

BUNNY & BOBBIE

THEIR STRANGE ADVENTURES



OSB (SA) fol. TOWERS, ALTON
BUNNY... [1907]



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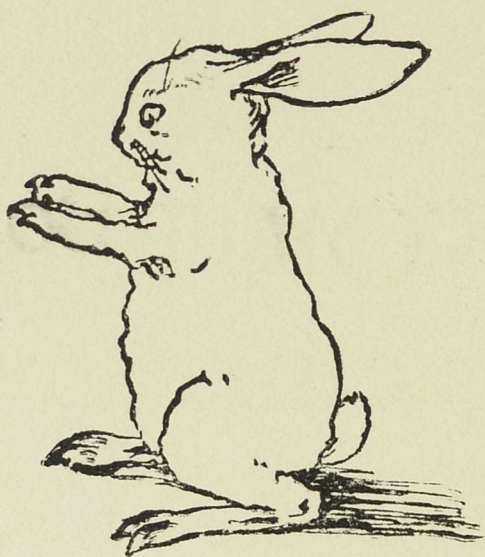
May Robertson

For dear little May
from Aunt Daisy and Uncle Carl

Christmas 1911.



BUNNY AND BOBBIE.



BUNNY & BOBBIE

THEIR STRANGE ADVENTURES IN THE
AIR, ON THE SEA AND ON THE SHORE

BY

ALTON TOWERS

pictures by

H. ROUNTREE

vignettes by

F. STUART

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Bunny and Bobbie :

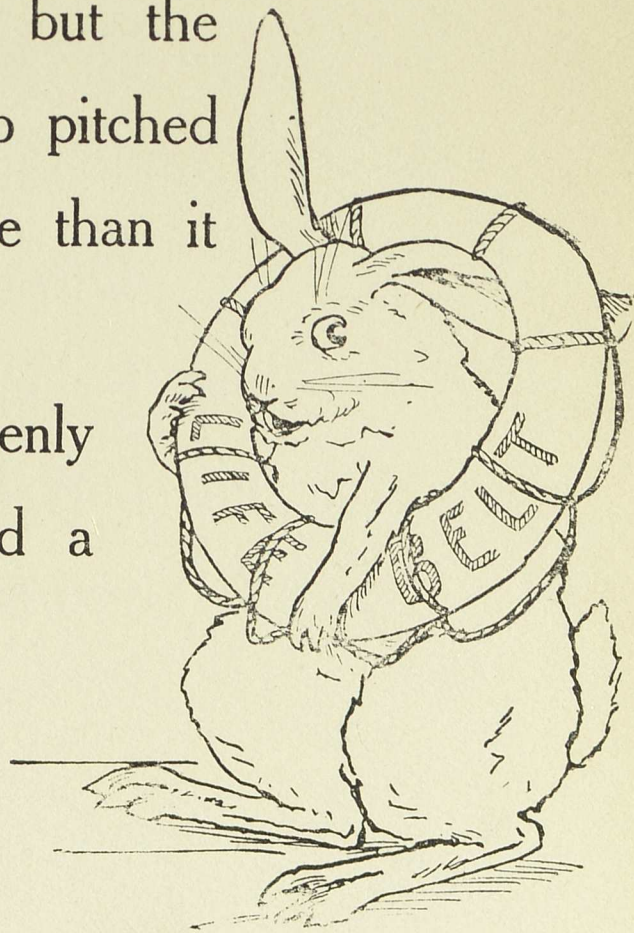
Their Strange Adventures in the Air, on the Sea, and on the Shore.

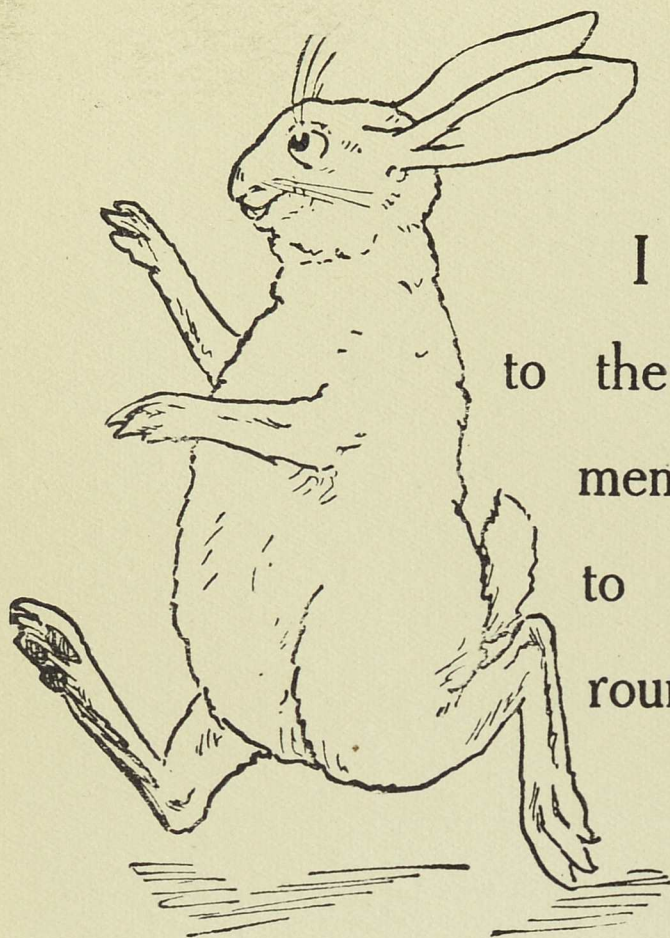
The life of a pet rabbit on board ship is delightful. Especially if you have such a dear friend to play with as Tip, the black cat.

I should have been quite happy to have stayed with my sailor friends and Tip for the rest of my life if the choice had rested with me, but it did not. Now I will tell you how it happened that I had to part from those kind sailors.

I shall never forget that terrible day as long as I live. The weather was bright, but the sea was very rough, and the good ship pitched and tossed on the waves, much more than it had ever done since I came on board.

I was sitting on deck, when suddenly my friend Tip darted out from behind a barrel, anxious for a game of play.



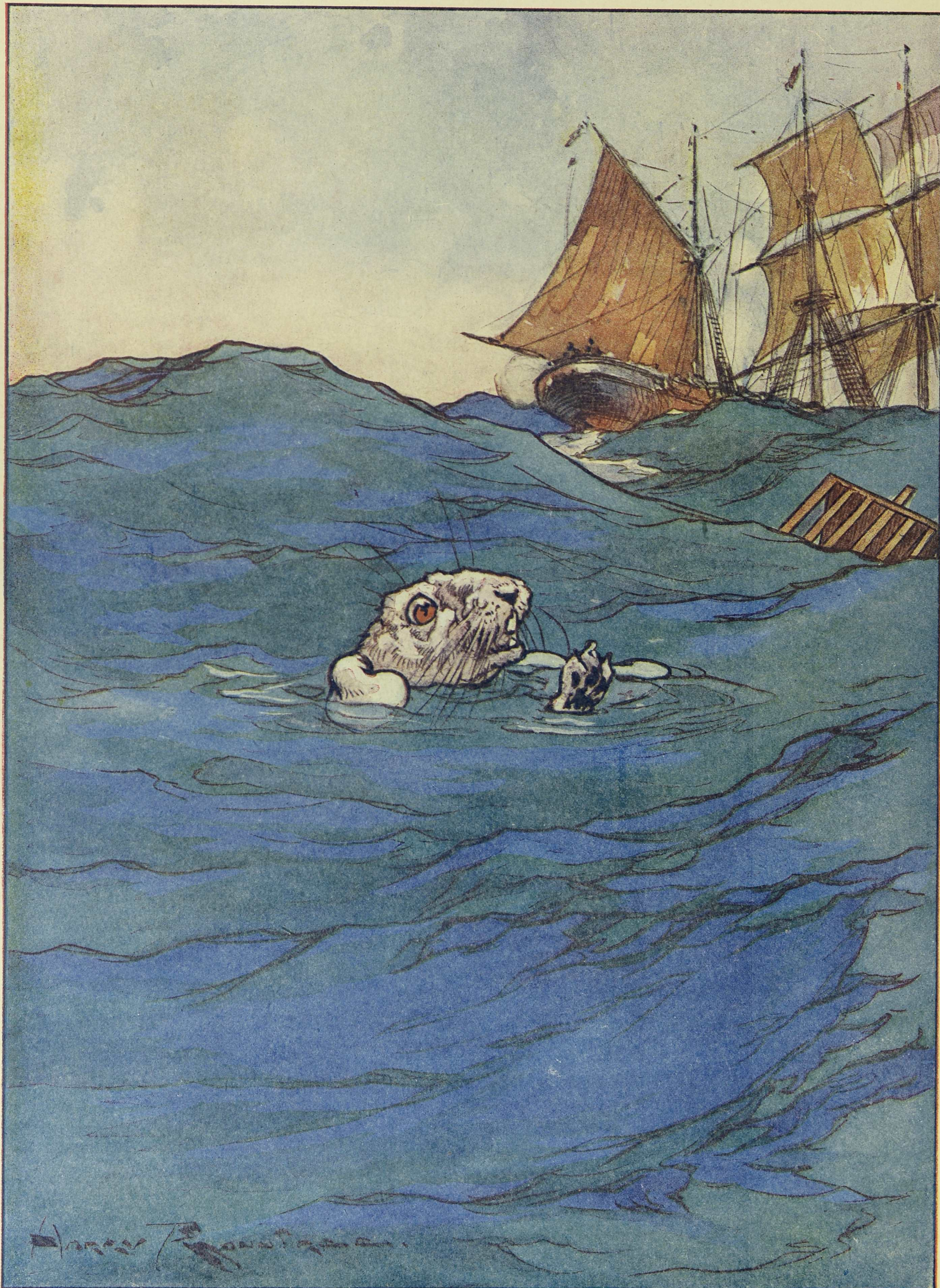


I skipped and hopped about, greatly to the delight of the sailors, who commenced to shout and clap their hands to encourage us. I ran round and round the deck, with Tip after me, dodging in and out of the boxes, barrels, and coils of rope.

