

HOME TREASURY

GRUMBLE
AND CHERRY.

JOSEPH CUNDALL

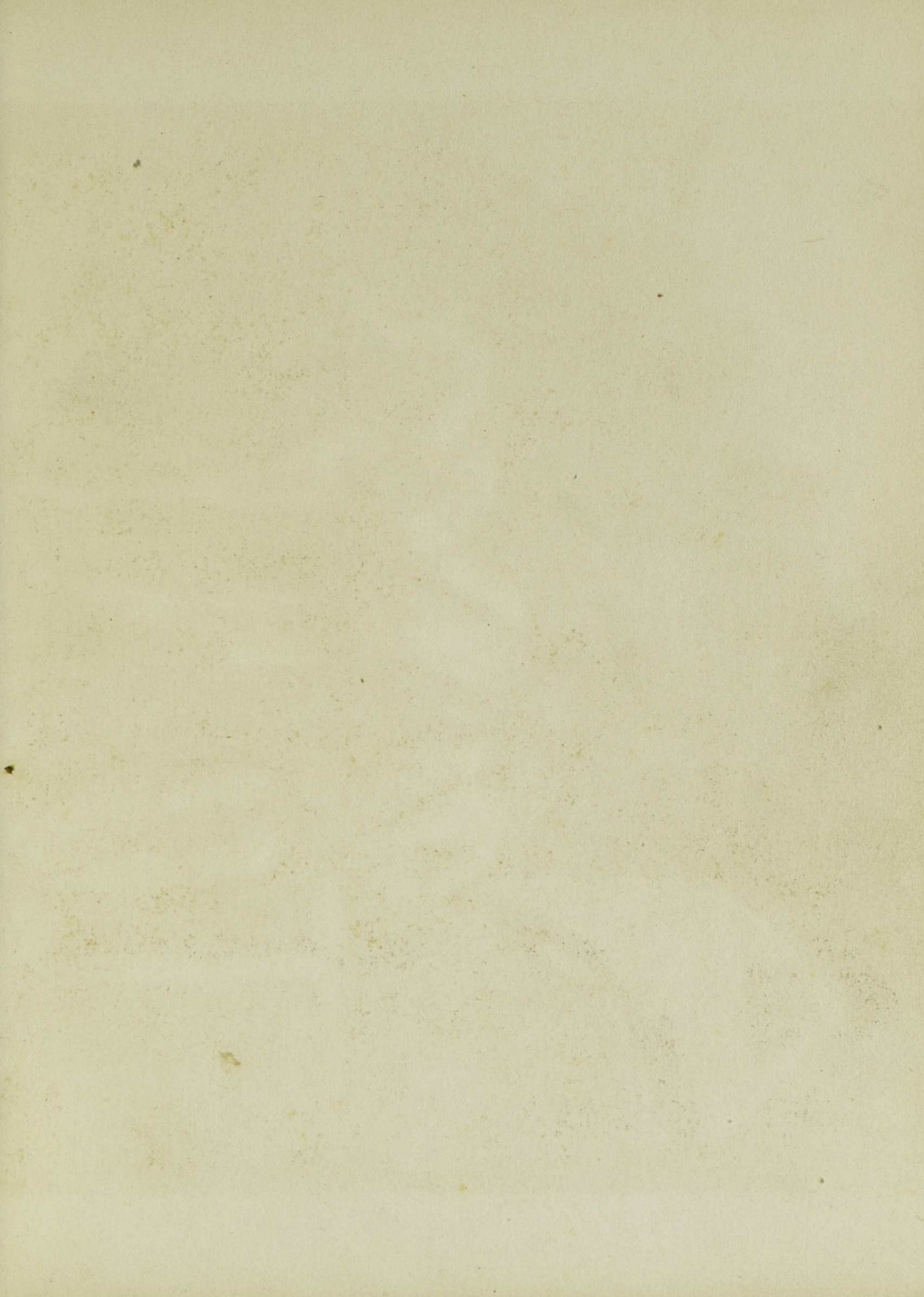
TOYS

FAIRIES

BALLADS

TALES

P. Browne.





The Home Treasury.

GRUMBLE AND CHEERY
AND
THE EAGLE'S VERDICT.

NEW FAERY TALES.

EDITED BY



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GRUMBLE AND CHEERY.



