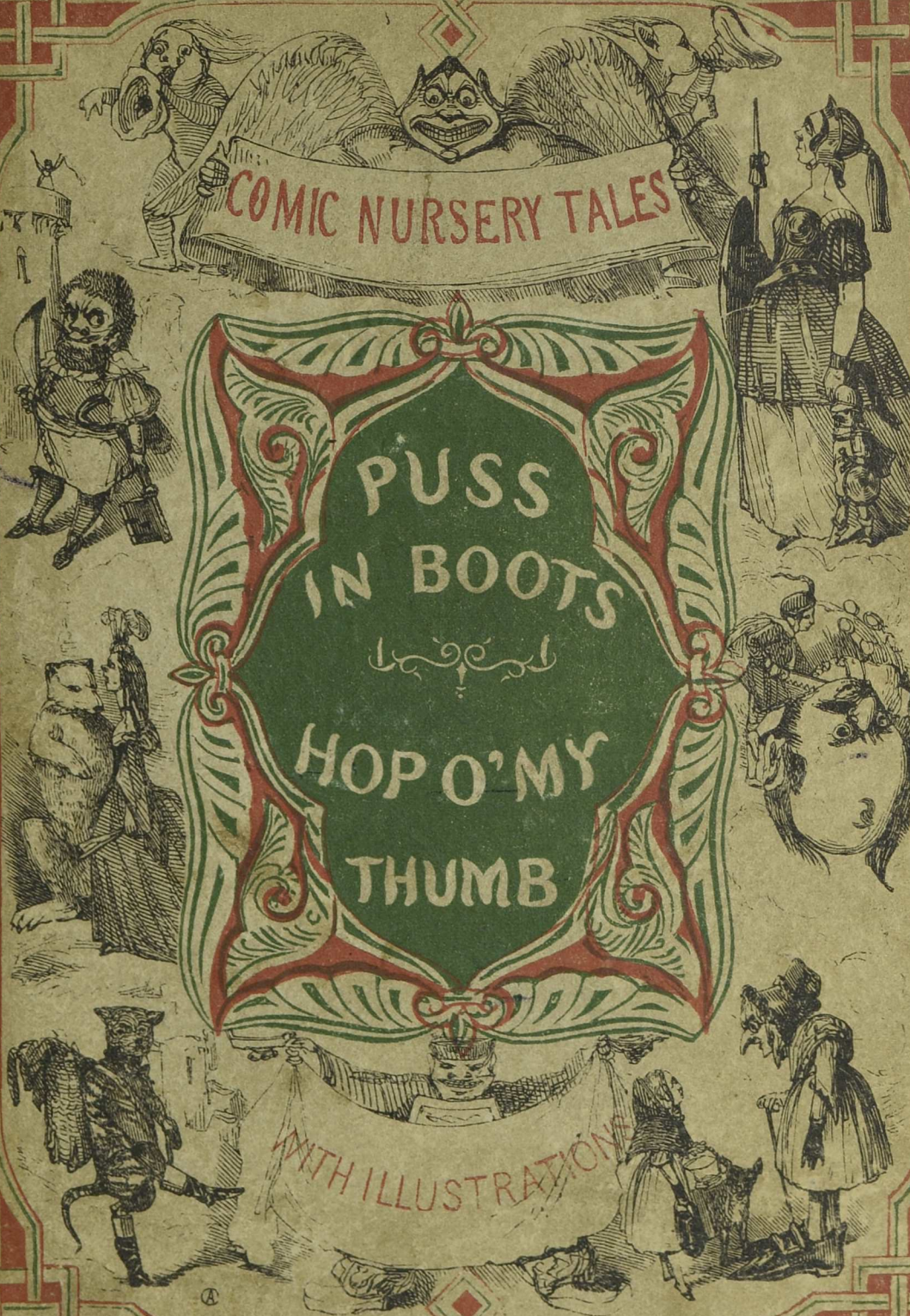


COMIC NURSERY TALES

PUSS
IN BOOTS
HOP O' MY
THUMB

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

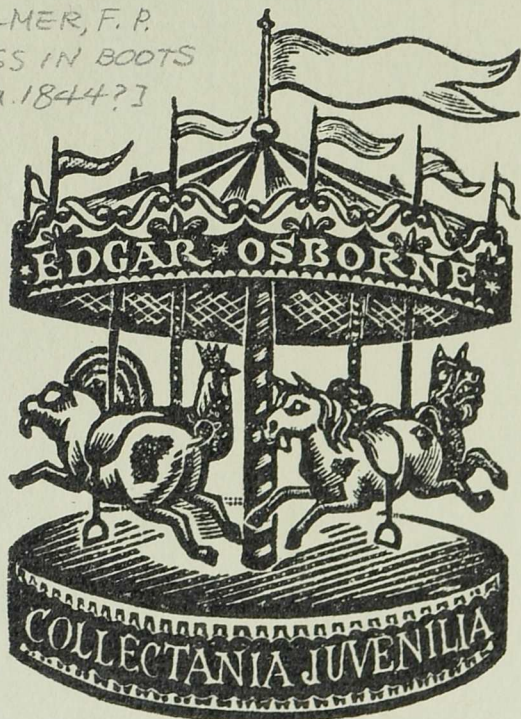


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PALMER, F. P.

PUSS IN BOOTS

[ca. 1844?]



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PUSS IN BOOTS

BY F. P. PALMER.

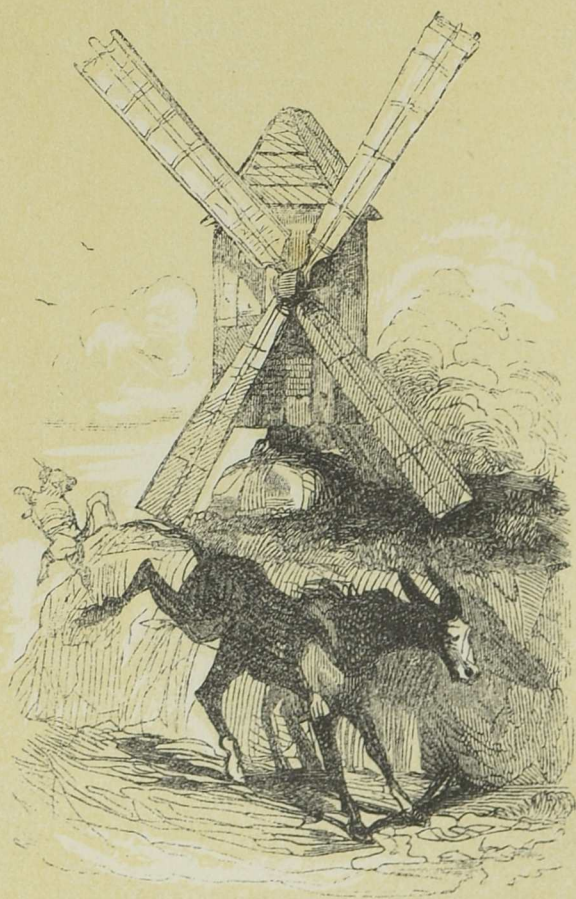
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS, HUMOROUS & NUMEROUS.

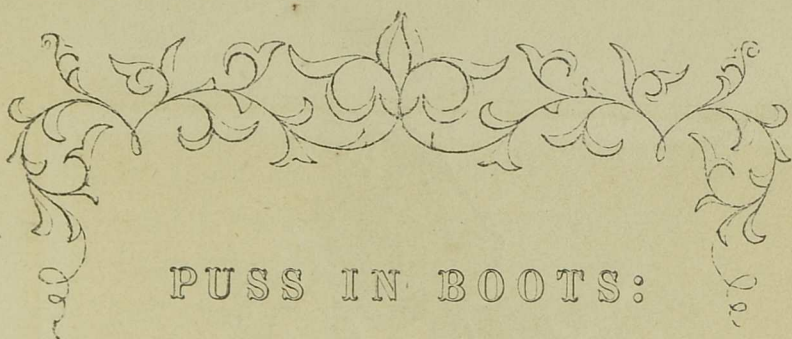


LONDON:

WM. S. ORR AND CO. AMEN CORNER,

PATERNOSTER ROW.





A Metrical Legend.

THE LEGACY.—THE EXPOSTULATION.—THE BOOTS.

Merrilie, ha! the Mill goes round,
Round with the wind, from day to day;
But the Miller, poor soul! lies under the ground,
He will never awake to that cheerful sound,
He is fast asleep for aye, well-a-day!!
The grass bends over his clay.

Little had he of worldly store,
A Mill—an Ass—and a Cat—(no more).
The eldest son hath taken "the Mill,"
The second son is the "Donkey-lord;"
But Robin, the youngest, obtains by "the Will"
Poor Puss! for companion at bed and at board.