The noise that the sailors made, clapping their hands and laughing, so excited me that at last I made a much higher spring than usual, for I felt Tip had almost caught me.

At that moment the ship gave a great roll, and instead of coming down on the deck, plump I went right into the sea.

Down, down, I sank, until I began to think that I should never come up again. It was the first time I had been in the water in my life, so that you may imagine how terrified I was.



Floating towards me a Wooden Coop.

Just when I had given up all hope, I felt myself rising.

Up, up, I came, until at last, spluttering and choking, I found my head above the water.

It felt as though I had been under the sea for hours, but it could not have been a minute, for I saw I was still quite close to the ship.

I commenced to paddle with my paws with all my might in order to keep myself from sinking.

Sometimes I was upon the top of a great wave, and could see the ship distinctly, and then I would sink down, and down, until I could see nothing but water.

Every now and then I caught sight of the sailors looking over the side of the vessel, but I expect I was so small they were unable to see me, and the ship was getting further and further away every minute.

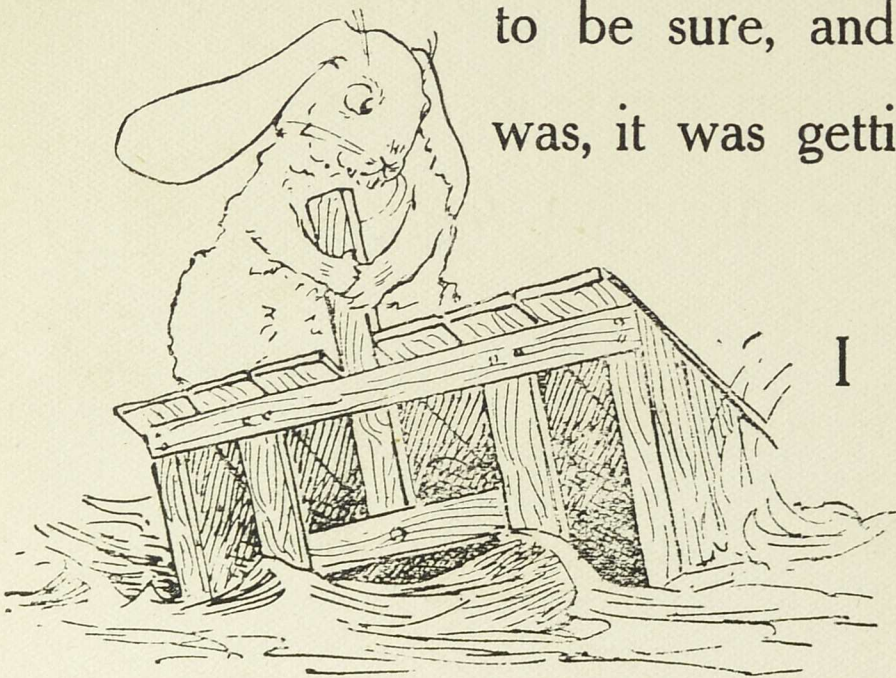
I am afraid my friends must have given me up for lost, for the vessel gradually disappeared, and I was left to my fate in that rough sea.

I kept paddling away, until at last I felt so exhausted I thought I must surely sink, and I knew that if I did, I should never come up again.

Just as I had given myself up for lost, I saw floating towards me a wooden coop, which I had often seen on board with chickens in it, and which doubtless the sailors had thrown overboard in the hope that it might be of service to me. I struck out, and soon reached it, and with some difficulty I managed to scramble on to the top.

Oh! how cold, and wet, and miserable I was to be sure, and what made matters worse was, it was getting dark.

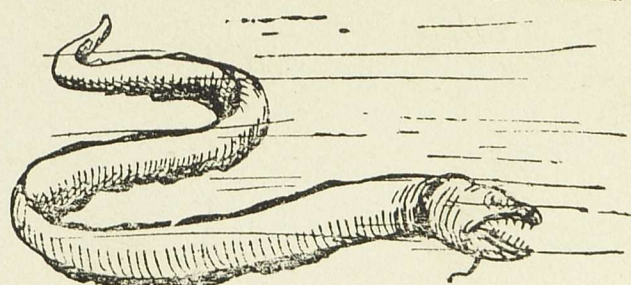
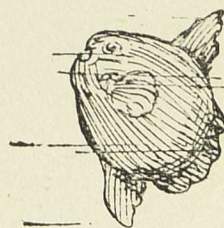
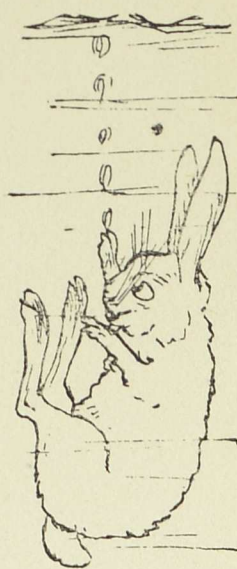
Time went on, and though I began to feel sleepy, I



was too frightened to go to sleep for fear of falling off the coop.

However, I must have fallen into a doze at last, for I thought I was once more on the ship, curled up in my comfortable box full of hay, when all of a sudden I felt myself sinking. This time I did not seem to care whether I went to the bottom or not, and when the water closed over me I felt quite warm and comfortable.

I began to look around me, and I could see all sorts of queer looking fish swimming by, but they did not seem to take any notice of me. I felt very lonely, and was wishing that some of the strange fish would speak to me, when I saw swimming towards me, the most lovely creature I had ever seen. It had the head of a beautiful girl, with long golden hair that floated gracefully in the water, but the body was the body of a fish, all covered with silvery scales.



When it came near me it spoke, and I have never heard a more beautiful voice.

“Little Rabbit,” it said, “you are from earth; are you going to visit the great coral caves, where I and my sisters live?”

I said I did not know where I was going to, but I should very much *like* to see the coral caves, and also her beautiful sisters.

“Jump on my back,” she said, “and we will soon be there.”

I did as I was told, and she dived down at such a rate that it was as much as I could do to keep my place. Soon we arrived at what I took to be the bottom of the sea.

Shells of all sorts and sizes, and of the most lovely colours, were lying on the sand, and from the rocks there grew the most beautiful flowers, which my friend told me were called sea-anemones.



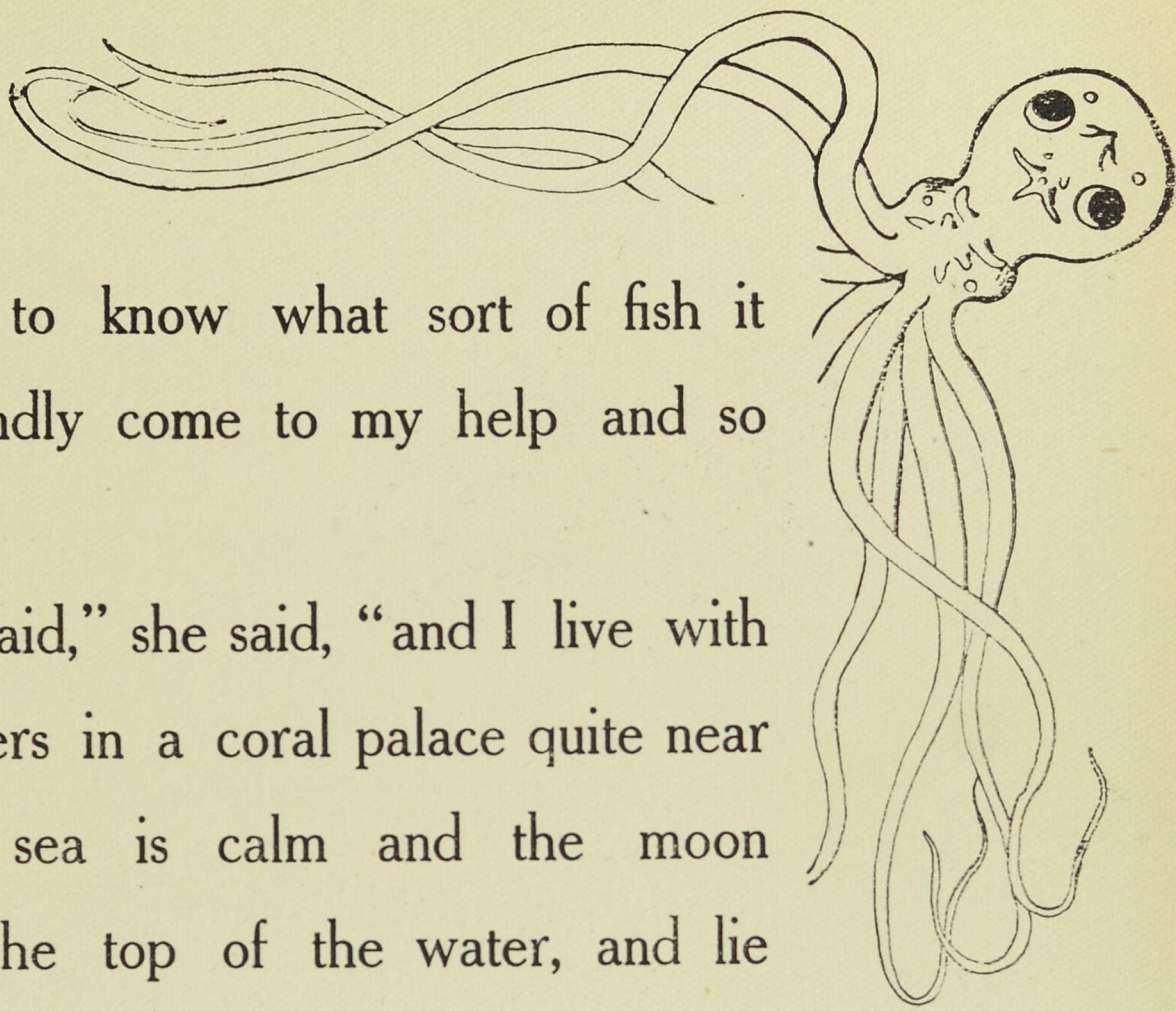
Clinging to Her Back.

