

# Wonder Web







A WONDER WEB OF STORIES.



*Fred finds himself in strange company.*

A WONDER WEB  
OF  
STORIES

BY  
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AND  
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## P R E F A C E.

The stories in this book we cheerfully give to the boys and girls far and near, in the hope that they may be as cordially received. Remembering, as we do, in our childhood days, the eagerness with which we read of everything connected with the wonderful fairies, we trust that all who read these tales may derive some of the pleasure that, in writing them, has been given to your friends,

THE AUTHORS.





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FARMER BROWN'S  
WONDERFUL ADVENTURES  
IN THE MOON.



# FARMER BROWN'S WONDERFUL ADVENTURES IN THE MOON.

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## CHAPTER I.

"Oh, Hop-And-Go-One, where have you gone?"



DEAR me, wife, I can't make out what the matter is with our geese! Such a cackling as they have kept up all day in the barn-yard; and you should have seen the queer way they were wagging their heads at each other, just as though they were busily discussing something very important."

"Really, John, I am astonished at you! As though they were a bit different from other folks. I suppose the next thing you will tell me, is, that they can speak."

"Well, well, wife, I don't say as they can do that; but you know



well enough that in all the country around there is no finer flock than mine." And back to the barn-yard went Farmer Brown in high dudgeon with his wife.

"It is no use telling Molly anything about them; she won't see how clever they are. Ah, they have settled down! I suppose they got tired of making so much noise. But I don't see Hop-And-Go-One; where can he be?"

No sooner had Farmer Brown uttered these words, than the geese commenced to cackle as hard as ever.

"Well, now, tell me they don't understand what one is saying. Look here, what's all this noise about, and what have you done with Hop-And-Go-One?"

Then up started old Billy Gray, the leader of the flock, and slowly waddling up to Farmer Brown, closed one eye, and gazing knowingly at him, winked. Overcome with amazement, Farmer Brown toppled over into the pig-sty, much to the pigs' consternation.

"Bless my heart! Well I never! Oh, if Molly could only have seen that wink!"

"John, John, where are you; why don't you come to dinner?"

“Come to dinner, indeed! I am too overcome with all these doings to want any dinner,” muttered Farmer Brown, as he lay in the pig-sty, while the pigs, with their inquisitive nature, poked their cold snouts into his face, as much as to say, “What are you doing here?”

“Now, I wouldn’t wonder if John has gone to the pond with those geese. I declare, I am tired of all this fuss. I have a great mind to—yes, I’ll do it to-night; but I wonder what the pigs are grunting about?” and away ran Molly to see.

“Oh, deary me! John, what ever is the matter? Have you got a sunstroke? Alack-a-day, am I to be left a widow with all these pigs and geese on my hands?” Loudly cackled the geese, and still more loudly grunted the pigs, while Molly’s shrill voice rose above the clamour as she endeavoured to rouse Farmer Brown. At last he gently opened his eyes, and in a faint voice said, “Molly, where am I?”

“Where are you!” indignantly answered Molly. “You are in the pig-sty, that’s where you are; and I’ll have you to know, John Brown, that I will not put up with this work any longer. To think of you choosing the pig-sty to go to sleep in, and frightening me half to death with thinking you had a sunstroke.”

"Hush, Molly, a most wonderful thing happened. I assure you that we have the"—"I don't want to hear anything more about wonderful things. I suppose it is those geese again."

Daylight faded gently into twilight, and then came the moon, flooding the whole place with her bright light, and, peeping through the half-closed blinds of Farmer Brown's bedroom, shone on his face as he lay in peaceful slumber. The old clock on the stairs struck twelve as Molly stole quietly down and looked out. Not a sound was to be heard; everything slumbered save the crickets, whose cheery whirr, whirr, sounded in the fields, and from the pond near by the frogs were holding high carnival.

Molly softly closed the door, and made her way to the barn, muttering, as she went, "Yes, I'll wring their necks—every one of them."

"No, you won't," shrieked a chorus of shrill voices.

Round turned Mrs. Farmer Brown in great fright at these words; and what do you think she saw? Why, a number of queer little creatures, tumbling and dancing about in high glee.

"No, you won't," they shrieked again, making all sorts of horrible grimaces at her. Just then some of them opened the barn-door, and out waddled the geese, cackling at a great rate.

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“Fall into rank” shouted one of the little creatures, and immediately the flock formed into rank. “To goose, to goose,” was the next order, and then the whole flock rose into the air with their strange riders.

Then away ran Mrs. Farmer Brown to the house, screaming: “John, John, the geese have gone!”

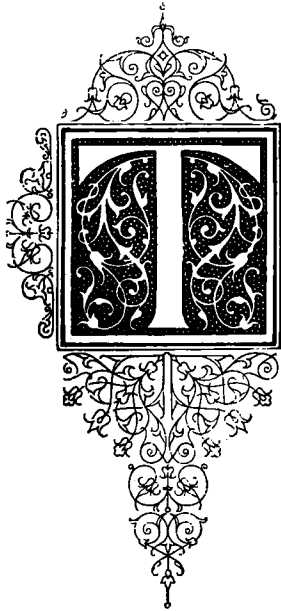
Up jumped Farmer Brown and popped his head out of the window, and the first thing he saw was his beloved geese floating upwards. “Oh, where are you going?” he shrieked in terror.

