Cat by telling her all sorts of news, and he discovered that she was well informed as to what was taking place in the world.

Supper over, various cats came in, dressed in fancy costumes, and danced a ballet, then the White Cat bid her visitor good-night, and the hands which had conducted him before, led him to a bed-chamber.

Early the next morning the hands awoke him, and dressing him in a handsome hunting costume, led him to the courtyard, where he found the White Cat upon a splendid monkey, with about five hundred other cats assembled, all ready for the chase; and never had the Prince enjoyed anything so much, for although mounted only upon a wooden horse, he rode at a great pace.

Day after day passed in such delights as made the Prince almost forget his own country.

"Alas!" said he to the White Cat again and again, "how sad I shall be to leave you! I love you so dearly! Either become a woman, or change me into a cat!"

A year passes very quickly when one has no care or trouble, and is enjoying life. But the White Cat knew when the Prince should return home, and reminded him, saying, "Don't you know you have only three days to look for the little dog for your father, and that your brothers will have found the most beautiful?"

Then the Prince came to himself, and cried, "By what charm have you made me forget what is so important? Where shall I find the dog, and a horse swift enough for such a journey?" And he was in great distress.

The White Cat comforted him, however, saying that the wooden horse would take him to his journey's end sufficiently quickly, and that she would herself also provide the little dog; then she handed to him a walnut, saying, "Put your ear to this shell and you will hear him barking."

So the Prince met his brothers, and they came into the King's presence.

[Illustration]

The two elder sons had brought little dogs so delicate and small that one hardly dared to touch them, and none could decide which should have the kingdom. Then the youngest took from his pocket the nut the Cat had given to him, and there was seen a little dog so tiny that it could go through a ring without touching it; he was also able to dance, and play the castanets, while his ears touched the ground. The King was embarrassed, for it was impossible to find a flaw in this lovely little creature.

However as he did not desire to part with his crown, he declared that they had succeeded so well in their first quest that now he should like them to search, by land and sea, for a piece of linen so fine that it would pass through the eye of a very small needle.

Then the three Princes set out once more, but the youngest mounted his wooden horse and repaired at once to the White Cat, who was rejoiced to see him, and the second year passed by as the first had done.

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When the day came round appointed by the King for the return of his sons, the two elder appeared before him, and, without awaiting the arrival of their brother, displayed their pieces of linen, which were of a fineness quite astonishing. But although they would pass through the eye of a large needle, through the small needle the King had selected they would not go.

There was much murmuring at this, and while the brothers were disputing the King's decision, a charming sound was heard of trumpets and other musical instruments.

It was the youngest Prince who arrived in a chariot with out-riders and numerous attendants, all of which had been provided for him by the White Cat.

After respectfully greeting his father and embracing his brothers, he took out of a jewelled box a nut which he broke. On breaking the nut he found a cherry stone, the stone was broken and there was the kernel, in the kernel was a grain of corn, in the grain of corn a millet seed, and within that a piece of linen so fine that it passed six times through the smallest needle's eye, and moreover on it were exquisite paintings of people and places without number.

The King heaved a deep sigh, and turning to his children said,

"Nothing pleases me, in my old age, so much as your deference to my desires, and I wish to prove you once more. Travel for a year, and he who at the end of the year brings home the most beautiful girl shall marry her, and be crowned king on his marriage. I promise you that I will not defer this reward any longer."

Our Prince saw the injustice of all this; his little dog and piece of linen were worth ten kingdoms, not only one; but he was too well brought up to go against his father's wishes, and, mounting into his chariot, with his retinue, he returned to the White Cat's Castle.

"Well! King's son!" said the White Cat, "you have returned once more without your crown?"

"Madam," answered the Prince, "your gifts should have gained it for me, but I am convinced that the King would have more pain in giving it up than I should have pleasure in possessing it!"

"Never mind," she replied, "you shall not neglect anything that may deserve it; and if you must conduct a beautiful girl to your father's court, I will look for one so that you may gain the prize. Meanwhile let us be happy."

[Illustration]



If the Cat had not taken pains to remember the time when he must return to the court, the Prince would surely have forgotten it. On the evening before, she told him that she would bring him to one of the most beautiful Princesses in the world, that at last the hour had arrived to destroy the fatal work of an evil fairy, and to do this he must make up his mind to cut off her head and tail, which he was at once to throw into the fire.

"I," cried the Prince, "Blanchette that I love: do you think I should be cruel enough to kill you? No doubt, you wish to prove my heart which will certainly never forget what I owe to you for your kindness."

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"No! King's son," she continued, "I don't think you are ungrateful. Do this that I beseech you, and then we shall begin to be happy with one another, by the faith and honour of a cat, believe that I am truly your friend."

Tears flowed from the Prince's eyes even at the thought, and he said all that he could to avoid it, but she urged him so vehemently that at last he took his sword and tremblingly cut off the head and tail of his dear friend the Cat.

In the same moment took place the most marvellous change imaginable.