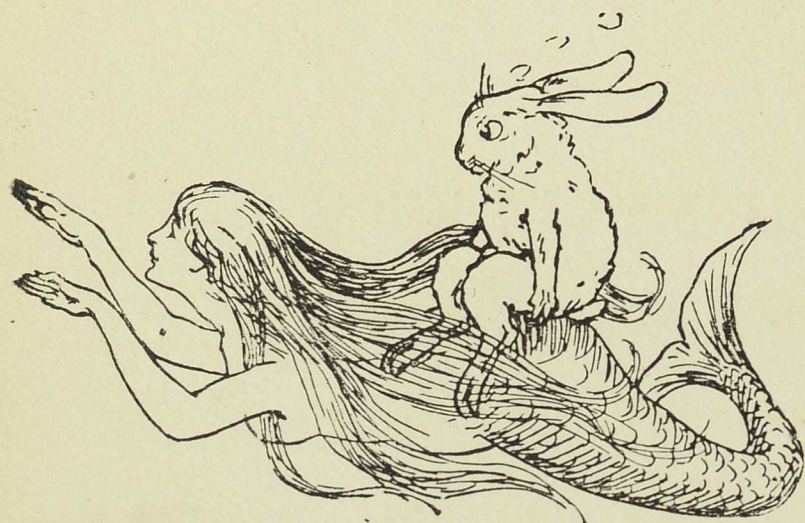
I felt curious to know what sort of fish it was who had so kindly come to my help and so I asked her.

“I am a mermaid,” she said, “and I live with my mother and sisters in a coral palace quite near here. When the sea is calm and the moon shines, we go to the top of the water, and lie on the rocks and sing; then we see the ships passing with the sailors on them. Sometimes we venture on the shore and see the strange creatures there; that is how I knew you were a rabbit and came from the earth.”

I was just about to ask the mermaid a lot more questions, when she cried out, “Come quickly or we are lost! See, my enemy the octopus, is here!” and she began to tremble all over.

I looked in the direction in which she was looking, and I saw a creature that made me tremble too. It had eight very long and very thick arms





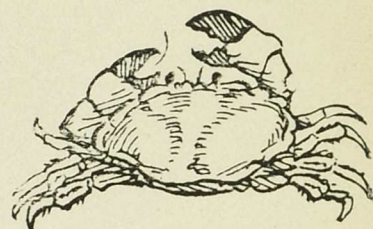
coming from a round body, in the centre of which were two bright, fierce-looking eyes, and a mouth just like the beak of a bird.

As the horrid-looking monster came nearer, the little mermaid darted off with me still clinging to her back, and swam along swiftly until we were safe inside a cave.

“The octopus,” said the mermaid, “is the terror of these parts. Once he gets those dreadful arms round you, there is no escaping him, and he crushes you to death. He killed one of my poor little sisters not long ago.”

We stayed some time in the cave until we thought the octopus had gone, then I got on the mermaid's back once more, and we set off again for her home.

It was not long before we came to a most



beautiful rock, the colour of it was a lovely pinkish red. The mermaid swam through an archway in the rock, and we were in what looked like a large room, the floor of which was covered with fine white sand. She bade me jump down, saying "This is my home, the coral palace."

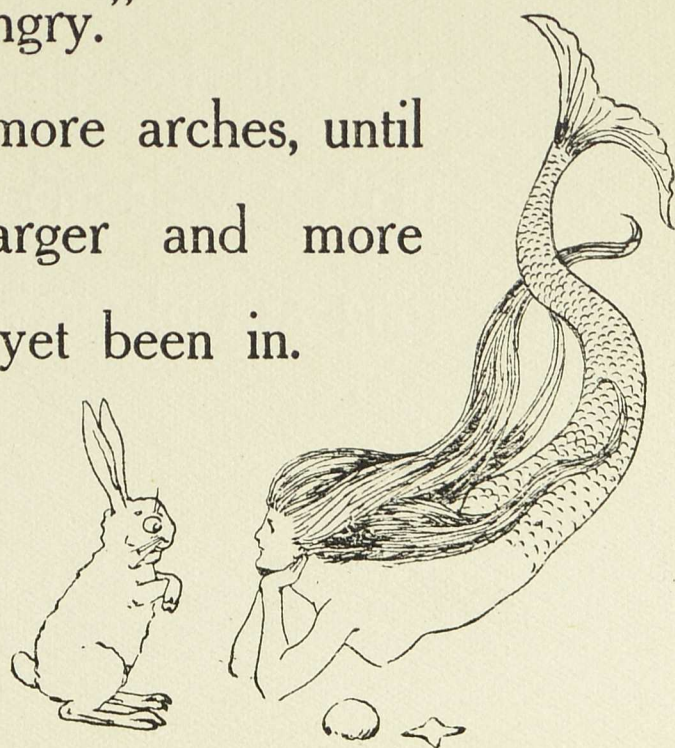
"What a wonderful place!" I said. "Who do you get to build you such a lovely house?"

"Little creatures called coral-insects built our palace," answered the mermaid.

"How wonderful! Are there many beautiful palaces like yours with walls of such lovely colours, and twisted pillars and archways?" I asked.

"Thousands and thousands," said my friend. "But come and see my mother and sisters, it is dinner time, and you must be hungry."

We passed through several more arches, until at last we entered a much larger and more beautiful room than any we had yet been in.



Round a table of rock, covered with a green, seaweed-cloth, were six mermaids, just like my friend.

“These are my sisters,” said my guide. “Mother will be here directly, and then we shall be able to have dinner.”

The six mermaids all said they were very pleased to see me, and made room for me at the table beside their sister.

Opposite to me I saw an archway from which hung curtains of a lovely copper-coloured seaweed, presently they were parted in the centre, and a much larger and more beautiful mermaid entered.

“This is my mother,” said my friend, and she told her parent how she had met me. The mother welcomed me, and said I might stay as long as I pleased. Just then eight large fish swam



I have never tasted it, Madam.

in, each with a big shell in its mouth, which they placed in front of the mermaids, and one in front of myself.

I looked anxiously at the shell for I was very hungry, and what was my dismay, when I saw nothing but a heap of little silvery fish that the mermaids all began to eat with great relish.

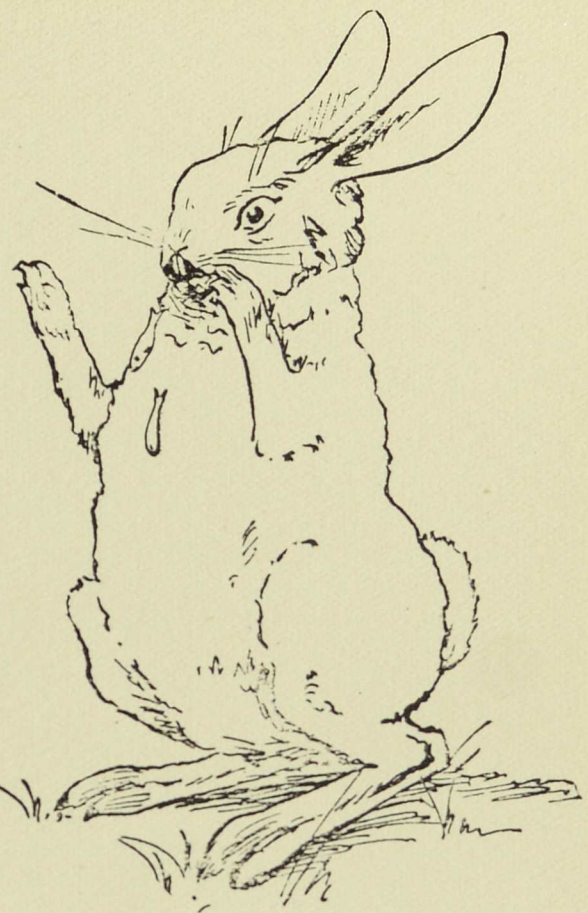
“Don’t you take whitebait?” asked the mother in surprise, as she saw me looking ruefully at my plate.

“I have never tasted it, madam,” I answered.

“Then you should,” she said, so of course, I felt bound to try.

Oh, how horrible it was to be sure, so cold, and salt, that it made me feel quite ill.

As the whole meal was nothing but different



kinds of fish, I had no dinner at all. The mother was much distressed, and turning to the mermaid who brought me, she bade her go to their treasure room with me, and see if there was anything I fancied.

She at once led me through several rooms, each containing a couch made of rock and covered with seaweed; these my friend told me were their bedrooms.

At last, we entered a very large chamber, filled with every sort of curiosity it is possible to imagine.

There were gold and silver cups, gold and silver and copper coins, swords, guns, chairs, tables, clocks, tins of all sorts of food, and hundreds of other things.