“To the moon, Farmer Brown,” answered the little creatures; “and when we get there we’ll find Hop-And-Go-One”

Farmer Brown and Molly continued to gaze till they were lost to view. And then with many tears his wife told him about the dreadful deed she had intended to do, and how it had been frustrated by the little creatures. But he, poor man, was too overcome at the loss of his geese to pay much attention to her, and merely said, “You see now what wonderful geese they are; the only hope I have is that they may come back, for they must have been to the moon before if Hop-And-Go-One is already there.”

## CHAPTER II.

### STRANGE THINGS HAPPEN.



THE round, jolly face of the sun was just peeping over the hill when Farmer Brown hurried off to the barnyard, next morning, anxious to see if the geese had returned. But alas! there was no sign of them, and he felt very lonely and sad all day, and often looked up into the sky to see if there were any trace of them.

Towards evening, as he was sitting on the fence lost in thought, he suddenly heard a loud cackle. Up he jumped at the welcome sound, and there right before him was old Billy Gray, with one of the sprites on his back.

"Evening to you, Farmer Brown," said the sprite in a shrill voice. "And so you have been very lonely without your geese, have you?"



“ Yes, very lonely,” answered Farmer Brown, bowing low; “ but if you have need of them it is not for me to murmur.”

“ Ah ! ah ! ” chuckled the little creature. “ Well answered, and now you shall be rewarded. To-night at twelve o’clock come to the barn-yard ; but, mind you, come alone, bring not your wife, for she has nearly been the death of our gallant steeds.”

So saying, the rider and Old Billy Gray disappeared.

As the clock struck twelve, Farmer Brown crept quietly out of the house. Pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat, went his heart with fear, and if it had not been for the thought of seeing his beloved geese he would have run back to the house. When he reached the barn-yard he saw no signs of them, and began to think that after all nothing would happen. Suddenly he looked up at the moon. And oh, what do you think he saw ! Why, a beautiful ladder, which gradually lengthened till it reached the place where he stood. It was made of thick ropes of silk the seven colours of the rainbow. The next thing he saw was a number of the little sprites running helter-skelter down the ladder, and calling out, “ Halloo, Farmer Brown, here we are again, and you are to come with us and make the acquaintance of the Man in the Moon.” And with



that they surrounded him, and before he knew where he was had him on the ladder pushing him up as fast as they could. On and on they went till he could just faintly see his home far below.

At last they reached the top of the ladder, and Farmer Brown found himself on the edge of a grassy plain bounded by thick woods.

"Here comes the Man in the Moon to welcome you to his domain," shouted the little creatures in high glee as they capered about Farmer Brown, whose teeth were chattering in his head with fright.

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Suddenly there bounded from the woods the queerest little creature ; he was somewhat taller than the others, with an immense head, and a mouth so large that when he laughed (which he seemed to be doing all the time) it rounded up at the ends and nearly met his eyes, which could hardly be seen for his fat cheeks.

“ The Man in the Moon ! the Man in the Moon ! ” murmured the sprites, bowing at a great rate.

“ Oh, what’s going to happen next ! ” thought Farmer Brown. But, frightened as he was, he did not forget to bow ; and, remembering how the dancing master always put one leg behind the other, he did the same, and kept bowing away till he bowed himself to the edge of the moon, and in another moment would have bowed himself over had not the Man in the Moon clutched hold of him and dragged him back.

“ Very gracefully done, Farmer Brown, but you must remember you are only on the edge of the moon at present, and the distance from the earth is—ah ! let me see——. Oh, I can never remember figures ; but, as you have been to school, you can tell us.”

Poor Farmer Brown got very red in the face as he said in a low tone : “ Your Majesty must pardon me ; I am unable to answer your

question, for the day we had that lesson in geography I was sent out of the room for passing nuts to Molly."

"Ha, ha," laughed the sprites till Farmer Brown thought they were never going to stop, and, indeed, he had to join in the laugh, though he felt dreadfully ashamed of himself, for they looked so comical as they twisted their little bodies about. But he got a great fright as he happened to look at the Man in the Moon, for what do you think had occurred? Why, he had suddenly shot up to an immense height, his legs were taller than the tallest trees; in fact, by stretching his neck, he could see over a mountain. No sooner had this taken place than all laughter was hushed and deep silence reigned.

"Oh!" cried Farmer Brown in great fright. Immediately all eyes were turned indignantly upon him, and signs made to keep quiet. One of the little creatures, however, pitying his frightened looks, whispered to him not to be afraid.

"He is only looking over his domain to see that everything is all right, for these are troublesome times; but he will soon come down to his usual size. Is he not grand? look at his magnificent legs!"

"Does he often get like that?"

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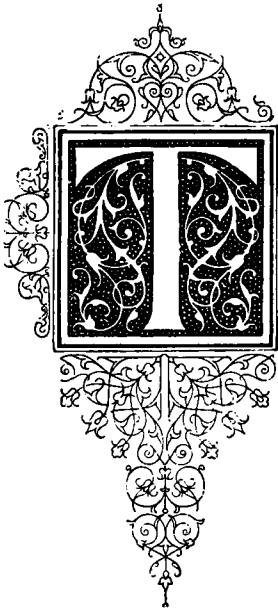
“No ; only when he wants to see how things are going on in distant parts of his domain ; but hush, he is coming down.” And sure enough, back he came to his usual size. Turning to one of his subjects he said :

“Go-As-The-Wind, you will hasten to the camp with orders to the General to be ready to march by to-morrow. I see Venus’ army has nearly reached our domain, so there is no time to be lost.” Go-As-The-Wind bowed and quickly vanished through the woods. The Man in the Moon then turned to Farmer Brown and said : “Your rare simplicity and love of truth commends itself to my judgment. I, therefore, have great pleasure in inviting you to be my guest. We will now leave the edge of the moon and go farther into the interior, where I will show you my summer residence.