'T is a beautiful day, and a cheerful day,
And wide a-field the cottagers stray,
Keeping the flowery "First of May,"
With "morrice-rounds" and minstrels gay,
Garlands and bowers, and cakes and beer,
And the songs that their grandsires loved to hear
(Older by far than the sound that swells,
In the gush of the musical village bells):
But Robin, poor Robin! sits all alone,
With the Cat by his heels, on the broad hearth-stone,
And thus doth the pensive mortal moan:—

“ I am wearied and poor, and cold, and bare,
My home is here and everywhere.
Sternly my brothers deal to me
The pitiful crust of charitie,
Alas ! I am nothing but bones and skin,
Rags without, and sorrow within ;
And what is a great deal worse than that,
Every ‘ son of a gun ’ that I see,
Cries out with a sneer, ‘ *Well, how is your Cat ?*’
And what’s the use of a Cat to me ?
‘ *You can’t have more of a Cat than her skin !*’
’T is true she might furnish a dinner beside ;
And when winter arrives and the storms begin,
I might fashion a cap of her elegant hide !
Oh dad ! to bequeath poor Tibby to me !”
Here he wept like the dew from an aspen tree.

Up rose the cat, with a horrible stare !
Thus she addressed him, his carrotty hair
Bristling on end, like the stump of a broom,
As he jumped half a yard from the floor of the room,
Like a sportive gudgeon forsaking the deep,
Or a pancake performing a Shrove-tide leap
And a ghastly chalk came over his cheek
To hear such a strange attempt to speak.

“ Cowardly sneak ! is this your trust ;
Is this your respect for your parent’s dust ?



Do you dare to 'spit your spite' on me,
And think *me* a pitiful legacie ?
Your wit and your 'pluck' are all fiddle-de-dee !
I've a precious good mind to leave you here,
To die in your dirt, and perish with fear !
But no, you're my master's youngest child,
And however insulted, however reviled,
If you'll only be decent and do as you're bid
I'll fashion your luck, 'in the turn of a quid,'

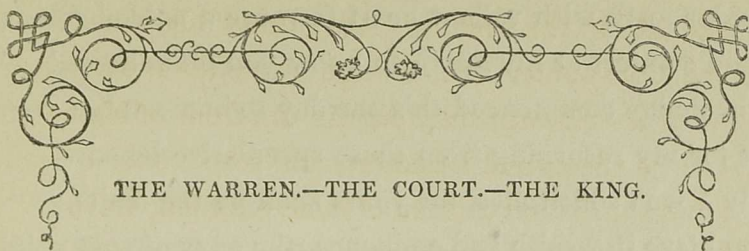
And convince you, you lubber, both here and hence,
There's a something above termed Providence.
Listen! I'm not *what I seem to be*!
Sit on the chair.—If we only agree
 (For I've something to ask
 Ere I venture the task)
See if you'll say this time next year
(You glutton of crusts and treacle beer),
 What is the use of a Cat to me?
I do not petition for silken suits,
 For you are a beggar, and poverty struck,
I only request a pair of boots
 And a linen bag, and we'll try the luck.
Here's the measure of the feet, young man,
Away to the cobbler as fleet as you can!
To bear the fee, and cover the cost,
An ancient dollar, long time lost,
Lies in the chink of your chamber floor,
One inch from the hearth, a foot from the door.
You stare—but prepare the Boots for me,
Or in strife—for your life, you a beggar must be."

With a start—like a dart, he flies at the top
Of his speed—for the deed at the shoemaker's shop;
With a call by the way, upon lame "Widow Day,"
 To order a wallet,
 Or *scrip*, you may call it,
Made out of a napkin or shirt, I dare say.

Poor Widow Day, she stitches like fun,
And late in the evening "the pocket" is done ;
And Cordwainer Bob, though he smiles at the job,
Sticks a well-varnished pipe in the front of his nob,
And he slices, and hammers, and sews "*like a Turk*,"
Till he turns out a blaze of most excellent work ;
Patent tops, and revolving heels,
A pair *quite the thing*,
And *fit for a king*,
Once into the Boots, you were going on wheels !



Here the Historian imputes
The grand "débüt" of Puss in Boots.



THE WARREN.—THE COURT.—THE KING.

By dawning of the morning, poor Robin wakes from slumber,
For through the cottage windows the sun is shining clear,
It twinkles through the jessamine, and brightens up the lumber,
When the falls of little footsteps attend upon his ear.
“Tit-tat! Tit-tat!” the sound is mysterious and unwonted;
He turns upon his elbow, and trembles with alarm,
For there he finds himself at once by smiling Puss confronted,
With “the Boots” upon her ten-toes, and the scrip beneath her arm.

“My lively tricks and fancies you frequently remember,
My stratagem exhibited in gathering my prey,
For you often held your aching sides in the nights of dull December,
When extended in the pantry for ‘moribund’ I lay:
To nab the filthy vermin, who fancied I was dying,
And innocently sported between my languid paws,
Unconscious of the artifice, till pulverised and lying
Engulphed in the sarcophagus of my vindictive jaws.

Now over dike and bramble-bush, by boots from thorns protected,
I wander forth with valiant heart to rouse a nobler game ;
It will be a comfort at my death to know you oft reflected
On the dodge commenced this one day to immortalise your name.
Just wait for my returning from these speculative labours,
Boldly I woo solicitudes, for yours shall be the fruits,
When you blaze in wealth and eminence, the envy of your neighbours :
So, good morrow, gentle master ! and a *blessing on the Boots !*"

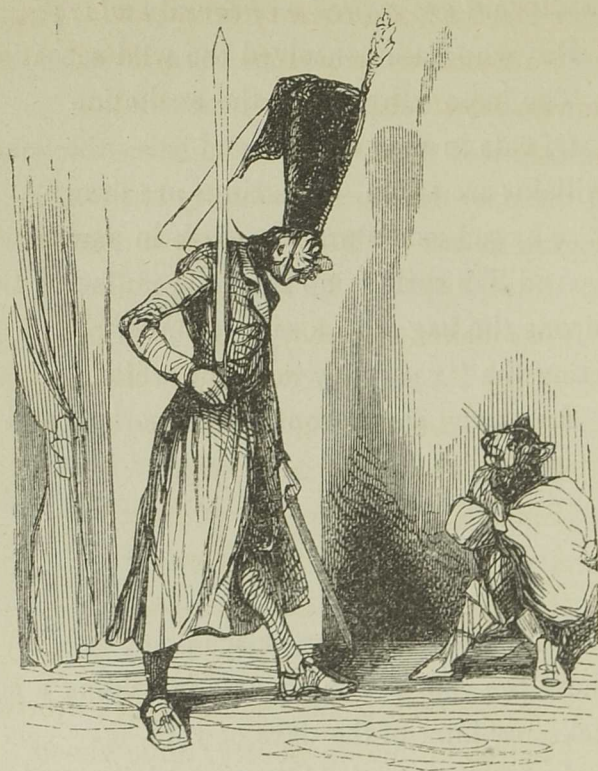
" A'chuck-a-doodle ! doodle-doo ! "

Over the meadow and over the moor,
Whilst the water-wind plays with the lilies so blue,
The red cock crows at the granary door.
The eastern sky is in golden flame,
And the hind awakes with a cheerful brow,
And he kisses his child, and the bonnie good dame,
And away, and away, to the " ancient plough."
But Pussy is first in the fields to-day,
Down by the warren she seeks for the prey,
Lying asleep, as sound as may be,
Beneath the mound of a mulberry tree :
Where forests of nettles encumber the ground,
And conies are frolicking fast around.
The wallet is baited with luring " scran,"
Medicinal parsley and nutritive bran ;
For the mouth of the prison is gaping wide,
And two little thieves are a peeping inside.

We talk of "*feelings!*" and poets sing
Of "*souls that are wafted on heavenly wing;*"
But who hath conceived the wild sensation—
The hope—the bliss—the exaltation
Of cats in *such* a situation?
The villains are taken, the strings are drawn,
They're as sad as a Puritan's cloak in pawn;
And Tib springs up from the mulberry tree;
She opens the bag with a saintly smile,
Inflicting the "*coup de grace*" the while,
And away she is gone over moorland and lea.

Where is she now?—at the palace door,
Where the czar of the country is holding a court;
A frolicksome king of the days of yore,
Fond of cadgers and fiddlers, and jolly good sport
No "*temperance banner*" waves over his towers,
He drinks ocean-deep—but keeps very good hours.

"Hip! hip! hollo!" exclaims the guard,
"Slice off her ears for knocking thus;
Here, loose the mastiff in the yard;
And, servitor, scourge out the Puss!"
But she grinned in his teeth, and jeered at the word,
And laughed outright when he drew the sword.



“ Flog *me*, forsooth ! Yes, yes, I bring
A good and right sufficient ‘ pass,’
A present to *your* lord the King,
From *mine* the Marquis of Carrabas.
A cavalier, who ’d scorn to use,
A ghost like you to clean his shoes ;
Come now, be civil, save your skin,
Open the doors,—and lead me in.”