I was very curious to know where all these

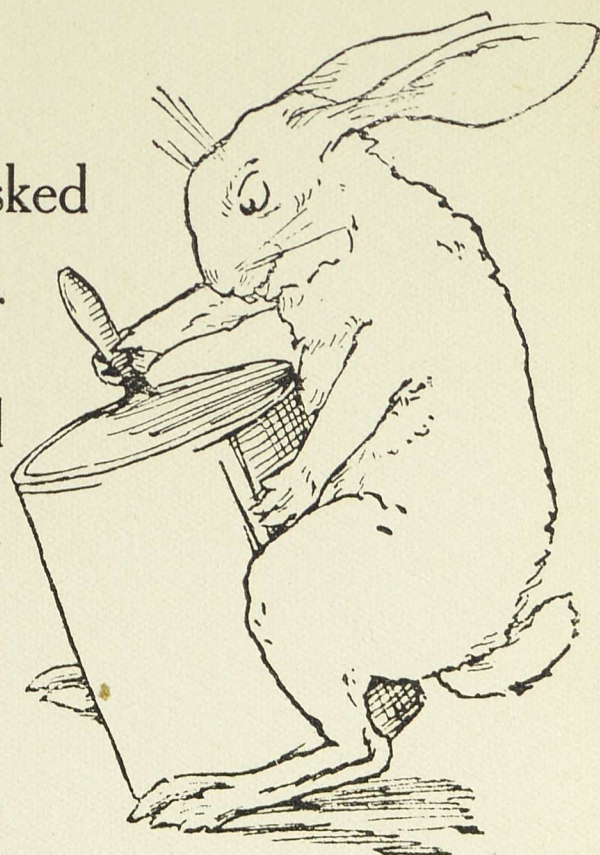
things came from, and when I asked my friend, she told me that they had been collected at different times from the wrecks of ships that were always coming down to the bottom of the sea.

“See,” said the little mermaid, “if there is anything you can eat.”

I looked round and saw all sorts of tinned food, but nothing I had ever eaten. I was just going to give up searching any more, when I spied a tin with a picture of a carrot upon it.

I chose this, and when it was opened, what was my delight to see a lot of lovely, fresh-looking carrots that I ate greedily.

After I had finished, my friend asked me if I would like to go and see their fisheries. Of course I said “Yes,” and off we started. At every step I took,



hundreds of little fish, which the mermaid told me were shrimps, darted out of the sand.

My guide was going on in front to show me the way, when I heard her suddenly give a piercing shriek. I ran on as fast as I could, and imagine my horror when I saw an enormous fish with a tremendous mouth coming straight at her. The hideous mouth, which was full of cruel sharp teeth was wide open, and in another minute the terrible monster would have swallowed my beautiful little friend.

I saw there was no time to lose, and making a spring I fixed my teeth firmly in the white part underneath the monster. This startled him so much that it gave the mermaid time to get to a place of safety, and as I felt the fish commence to rise, I let go my hold, and sank to the sand



I fixed my Teeth firmly.

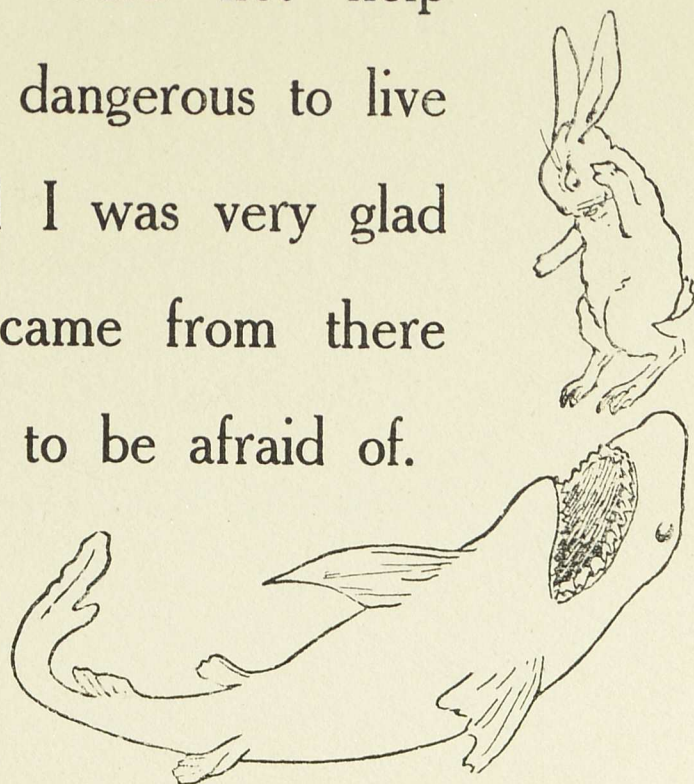
again, and it was not long before I found the mermaid.

It was a terrible fish called a shark, from which I had saved her, she told me. A fish that is dreaded by man as well as the inhabitants of the deep. So large and fierce is it that it has been known to bite a man in half!

After this adventure we returned to the coral palace, where the mother-mermaid thanked me very warmly for saving her daughter's life.

I said that I was only too pleased to have been of any service to her.

After these adventures, I could not help thinking that it was much more dangerous to live under the sea than on land, and I was very glad that in the country where I came from there were no sharks, and no octopus to be afraid of.



Then the mother-mermaid told me of sea-serpents, that were hundreds of yards long; jelly fish that could sting you to death; giant crabs and lobsters, and of scores of horrible creatures, till my blood ran cold just to hear about them.

All these tales made me wish to return to earth again, and I asked the mother-mermaid if she could tell me how to get there.

She very kindly offered to lend me her carriage and sea-horses, which she said should take me to the shore.

The carriage was ordered, and my little friend offered to come part of the way with me.

When the carriage arrived, it was the funniest conveyance I had ever seen! It was made of an enormous shell, there were no wheels, and from the front were fastened two very long cords.

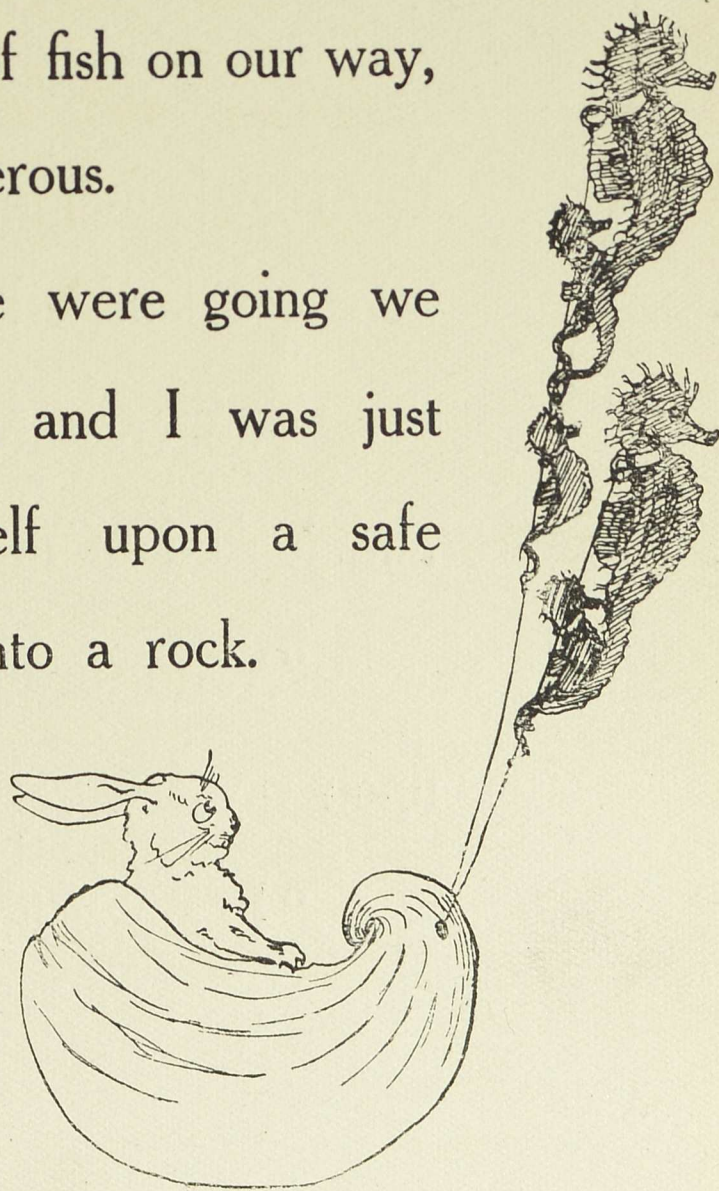
The horses were the most curious of all; they were quite small, and had heads something like the horses on land, but they had no feet. Instead they had a tail which they curled round the ropes, fifty on each rope.

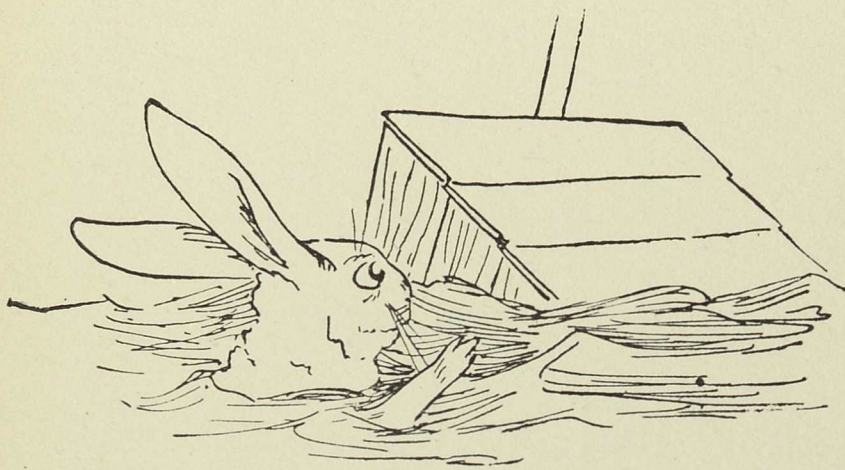
After bidding the mermaids good bye, I jumped in and off we started, with my friend swimming at the side of the strange carriage.