## CHAPTER III.

### THE AMBER PALACE.



THEIR way lay through woods luxuriant in the richest vegetation, gigantic trees of untold ages towered aloft, clumps of exquisite ferns grew beneath their shades, while flowers of rare beauty and fragrance peeped at them as they passed by.

Farmer Brown's fear vanished as he gazed with wonderment on the many beautiful things.

"I never thought it was half so beautiful here, the people below are always saying it was a barren, dreary place, and nobody could live in it. But I was very fond of looking at the moon and fancying that I could see mountains and valleys, and I am sure, Your Majesty, that I have seen you looking at me sometimes."

"No doubt," answered the Man in the Moon, nodding and smiling at him. "But see! here come my light-bearers." As he spoke, there appeared a flock of birds of brilliant plumage, so brilliant as to dazzle the eye.

"They are very beautiful," murmured Farmer Brown, wondering what he meant by calling them light-bearers. Just then their path through the woods was brought abruptly to an end by an immense mountain towering thousands of feet above them, and thickly covered with trees and brushwood.

"Oh dear!" thought Farmer Brown, "how ever are we going to climb the mountain when I can't even see a path."

"Don't be alarmed, we are not going to climb it, but pass through it," said the Man in the Moon, as he noticed the troubled look on Farmer Brown's face. "See!" and he pointed to a large arched opening in the side of the mountain. Then, taking a horn which hung by his side, he blew several quick notes, which were immediately answered by the birds with a succession of chirps, followed by a rapid flight towards the opening, into which they disappeared in two regularly formed lines. "Now," said the Man in the Moon, "we will follow, but



let me warn you on no account to speak ; no matter what you see, preserve silence."

Passing through the arched way, they entered a small stone chamber with a couple of seats roughly hewn from the rock. From this a flight of stone steps led down into a dark abyss. Groping his way, Farmer Brown followed the rest through what seemed a narrow passage with many windings, and then there burst upon his view a vision of wonderful enchantment and loveliness. A broad and lofty passage paved with the softest of green moss ; while from the walls and roof hung strange fantastic stalactites sparkling and glowing with many a beautiful colour, and over all was shed a soft, mellow light, not unlike the light of the moon, and as the wondering eyes of Farmer Brown drank in the scene, he saw that this light came from the birds who lined either side of the way. Their whole breast seemed to be a living flame of light. In his surprise and wonderment Farmer Brown forgot the warning he had received and uttered an exclamation of delight ; hardly had he done so, when the sound was reverberated again and again with a roar like mighty thunder, the birds uttering shrill cries of fright, dashed madly about, and the whole place was plunged into dense darkness. Suddenly

in the midst of the confusion a long, clear note from a horn was heard. Immediately the birds ceased their struggles and returned to their places, and in a few moments quiet and light were restored. Continuing on their way for some time longer, they at last gained the open air, much to the delight of Farmer Brown, who had been dreadfully frightened at what he had done.

“How was it you forgot my warning?” asked the Man in the Moon; “but I suppose I should have impressed it more strongly on you. But see! yonder is my palace, what think you of it?”

“Think! Your Majesty. I am beyond thinking, everything is so wonderful; but oh! this is the greatest sight of all.” And well might he exclaim. From where they stood a gentle slope led down to a beautiful lake, in the middle of which was a small island rising abruptly to a height of a thousand feet, and on the summit was the summer palace of His Majesty; a long, low building of clear amber beautifully ornamented with trimmings of emeralds and pearls. It was approached by terraces rising one above the other; round each terrace ran a white marble balustrade, while numerous fountains threw aloft delicately perfumed waters.

Waiting for them by the side of the lake were a number of little boats, made out of huge mother-of-pearl shells and daintily cushioned. But His Majesty's surpassed them all for beauty. It was in the form of one of the birds which had lighted them through the mountain. The brilliant colours of the plumage were represented by precious stones, and in the centre of the bird's forehead blazed an enormous diamond. Each of the boats was manned by two rowers dressed in sea-green tights, with a jaunty little cap perched on their heads.

"Dear me!" thought Farmer Brown, "I can never get into one of those little things." Now, he was very much afraid of the water, and when the Man in the Moon asked him if he could swim, he shuddered at the idea, and made haste to say, "No, Your Majesty, I can't swim a stroke." "That is awkward, for I do not see how we are to get you over. Ah, I have it! you can cross on the turtle's back. I'll tell them to bring him over." With that he sounded his horn, and in a short while an immense thing was seen moving through the water guided by a little creature dressed like the rowers. It was so large it made a good-sized raft. But it seemed terrible to Farmer Brown to cross over on the back of such a creature. "Suppose it should turn

over or make a dive; ough! the thought was enough." Still he did not like to refuse when he was asked to step aboard.

At first the turtle moved steadily through the water, but ere the middle of the lake was reached it showed signs of restlessness, and presently it began to plunge about so violently that Farmer Brown could scarce hang on.

"Oh dear! oh dear! I shall be drowned! I know I shall; oh please Mr. Sailor help me! oh! oh!" and down he rolled on his face as the turtle gave another flop.

"What are you rolling about like <sup>th</sup>at for?" cried the sprite with a chuckle, "can't you sit steady? you see how you are frightening the turtle, I wouldn't be surprised if he made for the bottom; ah, he is going! hold on!" And sure enough, down went the turtle to the bottom of the lake, where, after quietly swimming about he rose again with his rider; but alas! no Farmer Brown was visible.