The body of the White Cat grew large, and was transformed into that of a girl; how, one could not say; one only knew it was so. Her figure was majestic, her manners charming, her whole appearance beautiful beyond words.

Then there entered an immense number of lords and ladies, who carrying their cats' skins, or with them thrown across their shoulders, came and cast themselves at the feet of the Queen, expressing their joy at seeing her again in her rightful form.

She received them all with a kindness which showed the goodness of her heart, and then turning to the Prince she told the story of her life, and how by a wicked enchantment she had been transformed into a White Cat.

"But it is you, my Prince, who have freed me," she concluded; "as soon as I saw you I knew my troubles were at an end."

They set out forthwith in a splendid carriage. As they drew near the castle, at the place where the three brothers were to meet, the Queen entered into a little crystal rock ornamented with precious stones, and this was carried by richly dressed young men.

The Prince who had remained in the carriage, saw his brothers, approaching with wondrously beautiful ladies.

On being questioned he told them that all he had brought was a little White Cat.

[Illustration: "THE BODY OF THE WHITE CAT GREW LARGE AND WAS TRANSFORMED INTO THAT OF A GIRL."]

They began to laugh at him, and drove on followed by the young Prince, while after him was brought the crystal rock.

Arrived at the Palace the two elder Princes dismounted with their marvellous Princesses.

The King received them graciously, and did not know to which to award the prize.

He looked at his youngest son and said, "This time, then, you have come alone." "Your Majesty will see in this rock a little White Cat who mews sweetly and has soft little velvet paws," answered the Prince.

The King smiled, and himself went to open the rock. But, as he came near, the Queen, with a touch, made it shatter to pieces, and from out of it she appeared like the sun that has been hidden by clouds; her fair hair was spread over her shoulders, and fell in waves to her feet, and she was robed in a gown of white and rose-colour.

She made a deep curtsy to the King who, struck with admiration, could not help exclaiming,

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“Here is one who is matchless, and she deserves my crown.”

“Sire,” she answered, “I have not come to take away the throne that you fill with such dignity; I was born heir to six kingdoms, allow me to offer you one, and one of them I give to each of your sons. In return all I ask of you is this young Prince for my husband. We shall still have three kingdoms.”

The King and all the Court uttered loud cries of joy. The marriage was at once celebrated, also that of the other two Princes; and in such a manner that the Court spent several months in fetes of all sorts.

Then each one of them departed to govern his kingdom, the White Cat making herself ever remembered as much by her kindness and generosity as by her rare merit and beauty.

[Illustration]

BLUEBEARD

In the long ago times, in a splendid house, surrounded by fine gardens and a park, there lived a man who had riches in abundance, and everything to make him popular except one, and that was his beard, for his beard was neither black as a raven’s wing, golden as the sunlight, nor just an ordinary every-day colour, but it was blue, bright blue.

Of course had blue beards come into fashion his would have been considered beautiful beyond words, but, as far as we know, blue beards have never as yet been fashionable, nor are they likely to be so.

However, in spite of his blue beard this man had married several times, though what had become of his wives nobody could say.

Now, not far from Bluebeard’s house there dwelt a widow with two very lovely daughters, and one of these Bluebeard wished to marry, but which he did not mind, they might settle that between themselves.

Neither of these girls had the least desire to have a husband with a blue beard, and also, not knowing the fate of the other wives, they did not like to risk disappearing from the world as those had done, but being very polite young women they would not refuse Bluebeard’s proposals outright. The younger said, “I would not for a moment take away Sister Anne’s chance of marrying such a wealthy man,” while Sister Anne declared that, although the elder, she would much prefer to give way to her sister. And so it went on for some time.

Then Bluebeard invited the widow and her daughters to spend a week with him, and many of their neighbours he also invited.

Most sumptuous was the entertainment provided for them. Hunting and fishing expeditions, picnics and balls went on from morning till night, and all the night through, so that there was not time even to think of sleep, only feasting and pleasure the whole week long.

So well, indeed, did the younger sister enjoy this, that by the end of the week she had begun to think perhaps after all her host's beard was not so very blue, and that it would be a fine thing to be the mistress of such a magnificent mansion, and the wife of such a rich husband.

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And so, not long afterwards, there was a grand wedding, and the widow's younger daughter became Mrs. Bluebeard.

About a month later, Bluebeard told his wife that he must leave her for several weeks, having to travel on business.

"While I am absent, my dear," said he, "invite your relations and friends and enjoy yourself just as you please in entertaining them. See here are my keys, the keys of the rooms and of the chests where I keep my money, my gold and silver plate, and my jewels. Unlock rooms and chests and use freely what you will."

[Illustration]

"This small key," he added, pointing to quite a little one, "is the key of the door at the end of the lower landing, you will not need to use this at all. In fact, should you open that door, or even put this key into the lock, I should be dreadfully angry, indeed I should make you suffer for it in a terrible way."

Then Bluebeard bid his wife good-bye, and departed.

As soon as Mrs. Bluebeard's friends and relations knew that her husband was away, they came flocking to visit her, for they longed to see all her splendid possessions, but had feared to come before.