There sits a monarch of high degree
(The lord of a country proud and free),
Surrounded by ensigns of royalty.
Two human footstools, kneel by the throne,
And he tramples them well, till he bares the bone.
Yet all the poor devils, tax-eaten by knaves,
Are singing in *alto*—"They 'll never be slaves." *

Puss makes a speech,
" Her lord has sent
To *him*, the orb of government,
A *little* game from his estate
(Small things, indicative of great);
A very trifle, meant to prove
His loyalty and boundless love."

The monarch bends—holds forth his fist,
Though desperate smutty, to be kissed
(He who commands
Can 't have "clean hands");
Forthwith "the Dodger" is dismissed.

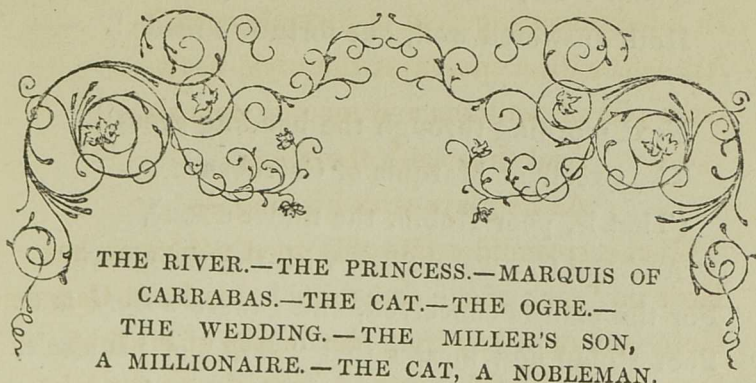
The very next day, in the very same way,
"Puss in her Boots," so bright and gay,
Awaits by dawn at the regal door
With an introduction, the same as before.

* Query? Rule Britannia.

A brace of fine partridges, prigged in the morn
In a neighbouring field of juvenile corn.*
Are laid with a speech at the royal heels,
On a pile of petitions and mouldy appeals :
 And thus saith the King,
 As he plays with his ring,—
“What a splendid estate this good nobleman has ;
He’s no ‘cock of the dunghill!’ this Lord Carrabas.—
Here (taking a key from the depths of his fob),
Draw the Cat half-a-pint of stout ale for the job.”

* “The climate of England is here plainly contra-indicated, this occurring in the month of May.”





THE RIVER.—THE PRINCESS.—MARQUIS OF
CARRABAS.—THE CAT.—THE OGRE.—
THE WEDDING.—THE MILLER'S SON,
A MILLIONAIRE.—THE CAT, A NOBLEMAN.

The "Tira-lira" of the lark,
Is in the placid evening sky,
And Heaven seems like a splendid ark,
Curtained with tinted clouds on high;
Purple and gold, a fleecy fold,
Of sumptuous glory marshalled there,
Like banners rent from a tournament,
Upwafted to the peaceful air.
All the day, Puss is away,
Loitering beneath the eaves of "Court,"
In hopes to bring news from the King,
Heralding fame with good report.
At last, forsooth, she hears for truth,
The King and Princess mean to ride;
And take the air, in "a chaise and pair,"
Next morning by the river side.

Quoth Puss, "The rabbit-hunting trade
Hath answered well, our fortune's made!"—

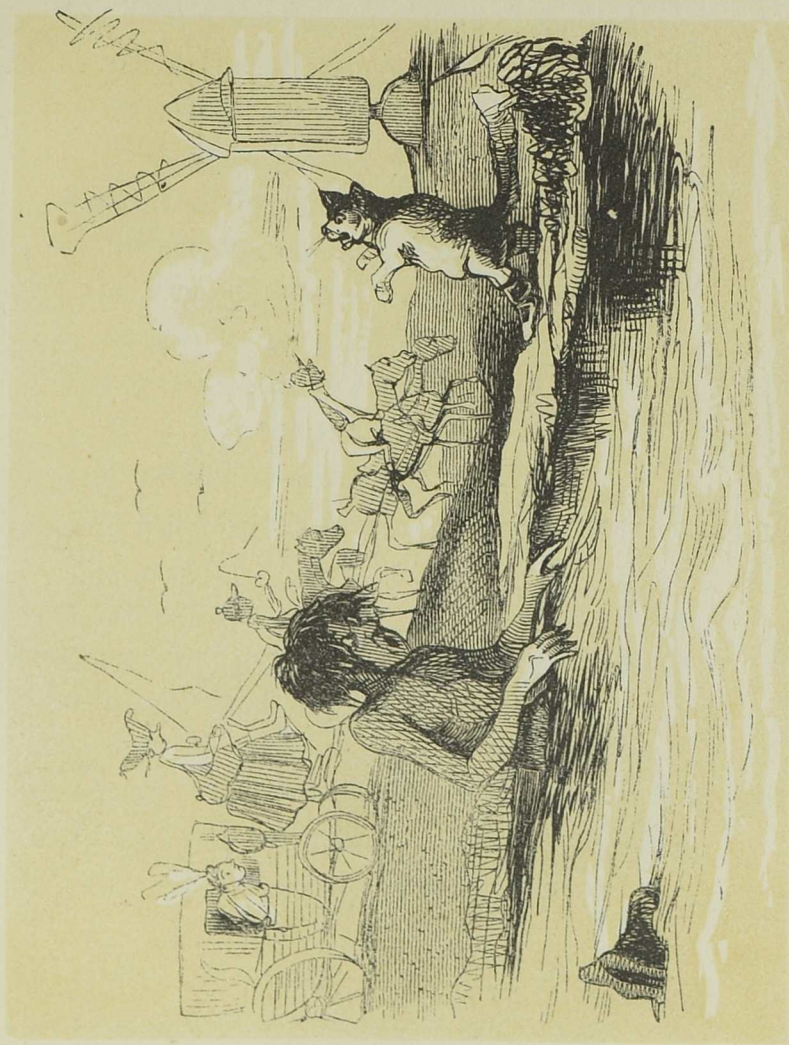
Next morning through the bending grass
The excellent Marquis of Carrabas
(That is, poor Robin, the miller's son),
And the Cat wend forth with the rising sun;
For the plan is conceived, and "*there's work to be done.*"
Poor Robin now blesses that "*Will*" of his sire's,
And patiently does, what "*the Cat*" desires.—

"Master! the morning's uncommonly cold!
But remember that 'Fortune is kind to the bold;'—
So peel off your jerkin, and strip to your skin,
And wade into the river as deep as your chin,
In a very few moments, *my* share will begin.—
See! See!—there's a coach by the side of the hill!
It turns by the coppice—and down by the mill.—
'T is the King and his daughter a-coming this way;
Tumble into the water!—Abandon delay!
Off! off! to the centre—bear off from the shore;—
Dads! here come the equerries prancing before.—
What a beautiful sight, to astonish beholders!"
Robin shivered—and covered—his ears with his shoulders.

"Hoy, hoy! Hollo hol-lo!

Good gentleman in mercy stay!"

'T is thus, Puss hails them as they go,
Dashing and lashing down the way.



"Haste, haste in mercy! hasten down!—

Mercy, Oh mercy! help!—Alas,

My lord!—my gracious lord will drown!

Help, for the Marquis of Carrabas!"

A voice of fear, a sound of dread,

The servants hear, and go-ahead.

And the pitiful King begins to wring

His hands, exclaiming to his daughter,

"Oh, crikey! what a dreadful thing!

A peer! a peer! is in the water!"

The servants plunge into the flood

(The Princess and her father bellow),

And rescued from the weeds and mud,

They drag—a very dirty fellow.

When the Cat was assured of the menials' approach,

She tripped in her Boots to the door of the coach.

"Oh sire!—this disaster!—the Marquis (my lord),

Came early this morning to bathe at the ford;

When some 'prigs' who had seen him safe up to the nose,

Kicked *me* like a football, and pilfered *his* clothes.

He's as bare as"—the Princess "blushed" up like a rose.

One knave on "the box"—another behind,

The King bids them "vanish as swift as the wind;

And bring from his wardrobe those 'Opera Boots,'

And one of the 'silver-laced festival suits.'"

Hat, rapier, and wig; and they quickly appear,

With "Bears'-grease from the North," and perfumes from "Moun-seer."

And he turns out "a regular *Blood* of degree,"
From behind the rude trunk of a sycamore tree.

We need not tell how "*the Peer*" behaved,
Rigged "*a la mode*," his brain was fired ;
His rudeness went, like a beard new shaved,
And he acted perfection like one inspired.
The King received this "*Lord by stealth* ;"
"Step in, *My Marquis* !" In he moved ;
And the Princess who heard of his power and wealth,
Confessed, with a clever dismay, that she loved.

On rolls the carriage a mile or more,
But the Cat in the Boots speeds on before ;
A field is glistening in the morn,
Where reapers lay the ripened corn.



Thither old Puss excited runs,
Calling them near, "Hark ye, my sons!"
"Your King to day, is coming this way ;
'Tis mine to command, and yours to obey ;
Be swung from a gibbet, or do as I say.—
He will ask unto whom these fields belong ;
The corn, the wood, the stream, the grass ;
Answer him there, in a sturdy throng,
To the Lord and Marquis of Carrabas."