RUMBLE and Cheery kept a large mill between them, which was built on one of those little islands to be met with in the river Thames, near the town of Maidenhead. Every one in the neighbouring village looked upon Cheery as the kindest, merriest soul alive.—But Grumble was not in very good favour—for he always found fault with the times—the weather—the neighbours—the mill—Madame Grumble, or his partner, Cheery. Somehow or another accidents seemed to fall thicker on him than on any one else. Folks said if it were not for Cheery, bread and cheese would

be scarce at the Mill: for Grumble's sole delight seemed to be to stroll about with his hands in his pockets, doing nothing but grumble, grumble, grumble; while Cheery worked and sung as blithe as a skylark.

One bright morning, Cheery and Grumble set off to Reading market, to buy a horse.

As they walked, they passed by a turn of the road, where there was a small narrow cave in the chalky side of a hill, all fringed about with box trees, and as they drew near it, two or three very shrill voices screamed out, "Let us out, masters, let us out! here we stay at your mercy!"

Grumble said, "Get out as you got in—who's to blame but yourselves?" but Cheery said, "Nay—Grumble—if one won't help another, how shall we live?"

Then Cheery turned towards the mouth of the cave, and found a great lump of chalk

had rolled down close against it, so that one could not get in or out. He set his shoulders well to work, and he halloed loudly to those inside, saying, "push, push away, my fine fellows," and after heaving the great stone three or four times, away it rolled, and left the mouth of the cave open.

Out from the cave walked three fat little men, the queerest little fellows possible, with long hair, long noses, long chins, and very long hands. And as they came out, they danced and sprang about like young frogs. Then one said, "Soft! here's master Cheery who let us out. In return for his kindness, I promise him that the horse he shall buy at market shall have the speed of the wind." "And I," said the second, "say the horse shall never tire under weight or work." And the third little old man promised that after three years service, the horse should run away

with all the ill luck in the house. As he finished, the three little grigs scampered back into the cave as quick as they could, singing in chorus—

“A smiling face and a ready hand
Outweigh the riches of all the land;
For the face gets fat, while the hand doth toil,
Heedless of every one’s chatter or coil.”

Cheery laughed hard enough at the little men’s promises, and Grumble muttered “Ah! ah! promises are ready payment. ’Twas a pity they hadn’t better thanks in their pocket.”

On the two millers trudged to market, and when they got there, they found such strings of horses tied by their tails to be sold, that Cheery could not make up his mind which to buy, and Grumble did not help him, but managed to find some fault with every one of the horses.

After they had been wandering half the day long, quite undetermined what to do, an

odd, grim looking little old man who had been standing with his arms folded, his back against the warm sunnied wall, cried out that his pony (as fat and as sleek as could be) was for sale, and more too, that Cheery should have him at his own price.

Grumble said the pony was much too fat for work—that he was sure he could not be sound—that he'd a vicious eye—that his hind legs were clumsy—here the pony gave him such a switch with his tail that Grumble clapped his hands to his mouth, and of needs held his tongue.

Cheery bought the pony, and paid twenty gold pieces down for him.

So home they went, Grumble in a sad way, and Cheery better pleased every step he took with his purchase.

The next morning, when Cheery went to feed the pony in the manger, there lay the

twenty gold pieces in the bin ; the very same Cheery had paid the day before.

From that day all went well at the mill. The flour was always the earliest in the market, and brought the highest price ; there were more sacks on the pony's back than three horses could carry. Cheery bought a cart ; and let him fill it as heavy as he would, the pony never slacked his pace, but trotted on, and seemed as fresh and as fat after a day's work, as when he was first taken out of the stable.

In a year's time Cheery married a merry little cherry-lipped wife, as lively and sprightly as himself, and things went on so excellently well, that Grumble got worse tempered than ever at having nothing to find fault with. Above all, he had the strongest dislike to the gray pony ; for not long after he had been at the mill, Grumble tried to ride him, and

the pony ducked him in the pond, dragged him through the briers, and soused him at last into a ditch by the mill. So Grumble for a long time brooded over this, but could not find an opportunity for his revenge.

After three years, as the little old men had declared, Cheery's affairs were so thriving that he and Grumble were nearly the head men of the parish, and they were both made overseers of the poor. Cheery was always for kindness to the poor old people, but Grumble was a harsh tyrant, and would never give them an atom more help than he could avoid.