They could not enough admire the magnificent apartments, and ran from one to another praising everything they beheld.

But the young wife heeded nothing they said or did, all she thought of was that little key which she must not use, wondering more and more why she ought not to open that one particular door.

At last she could bear it no longer, but slipping away from her visitors, she ran along the passages and stairs, nearly falling down them, so great was her haste, until she came to that door at the end of the corridor.

Not pausing an instant, she thrust the key into the lock, and the door sprang open.

At first she could distinguish nothing, for the room was dark and gloomy, but then, all of a sudden, she knew what had become of Bluebeard's other wives, for there they lay, in a long, straight row, all dead. She stood horrified for a moment or two, gazing at the pale faces, and long hair spread out around them, then picking up the little key which she had taken from the lock but dropped in her fright, she hastily quitted the room, shut and locked the door, and ran to her own chamber to calm herself before returning to her guests. But she was unable to rest for an instant, so dreadful were her feelings; then with terror she noticed that on the key there was a stain. She wiped it with her

handkerchief, but alas! it was blood that would not be wiped away. She washed the key and rubbed it, and scraped it and polished it, but all to no purpose, if she succeeded in cleansing one side, the mark came out on the other. For the key was enchanted.

[Illustration: *Painted by Jennie Harbour BLUEBEARD*]

That same evening Bluebeard returned saying he had met the man whom he was wanting to see, and so the long journey was unnecessary, and he was rejoiced to be at home again.

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Next morning he called for the keys; his wife brought them to him, but not the little one; that she left behind. Bluebeard noticed this directly and sent her to fetch it. Trembling, and white as a sheet, she was forced to give it into his hand.

“Ha! what is this?” he cried, “what is this stain that I see!”

His poor wife trembled still more, and could not speak.

“Wretched woman!” shouted Bluebeard, “you have used this key, you have unlocked the door of that room at the end of the passage. You shall die!!!”

In vain did his wife plead with him to spare her, kneeling before him with tears streaming from her eyes. “You shall die!” he cried again, more savagely than before.

“Let me have a few moments alone, to prepare for death,”

“Half a quarter of an hour, but not a moment longer,” he replied, and left her.

The poor young woman hastened to a room at the foot of the turret stairs where was her Sister Anne, and called to her.

“Sister Anne, Sister Anne, look from the tower window. Can you see no one coming?” And Sister Anne, looking out, answered:

“Alas! No! Nothing but the green grass, and the sun which shines upon it.”

Bluebeard shouted from below that the time was almost up.

“Sister Anne, Sister Anne, look once again, can you see no one coming?” whispered the young wife wringing her hands. Her brothers, she knew, were to visit her that day—if only they would come in time!

“Alas, No!” Sister Anne replied. “I see a cloud of dust, but it is only a flock of sheep on the road.”

But now Bluebeard bawled out so loudly for his wife to come down, that the whole house shook.

“Sister Anne, Sister Anne, tell me is no one coming?”

“I see two horsemen afar off,” cried Sister Anne. “I will beckon to them to hasten hither.”

But Bluebeard would wait not a moment longer, and nearly dead with terror his wife descended, still entreating him to spare her life.



He would not, however, give heed to her prayers, and was just brandishing his sword, so that it might come down straight and true upon her slender neck, when the door burst open and two young army officers came rushing in, whom Bluebeard recognised as the brothers of his wife. He swiftly fled, but they speedily followed, and for his many crimes slew him then and there.

All his wealth now belonged to his widow, and she gratefully rewarded her brothers by purchasing them commissions in the army; she settled a large sum of money upon her sister, and after a while she married again, and with a good husband lived a happy life.

[Illustration]

[Illustration]

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Once upon a time, a long while ago, there was a Beast.

He was a Great Beast, and lived in a Great Castle that stood in the middle of a Great Park, and everybody in the country held the Beast in great fear. In fact everything about the Beast was great; his roar was great and terrific and could be heard for miles around the park, and when he roared the people trembled.

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Nobody ever saw the Beast, which was by no means remarkable, for the Beast never came out of his Park, and no one, I can assure you, ever ventured on to his estate.

But matters were not allowed to remain like this for ever, for something very wonderful happened to the Beast and to somebody else, and if that something had not happened this story would never have been written.

About two miles and three quarters from the Castle gates there lived a rich merchant and his three daughters. The two elder girls were ugly disagreeable things, and although they had all they could wish for to make them happy they were always grumbling; but the youngest daughter, whose name was Beauty, was very pretty, and her nature was happy and good, her presence was sunshine, and she was the joy of her father's heart.

Well, one day the two elder sisters had something to grumble about with a vengeance, for a telegram arrived to say that the merchant was no longer a rich merchant, for he had lost all his money.

So the horses and carriages had to be sold, and everything that was of value was got rid of, the servants were sent away, and the merchant and his daughters had to do their own work.