Down at the bottom he lay with his feet held fast by a monstrous fish, who slowly and carefully swallowed him; then rising to the surface this monstrous fish swam to the island and gently deposited Farmer Brown on the shore, amidst shouts of laughter from the sprites, who

had already landed. There he lay helpless and limp, hardly realizing he was still alive.

“Come, come, Farmer Brown, don’t be so down-hearted, I will give you another suit of clothes, and you will be none the worse for your little episode.”

“Oh, Your Majesty! I am afraid I am done for, I feel so queer; and then there’s Molly, she will never believe that I have been inside of a fish; inside of a *fish*! ough! to think of it,” and in his excitement Farmer Brown raised himself on his elbow, but speedily sank down again, saying in a listless manner, “Farewell, Your Majesty, I feel that my breath is going.”

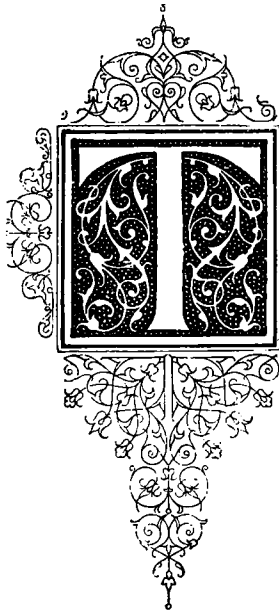
“Then you don’t want to see your geese?” said the Man in the Moon, with a sly twinkle in his eye.

Up started Farmer Brown—the name was enough to rouse him once more to action. “Oh yes, I assure Your Majesty I am quite better now, and the fact is, I don’t think I will say anything to Molly about it, for I am afraid I would never get her to believe me.”



## CHAPTER IV.

FARMER BROWN MEETS HIS GEESE, AND  
MAKES A SPEECH TO THE ARMY.



THE next morning, the Man in the Moon took Farmer Brown out to the terrace, and pointing to a distant plain, covered with tiny, white tents, said: "That is where my army is encamped; we will join them shortly, for there is to be a great battle fought between my army and that of Queen Venus. She has for some time been encroaching on my domain. I sent several ambassadors to warn her that if she continued in her present aggression I should have to take measures to protect myself. I lately had intelligence that a vast army was on its way to overthrow my kingdom. Are you fond of battles, Farmer Brown?"

“ Well, Your Majesty, I hardly know, I have never seen one ; but I would like to accompany you, if you have no objection.”

“ That you shall, and some wonderful fighting you will see, for Queen Venus’ army, I am told, is in splendid condition, and they will not give in without a hard struggle. And now, if you are rested, we will go to the camp.”

Farmer Brown glanced down at the lake and then at His Majesty, who laughingly said : “ You are afraid to cross the lake again, but be at rest, I will send you over another way.” Turning to one of the attendants, he asked if Flying Jack were ready. “ He is, your Majesty.”

“ Then come with me, Farmer Brown, and I will see you safely on him.” Down the terraces they went, and there, at the side of the lake, stood the largest goose Farmer Brown had ever seen ; it was the size of a small pony and perfectly white, with an immense yellow beak.

“ Oh, you beauty ! ” exclaimed Farmer Brown in wild delight, stroking his neck.

“ Quack, quack,” answered the goose.

“ You are friends already ; he must know you are Farmer Brown ; no doubt your geese have told him all about you. He is the leader of

the flock that accompanies the army, and as we were rather short of geese I borrowed yours, knowing they were to be relied upon."

"It is a great honour, Your Majesty, and may I ask in what way you make use of them?"

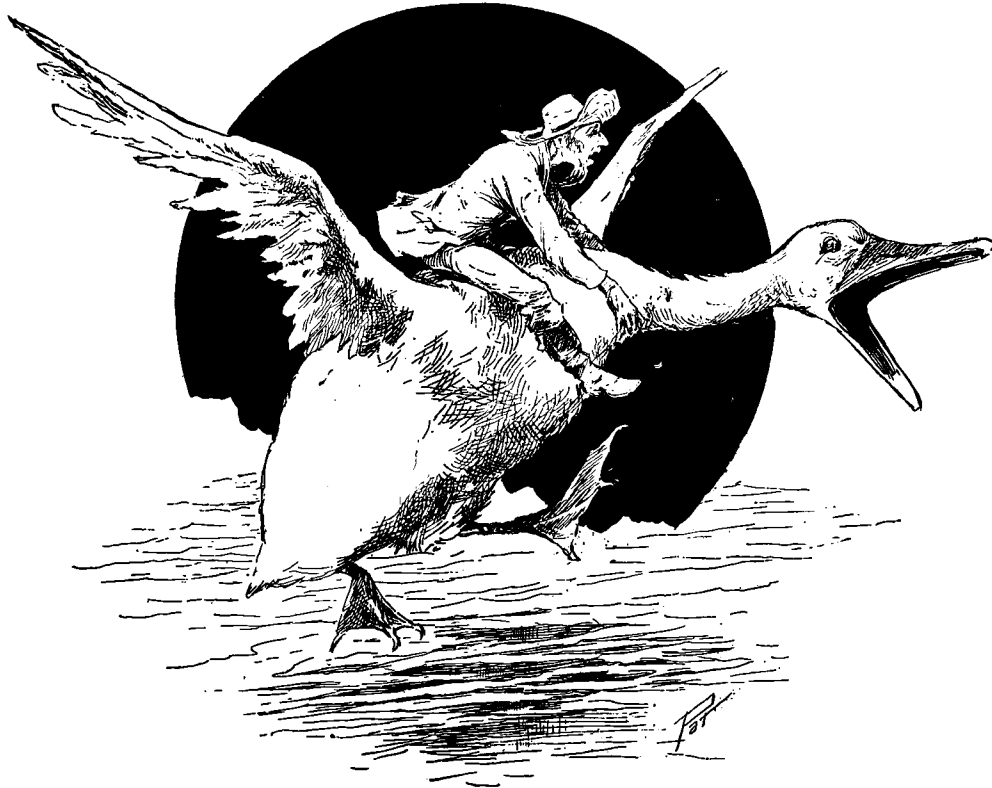
"Wait till we go to the camp, and then you will see. Now, Flying Jack, you must take Farmer Brown safely across the lake. Jump on, Farmer Brown, and hold on to his neck, for he goes like the wind. We will follow in our boats."