The King rolls by, with his glass in his eye ;
Thus he demands, and thus they reply.

On with the Cat—forthwith she comes
To where the boors are straining their thumbs,
Binding the sheaves ; to these once more
She lectures, the same as we said before.

The King rolls by, with his glass in his eye ;
And thus he demands, and thus they reply.

On with the Cat—by the water side,
Where the noble meadows are green and wide,
There a vintager sits on a ricketty gate,
Dreaming of nothing, and scratching his pate :
To him the Cat—as we told before,
Of the lord of the lands and the wonderful store.

The King rolls by, with his glass in his eye ;
And thus he demands, with the same reply.

“A precious estate of your own, by the mass !
My dear Lord Marquis of Carrabas.”

Where is the Cat ? At the Ogre’s gate,
The castle which frowns in terrible state,
With its ninety towers, and gloomy walls,
And cupolas decked with brazen balls ;
And banner aloft—“ *A Sable Bull,*
Each hoof supported by a skull.”
The gate is unbarred, the Ogre there
Imbibes the fragrant morning air.

“Law !” says the Cat, “can this be true ?
Why, *really*, I was seeking *you*.
Excuse my boots ! Could you contrive it,
To render one a word in private ?
If there be time—pray, be so good ;
One word—I hope I do n’t intrude ?”

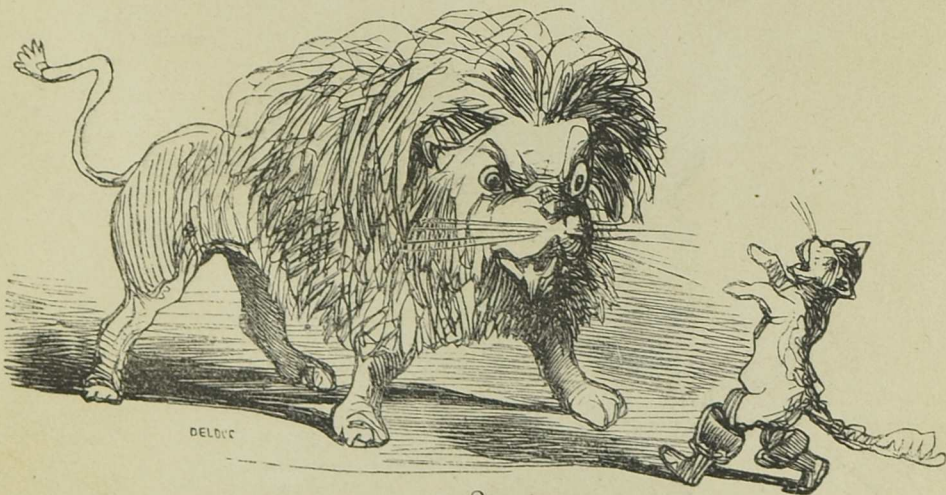
The Ogre growled like a *forest of bears*,
And beckoned the cat to the porphyry stairs
Who scarcely can restrain his laughter,
But wipes his boots and follows after.
The Ogre stands, for his commands,
In a room constructed by demon hands ;



Floors of jasper, walls of steel,
With cushions around luxurious to feel;
Skins of the wolf, the bear, the seal,
All fashioned rare ; with here and there
A tasty lock of human hair.

“ Pray, Mr. Ogre, is it true
What country people speak of you
(*I seldom heed what people say*),
That, in a conjuring kind of way,
You change yourself into all kinds
Of savage beasts that nature finds.”

“ Yes,” said the Ogre fiercely, “ see !
Make room ! Stand back ! Just notice *me* !
My nose and whiskers keep your eye on.
Hey cockalorum jig,—‘ A Lion ! ’ ”

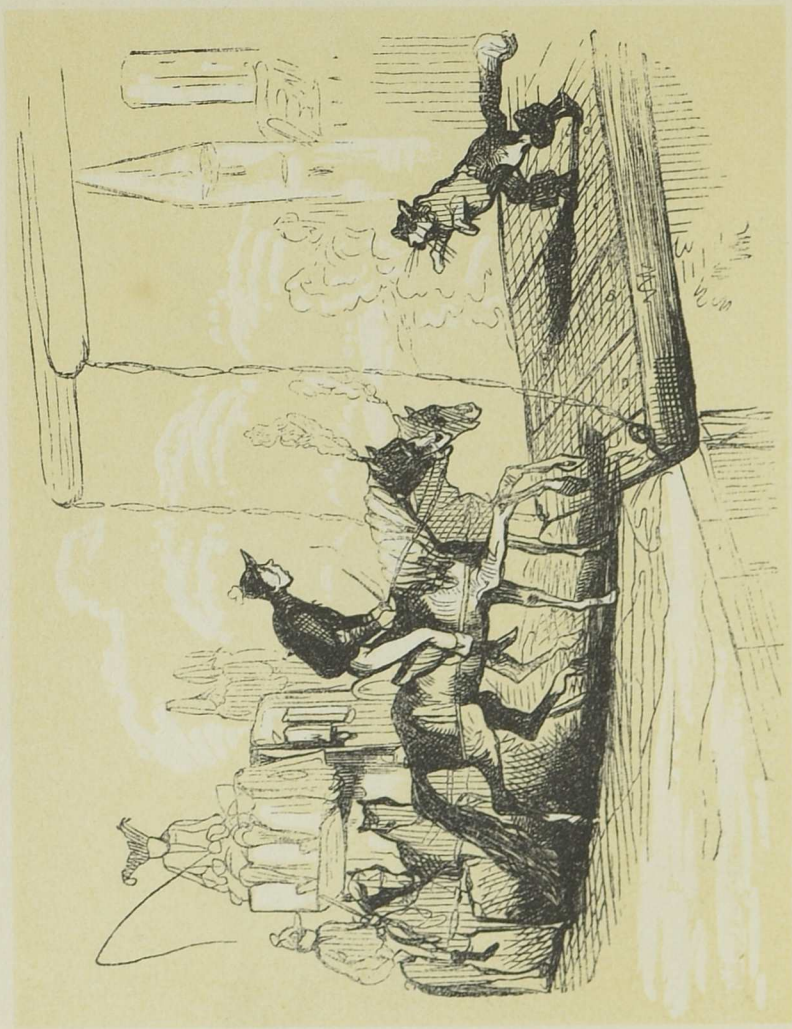


Bang through the casement at the proof
Retires the Cat, and stands aloof;
But boots, od rot them, on a *roof*!
Safety in such attempt is vain,
Puss coolly ventures down again.
Holding his ribs with two huge hands,
With laughing eyes the Ogre stands.
“Well, really now I’m pleased with *that*!”
Softly replied the trembling Cat.
“Perhaps you never tried at all
To change yourself to things as small
As rats or mice.”

“Catskin, you lie!

Behold a *mouse*! Puss, mind your eye!
Shew *me* a form, I *can*’t assume.”
Forthwith he crept about the room
And squeaked; ’t was the last sound he gave,
Grimalkin is the Ogre’s grave!







“ What can have led the Sovereign here ?”
The Ogre’s men proclaim with fear.
He has seen the mighty walls which brook
No rival near, and comes to look
For what tradition told before,
A “ castle ” on the “ lonely moor.”
Puss runs down to the parapet walls,
Thence to the drawbridge, and hastily calls :—
“ Happy the days and the hours that bring
The heavenly form of our noble King ;
Down with the bridge ! Postillions pass !
Enter the *Halls of Carrabas* ! !”

The King and his daughter descend with surprise,
The King is uproarious ; the Marquis is wise ;
He remembers a proverb his grandfather said,
“ *A very still tongue makes a very wise head !*”

Some weeks before in the Gazette ’t was printed,
That “ the same Ogre had a transformation ;”
And “ as a mastiff ” (lies of course are mint-ed,
To stimulate the palsied ears’ sensation),
“ Flew upon six poor pilgrims ! who, ’t was hinted,
Mistook the castle for a habitation
Of hospitable Christians ! All the six
Were eaten up, excepting hats and sticks !”

From this the Marquis hesitated riding
Over the bridge ; but Tibby whispered near,
Whilst music and the footcloths were providing,
Stroking her belly, " Hark ! the Ogre's here,"
Combining, too, the detail with the tiding :
" The mansion is your own. The coast is clear !
Now to the Princess ! Is n't *this* a gay day ?
Perform the ' saccharine,' you 'll win the lady."

A grand array, that identical day,
Of terrible ogres, young and grey,
Were to dine with the old " transforming cove ;"
But they send an excuse, with a " bucket of love :"
For they hear that the monarch has travelled that way—
It reminds them of " scores" he's forgotten to pay.

Down from the hills, by twos and threes,
Come lackeys and loons of all degrees ;
With boys and girls, and fighting men
(Pussy has hired three score and ten) ;
And they marshal in order as gay as you please,
Fresh as a row of " marrow-fat peas,"

In the Ogre's best green liveries.
Whilst the odour of " grub" from the kitchen below,
The boiled, the hashed, the fricandeau ;
The grinding of knives, and the scrubbing of castors,
Shew the Ogre's great dinner is finding new masters.