Grumble had never forgiven the pony, and when these millers got rich enough to have other horses, he took it into his head one night to run down to the stable to take the pony out, and kill him in some field far away. He had thought often and often how to harm

the pony, but all his trials had been baffled somehow or another. Sometimes folks were in the stable, at other times the pony was in the fields—then Cheery had the keys of the stable. But this night Grumble had the keys himself: the night was rainy, and the pony was safely housed; and so down he went, creeping along till he reached the stable door. The instant he opened it, out rushed the same three little fat old men whom he and Cheery had met on their way to market, and who had promised so much about the pony. As soon as they saw Grumble, they set up a shout and poked at him with their sticks. Then they danced, then laughed, and pinched and kicked Grumble without mercy. Here they beat him—there they pushed him; and at last they bound him with hay-bands hand and foot. Then they untied the pony, placed Grumble on his back, and telling Grumble he was all

the "bad luck" of the house, bade the pony scamper round and round the world and not to stop until he was told.

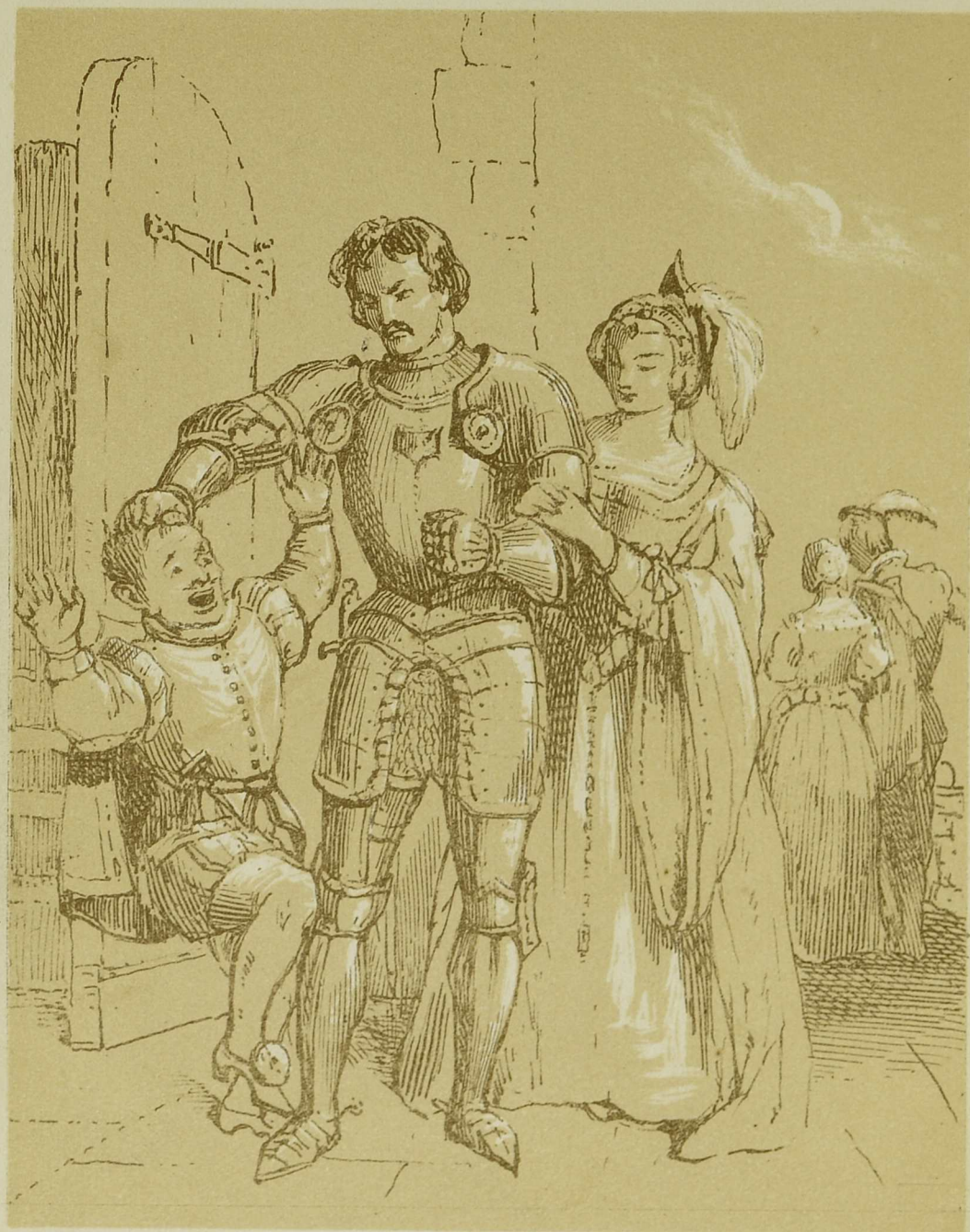
Away went the pony at a quick, uncomfortable, shaking trot, with Grumble tied to his back, and was soon out of sight. Then the three little men danced out at the roof of the stable, and all again was still.