Dear me, it was shocking, the way those two sisters grumbled, but Beauty, oh dear no, she was all smiles, for her heart was as sunny as ever, as she rolled up the sleeves of her print frock, and cooked the dinner, and scrubbed the floors, and made herself useful, here, there, and everywhere.

Things had been going on like this for about three months, when one fine morning another telegram boy came with another telegram to say that somebody who owed the merchant a great deal of money was ready to pay the debt, and all the merchant had to do was to go to the city and get it.

Of course, everybody was delighted at this good news, and the merchant didn't waste any time, but started off to the city at once.

"Mind you bring me something back," said the eldest daughter as he was starting.

"What shall it be?" asked the merchant.

"A white satin dress trimmed with lace and pearls," said his eldest daughter.

"And you must bring me something too, please, father," said the second daughter.

"And what do you want," asked the merchant.

“A purse full of gold so that I can buy what I want myself,” said the second daughter.

“I will try and do what you both ask,” he said, “and what shall I bring for my Beauty?”

“I will wait a little for my dresses and things,” replied the smiling Beauty, as she helped her father on with his cloak, “but I should like you to bring me home a rose, a lovely red rose, if you can.”

So her father kissed her, and promised he would bring her the rose, and went on his way full of hopes.

What a pity it is that our hopes cannot be always realized, and that we are so often doomed to disappointment! When the merchant arrived at the city, to his dismay he found that the man who owed him the money was still unable to pay him, the man had been disappointed himself at the last moment.

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So the unhappy father had to return home without the white satin dress trimmed with lace and pearls, and without the bag of money, and he dreaded meeting his two daughters, for he knew they would be terribly angry.

[Illustration]

Now on his way home from the station to his house he had to pass by part of the wall that surrounded the Great Park where the Great Beast lived in his Great Castle; and as he passed by a corner of the wall what should he see hanging just over the top, and just within his reach if he stood on his toes, but a lovely red rose.

“At any rate I can take my Beauty what she asked for,” he said to himself, and, without so much as giving a thought to the wrong he was doing, he stood on his toes and plucked the rose.

He was sorry he did it.

Of a sudden there was a roar, such a roar that the very ground shook, and as to the poor merchant he quivered like a leaf.

Enough to make him quiver indeed, for a gate in the wall suddenly opened, and out rushed the *Beast*.

Yes, the Beast, if you please, and he seized the merchant by the scruff of his neck, and dragged him into the Park, and shut the gate after him.

“Don’t you know it’s a sin to steal?” roared the Beast. “How dare you steal my roses? I am going to kill you.”

“Oh, mercy, Mr. Beast,” cried the unhappy man, flinging himself on his knees before the monster.

[Illustration]

“I’m going to kill you,” roared the Beast still more loudly. “It’s taken years to cultivate this sort of rose, and—and I’m going to kill you. Unless,” he added after a pause, “you send me one of your daughters here instead.”

“All right,” said the merchant and got on his feet again.

“She must be here to-morrow by breakfast time, and I breakfast early,” said the Beast, as he let the merchant out of the gate. “If she is not here, I shall come for you, and don’t you forget it.”

It was by no means likely that he would forget it, in fact he could think of nothing else. He hurried home and told his dreadful news, and received a dreadful scolding from his two elder daughters, who were angry at not getting their presents.

“And it is Beauty’s fault that you have got into this trouble,” they said. “Beauty and her stupid rose. Beauty had better get you out of the trouble.” Beauty said little, but smiled on, with sunshine in her heart, and trust in her loving nature, and cooked the dinner.

[Illustration: “WHEN SHE CAME TO THE GATE IN THE WALL SHE KNOCKED UPON IT THREE TIMES”]

Early next morning when the dawn was breaking she left her father’s house, leaving a little note behind her begging him not to be anxious but that she had gone to the Beast’s castle.

When she came to the gate in the wall she knocked upon it three times and it opened as if by magic, for she could see no one. And she stepped into the garden of red roses, and in the distance across the Park she saw the Castle, and she thought she had never seen anything so beautiful. For it was built of mother-of-pearl, and the red and yellow gleams of the rising sun shone upon its glistening walls, and lit them up with a thousand radiant lights.

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Beauty marvelled at the loveliness and walked on. And when she arrived at this beautiful Castle, the huge gates opened as if by magic, and the doors opened as if by magic, for never a soul did she see, nor living thing of any sort.

And in the great hall was the breakfast table laid for two. It was a nice breakfast with steaming hot dishes, and jams, honey, and hot rolls, and brightly polished silver, and sweet flowers.

Then the Beast appeared suddenly from behind a curtain; oh, he was an awful Beast, and Beauty's heart beat fast! But he seemed a polite Beast for all that.

He handed Beauty a chair, and when she had sat down said:

"I bid you welcome; which do you take, tea or coffee?"

"Tea please," answered Beauty.

"Then pour it out," he said, "and I'll take tea too, please. Eggs, do you like eggs hard or soft?"

"I always cook mine three minutes and a half," replied Beauty.

"Half a minute too much, I think. But you shall have just what you like."