The trombones play, and the fiddlers make way,
For the monarch comes in with a social array,
With the buxom Princess, light and gay,
Led by the Marquis, strutting and tall,
With an elegant smile, to the Painted Hall.
Where gleemen, and yeomen, and choristers sing,
Plumping their gills, so round and rosy,
“Non nobis!” and “Merrie olde Cole, ye Kynge!”
“Fake away!” “Jolly Nose!” and “Jim along Josey!”
And ha! they rolick till ten of the night,
Quaffing the punch and the wine so bright;
And singing and dancing with all their might,
Till the torches burn down with a twofold light.
The King rose up, he could scarcely stand
(Perhaps with liquor—perhaps with joy),
And fervently squeezing the Marquis’s hand,
He called him “*a duck, and a darling boy!*”



Oh dear! the ridiculous things that he said,
 Upsetting the biscuits and sweet maccaroons;
 Till the crown which had shaken so long on his head,
 Fell into the midst of the smokers' spittoons.

He was going to sing,
 But the daughter said, "King,
 Let me call for some 'tea'—your behaviour is shocking!
 It's amazingly low!"
 But he hiccupped out "N—N—No!"

And he tipped them two verses of "Wedgebury Cocking." *
 Singing them seriously, ten times each,
 And he never sat down till he 'd spoken "*his speech!*"
 "Sirs, this is the happiest day of my life,
 God forbid it should end in confusion or strife;
 Here, Marquis, you're welcome, take Madge for your wife;
 She can spin—she can sing—she can knit worsted breeches—
 And, if ever you're king, she can write all your *speeches!*
 Oh, the morning is dawning! we'll marry you *now!*
 So we'll call for the priest, if my friends will allow."

The parson is near, swimming in beer,
 He has just enough sense to rise and appear.
 And, *after a fashion*, the Princess is wed,
 With whistling, and screaming, and hurling of caps;
 With a flourish of cymbals, the King reels to bed,
 And the people rush in and devour the scraps.

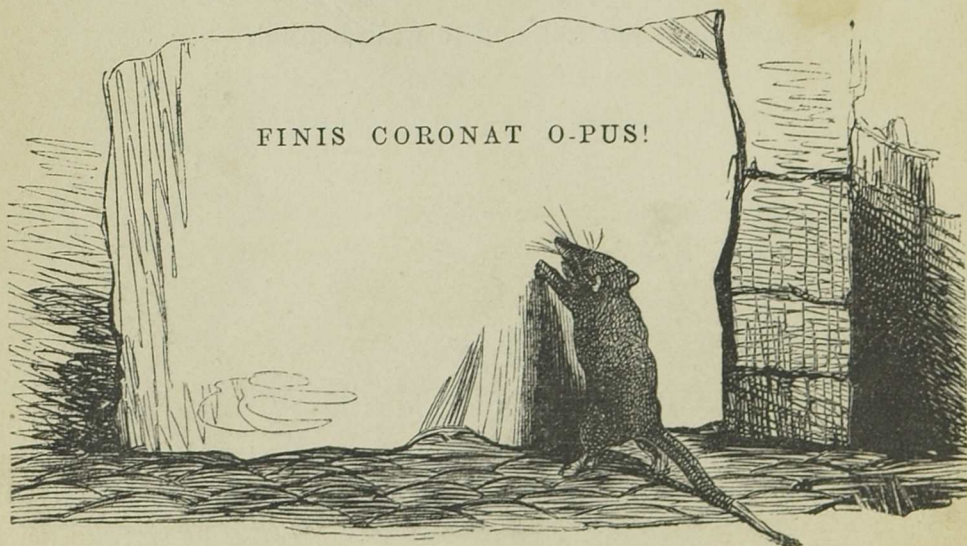
* See Mrs. Loudon's "*Mummy.*"

One very rainy Whitsun-tide,
The merry ruler drank "*too deep* ;"
He took a quinsy, and he died,
And slept where his forefathers sleep :
When, as a decent sort of thing,
The Marquis was acknowledged "*King*."
His brothers both died suddenly :
Had they but seen a few more years,
The ragged "*tykes*" had lived to be
Progenitors of princely peers.
"*The Cat*" was made a "*nobleman*," no *Norman hound* deserved
it better ;
And lived beloved to "*green old age*," suiting the title "*to the letter*."
She had golden heels to her "*London Boots*,"
And, whenever the weather was "*fairly*" inclined,
She had five little pigmies, in mouse-skin suits,
To support her tail, and to walk behind.



Moral.

Renounce all sensual things ; your minds improve ;
Hold faith in Heaven ; be constant in your love.
Had Puss remained, as vulgar "tibbies" do,
Slumbering, and gorging mice, the long day through,
She would have "burked" her intellectual brain,
And Robin's glory would have dawned in vain.
If you have friends, the "angels of your need,"
And affluence comes, and fortune holds fair speed,
Look down below, give humble friends their due,
And deal to others as they dealt to you.



HOP O' MY THUMB

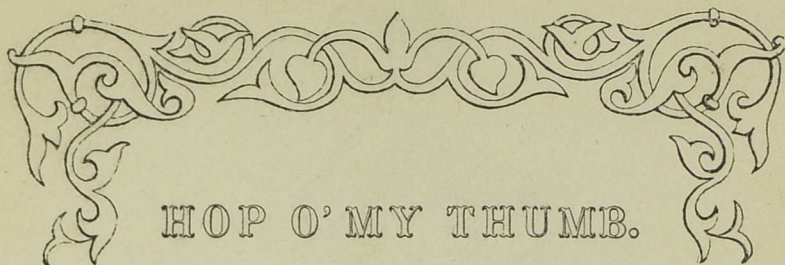
BY GILBERT A. A'BECKETT.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS, HUMOROUS & NUMEROUS.



LONDON:

WM. S. ORR AND CO. AMEN CORNER,
PATERNOSTER ROW.



'T was on a certain time, and at a certain place,
A certain faggot-maker lived in most uncertain case ;
For poverty had placed him in a very pretty fix,
As very slowly he got on by cutting of his sticks.
He had a wife, and she had brought, to share in all his joys
(Which office was a sinecure), no less than seven boys :
The eldest was but ten years old, the youngest four and three,
Which seven make together, as any one may see.
The youngest was a puny child, who seldom spoke a word,
From which his great stupidity was readily inferred ;
 But really the judgment was quite absurd,
 For many M.P.'s that to speak are heard
 (If the truth may be told without offence),
 By holding their tongues would display their sense.
The youngest boy had a name rather rum,
His parents christened him Hop o' my Thumb ;



Because as a thumb he was just as high,
Such history gives as the reason why ;
Though it's far more likely, by-the-by,
His meddling habits it meant to imply,
For he *would* have a finger in every pie.

It happened the harvest was shocking bad,
Such a crop as never before was had ;
The corn, which the farmers wished to appear,
To all their entreaties would n't give ear ;
The wheat and barley were looking shy,
And the only luxuriant crop was rye ;

For every farmer in the place
Was seen to wear—a very rye face ;
For then they had n't thought of, or tried,
The method that since has been applied,
By which a dearth of flour they master,
By alum, chalk, gypsum, and plaster.
The faggot-maker and his wife
Were leading a very unpleasant life ;
They had n't discovered the modern plan
Of feeding an able-bodied man
On gruel,—and sometimes, by way of treat,
A homœopathic portion of meat,—
As in the Unions now they do,
If all that is said on the point be true.
The father and mother were very sad,
When they found no food was now to be had ;
They 'd managed some time to keep grubbing on,
But at last every chance of grub was gone.



Over the fire one night they sat,
On family matters having a chat :
The husband remarked, " He could n't afford
To furnish the boys with adequate board ;"
And as he believed it his duty, no doubt,
To put the whole of his children out,
To get their living as well as they could,
He proposed to turn them into the wood ;
And perhaps, when lost, some fairy elves
Might come and teach them to find themselves.
The mother, first, was shocked, but soon agreed :
To see the children getting thin by inches,
Compressed beneath the gripe of hunger's pinches,
Was more than she could tolerate indeed.
An inefficient matron, I'm afraid,
She for an Union workhouse would have made ;
Though, it is strange, no hearts to break are known
In places where they're always breaking stone.

Hop o' my Thumb had not been sleeping,
But silently out of his warm bed. creeping,—
Had quietly heard
Each identical word,
To his bed he returned ; and not a doubt
His parents possessed for a minute,
That he'd all the while been in it,—
His mother never knew he was out.