On jumped Farmer Brown, not at all frightened, for he knew he would play him no tricks, like the turtle. Swift and straight, as an arrow speeds from the bow, did Flying Jack bear Farmer Brown across the lake. So delightful was the motion, that he felt loath to get off. The Man in the Moon and his retinue soon joined him, and they started for the camp.

As they neared the outskirts they were observed by the sentinels, who immediately shouted: "His Majesty comes, and with him Farmer Brown!"

"Why, they know my name already!"

"Oh, yes, and they will expect a speech from you."



“ A speech ! Why, I never made a speech in my life ! ”

“ Time you commenced, then,” was the smiling answer. “ But what think you of my army ? ”

“ Magnificent, Your Majesty ; it seems to be a great one.”

“ Yes, it is a large army, and yet my warriors are not all here, as they are doing duty elsewhere ; but here comes my General ; allow me to introduce you—Farmer Brown—General Quickeye.”

“ Truly an appropriate name,” thought Farmer Brown, as he looked at the little figure, clad in a complete suit of armour of rich workmanship, and whose bright eyes twinkled and danced about at a great rate.

“ Would Your Majesty like to review the army ? ”

“ Yes, General, I think I would. We will show Farmer Brown what kind of an army we have.” Accordingly they were put through manœuvre after manœuvre, which they executed with wonderful skill. Even Farmer Brown's unpractised eye saw that they were in a high state of efficiency, and looked with admiration upon the splendour of their equipments. Each company was clad in different styles of armour ; some carried short swords, others clubs ; then besides these were the archers, dressed in dark green. After the review was ended the Man in

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the Moon made a short speech, in which he praised the men for their soldier-like appearance and execution. Immediately at the close of his address came cries of "A speech from Farmer Brown."

"You see, I told you they would expect an address from you."

"Oh, I beg of Your Majesty to excuse me, I really can't do it."

"Oh, yes you can; say anything you like; they will not be satisfied till you speak to them; just listen how they are calling you!"

"Dear! dear! Well, I suppose I shall have to try, but how shall I commence?" Then he remembered in a vague sort of way that the speakers he had heard always began with "Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen." "That's the correct thing, no doubt. So I had better begin that way."

Bowing to the Man in the Moon, he said: "Mr. Chairman," then turning to the army, "Ladies and Gentlemen, I"—but he was interrupted by a roar of laughter. "What's the matter?" he asked in a bewildered way, turning to the Man in the Moon.

But His Majesty was laughing as well as the rest, and could hardly answer him; at last he gasped out: "Don't you see there are no ladies present?"

“ Oh—ah, yes—yes—how stupid of me ! ” Then he began again. “ Mr.—Lad—I mean—oh, what do I mean ? Oh, now I have got it. Fellow-citizens, I hope you are feeling quite well, and I am much obliged, I am sure, for the great attention with which you are listening to me.” (There, that is a little better ; I do believe I shall become a speaker after all.) This was said in an undertone, as he paused awhile to steady himself against a rock, for his knees threatened to give way, while the perspiration rolled down his face. “ As I was saying—bless my heart, what was I saying ? ” and in frantic despair he ran his fingers through his hair till it stood on end. Just then a happy thought struck him. He had once learnt a piece of poetry ; why not give it to them ; everybody was fond of poetry. So clearing his voice he began :

Cowards, cowards, all of you,  
Traitors, traitors, every one.

What the rest was will never be known, for he got no further, for a great shout of anger drowned his voice, and a dozen little clubs and spears were flung at him, and if it had not been for the presence of the Man in the Moon nothing would have saved him from their fury.





Poor Farmer Brown was so overcome at this unexpected ending of his poetry that his knees gave way entirely, and he sank in a helpless state to the ground.

The angry clamour of voices was instantly hushed at the sound of a trumpet, which His Majesty commanded to be blown. As soon as quietness was restored, he addressed his army, assuring them that Farmer Brown was deeply hurt at the way they had received his poetry, "for you ought to have known, my brave soldiers, that his kind and sympathetic nature was quite incapable of imagining for a moment that you were cowards and traitors. I am ashamed of you for having treated him in such a way; now show that you bear no ill-will by giving him three cheers." This they immediately did, and by the time they were finished, Farmer Brown, who had heard what His Majesty had said, had hastily risen and in great excitement assured them that he had never intended anything personal, but it was the only piece of poetry he knew. "And, indeed, I think you are the bravest, grandest army that exists."