And so she had; not only at the breakfast table but in everything. She had only to express a wish and it was immediately gratified. She had ponies to ride, and dogs and cats, and pet birds, and the most beautiful dresses ever worn by real princesses.

And if it had not been that she was away from her father she would really have been happy.

[Illustration: *Painted by Jennie Harbour* BEAUTY AND THE BEAST]

The Beast was most kind and attentive to her, and told her that he loved her, and three times a day he asked her to marry him, but Beauty shook her head and said, oh no, she couldn't.

Well, Beauty had been at the great Castle some time when she began to pine to go home and see her father, and she begged the Beast to let her go.

"Very good," he said with a great sigh, "you may go home to-day, but promise me that you will be back early to-morrow morning. If you do not come back early I am sure I shall die for I love you so dearly."



So Beauty promised and went home, and she took presents for her father and her sisters, and when the sisters heard of all the wonderful things at the great Castle, they were envious and jealous, and made up their minds to do Beauty and the Beast a great injury.

So they mixed something in Beauty's supper that made her sleep nearly all the next day, and so she did not keep her promise. It was evening when she arrived at the gate in the wall, instead of early morning.

But she knocked three times and the gate opened by magic, and she went through the garden and hurried to the Castle, that shone like fire in the light of the setting sun. And the huge gates opened by magic, and the doors opened by magic, and she stood in the great hall, but there was no Beast there. She searched in all the rooms but he was not there; with fear and anxiety in her heart she ran into the gardens, and there she found him at last. Found him lying stretched out on the grass, and she thought he was dead.



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"Oh, dear darling Beast," she cried, as she threw herself on her knees beside him, and raised his ugly head, "dear Beast, do not die, for I love you with all my heart, and will marry you to-morrow." And she kissed him. Then of a sudden he sprang to his feet, but no longer the Beast, no longer a hideous monster, but a beautiful prince most beautifully dressed. "Dearest," he said, "a wicked fairy turned me into this brute form until a day should come when a good girl like you should tell me that she loved me. And you will marry me to-morrow."

"Oh, yes," answered Beauty, "but the wicked fairy could not change your nature. I would have married you if you had remained just as you were."

[Illustration]

And so they married and lived happy ever afterwards, and they took care of Beauty's father until the end of his days; so he was happy, and they forgave the two sisters and gave them fine dresses and jewels, and the two sisters turned over a new leaf and were less selfish, and they were happy, so this is a very happy ending to the story.

What a pity all stories can't end the same way!

[Illustration]

TUFTY RIQUET

There was once upon a time a Queen who had the ugliest little baby imaginable, so ugly, indeed, that it was almost impossible to believe he was a little boy at all.

A fairy, however, assured his mother that the little baby would be very good and clever, saying that she was also giving him a gift which would enable him to make that person whom he loved the best as clever as himself.

This somewhat consoled the Queen, but still she was very unhappy because her son was so ugly, though no sooner had he begun to speak than he could talk about all sorts of things, and he had such pretty ways that people were charmed with him.

I forgot to say, that, when he was quite a baby, he had a funny little tuft of hair on his head, so he was called Tufty Riquet, for Riquet was the family name.

When Riquet was about seven years old, the Queen of a kingdom near by was given two baby daughters, twins, of which one was so exquisitely beautiful that the Queen nearly died of joy when she saw her, and so the fairy, the same one who had given Riquet his gift of cleverness, to keep the Queen from making herself ill with excitement, told her that this little Princess would not be at all clever, indeed she would be as stupid as she was beautiful.

[Illustration]

The Queen was very much grieved at this, and felt still more troubled when she beheld her other daughter, for the second Princess was extremely ugly.

“Do not take it too much to heart, madam,” remarked the fairy, “for this second daughter will be so clever that it will scarcely be noticed that she is not beautiful.”

“Well, if it must be so, it must,” remarked the Queen, “but I should certainly have liked the elder one, who is beautiful, to be just a little bit clever too.”

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"I can do nothing as to her mind, madam," replied the fairy, "but for her beauty I can, and as there is nothing I would not do to please you, I will give her a gift so that she can make the one who wins her heart beautiful too."

As the Princesses grew up, their gifts likewise grew with them, so that everybody spoke about the beauty of the one and the cleverness of the other; but also their defects grew, so that it could not but be noticed that the younger was daily uglier, and the elder day by day became more stupid, until she either said nothing in reply to a question, or something quite silly, and so clumsy was she that she could not arrange four china ornaments on the chimney piece without breaking one, or drink a glass of water without spilling half of it on her frock.

Although it is a great thing to have beauty, yet the younger generally received more attention in company than her elder sister.

At first, everybody would gather around the beautiful one admiringly, but before long they would leave her for the clever Princess, to listen to her pleasant conversation; and by the end of a quarter of an hour the elder would be left alone, while the other would be the centre of a group.

This the elder sister noticed, in spite of her stupidity, and she would gladly have given all her beauty for half the cleverness of her sister, and sometimes the Queen, although full of kindness, would reproach her daughter for her foolishness, which caused the Princess almost to die of grief.