Up! up! up! we went at a tremendous pace, passing hundreds and hundreds of fish on our way, but luckily none that were dangerous.

I knew that at the rate we were going we should very soon reach the top, and I was just beginning to congratulate myself upon a safe journey, when bang! we went into a rock.

The collision upset the carriage, and I found myself in the





water ; when I'd recovered sufficiently to look round, there was no carriage, and no mermaid ; nothing but the old hen coop !

I felt quite dazed, and began to wonder if it were possible that I had been asleep on the coop, and had dreamt that I had been to the bottom of the sea with the mermaid.

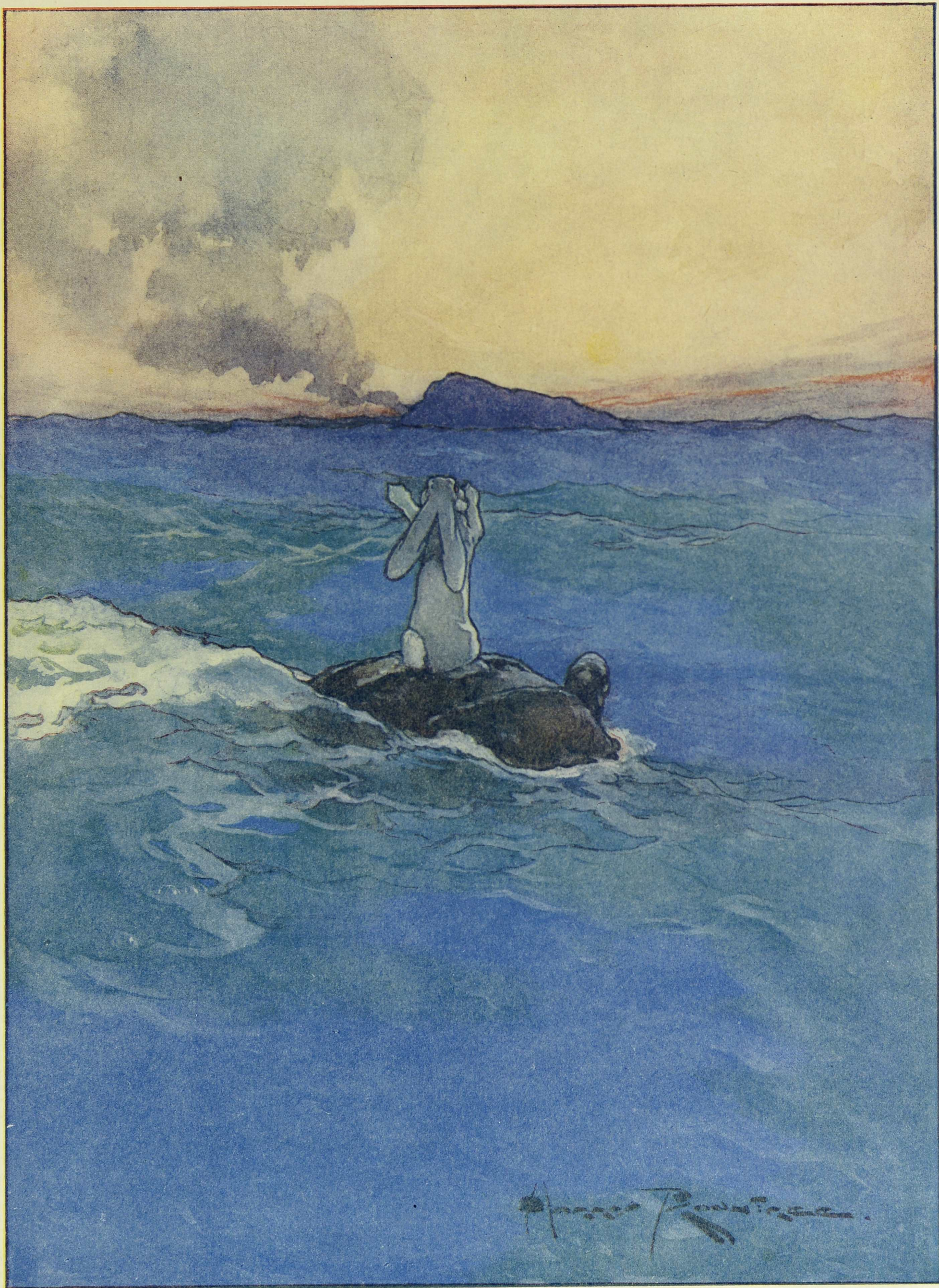
But what had thrown me into the water ?

As I paddled about, I saw a large, flat, black thing swimming close to me, and without more ado, I scrambled upon its back.

The creature lifted up a funny, horny head and looked at me.

"Who are you, and what are you doing upon my back, I should like to know ?" it asked.

"I am Billy Bunce, the white rabbit, and



I Scrambled upon its Back.

you upset my coop, and threw me into the water,”
I answered.

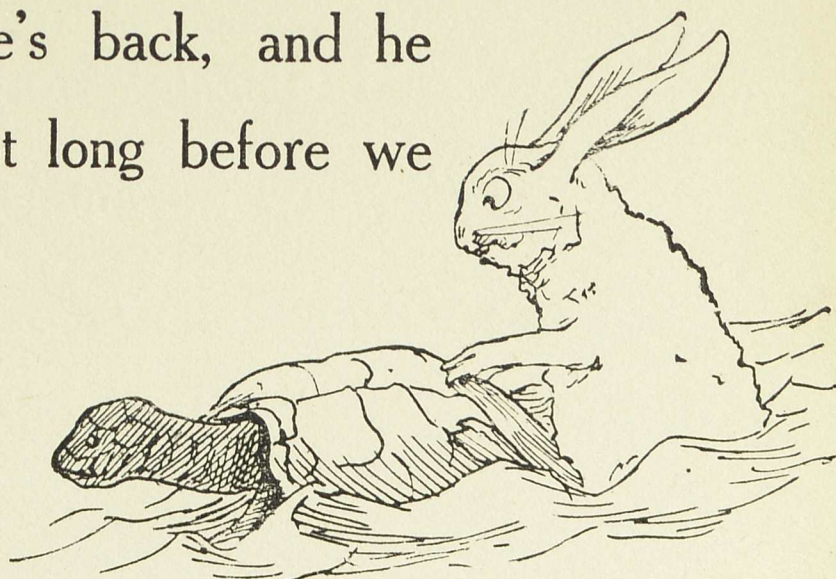
“Very sorry, I’m sure,” said the strange creature, “I’m on my way to land, to sun myself, so stay where you are, and I will take you safely.”

“It is very good of you,” I said, “I have never seen anyone like you before, would you mind telling me who you are?”

“Not at all,” said my friend. “I am a turtle, my family live on that island, in fact it is called Turtle Island.”

I looked towards the land, and in the distance I could see smoke rising, which made me think that perhaps there were men there also.

I sat still upon the turtle’s back, and he swam so swiftly that it was not long before we reached the shore.



I can tell you I was very glad to be on the dry land again, and I thanked the turtle for his kindness.

“Not at all,” he said politely, “glad to have you at any time for a passenger. Ah! there’s my wife waving her flapper to me, she has a party on this afternoon, and I know she wants me to hand round the seaweed sandwiches. You had better come, I know she will be pleased to see you.”

The turtle had been so good, that I could not very well refuse his invitation, although I would rather have explored the island to find out what kind of a place it was.

“You are very kind,” I said, and I trotted along by the curious creature’s side.

He could swim very swiftly in the sea, but I never saw an animal so slow upon land, I thought we should never reach the other turtles.

“My dear,” said the turtle to his wife, when we arrived, “I have brought this gentleman to tea.”

“Then I wish you hadn’t,” said Mrs. Turtle irritably, “how many times have I told you not to bring strangers unexpectedly, it is most annoying, you know how scarce seaweed is, and as he looks hungry, I’m sure I shan’t have enough to go round.”

I felt very uncomfortable.

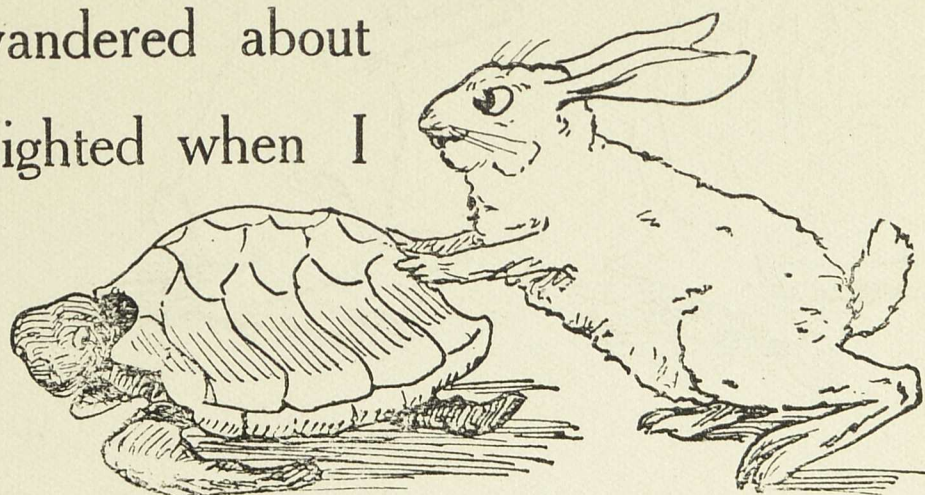
“Madam,” I said, “pray don’t upset yourself, I never eat seaweed.”