"Well," said the Man in the Moon, "I think Farmer Brown deserves to be rewarded after all this rough treatment. Bring forth the flock."

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“Quack, quack,” was heard, and there appeared before the delighted eyes of Farmer Brown an immense flock of geese, and in the front rank were his own. Yes, there they were, every one of them, even to Hop-And-Go-One, all looking so proud and happy. They advanced with measured waddle to him, whereupon Farmer Brown fell to stroking them with much pleasure, while they quacked merrily away, seemingly as much delighted at the meeting as he was.

“Now you will see the use we make of the flock in time of war.” And His Majesty said something to the General, who called out, “The Scout’s Division, make ready!” At this command a number of warriors advanced and stationed themselves each behind a goose. Then came the order, “To goose! to goose! and away!” Quick as a flash each little rider jumped on his goose, and was soon soaring aloft, with Flying Jack leading.

“These are our scouts, who go before the army and bring news of the enemy’s movements; from their lofty position they are out of the reach of the enemy, and can watch what is going on without danger.”

“Wonderful! wonderful!” was all Farmer Brown could say.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE ARMY ON THE MARCH AND THE ASCENT OF THE ICE MOUNTAIN.



SHORTLY after the departure of the scouts the camp was struck and the vast army in motion. There being no artillery and the roads being good, it made rapid progress. From time to time some of the scouts would return with news of the enemy. A little before noon Flying Jack was seen approaching.

“He must bring important tidings, for he never leaves his post unless something out of the way has occurred,” said His Majesty, as he ordered a halt.

The news proved to be serious indeed. It seemed that Queen Venus' army had taken up its position at an almost impregnable pass, from which to dislodge it would be well nigh impossible.

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A council was immediately called, and it was finally decided to abandon their present tactics and attack the enemy in the rear. "To do this," said the Man in the Moon, turning to Farmer Brown, "we will have to scale the Ice Mountain; it will be somewhat toilsome, but when once the top is gained the slide down on the other side is magnificent. I dare say, now, that you are quite fond of sliding; the people below seem to go in for a good deal of that sort of thing."

"Indeed, Your Majesty, I am not much of a hand at steering; in fact, I have never attempted it since the time I upset Molly, and—but perhaps I am tiring you with my conversation. Molly says when I get going I never know when to stop."

"Not at all, pray continue; your conversation is truly delightful."

"Well, then," said Farmer Brown, quite pleased at such a compliment, "one fine, bright night Molly and I started to go sliding, and as the hill was crowded, she said she hoped I would steer straight and not go and make a donkey of myself, which I sincerely hoped I wouldn't, as Jim Brown was there with a splendid new turnout, and Molly and he used to be rather fond of each other, and of course I was anxious to show her that I could steer as well as he. The first three slides

went splendidly ; but at the next, when I got to the middle of the hill, didn't I steer straight into another sledge, and such a commotion we made, bumping into one another and rolling apart, only to meet again with a harder knock, and so we kept at it till we reached the bottom of the hill. I scrambled up as quickly as I could, and blinded with the snow in my eyes, rushed to help, as I thought, Molly, half buried in a bank of snow. Just as I was pulling her up, somebody grabbed me by my coat-collar and sent me flying down the path, saying at the same time : ' You had better go and look after your own young lady, and leave mine alone.' I did go, Your Majesty, but couldn't see her anywhere, and somebody told me she had gone home, being that mad with me. I hurried home after her as fast as I could, but she wouldn't see me. Nearly a week passed, and I got no sleep with trying to think how I could make it up. At last, one night, as I lay a-thinking, I remembered having heard her say how she liked to listen to the banjo, and especially if she were out of sorts. That's the very thing, thought I ; so away I went the next morning and bought a banjo, and so soon as evening came started for her home. I was not much of a player, but I just stood beneath her window and played one or two

simple tunes, somewhat of the melancholy kind, to let her see how badly I was feeling, and then in a very slow and sad voice I sang this little song :

Oh Molly, dear Molly,  
The bright stars are shining,  
In haste to your lattice come,  
Your true love is pining,  
Sad moonbeams are twining  
Around his cold heart, *Oh come !*

“ Bravo ! bravo ! Why, Farmer Brown, you should have been a poet,” cried His Majesty in great glee.

“ I think the song kind of touched her as well as the banjo playing, for we made it up that night. But, oh ! Your Majesty, what is that shining yonder ? ”

“ That is the Ice Mountain we have to climb.”

“ It is very steep, Your Majesty.”

“ Yes, it is steep ; but be not alarmed, our pioneers will make the ascent easy. See ! they are at work already.”

Farmer Brown looked and saw a number of the sprites busily engaged in cutting steps up the side of the mountain, and so quickly