One day when she had retreated to a wood to brood over her unhappiness, she saw a little man coming towards her. He was uncommonly ugly and unpleasing in appearance, but was very richly dressed.

It was the young Prince Tufty Riquet, who had fallen in love with the pictures he had seen of her, and had left his father's kingdom for the sake of making her acquaintance.

Delighted to meet her alone in this manner, he accosted her as courteously as possible, but soon, noticing that she was melancholy, he said:

"I cannot understand how it is that anyone as beautiful as you are, can be as sad as you appear to be; for I must own, that although I can boast of having seen many beauties, not one have I ever met whose beauty equalled yours."

[Illustration]

"It pleases you to say so, sir," replied the Princess, and relapsed into silence.

"Beauty," went on Riquet, "is so delightful that one would give everything for it, and if anyone is beautiful I can't understand anything troubling greatly."



“I would rather be as ugly as you,” answered the Princess, “and be clever, than as beautiful as I am, and be stupid.”

“To think you are stupid is a sure sign that you have a certain amount of cleverness, madam,” replied Riquet.

“I don’t think about that,” said the Princess, “but I am quite sure that I am very silly, and the grief of that is killing me.”

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"If that is all that troubles you, I can soon put an end to your grief," said Riquet, "for I have the power of giving cleverness to the person whom I love the best, and if only you will marry me, you shall become as clever as you can wish."

The Princess was greatly astonished, but remained silent.

"I can see," continued Riquet, "that this proposal is not to your taste, and I am not astonished. I will give you a year to think about it."

So great was the longing of the Princess to be clever, that she at once promised Riquet to marry him in a year's time, and no sooner had she made the promise than a great change took place in her, and she found she could say all sorts of pleasant things, on all sorts of subjects, in quite an easy manner.

She at once began a conversation with Riquet, making such brilliant remarks, that he could almost think he had given her all his cleverness and had kept none for himself.

When the Princess returned to the Palace, everybody was astonished at the sudden and extraordinary change, for, instead of saying stupid things, or just nothing at all, she was now full of beautiful ideas which she expressed most charmingly.

The report of this transformation was soon spread abroad, and all the young Princes of the neighbouring kingdoms asked for her hand in marriage, but not one did she find altogether suitable.

However, at last one arrived, who was so powerful, rich, clever and handsome, that she could not help approving of him, and her father, noticing this, told her she was quite free to choose what husband she wished.

The Princess thanked him, and asked for time to consider the matter.

[Illustration]

Then, to think it over, she went by chance, into the wood where she had met Tufty Riquet.

While she was walking, deep in thought, she noticed a loud noise beneath her feet, as of many persons hastening to and fro; then, listening attentively, she heard a voice say, "Bring me the saucepan," and another voice cry, "Put some wood on the fire."

At the same moment the earth opened and she saw a big kitchen full of cooks, and all sorts of things necessary for the making of a magnificent banquet, and everybody hard at work.

The Princess, astonished at this sight, asked the men for whom they were working.

“For the Prince Tufty Riquet,” answered the head cook, “for to-morrow is his wedding day.”

The Princess, more surprised than ever, all at once recollected that it was just a year ago that very day that she had promised to marry the ugly Tufty Riquet.

[Illustration: “TO THINK IT OVER SHE WENT INTO THE WOOD.”]

The reason that she had not remembered her promise before was that she was foolish when she made it, and in becoming clever she had forgotten all her former stupidities.

She had only walked on a few steps further, when Riquet appeared before her, magnificently clad, as a Prince about to marry.

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"Here you see me, madam," said he, "keeping my word, and I have no doubt that you also came here to keep yours, and by giving me your hand to make me the happiest of men."

"I frankly confess," replied the Princess, "that I have not yet made up my mind, and I do not think I can ever do as you wish."

"You surprise me, madam," said Riquet.

"I can quite believe that," said the Princess, "and if you were not a good and clever man, I should not know how to act. But you are well aware that it was when I was stupid I promised to marry you, but now, as you may imagine, I am not so easily pleased."

"Except for my ugliness," said Riquet, "have you anything against me? Do you object to my birth, my character, or my manners?"

"Not at all," replied the Princess, "I love those things in you."

"If that is so," answered Riquet, "I shall indeed be made happy, because you can cause me to become the most delightful of men if only you will desire it. For know, madam, the same fairy who at my birth gave me the power to impart cleverness to whomsoever I should love, gave you a gift also, that of being able to render beautiful the one to whom you would grant this favour."

"If that is the case," exclaimed the Princess, "I desire with all my heart that you might be the most handsome and pleasing Prince in the world."

No sooner had the Princess uttered these words than her wish was fulfilled, though some say that no change really took place in Riquet, but that the Princess loved him now so much that all his ugliness was seen as beauty by her eyes.

However that may be, she straightway consented to be his bride, and, as the preparations had already been made, the wedding took place the very next day.