“My dear,” said Mr. Turtle, “this really is very rude, I’m surprised.”

“Are you?” snapped Mrs. Turtle, “then I’m not; it’s your own fault.”

Soon after this I made an excuse to get away.

For some time I wandered about the island, and I was delighted when I

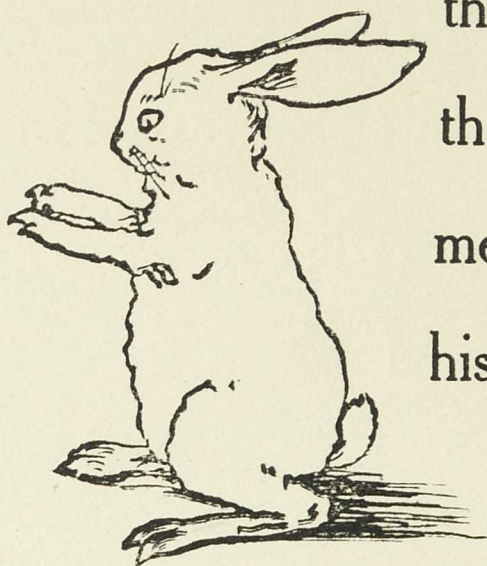
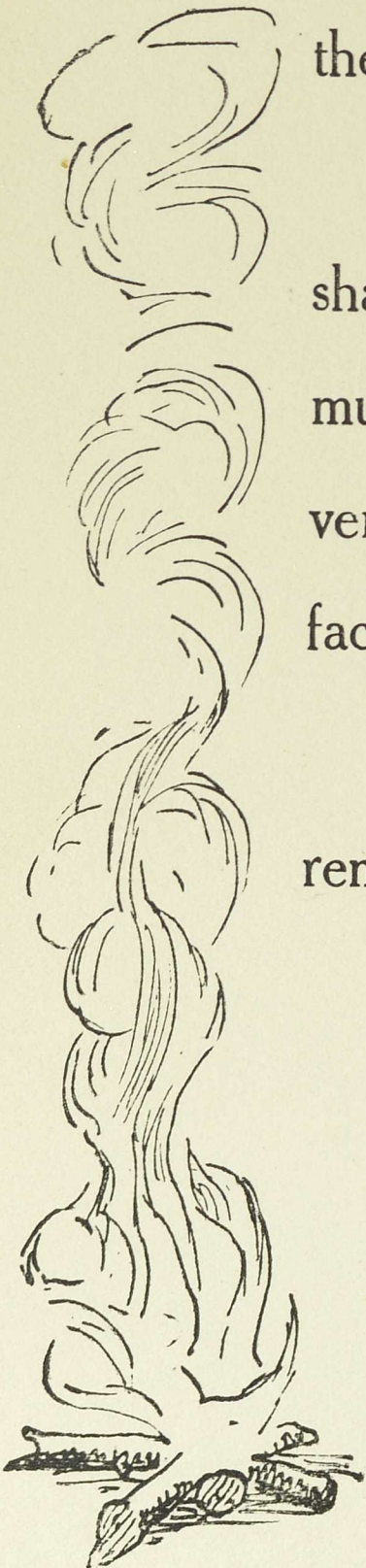


found some nice juicy roots, which I ate ravenously, for I was very hungry.

I ran about until night came, and was just wondering where I should sleep, when I came upon the fire I had seen burning whilst I was upon the turtle's back at sea.

Beside it sat a little curly-headed boy in a shabby blue sailor suit. He had on a pair of much worn boots, but no stockings. He looked very sad and lonely, but directly he saw me his face brightened up.

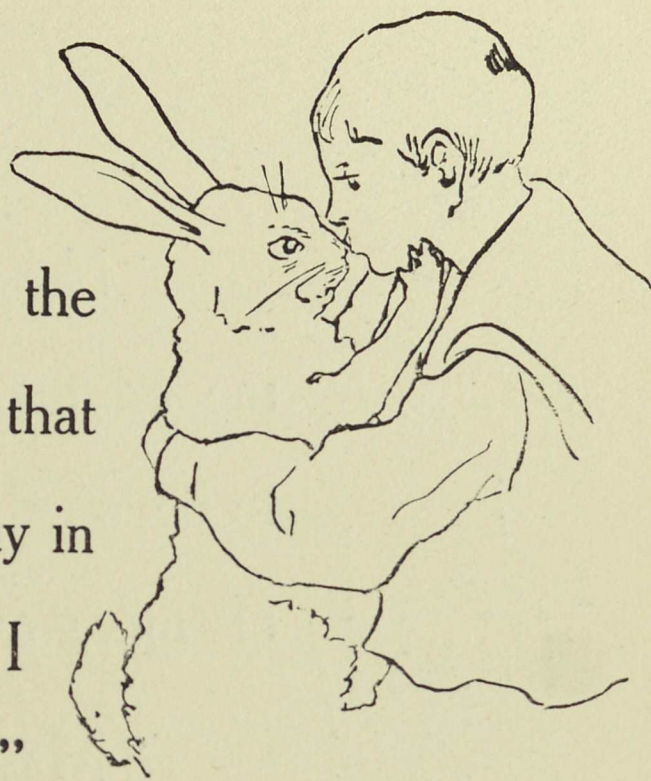
"Oh, bunny, bunny," he cried, "you do so remind me of home. You are the very image of the dear little white rabbit that my mother once bought me, and who escaped from his hutch one day.





Sat a Curly-headed Boy.

“But, of course, you cannot be the same little bunny,” he went on, “for that is hundreds and hundreds of miles away in a country called England. Oh! how I do wish I were back there once again.”



I could scarcely believe my ears. I looked again, and sure enough it was Master Bobbie, the very same little boy I had belonged to before I escaped!

“I *am* Billy Bunce, your very own white rabbit,” I said.

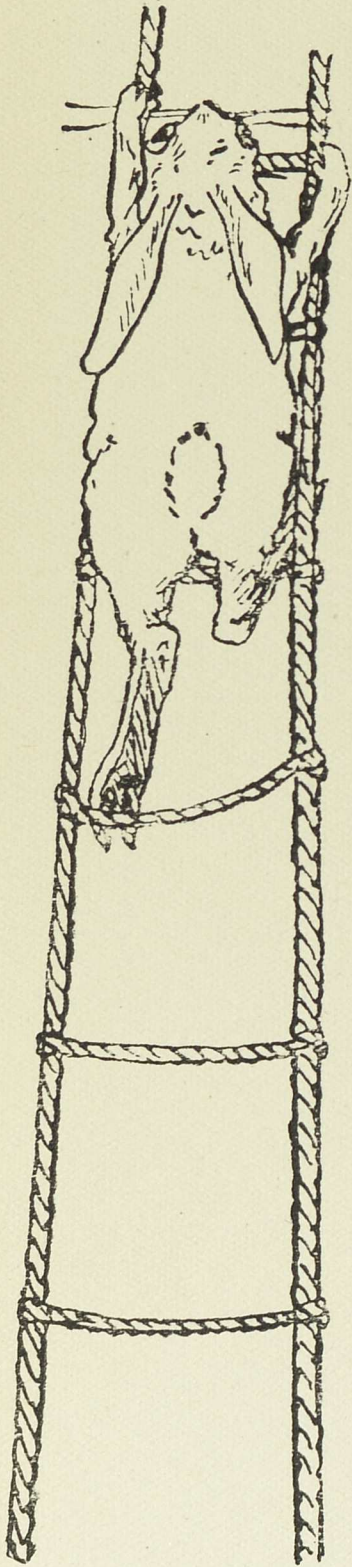
I never saw anyone so delighted as Master Bobbie was when he found I really was the same little rabbit that his mother had bought him so long ago.

He caught me up in his arms, and kissed, and hugged me, until I had hardly any breath left in my body.

“Now, do tell me, Billy,” he said, as he placed me on the ground near the fire, “how you came to be on this desert island, hundreds and hundreds of miles away from home?”

“Master Bobbie,” I said, as he settled himself down to listen, “I was very unhappy after you bought me ; you soon grew tired of me and gave up coming to see me, so I made up my mind to escape. I did this as you know by gnawing a hole in the bottom of my hutch.

“Then I ran away into the country, and after many adventures, I fell in with a queer bird called a Toucan who showed me the way to the seashore. We were to have travelled together to a place called Brazil, but somehow I got on to the wrong ship, and found myself going to a dreadfully cold country, called Greenland.



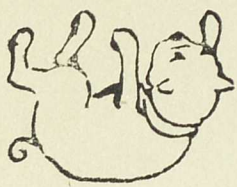
I managed to escape from the ship and get on shore, but the ground was all covered with snow, and I was nearly starved to death when two dear little Esquimaux children found me, and saved my life. They showed me the way to the seashore again, and I managed to get on board another ship.

I was made a great pet of by the sailors, and I had such a nice friend and playmate called Tip, a large black cat. I was very happy indeed until one sad day when I fell overboard, and was nearly drowned, indeed I should have been, had not a friendly turtle brought me on his back to this island."

Master Bobbie was very much interested with all my adventures, but he told me that his adventures were much more wonderful, and so I was most anxious to hear how it was he came to be on the island.

“One day, soon after you ran away,” said Bobbie, “my mother promised to take me to the Crystal Palace for a birthday treat. When we got there, I begged to be allowed to go up in a large balloon that was held to the earth by a long piece of rope, so that it could not get very far away. After a lot of coaxing my mother let me get into the balloon, and I took Peter, our pug dog, for company.