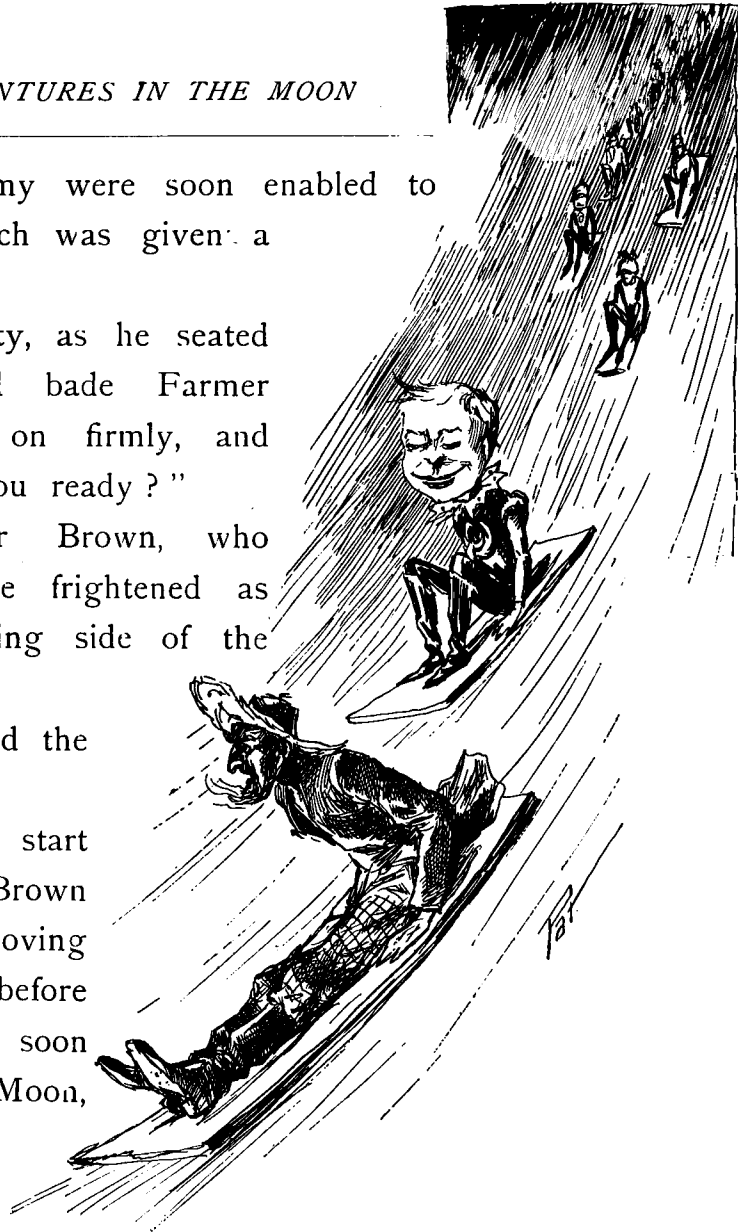
did they work that the army were soon enabled to gain the summit. Here each was given a piece of board.

"Now," said His Majesty, as he seated himself on his board and bade Farmer Brown do likewise, "hold on firmly, and just let yourself go. Are you ready?"

"Yes," gasped Farmer Brown, who couldn't help feeling a little frightened as he looked down the glistening side of the mountain.

"All right! start us, cried the Man in the Moon.

It was easy enough to start His Majesty, but Farmer Brown required a vast deal of shoving from a number of sprites before he could be started; but he soon overtook the Man in the Moon,



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and shot past him at a tremendous rate, with his mouth wide open and his eyes staring wildly.

“Hold on! cling to your board!” called out His Majesty.

“Bless my heart, I should think so!” called back Farmer Brown.

“Well, how did you like it?” asked the Man in the Moon, as they reached the bottom.

“Glorious! Your Majesty. Never experienced anything like it! So smooth and swift; not a jar or a shake.”

“Considerably better sliding than you have on your planet, eh!”

“Our planet is not to be compared to this, Your Majesty, everything is so beautiful here.”

“It is, so far as you have seen; but alas! all parts of my domain are not so beautiful; in fact, there are places where no one could live; but I will tell you more later, for I see one of the scouts coming this way.”

The scout brought word that they were now close to the enemy’s camp, who were totally unaware of their approach.

Silence was strictly enjoined as they moved forward to the attack. Before ascending the hill which hid them from the enemy—who were



encamped in a valley below—the Man in the Moon sent for two of his warriors, and whispered to them to remain with Farmer Brown through the battle, and take every care of him.

Then turning to Farmer Brown, he said: “These are two of my most experienced warriors, called Squibbs and Squibbles; they will take you into the company they belong to. And now I must leave you, as the attack is about to commence;” and waving his hand, His Majesty hurried forward to speak to his General.



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE BATTLE.



LEAR and shrill sounded the bugles for the charge, and with a cry of "Long live the Man in the Moon," they rushed down the hill, the archers leading. Though taken by surprise, the General of Queen Venus' army quickly formed his men into a solid phalanx and awaited the onslaught.

Showers of arrows now began to fall, fast and furious, between the two armies, but as His Majesty's drew near, their archers fell back and allowed the spearmen to advance. These came forward at the double quick, their long, slender spears forming a glittering line of steel. Faster and faster sped the arrows from the bows of the enemy as the spearmen advanced. But on they came, with so fierce a rush that the

archers were swept aside. Crash!—steel has met steel, but the solid phalanx remains unbroken. Again and again did General Quickeye lead his men to the charge, but each time the enemy's ranks remained unbroken.

Finding it impossible to force his way through, General Quickeye commanded the retreat to be sounded, for he saw he must try other tactics.

When the retreat sounded, Squibbs and Squibbles had fairly to drag Farmer Brown back, for by this time he was worked up to the highest state of excitement.

“A retreat, you dogs!” panted he, in great wrath. “Not a bit of me will retreat while I have a leg to stand on. It is a shame to run away!”

“But we are not running away; we will charge again. See, they are already forming.”

“Dear! dear! Well, it is a queer way to fight, I must say, running away and then back again.”

Suddenly the bands of His Majesty's army struck up a blast of such martial music that it sent the blood tingling through Farmer Brown's veins, and made him long for the fighting to recommence.