[Illustration: *Painted by Jennie Harbour* THE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS—"TUFTY RIQUET"]

[Illustration]

THUMBLING

There was once a poor woodman sitting by the fire in his cottage and his wife sat by his side spinning. "How lonely it is," said he, "for you and me to sit here by ourselves without any children to play about and amuse us, while other people seem so happy



and merry with their children!" "What you say is very true," said the wife, sighing, and turning her wheel; "how happy should I be if I had but one child! and if it were ever so small, nay, if it were no bigger than my thumb, I should be very happy, and love it dearly." Now it came to pass that this good woman's wish was fulfilled just as she desired; for, some time afterwards, she had a little boy, who was quite healthy and strong, but not much bigger than my thumb. So they said, "Well, we cannot say we have not got what we wished for, and, little as he is, we will love him dearly;" and they called him Thumbling.

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They gave him plenty of food, yet he never grew bigger, but remained just the same size as when he was born; still, his eyes were sharp and sparkling and he soon showed himself to be a clever little fellow, who always knew well what he was about. One day, as the woodman was getting ready to go into the wood to cut fuel, he said, "I wish I had some one to bring the cart after me, for I want to make haste." "Oh, father!" cried Thumbling, "I will take care of that; the cart shall be in the wood by the time you want it." Then the woodman laughed and said, "How can that be? You cannot reach up to the horse's bridle." "Never mind that, father," said Thumbling; "if my mother will only harness the horse, I will get into his ear, and tell him which way to go." "Well," said the father, "we will try for once."

When the time came, the mother harnessed the horse to the cart, and put Thumbling into its ear; and as he sat there, the little man told the beast how to go, crying out, "Go on," and "Stop," as he wanted; so the horse went on just as if the woodman had driven it himself into the wood. It happened that, as the horse was going a little too fast, and Thumbling was calling out "Gently, gently!" two strangers came up. "What an odd thing that is!" said one, "there is a cart going along, and I heard a carter talking to the horse but can see no one." "That is strange," said the other; "let us follow the cart and see where it goes." So they went on into the wood, till at last they came to the place where the woodman was. Then Thumbling, seeing his father, cried out, "See, father, here I am, with the cart, all right and safe; now take me down." So his father took hold of the horse with one hand, and with the other took his son out of the ear; then he put him down upon a straw, where he sat as merry as you please. The two strangers were all this time looking on, and did not know what to say for wonder. At last one took the other aside and said, "That little urchin will make our fortune if we can get him, and carry him about from town to town as a show; we must buy him." So they went to the woodman and asked him what he would take for the little man: "He will be better off," said they, "with us than with you." "I won't sell him at all," said the father, "my own flesh and blood is dearer to me than all the silver and gold in the world." But Thumbling, hearing of the bargain they wanted to make, crept up his father's coat to his shoulder, and whispered in his ear, "Take the money, father, and let them have me; I'll soon come back to you."

[Illustration]

So the woodman at last agreed to sell Thumbling to the strangers for a large piece of gold. "Where do you like to sit?" said one of them. "Oh! put me on the rim of your hat, that will be a nice gallery for me; I can walk about there, and see the country as we go along." So they did as he wished; and when Thumbling had taken leave of his father, they carried him away with them.

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They journeyed on till it began to be dusky, and then the little man said, "Let me get down, I'm tired." So the man took off his hat and set him down on a clod of earth in a ploughed field by the side of the road, But Thumbling ran about amongst the furrows, and at last slipped into a mouse-hole. "Good-night, masters," said he, "I'm off! mind and look sharp after me the next time." They ran directly to the place, and poked the ends of their sticks into the mouse-hole, but all in vain; Thumbling only crawled further and further in, and at last it became quite dark, so they were obliged to go their way without their prize, as sulky as you please.

[Illustration]

When Thumbling found they were gone, he came out of his hiding-place. "What dangerous walking it is," said he, "in this ploughed field! If I were to fall from one of these great clods, I should certainly break my neck." At last, by good chance, he found a large empty snail-shell. "This is lucky," said he, "I can sleep here very well," and in he crept. Just as he was falling asleep he heard two men passing, and one said to the other, "How shall we manage to steal that rich parson's silver and gold?" "I'll tell you," cried Thumbling. "What noise was that?" said the thief, frightened. "I am sure I heard some one speak." They stood still listening, and Thumbling said, "Take me with you, and I'll soon show you how to get the parson's money." "But where are you?" said they. "Look about on the ground," answered he, "and listen where the sound comes from." At last the thieves found him out, and lifted him up in their hands. "You little urchin!" said they, "what can you do for us?" "Why, I can get between the iron window-bars of the parson's house, and throw you out whatever you want." "That's a good thought," said the thieves: "come along, we shall see what you can do."