“There were two gentlemen and a little girl as well. I enjoyed myself very much floating about in the air above all the people until I heard a great shout from the crowd below. I looked over the edge of the basket-work car, and at first I thought they were shouting at two monkeys who had escaped and were climbing up the rope that held the balloon to the ground. But I found that the rope





Floating about in the Air.

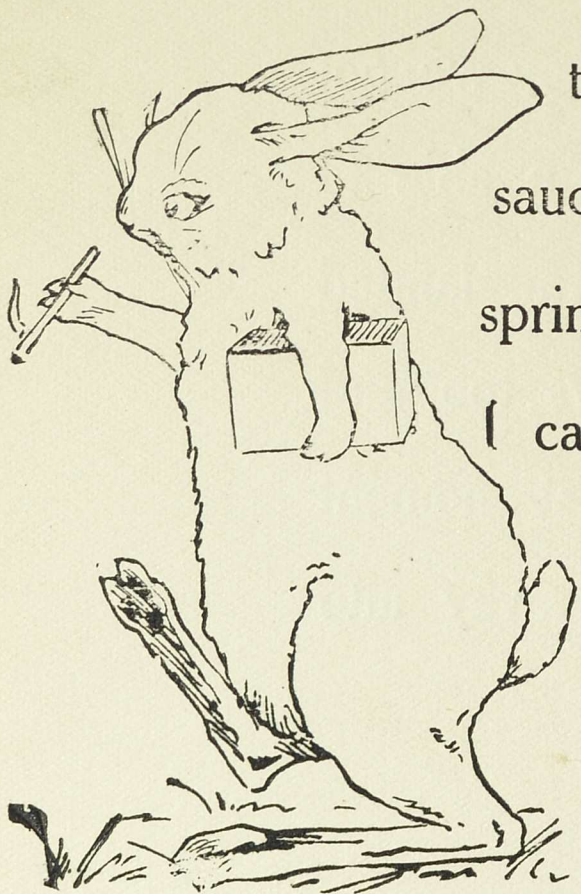
had broken and the balloon was shooting up into the air. Just at that moment, the monkeys reached the car, and jumped in, which so frightened poor Peter that he jumped out, and of course I have never seen him again.

“On, on, we floated over London, across the country, and over the sea, until we came to land again. The poor little girl was dreadfully frightened, and the two gentlemen did all they could to comfort her. Soon the balloon began to descend, and the gentlemen let down a sort of anchor, which caught in some trees, then we got so near the earth that the gentlemen were able to jump out, and help the little girl, they all landed safely upon the ground and the monkeys too, and I should have done the same, but at that moment the wind sprang up and whirled me away into the air again.

“On, and on, I went over the sea and over more land, through the day, and through the night, until I became so tired that I fell asleep. The next thing I remember was a great bump, that woke me up, and I found myself here.

“When I had recovered my senses sufficiently to look round, I saw the balloon was all torn to pieces. Out of the remains I made a tent house, and some netting I found in the car of the balloon I turned into a hammock to sleep in. Luckily I had some matches in my pocket, so I was able

to light a fire. I also came across a saucepan on the shore, and there was a spring of fresh water quite near to where I came down, so that I have been able to cook the fish I have caught at different times, which has kept me from starving.”

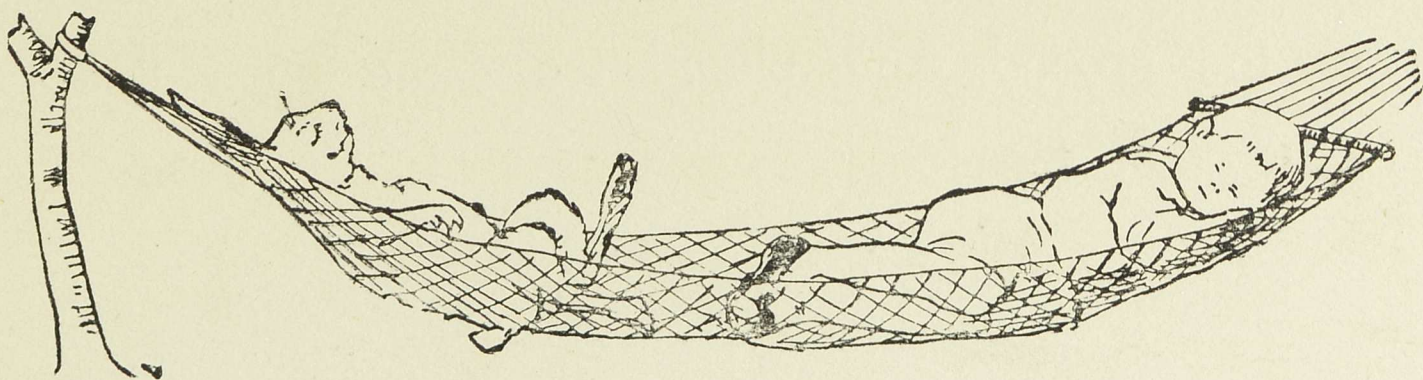


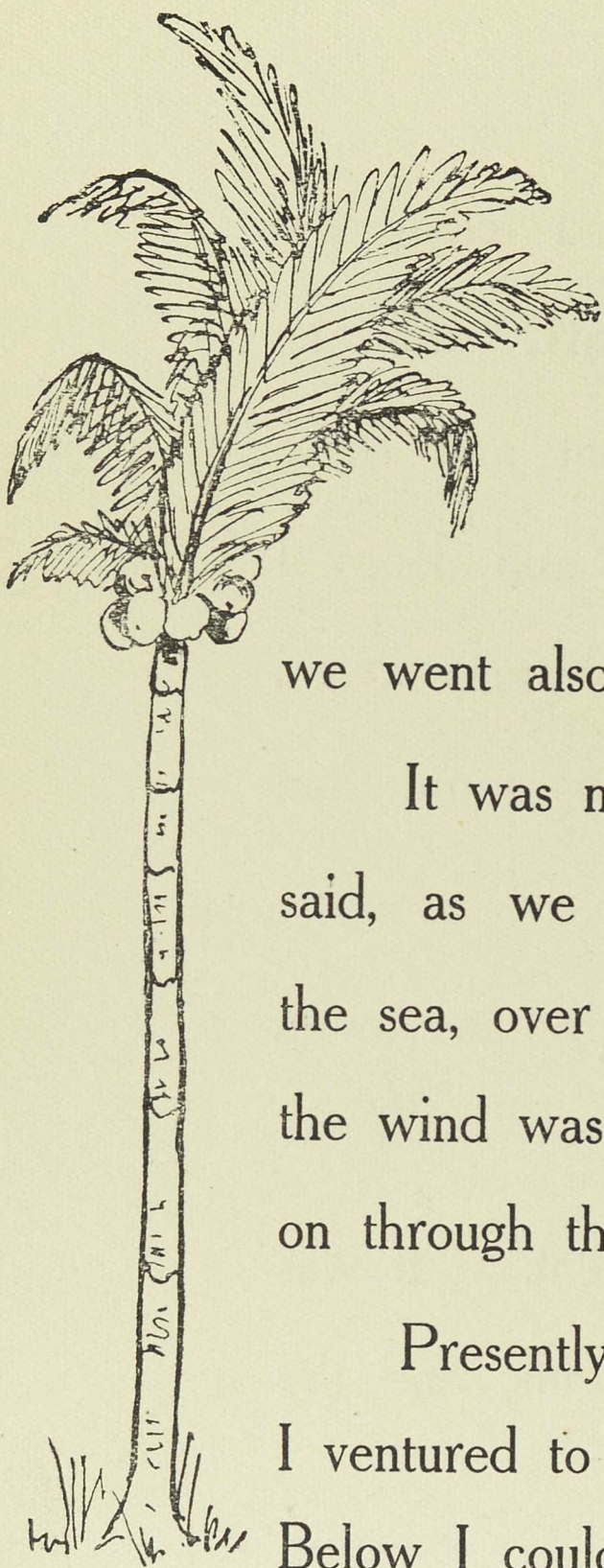
By the time Bobbie had finished telling me his adventures, it had become dark, and he suggested I should come into the tent and share his hammock; as I was both tired and sleepy I was very glad to accept his invitation. Soon the two of us were fast asleep, feeling more than glad to be together again.

Suddenly I was awakened by an awful roaring noise.

Bobbie woke at the same moment. It was daylight, but it was raining in torrents, and the wind was blowing a perfect gale.

Our little tent shook from side to side, until we became so frightened that we made up our minds to creep out. However, before we could





do so, a terrific gust of wind, stronger than any that had come before, tore our tent from the ground, and as the hammock was fastened to it, away we went also.

It was much worse than the balloon, Bobbie said, as we expected every minute to fall into the sea, over which we were being whirled, but the wind was so strong we were carried on, and on through the air, for miles and miles.

Presently the wind began to calm down, and I ventured to look over the edge of the hammock. Below I could distinctly see the sandy shore, and further on land upon which grew a number of palm trees. Luckily for us the wind dropped suddenly, just when we were within a few feet of the ground, and plump we came upon the soft, sandy beach.



Away we went.

We were soon on our feet, and it was not long before we began to explore the country we had landed in.

It was very beautiful, lovely palm-trees covered with cocoanuts were growing everywhere. There was also plenty of delicious fruit, and sweet roots and herbs, from which I made a good meal, whilst Bobbie greedily devoured the nuts and fruit.

We settled down quite happily for some time, when one day as I was nibbling some fresh juicy leaves, I heard Bobbie calling to me, he was round a corner on the beach just ahead of me.