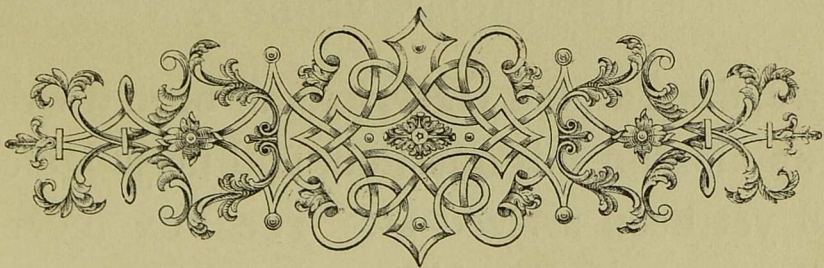
In the morning Grumble could not be found, and as the pony was missing also, some old dame said she thought she had seen Grumble riding through the village the night before. Days passed, weeks passed, months passed, and sometimes a tale was spread in the village, that the pony had been seen trotting through with Grumble on his back. But whenever this happened, something went wrong. At one of Grumble's visits to the village, Tom Tapster's beer turned all sour; at another visit, all the boys and girls were

frightened by the bull ; at a third visit, which was just before Christmas, no mistletoe could be found any where. In short, whenever any body said they had seen Grumble, some ill-luck was found to have happened just at the very time. Until at last, whenever things went wrong in the village, people said, “ Grumble has been riding through to-day.”

As for Cheery, after he had sorrowed for the loss of the pony, every thing was as gay, glad, and thriving with him, and his merry little wife, and his merry, little good children (for after a few years he had ten of them), as any one could wish.

END OF GRUMBLE AND CHEERY.





THE EAGLE'S VERDICT.

NE bright morning in autumn, the Eagle, the king of birds, sent out orders to call together all the birds of his court. The old Owl, the wisest and gravest of counsellors, was to be seen quietly and slowly flapping his wings towards the palace. Every bird from the lonely Bittern to the little Tom-tit, was summoned: for the Eagle had been sorely puzzled at a question of state which his brother king, the Lion, had proposed to him a short time back.

The Lion, and all his court, the Bear, the Dog, the Panther, the Horse, the Fox, the

Hare, the Cat, the Deer, had all been divided in opinion on this question, and no judgment had yet been arrived at. The Fox indeed, had made up his mind long ago, but he would not tell it when he found it was against that of the king. So the Lion, teased and confounded, had vowed that he would ask the advice of the Eagle his brother, and that all should abide by what the Eagle decided.

It happened that the Lion had stood Godfather to the daughter of a very old king to whom the forests belonged where the Lion lived. No fine gifts or rich presents had been sent to the princess, by the Lion as the godfather, for he only had power and plenty in the forest: and he had never stood godfather before; but he had promised his goddaughter, that, if ever she were in need of assistance, be it when and where it would, did she but send him a little mouse with which

he presented her, every thing he could do should be very much at her service.

The old king died when the princess, who was named Blanchflor, was but six years old, and with his last breath he commended her to the care of the king of a neighbouring country, who had been his bosom friend.

The Lion took upon himself to escort the princess to her new home. All the way, day and night, the Lion never left his charge, but marched in dignity by her side : he had not much to say, and what he did was only a renewal of his first promise never to neglect her when she wanted his aid.