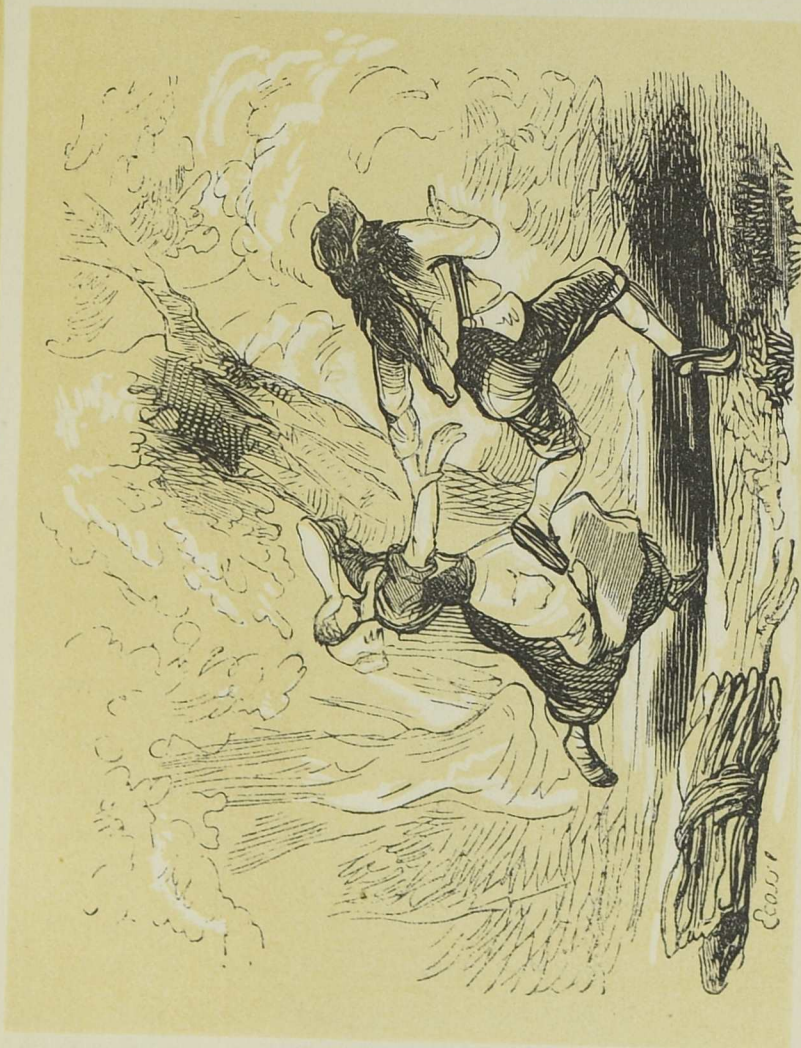
It was not very long before
His father found repose ;
And in a little more,
His mother too did dose.
Somnus their bed was hovering o'er,
And quickly there arose
A piece of harmony—in score,
With solos for the nose.

Hop o' my Thumb, in a bit of a shiver,
Left his own bed for the bed of the river ;
He went, with a little idea of his own,
His pockets to fill from the bank of stone ;



He chose the bank of stone, becós it
Was the only one where he kept a deposit.
Some pebbles white from this bank he drew,
And with the treasure homewards flew.
The morning came, when the father and mother,
As overnight they 'd agreed with each other,

Went with the children into the wood,
Intending to lose them if they could.
While the innocent children were running their rigs,
The cruel parents hopped their twigs,—
To cut their faggots they did n't stay,
But cut through the forest, and cut away.
The proverb says, "It is not good
To halloo, till you're out of the wood ;"
But when the children found themselves in it,
They hallooed louder every minute,
Till the old oak tree, with its graceful bough,
Nodded above the horrible row
That the junior branches continued to make,
Because their leaves they could not take.
At last says Hop o' my Thumb, "My boys !
Leave off a moment that terrible noise ;
About the way back I'll make no bones,
We can't be very far off the stones ;
Upon our parents we'll very soon pop,
If you'll only attend to what I've let drop."
So "gently over the stones" they travelled,
The forest's recesses were soon unravelled ;
And it was n't very long before
They stood once more at their father's door.
Let us follow the example of Hop o' my Thumb,
And back to the father and mother come ;
It seems they'd been such egregious ninnies
As to trust, to the tune of a couple of guineas,



A very great man, who near them dwelt,
And with them for wood and potatoes dealt ;—
This very great man, when he owed a debt,
Like other great folks, was apt to forget.
The bill had gone in ; but it did no good,
Against the great man the item stood
(They had chalked it down as well as they could),—
“ *Two-pund-two, for tatars and wood !* ”
But the very great man had, strange to say,
Taken it into his head one day,
His long-standing little account to pay ;
So long the very great man had neglected it,
 That when he came and brought the money,
 The faggot-maker thought it funny,
For, to say the truth, he never expected it.
The wife resolved upon having a treat,
Ran off to the butcher's, down the street,
And bought a great deal more than was meet
For a couple of grown-up persons to eat ;
Whether it was mutton,—and then, if so,
Whether the mutton was wether or ewe,
We find in history nothing to shew ;
But it seems they feasted, whether or no :
Or whether 't was veal, we can't reveal,
But certain it is that they made a good meal ;
If veal, they need n't have cut or halved it,
Because the cow had already calved it.

When they had eaten till they could no more
 (But not before),
And found there still was food for six or eight,
They both began to mourn their children's fate;
And were, like many other worldly sinners,
 Ready the fullest sympathy to feel
For every hungry wretch that wants a meal,
When they themselves have eaten hearty dinners,
To fall the mother's tears did fast incline,
And there she sat, poor thing! over her whine.
As when two persons' plans have been the same,
If right the issue, both the merit claim;
But if they find it is a losing game,
Both set to work and one another blame.
So did the wife declare it was a shame,
She to desert her children ever came;
And called her husband many an ugly name,—
But he, not being of a temper tame,
Declared if him she did much more defame,
To silence her at once would be his aim.
In fact, he threatened if he could not stop her,
That he should really be compelled,
Unless her tongue she on the instant held,
 To whop her.
But still the wretched wife kept sobbing on,
“ Oh, where, and Oh, where, are my little children gone?”
The children thought it a capital cue
To take for their entry, and in they flew;



The mother, giving a tragedy stare,
Threw back from the forehead of each the hair,
And soon the features of her sons she traces,
Concealed beneath the mask of dirty faces.

The youngest one, his mother's hope,
Had been so badly off for soap,
That, breadless though he was, the dust
Had formed upon his face a crust.

The children made a hearty meal
From a fillet of veal ;
And as on them the door to shut,
Each effort had been vain,
So now, fast as the parents cut,
The children come again.
Sweet is a family, however large,
So thinks e'en royalty upon the throne,
While every year an interesting charge
The loyal nation welcomes as its own.
The bells ring merrily ; and soon
The princes and princesses that we pray for,
We, to a very pretty tune,
Are called upon to pay for !
But 't was the faggot-maker's fate,
Not to be able to throw the weight
Of all his children upon the state,
To be provided for at the rate
Of thousands, *per annum*, six or eight ;
And soon he began to calculate,
That, having spent his little store,
He was just as badly off as before ;
Oh ! love on flowers cannot long exist,
It takes a turn when worried by its twist.
What was the faggot-maker now to do,
Gone was his capital of two-pound-two ;
His family once more composed of nine,
Who might, should, would,—alas ! but could not—dine ?

The faggot-maker, tired of vain exertion,
Made up his mind that, in the self-same place,
He would get up "another frightful case
Of wholesale child desertion!"

Hop o' my Thumb overheard the plan,
And at early dawn to the door he ran;
But how with fear his little heart revolted,
To find he could not bolt, because the door was bolted.
Relieving officers are often known,
To those who come for bread,—to offer stone;
And when the stone is broken, then, at last,
The paupers are allowed to break their fast;
Then, with a loaf to last them for a day,
Are to another parish passed away;
For 'tis the Poor Law principle confessed,
Those guardians carry out the act the best,
Who, by a nice adjustment, try
As little as they can to give,
So that no pauper stay to die,
Nor in the Union come to live:
The parish thus enjoys a double good,
Saving in funerals, as well as food!
The faggot-maker's wife this plan pursued,
With Poor Law principles no doubt imbued;
She gave to every child of bread a hunch,
Enough to serve for breakfast and for lunch,—
Giving them, as it were, a parting lift,
Before they were for ever turned adrift.



The father took them to the forest's heart,
Which, like his own, was much the darkest part ;
But Hop o' my Thumb, all the way he had come,
Took care to drop little bits of crumb,



In hope and trust,
That the crumb and crust
Would mark the track
To take them back ;

Alas ! for the crumbs the birds had followed them,
And a party of greedy swallows swallowed them.
The children, finding father—mother gone,
Perceived they had again been left alone,
So crying and whining awhile they stood,—
A sad illustration of whine in the wood.
Down came the rain in torrents, such as might
Become Vauxhall upon a gala night ;
When the proprietors are doomed to know,
The horrors of a “ real overflow.”
Down came the rain, and as the children stood,
All in the middle of the horrid wood,
They felt the ground, made muddy by the wetting,
As greasy as the true wood-pavement getting ;
And any one who 'd seen the little trippers,
Would have supposed they wore not shoes but—slippers.
Poor little things ! long time they did endure,
A foretaste of the famed cold-water cure ;—
The quack's device, who feels 't is vain,
His patients still to try and drain ;
And so by way of something new,
Reverses it, and wets them through.