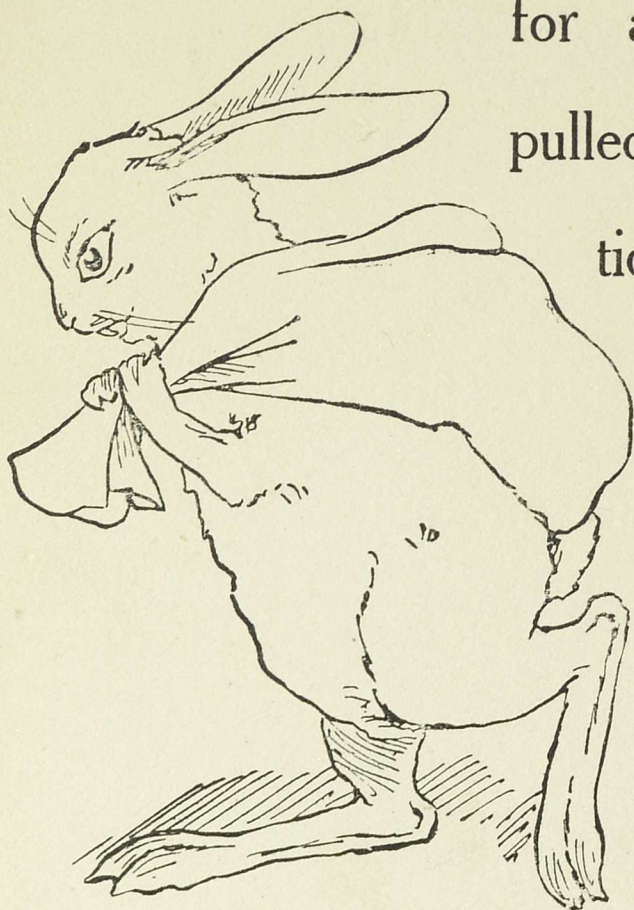
I scurried to him as fast as I could, and I was very surprised to see him standing in quite a large boat.

“Hurrah,” he shouted, “we shall be able to get home now.”

I jumped into the boat besides him, and we began to look about to see what there was in it.

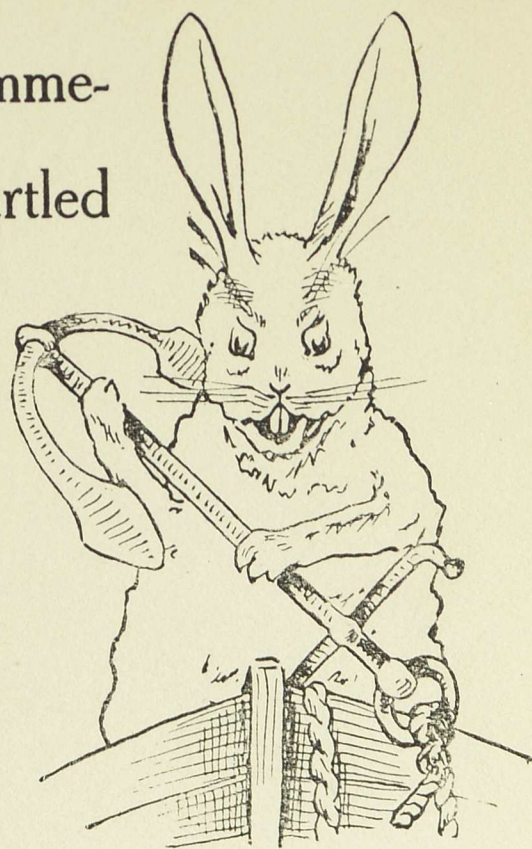
Among many other things was a gun. Bobbie seized this and some cartridges, and we went ashore, where he managed to shoot several birds that were flying about. Then Bobbie collected a lot of cocoanuts and roots and put them into the boat. There was also a cask, which he filled with fresh water, and having thus made provision for a long journey, we jumped in and pulled up the anchor, then waited for the tide to carry us out to sea.

When the tide was high enough the sail was hoisted, and away we glided merrily over the calm sunlit waters.



For some days we travelled like this. Once we saw land, and we should have been very glad to have landed, but there was a crowd of black men on the shore, who shouted and shrieked at us until we became quite frightened; and when a lot of arrows fell in the water quite close to us, we made up our minds that we had better get away as fast as we could.

The worst of it was we were drifting inland, and I saw the only thing to do to keep us at sea was to drop the anchor. I mentioned this to Bobbie and he managed to do it. Immediately this happened we were greatly startled by feeling the boat swing suddenly round and then set off through the water at a terrific pace. Luckily for us we were going *away* from the shore, and so fast



were we travelling, that the land and the black men were soon lost to sight.

On, and on we went, until we suddenly saw the head of a great fish rise up out of the sea.

“A shark!” shouted Bobbie, “and he has swallowed our anchor; if he dives to the bottom, we shall go too.”

Directly I heard this, I called to Bobbie to get a knife that was lying in the boat, and cut the rope of the anchor, which he did, and only just in time, for the shark immediately disappeared into the depths below us.

Days went on, and our stock of water was nearly exhausted, when one morning, just as the sun was rising, I saw in the distance some cliffs and a lighthouse. I woke Bobbie up, and directly he looked at the shore, he gave a great yell of delight.



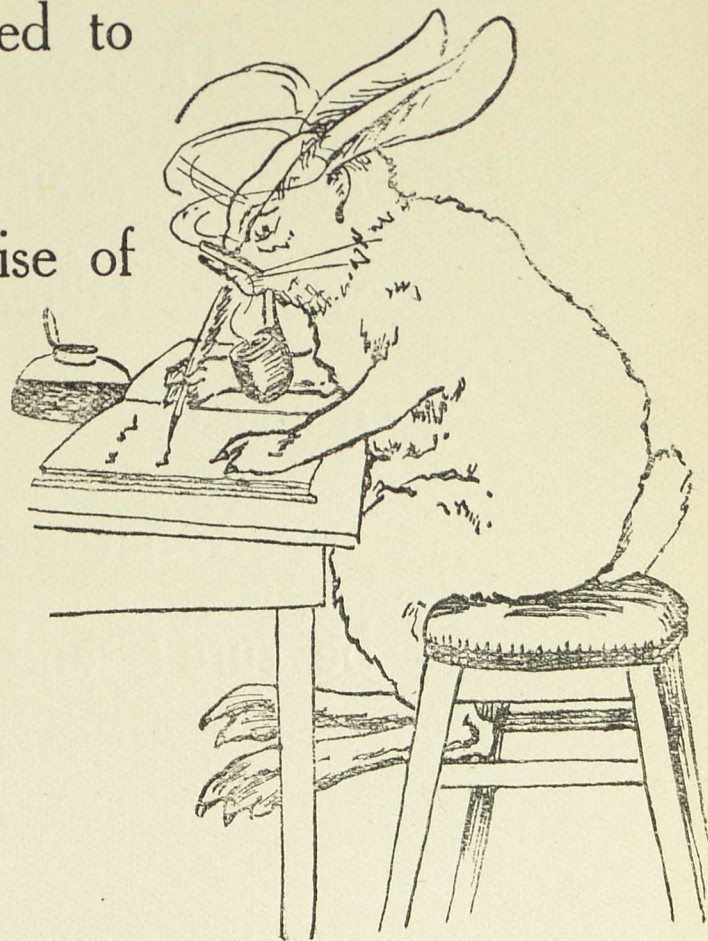
"A Shark!"

“Hurrah! hurrah!” he shouted, waving his cap, “I know where we are, it is dear old England; I have stayed at that place with mother and dad many a time in the summer.”

There was a strong wind blowing, so it was not long before we reached land, and we were quickly out of the boat and once more standing on the shore.

Collecting the cocoanuts that were left, and some of the birds’ beautiful feathers, Bobbie took his gun, and bidding me get on his shoulder, we started up the winding path that led to the top of the cliff.

I shall never forget the surprise of two sailors who were standing at the top when they saw us. I think they thought that we had dropped from the sky!



Bobbie soon found the house where he remembered stopping with his father and mother. He explained how he had got there to the landlady, and she immediately sent a telegram to his parents. Then Bobbie's father and mother came to fetch us, and, oh! what joy there was when they saw Bobbie and I were together—what kissing and hugging there was, even I was kissed and hugged, and petted, so that I felt very, very glad, and tears of joy filled my eyes!

Then we all took the train, and were soon at home again. In the yard I saw my old hutch with the bottom broken away, just as I had left it the day I escaped.

What adventures I had had since then to be sure! and what a fuss Bobbie made of me,

and so did his father and mother too. I had a lovely new hutch, and I was never neglected again; beautiful fresh hay was given to me every day, and fresh greenmeat, always brought by Bobbie himself. Of course, I was not obliged to keep in my hutch, but roamed about the garden, or went walks with Bobbie in the country lanes.

Oh! what times we had, scampering along the lanes, playing in the fields and hedges. Then when we were feeling tired, we would return home, and on the way we would talk of our adventures—of the time when we were far, far away. We would feel very glad that we had a nice home to return to, and good food to eat.

Everybody is so very kind to me, and even the old gardener, who used to roughly



handle me and grumble, now speaks in a soft voice, and strokes me.

The pug (who had not been killed by his fall from the balloon) became most friendly, in fact, it was he who suggested that I should write my adventures. I thought the idea a good one, and have done so, hoping you have enjoyed reading them.

I am getting old and am so kindly treated that I no longer wish to wander from home. I know what the world is like now, so I live contentedly in my comfortable hutch, with my kind friends to make a pet of me.

As I cuddle down into my nice warm hay, I am able to recall my many adventures, and so get the pleasure and excitement of all my wonderful travels again, without any of the dangers and discomforts.



The Surprise of the Two Sailors.