So they arrived in safety at their journey's end. Blanchflor found at her new house a princess about her own age, named the lady Florence. The two maidens were always together, they were as fair as fair could be, and were like sisters unto each other. And

the father of the lady Florence loved and treated the lady Blanchflor as his own child. Yet in no ways did the one resemble the other. Blanchflor being fair haired and blue eyed, and Florence had eyes like sloes, and hair as black as the raven's wing. Florence, too, was proud and haughty, but Blanchflor gentle and meek.

Princes from all parts flocked to seek the hands of these princesses in marriage, for the fame of their beauty had gone into all lands, and the old king pressed them to choose their husbands, that he might see them settled and prosperous before he died. Yet though there were so many princes to choose from, neither of the princesses had ever given a single suitor a hope ; for they had secretly and unknown even to each other, pledged themselves away ; Florence to a daring imperious Knight, and Blanchflor to a poor Scholar.

Now one of the princes, who was a suitor to the lady Blanchflor, was a little ugly coxcomb, named Prince Peter. Prince Peter was full of conceit, and great in his own grace: he had wondered and worried himself, why on earth any one could refuse him for a husband, and when he found that he could no-how settle this point to please himself, he went peering about, and bribing all the courtiers to watch and discover why his lady-love continued single.

One moonlit night as Prince Peter sat by the window of his chamber, in the palace, he fancied he heard the voices of two people, walking on the long terrace, leading from the tower in which he was. The palace was quite still otherwise, and as Prince Peter knew that all the inhabitants ought to be in bed, his long ears listened eagerly enough to catch all that was going on. Then he stretched out

his long thin neck, and looked far and wide out of his window, and beneath him saw, by the light of the moon, the lady Blanchflor walking with a stranger.

Both were in close conversation, and Prince Peter's eyes glistened, and he shrugged his shoulders with anger: creeping down stairs on tip-toe he goes as quietly as a thief in the night, hoping to surprise the lady Blanchflor on the terrace, and to see who her companion could be.

But he was obliged to pass through the oaken door at the foot of the stairs which opened from the great hall on to the terrace. As he turned the handle of the door he felt a huge, cold, iron-feeling hand on the crown of his little head. He turned trembling, in great fright, and saw the lady Florence, and a tall Knight in full armour. He made a hop to run back, but the Knight, believing it was

some spy set by the king, seized him, and cuffed him soundly ; and when he did escape it was with sore aching bones. What with his wounds and his grief he did not pass a very pleasant night.

Then he rose with the dawn and gladly had his revenge in revealing all he had seen to the king—how that he had first overheard the lady Blanchflor and her lover—and then how he stumbled on the lady Florence and her Knight.

The old king was greatly grieved and vexed at this news, for he equally loved the two princesses, and he tried hard to persuade them against marrying with any one but those of their own high rank ; but all would not do, for the princess Blanchflor urged her plighted faith with her poor Scholar, and the princess Florence said she would go through the world with her Knight. So, full of care, the

king called his parliament together, and having counselled with it a long time, he proclaimed a decree that “until it was determined which of the maiden’s lovers (the Scholar or the Knight) was best able to govern the kingdom, and make his subjects happy, neither of the maidens should be married :” and the second part of the proclamation declared “that the most worthy of the two should have the kingdom.”

So the news went abroad, and the kingdom was divided into two sets, one crying out for the Knight, and the other for the Scholar. And nothing could be settled by the wise men : for the scholars softened their hearts by eloquence, music, and poetry ; and the knights made their blood run cold with an account of the daring feats they had done.

Oberon here interrupts—

Stop ! Puck ! Stop ! This notion's old,
In bygone times oft told
By FANCY : reach me the Norman Fabliaux
Writ on a roll of vellum centuries ago ;
Turn to membrane sixty—there you'll find
A like contention raised 'tween FORCE and
MIND :

Besides, there's one Leigh Hunt, 'mong modern
men,
Has sung the deeds of Captains Sword, and
Pen.

Well, let it pass ! read on, and end the tale,
Though old the thought, its dressing is not
stale.

Puck resumes reading—

To all quarters messengers were sent by the
old king, but nothing was gained ; for the east
voted for the Scholar, and the west for the
Knight ; the north for the clash of arms,

and the south for the sounds of the lute. The east and south spoke of those that had moved rocks and trees, and stopped the course of waters with their song; the north and west of those that had riven oaks, had torn up mountains, and had slain the Dragon and the Sphinx.