Hop o' my Thumb, like others we see,
Was anxious to get to the top of the tree ;

And, having done so, from its height,
He did descry a distant light ;
Whether a rushlight, a dip, or a mold,
History never has hitherto told ;
Whether a twelve, or a ten, or an eight,
Year-books and chronicles do not relate :
The inquiry we leave, with the utmost reliance,
 To that light of the nation,
 The Ass-ociation
For the rapid advancement of science ;
 Which keeps science moving,
 If e'en not improving ;
But it certainly helps to make science advance,
For it fails not to lead it an annual dance.
When for effect dramatic authors write,
From a dark scene they quickly change to light ;
So from the Association back we come,
Unto the little candle seen by Thumb.
The light was distant, very very far,
As candles in romances always are.
Thinks Hop o' my Thumb, 't is likely enough,
 As I see a light,
 So late at night,
There's probably some one up to snuff.
For it would be a careless trick,
 To leave a candle up alone
(The Patent Safety Metal Wick
 Was in those early days unknown).



To go towards the friendly wick,
Straight from the tree he "cut his stick ;"
And came, with all his brothers, through the thicket,
Not to the wick, exactly, but a wicket,—
A word we scarcely need translate,
A wicket means a kind of gate.
So setting up a piteous call,
The children towards the wicket sent a bawl,
Which (raised in the middle of the night)
Brought down—to the door, as well it might—
A lady in a bedgown white,
Whom for shelter they asked in terms polite.
"Alas," said she, "your lives you'd better run for ;
Young children here are taken in and done for.
This is an Ogre's house ; 't is to be wished
You'd never come, for if you stay you're dished.
The Ogre eats young children, just like Saturn—
Methinks I see you on the willow pattern."
She ceased, and having spoken all her fears,
Found consolation in a pint of tears.
But Hop o' my Thumb was not to be stopped,
He wanted to gain admission ;
So, regarding his position,
A little logic thus he chopped.
"If to the forest back we go,
Eaten by wolves were sure to be,
Whether we fancy it or no—
That is as clear as A B C.

But let us in, and though the chance is slight,
The Ogre may have lost his appetite.
Besides, to say the truth, if we are booked,
We think we rather would be eaten cooked ;
The wolves would tear us any how, pell-mell ;
The Ogre—serve us *à la maître d' hotel*. ”
The lady let them in, but gave them warning,
She could do naught but hide them till the morning.
The children, grateful that their prayer was granted,
Declared a hiding to be all they wanted.
Sudden the door received a frightful shock,
It was the Ogre's well-known double-knock.

The lady, filled with dread,

Under the bed,

Heels over head,

Bundled the children with fright half dead.

Her husband she let in ; he was as cross

As one in business having met some loss.

The Ogre asked if his supper was cooked ;

Then he snuffed, and very knowing he looked :

Says he, “ The truth you 'd better tell,

'Tis the flesh of children which now I smell.”

For the Ogre had a quickness extreme,

In scenting that which he loved to eat ;

Like the man who inhaled the cookshop's steam,

When he could n't afford to pay for the meat.

A capital plan, and one, by-the-bye,

The Poor Law Commissioners ought to try ;





'T would read in the dietary well,
"Wednesdays and Fridays of meat the smell."
The wife began to pretend to laugh,
And said, "My dear, you smell the calf."



Says the Ogr, "You're telling a fib, I feel;
Talk not of calf, but the truth re-veal."
He paced the room with heavy tread,
And made of his four-post a turn-up bed,
By tilting it completely over,
So as all the children at once to discover.
"Madam," he roared, in accents rough,
"Lucky for you, you're old and tough;
Or for this vile attempted cheat,
Yourself I'd slaughter, cook, and eat."

But not the finest sauce in town
Would make you pleasantly go down ;
Not Harvey or the King of Oude
Could turn you into wholesome food.
But, madam, there are ogres three
To-morrow come to dine with me :
My brain I just had been bewilderin'
Where I should find a dish of children ;
And here they are. The youngest two
Will make a capital *ragout* ;
But how to dress the other five
Will take some trouble to contrive ;
Whether they 'll eat more tender, hashed or stewed,
I cannot say till I 've consulted Ude."
He said ; and from his belt a knife he took,
Giving the children all a "killing look."
His wife, though tough in body, yet in mind
To softness was exceedingly inclined ;
Like an old boot whose upper-leather 's whole,
But has grown very tender at the sole.
To save the children she, good dame, was willing,
And hinted that 't was not the time for killing.
Said she, "There 's too much in the house by half ;
Six pigs, ten sheep, a bull, and a calf :
And these, with the children altogether,
Won't keep if there comes a change in the weather."
As the dishonest lawyer, when he can,
By cheating many, will enrich one man

Making him but the bank wherein to lay
What he intends to have himself one day :
So, as a sharp attorney views his client,
"I'll fatten up those children," thought the giant.
"To feed them well, will make them fat and prime ;
'Tis only stuffing them before their time."
He bid his wife invite them all to sup,
In their condition just to get them up.
The Ogre sat down to make himself merry,
With a dozen of port and a dozen of sherry,
And sparkling champagne, but not the same
Which of "Genuine Walker" goes by the name ;
And which, by-the-bye, is such horrible stuff,
That "Walker" they call it correctly enough.
The wine soon mounted to the Ogre's head :
After the first half-dozen he was fuzzy ;
Two bottles more, and, if the truth be said,
The Ogre he was regularly muzzy.
He was not one of your cold water swallowers,
Nor did he rank 'mongst Father Mathew's followers.
Had he inclined to follow the good Father,
It would have been but to insult him rather ;
And to express a rude but natural hope,
"That one so fond of water is well off for soap."
The Ogre at last felt rather "toppy ;"
Or, to use a term more familiar, "moppy."
He began to think he was having a reel,
Performed by his head, and not by his heel :

So he staggered up from his large arm-chair ;
He clung for support to the vacant air ;
He leaned, as he thought, against the wall,
Where there happened, in fact, to be nothing at all ;
And, after some thumps to his arms and head,
The Ogre tumbled into his bed.

The Ogre had no less than seven daughters,
Who had repaired to their nocturnal quarters ;
An act in prose we should imply by
Saying they had gone to "by-by."
These ogresses had skins exceeding white
Because they had their father's appetite
For meat uncooked ;
And great raw girls they looked.
They were too young to do much mischief yet ;
But still they shewed a disposition rather
For following in the footsteps of their father,
By eating all the infants they could get.
These ogresses were always put to bed,
With each a crown of gold upon her head.
Shakspeare with perfect truth declares,
"Uneasy is the head that wears
A crown :"
To which might properly be added,
"Especially (unless 't is padded)
When lying down."
This bed, with room for seven, and to spare,
No doubt resembled greatly that of Ware

(Which, if it be as ancient as 't is said,
Must be for wear a valuable bed).
The chamber had two beds : and e'en the spare one
Must have been on the model of the Ware one :
In one the ogresses already lay ;
The boys were in the other stowed away.
Hop o' my Thumb, when all his brothers slept,
Out of his bed in silence softly crept ;



The crown he took from each young ogress' head,
And placed a cotton nightcap there instead ;
While on his brothers' heads and on his own,
He settled most usurpingly a crown ;
Like certain kings, who settled on their sons
The crown of England—so the history runs ;]

And though the action Hume and Smollett blame,
Sure human nature would have done the same.
Hop o' my Thumb having finished his plan,
Into his bed again hastily ran.

The Ogre was restless, he could not lie still,

But he tossed impatiently about ;

For then the secret of sleep at will

Had not been yet found out.

A secret they call it, and 't is plain

A secret 't is likely to remain ;

For how can any one disclose

What not e'en the inventor knows ?

The nearest approach that ever was known

To sleep at will, is to go alone .

And see a modern farce or play,

When for what at the door you have to pay,

Sound sleep not only at will may be got,

But sleep e'en whether you will or not.

The Ogre could n't kill time in his bed,

So he thought he'd kill the children instead.

He sought the room where the children slept,

And, as no rushlight was burning kept,

The reader intelligent will presume,

That darkness dwelt i' the double-bedded room.

The Ogre softly stole unto the bed

Where lay the boys, and felt each little head :

Like a phrenologist, he came to feel,

But 't was to play the devil—not Deville.



A crown on every head of course he found,
Thought he "That wine has turned the bedroom round!
I thought this was the bed of those young chaps,
But they I know wore only cotton caps;
Such as the tradesman at his door hangs out,
Marked 'threepence-halfpenny,' or thereabout."
Unto the other bed he softly stole,
And found a nightcap on each daughter's poll.
"So, so," to himself the Ogre said,
"This of the brats must be the bed."
Then, as a drayman makes a pint of porter
By one good blow the head precisely shorter,
So did the Ogre, urged by cruel fate,
At one fell swoop his girls decapitate.
The Ogre, when his horrid work was o'er,
Returned to bed, to snooze, to sleep, to snore.