When they came to the parson's house, Thumbling slipped through the window-bars into the room, and then called out as loudly as he could bawl, "Will you have all that is here?" At this the thieves were frightened, and said "Softly, softly, speak low that you may not awaken anybody." But Thumbling pretended not to understand them, and bawled out again, "How much will you have? Shall I throw it all out?" Now the cook lay in the next room, and hearing a noise she raised herself in her bed and listened. Meanwhile the thieves were frightened, and ran off to a little distance; but at last they plucked up courage, and said, "The little urchin is only trying to make fools of us." So they came back and whispered softly to him, saying, "Now, let us have no more of your jokes, but throw out some of the money." Then Thumbling called out as loudly as he could, "Very well; hold out your hands, here it comes." The cook heard this quite plainly, so she sprang out of bed and ran to open the door. The thieves rushed off as if a wolf were at their heels; and the maid, having groped about and found nothing, went away for

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a light. By the time she returned, Thumbling had slipped off into the barn; and when the cook had looked about and searched every hole and corner, and found nobody, she went to bed, thinking she must have been dreaming with her eyes open. The little man crawled about in the hay-loft, and at last found a glorious place to finish his night's rest in; so he laid himself down, meaning to sleep till daylight, and then find his way home to his father and mother. But, alas! how cruelly was he disappointed! what crosses and sorrows happen in this world! The cook got up early, before daybreak, to feed the cows: she went straight to the hay loft, and carried away a large bundle of hay with the little man in the middle of it fast asleep. He still, however, slept on, and did not wake till he found himself in the mouth of the cow, who had taken him up with a mouthful of hay: "Good lack-a-day!" said he, "how did I manage to tumble into the mill?" But he soon found out where he really was, and was obliged to have all his wits about him in order that he might not get between the cow's teeth, and so be crushed to death. At last she swallowed him down. "It is rather dark here," said he; "they forgot to build windows in this room to let the sun in; a candle would be no bad thing."

[Illustration]

Though he made the best of his bad luck, he did not like his quarters at all; and the worst of it was, that more and more hay was always coming down, and the space in which he was became smaller and smaller. At last he cried out as loudly as he could, "Don't bring me any more hay! Don't bring me any more hay!" The maid happened to be just then milking the cow, and hearing someone speak and seeing nobody, and yet being quite sure it was the same voice that she had heard in the night, she was so much frightened that she fell off her stool and upset the milk-pail. She ran off as fast as she could to her master, the parson, and said, "Sir, sir, the cow is talking!" But the parson said, "Woman, thou art surely mad!" However, he went with her into the cow-house to see what was the matter. Scarcely had they set their feet on the threshold when Thumbling called out, "Don't bring me any more hay!" Then the parson himself was frightened; and thinking the cow was surely bewitched, ordered that she should be killed directly. So the cow was killed, and the part in which Thumbling lay was thrown away.

Thumbling soon set himself to work to get out, which was not a very easy task; but at last, just as he had made room to get his head through, a new misfortune befell him: a hungry wolf passed by and swallowed Thumbling and all, at a single gulp, and ran away. Thumbling, however, was not disheartened; and thinking the wolf would not dislike having some chat with him as he was going along, he called out, "My good friend, I can show you a famous treat." "Where's that?" said the wolf. "In such and such a house," said Thumbling, describing his father's house, "you can

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crawl through the drain into the kitchen, and there you will find cakes, ham, beef, and everything your heart can desire." The wolf did not want to be asked twice; so that very night he went to the house and crawled through the drain into the kitchen, and ate and drank there to his heart's content. As soon as he was satisfied, he wanted to get away; but he had eaten so much that he could not get out the same way that he came in. This was just what Thumbling had reckoned upon; and he now began to set up a great shout, making all the noise he could. "Will you be quiet?" said the wolf, "you'll awaken everybody in the house." "What's that to me?" said the little man, "you have had your frolic, now I've a mind to be merry myself;" and he began again singing and shouting as loudly as he could.

[Illustration: "THE WOODMAN AND HIS WIFE, BEING AWAKENED BY THE NOISE, PEEPED THROUGH A CRACK IN THE DOOR."]

The woodman and his wife, being awakened by the noise, peeped through a crack in the door; but when they saw that the wolf was there, you may well suppose that they were terribly frightened; and the woodman ran for his axe, and gave his wife a scythe. "Now do you stay behind," said the woodman; "and when I have knocked him on the head, do you cut him open with the scythe." Thumbling heard all this, and said, "Father, father! I am here; the wolf has swallowed me;" and his father said, "Heaven be praised! we have found our dear child again;" and he told his wife not to use the scythe, for fear she should hurt him. Then he aimed a great blow, and struck the wolf on the head, and killed him on the spot; and when he was dead they cut open his body and set Thumbling free. "Ah!" said the father, "what fears we have had for you!" "Yes, father," answered he, "I have travelled all over the world, since we parted, in one way or other; and now I am very glad to get fresh air again." "Why, where have you been?" said the father. "I have been in a mouse-hole, in a snail-shell, down a cow's throat, and inside the wolf; and yet here I am again safe and sound." "Well," said they, "we will not sell you again for all the riches in the world." So they hugged and kissed their dear little son, and gave him plenty to eat and drink, and fetched new clothes for him, for his old ones were quite spoiled on his journey.

[Illustration: From "THE GOOSE GIRL"]

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