The ladies Florence and Blanchflor no longer loved each other; and whenever they met, it was with sharp looks and angry words. So when the king's counsellors could neither give nor get a decision, but day after day asked time to deliberate; the lady Blanchflor in her distress sent to her godfather the Lion, to tell him what had befallen her, and to beg his interference in the matter. The little mouse of course was the messenger, and straight away he went on his errand, and told the Lion the tale of his mistress's love, and

how that she had said neither peace nor rest could she enjoy, till her Scholar's superiority was established.

Now the Lion felt inclined to say that the Knight was the best, but he did not like to decide against his goddaughter, so he called his council together, and put forth the same question, Whether arts or arms be the best?

What was to be done? Every beast had something to say, from the proud Tiger down to the humble Donkey: and yet, as I said above, no judgment was arrived at. And it was only after many an hour's thought and toil, that the Lion hit upon the idea of asking his sage and aged brother the Eagle for his advice.

So to return to the opening of our story—the Eagle's throne was crowded with his anxious court: and the clerk in court, the

Cuckoo, proclaimed the question, and silence reigned, till the Eagle commanded the discussion to begin.

Then the Knight's chosen champions, the Hawk, the Falcon, and Magpie (the bigger birds reserving themselves if these should not be successful), boldly stood forth to prove their cause with their lives. And the Falcon looking on the Scholar's party contemptuously, said, "We come not, O King! to bandy vain and cheating words: but to do, or die!" and applause rang through the assembly at his bold speech. And Blanchflor's heart began to droop, for some of her friends, the Wren, the Pigeon, and the Goldfinch, crept down under the Falcon's glance. And Florence haughtily smiled in her joy, till the Lark dashed forward and poured forth all his song for the Scholar, and sweeter and sweeter grew his

notes as he went on, till the court were lost in amazement. Then the Nightingale followed, and with his melting tones pleaded so movingly that every one, in spite of themselves, applauded his power, and not a bird could gainsay him. "So music won the day." And the Eagle decreed that Arts were better than Arms.

This verdict came to the Lion. The Lion had wished to decide for his goddaughter Blanchflor, but could not make up his mind that arts were better than arms, but now for his oath's sake he abided by the Eagle's decree. And it was spread through the kingdom what the kings of beasts and birds had settled, and the old king was glad enough to arrive at some conclusion.

So the Scholar and his Learning were preferred to the Knight and his Chivalry. And

despair came over the lady Florence, and she would have died in her grief, but the lady Blanchflor prayed the old king to grant that the Knight might reign equally with the Scholar. So that the one might guard and protect, and the other make laws for the kingdom.

THE minister was proceeding in his reading,
When suddenly Her tiny Majesty

THE QUEEN,

With her troop of quaint spirits and elves,
Were seen to sweep themselves along the
green,

FANCY foremost in the throng.

Lovingly did Oberon Titania greet
When on her cobweb throne she took her seat.
Anon, He, King Oberon, calling FANCY to
his side,