Hop o' my Thumb his brothers woke,
And (not yet letting them into the joke,
But waiting his leisure to calmly crack it)
Made each of his brothers on with his jacket;
And away they went, one and all,
Over the Ogre's garden wall.
The Ogre, waking, said to his wife,
With a coaxing tone, "My love, my life,
I think it would be much the best,
To have those brats immediately dressed."

But it seems that the Ogre, when he spoke,
Had merely intended to make a joke
(When an Ogre perpetrates a pun,
'Tis certain to be a monstrous one).
But the Ogre's wife did n't happen to see
The force of this horrible *jeu d'esprit*;
To help them put on their clothes she went,
Declaring 't was what the Ogre meant.
Alas! what horrid vision met her view!
She saw her seven daughters cut in two!

Each one was dead,
And each had got on
Her severed head
A cap of cotton.

How shall the mother's agony be painted?
She screamed, of course—then fainted.
Her husband, at her stay alarmed, soon sought her,
And though he saw it was a shocking case,
He had the sense to pour a jug of water
Into his poor wife's face;
She started up, unable to endure
Another dose of the cold-water cure.
When the Ogre saw the deed he had done,
He determined after the boys to run;
He called aloud for his seven-league boots,
A pair of high-lows he kept for pursuits,—
High-lows they were, adapted to go,
Over every ground, whether high or low.





At railroad-speed away he ran,
As fast as the famed ærial ship
Will take its contemplated trip.
Which it means to do—when it can.
Hop o' my Thumb and his brothers had come
To within a little way of their home,
When Hop o' my Thumb a rock espied,—
And as in melodramas heroes hide
In places scarce large enough to hold them,
His brothers doing as he told them,
The “situation” quickly seized,
And into the hole the whole of them squeezed.
It is a certain piece of stage effect,
That the pursuer always should select,
As the best spot on which to take repose,
That where the one pursued for safety goes.
It follows then, as regular as a clock,
The Ogre sat upon this very rock ;
First having looked, of course, with all his might,
Around in all directions but the right.
The Ogre, being weary, yawned, looked wise,
Nodded a little, started, rubbed his eyes ;
Then yawned again, once more his eyelids closed,
His head sunk slowly down—the Ogre dosed.
Though rather slow to fall asleep, at last
The Ogre on the rock was sleeping fast ;
And from his nostrils he began to pour,
Echoing from hill to hill, a frightful snore.

Perceiving that the Ogre slept,
Hop o' my Thumb from his hiding-place crept ;
And bidding his brothers homewards run,
Prepared to take care of number one.
First to the Ogre's feet he slyly steals,
And lays him very gently by the heels ;
Pulling off the seven-league boots in a crack,
As cleverly as any Jack.
On his own feet the boots he quickly drew—
They must have seemed full large at first, 't is true ;
But as the boots were fairies,
 They did contract like the colosh
 Of caoutchouc, or of Macintosh,
Which in dimensions varies ;
Shrinking according to the foot,
Of him who wears that easy boot.
“ These seven-league boots,” thought Hop o' my Thumb,
“ Will make me worth an unlimited sum ;
Backwards and forwards the news to bring
Between the army and the king.
He to employ me cannot fail,
I could outstrip the mail, or e'en the rail.
As hackney coaches got some fatal stabs,
By the establishing of four-wheeled cabs ;
And as the cabs themselves were doomed to know,
From omnibuses a decisive blow ;
And as the omnibuses got no good,
From the small steamboats, iron as well as wood ;



And, as the steam-boats felt, they too must quail,
Beneath the expedition of the rail ;—
So," reasoned Hop o' my Thumb, "these boots in speed,
Will steam-boat, railroad, everything exceed."
Not far had he gone, with a skip and a hop,
Than he heard a voice that called out "Stop!"
He looked above, and he looked all round,
But he could not see whence came the sound ;
At last he thought of looking below,
For the voice seemed to come from his own great toe.
These words appeared from his boots to come,
"Listen, listen, Hop o' my Thumb!
Do n't go to the palace, for if you should,
O, take the word of a fairy boot
(For such am I, on your own right foot),
Upon my sole you 'll do no good.
I can't stand talking now to you—but,
Feel in your pocket, you 'll find a nut,
'T is one of the sort the pastrycooks sell,
With a little motto inside the shell."
Hop o' my Thumb immediately did
As he was by the fairy high-low bid ;
He cracked the nut with his teeth in a minute,
And found the following words within it :—
"Go unto the Ogre's door,
These words speak, and nothing more,
'Ogress, Ogre cannot come ;
Give great key to Hop o' my Thumb.'"

To the Ogre's house he took his way,
In a nutshell his instructions lay ;
At the Ogre's door so loudly he knocked,
That the Ogre's wife was really shocked ;
And if he had n't continued to stun away,
She would have thought it was only a runaway.
She went to the door, and though the sight
Of Hop o' my Thumb did n't please her quite,



She was forced to listen, for he began
A very long story, and on he ran,—

How the Ogre had caught them all in a wood,
As he and his brothers nutting stood ;
And how a party of lords there came,
In the sovereign's name, from the Ogre to claim
Of ready money a terrible sight,
Which unhappily was n't ready quite :
How the Ogre said that Hop o' my Thumb
Would p'rhaps be so good as to go for the sum ;
And how the lords at once, upon that,
Made the Ogre an aristocrat ;
Admitting him into nobility's pale,
By the title of Duke of Draggletail ;
And how the Ogre the boots had lent
To Hop o' my Thumb, and this message sent,

“ Ogress, Ogre cannot come,

Give great key to Hop o' my Thumb.”

The thoughts of a title could not fail

A woman to please,

And a thousand great keys

She 'd have given, no doubt,

To have walked about

As Duchess of Draggletail.

The keys she gave, and told him where

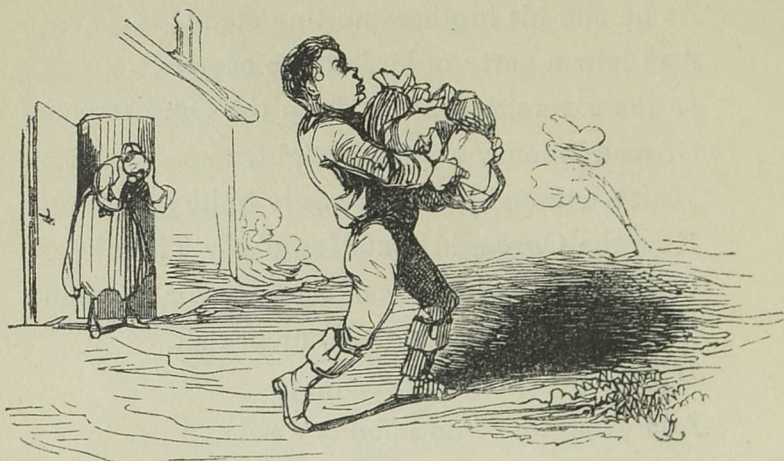
He 'd meet with gold and jewels rare ;

And Hop o' my Thumb took as many of these

As he thought would give

His father and mother the means to live,

With all their children, a life of ease.



To see him his parents of course were delighted,
And poverty being turned from the door,
Love flew in at the window once more ;
And the family henceforth were all united.
Of the seven-league boots the fame was so great,
That their owner in all the affairs of state
Was called upon to interfere,
But why, the reason 's not quite clear ;
Unless it was upon the strength
Of boots that let their wearer go
E'en to the most outrageous length,
As statesmen sometimes will we know.
The Ogre, from the rock,
Fell with a dreadful shock,

Which woke him from his sleep ;
 He tried to stand upon the ground
 But 't was not long before he found
His legs he could not keep ;
For if the painful truth be spoken,
The Ogre's legs, arms, nose, and head, were broken.
Some faggot-makers passing by,
To lift him up in vain did try ;
 So down they flung him :
And so a serpent came at night,
Who, acting like a serpent quite,
 Savagely stung him.
A man once powerful,—when down at last,
Gets stung by any reptile going past ;
And oft the very vilest thing that crawls,
Gives the death-blow to greatness when it falls—
Thus died the Ogre. But already Thumb
Had the king's favourite, at court, become.
'T was natural enough, for oft at court,
Littleness wins the favour greatness ought.
Hop o' my Thumb remembered, for his life
He was indebted to the Ogre's wife ;
In gratitude determined not to fail,
He got her made Duchess of Draggletail.
We know not if by means direct or sinister,
Hop o' my Thumb became in time prime minister ;
And, assuming all a statesman's airs,
He managed the whole of the nation's affairs.



And many a premier has after him come—
Who though not in name
Exactly the same,—
Is, in mental proportions, a Hop o' my Thumb.

Moral.

Parents! when to the worst affairs seem tending,
Despair not, they are on the eve of mending!
Ogres! who are to murder children prone,
Take care the innocents are not your own!
Ye wives! whose husbands are away from home,
Believe not those who with false tidings come!
And, little people! shrink not, or refuse,
To do your best to walk in great ones' shoes!
Such are the moral warnings, that have come
From this brief history of Hop o' my Thumb!





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