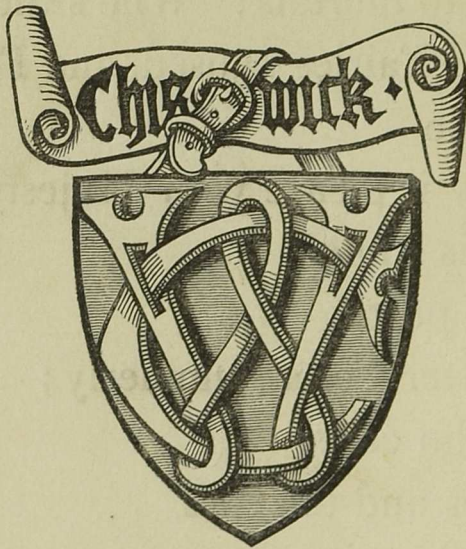


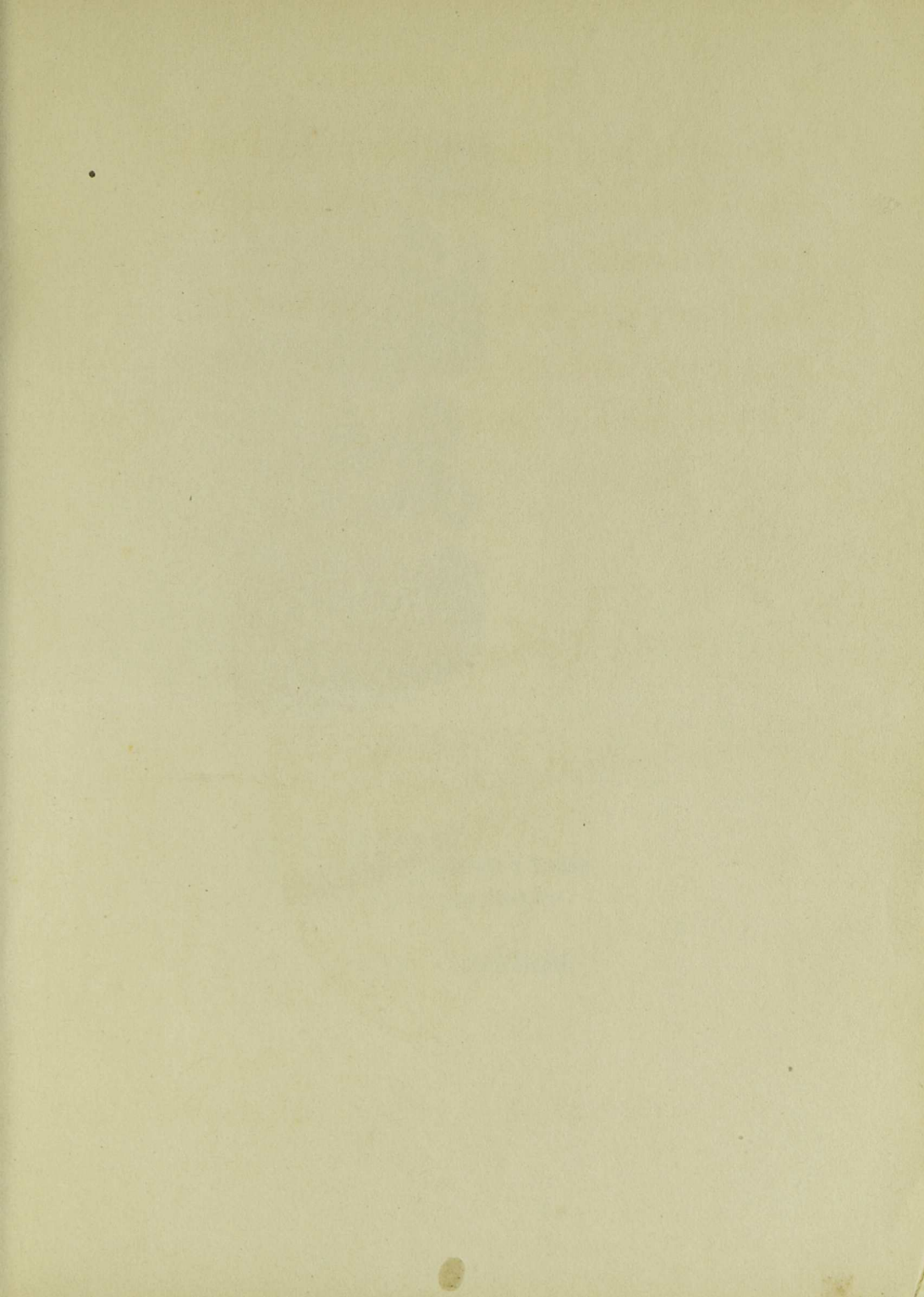
In a most complimentary strain
Declared his pride and delight
In having such a sprite in his train :
He praised her legendary lore,
Which Puck, five minutes before,
Had presented from her store.

“ Who,” said the king, “ shall have the honour
To indite or bring to light
These tales to mortals ? Who’s the wight ?”
The King of Fairies paused, and FANCY with
a smile

Said, “ May it please your Majesty !
I choose this while
To pass the portal
Of one Master Felix Summerly ;
A mortal who cares
For the eyes and the ears
Of all little dears :
And for them prepares my light wares.”

“So let it be,” cried Oberon to Puck.
“In cups of Nectar full to the brink
Let all drink
To Fancy’s new work, Good luck!”
The Fairy rout chorused in tiny shout
“Good luck! Good luck!”





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