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“What are we waiting for? the men are all ready. Why don't we charge?”

“Have patience. Really, Farmer Brown, you surprise me!” chuckled Squibbs. “I had no idea you would make such a valiant warrior. Your geese seem to be imbued with the same lively spirit as yourself; look up yonder and see what a dance they are having.”

Farmer Brown glanced up and saw the whole corps of geese over the enemy, rising and falling in time to the music.

“Bless my heart! whatever are they going to do?”

“They are waiting for the signal to dash down upon the enemy. The scouts are armed with long spears; these they will thrust with great quickness among the enemy, and then, when they are thrown into confusion, we will charge.”

Just then the music changed into a piercing wail, and down dashed the corps of geese with shrill cackles, and, to the dismay of the enemy, they found themselves attacked from above.

Thrown into wild disorder, they broke their ranks and fled, hotly pursued by His Majesty's army. Several times did the General who commanded Queen Venus' army succeed in rallying his men, but they

were as often routed. But he endeavoured to make one stand more, and the soldiers, animated by his gallant conduct, took up their position on a slight eminence, and once more faced their adversaries.

Farmer Brown and the two warriors were among the foremost of their pursuers as they turned a bend in the valley, round which the enemy had vanished from view.

"Back! back! Farmer Brown," cried Squibbs and Squibbles, as soon as they saw the position occupied by the enemy. "We must wait for the rest to come up, or we will be cut to pieces."

But with a shriek of "Long live His Majesty," he darted towards the enemy, brandishing his spear. Upon seeing this, the two warriors followed, resolving to die with him rather than be false to their trust."

"Seize that tall warrior and the other two. We will keep them as hostages," called out the General.

The three were soon overpowered and made prisoners and marched off, just as the cries of "To the rescue! to the rescue of Farmer Brown!" fell upon their ears.

They were hurried quickly along till they came to a place where a

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great deal of the baggage and other stores of the enemy were drawn up under a strong guard. Here they were given in charge of the officer who commanded.

"A queer specimen," said the officers, as he eyed Farmer Brown. "Said you he was in the Man in the Moon's army?"

"Yes, taken along with these other two; and the orders were to see that they were well guarded."

"I will take them to Her Majesty; she may gain some information from them."

Accordingly they were conducted to a tent before which stood two soldiers with drawn swords. Above the door of the tent hung a shield of wondrous beauty, from which shone a mingling of most exquisite lights, but so soft and mellow as not to dazzle the eye.

"It is the shield of Queen Venus," whispered Squibbs to Farmer Brown. "I have heard tell of its beauty."

As they entered, they saw on a richly ornamented seat one of the most lovely beings that eye ever rested upon. This beautiful little woman was dressed in a suit of armour of delicate and intricate workmanship, over which hung a mantle of silk.

“Whom have we here?” she asked, as the officers, bowing low, presented the three.

“Prisoners taken in battle, Your Majesty.”

“Say you so? Then our General is gaining ground, and before long he will send me the Man in the Moon; ay! and his whole army will come as prisoners to my tent. The victory is ours, is it not?” she said, turning to the officer.

“Your Majesty, pardon me, but the General has just sent word that he is making a last desperate stand, and in case that fails we are to hold ourselves in readiness to flee.”

“What!” cried Her Majesty, starting up; “then I shall myself go to the field of battle and take command. Bring me my shield and helmet.”

“May I beg of Your Majesty,” interrupted Farmer Brown, timidly, “not to think of such a thing——”

“How now! where are your manners, sir, that you presume to dictate to me!” And clapping her hands, she said to the warrior who answered the summons, “Chop this man’s head off.”

“And ours also,” cried Squibbs and Squibbles, each frantically grasping hold of Farmer Brown.

The warrior hesitated, and looked enquiringly at Her Majesty, who thereupon ordered them to be taken from her presence. At this moment, a messenger came running with breathless haste to say that the General was defeated and the whole army in flight. All was confusion and excitement for some moments, but finally Her Majesty, seeing that their case was now hopeless, gave the order to commence their retreat.





## CHAPTER VII.

### FARMER BROWN RECEIVES A LESSON IN ASTRONOMY.



AS Queen Venus and her body-guard fled, they were from time to time overtaken by fugitives from the main army. These brought word that the Man in the Moon's army was still pursuing, and that many of their warriors had been slain in the last stand made.

As night came on they halted for a few hours' rest before continuing on their way.

Poor Farmer Brown sank down with a sigh of relief; the rapid movements of these wonderful little people were somewhat tiring to his larger frame. But scarcely had he sat down and looked about him than he uttered an exclamation of delight.

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“What now?” said Squibbs, as he uncoiled himself from a short nap he was indulging in.

“Look!” said Farmer Brown, pointing to the sky.

“Well, I am looking. Here, Squibbles, rouse yourself, Farmer Brown wants us to look at the sky.”

“I should think,” answered Squibbles, gravely, as he adjusted his helmet, “that this was hardly the time for jesting.”

“Hear him! jesting forsooth! there’s little of it left in me, what with three arrow-heads sticking in me.”

“Eh! why don’t you pull them out,” said Farmer Brown, in great concern for his little friend.

“I did pull them out; but you see the wounds are there all the same; but let us return to the sky. What is that you see there?”

“Why, that huge body hanging in the sky; what a brilliant light is shining from it; it looks something like your moon appears to us, only much larger. And how dazzlingly bright the stars are; it is truly a wonderful sight; pray tell me what you call that large object?”

“It’s your own planet, to be sure; ha! ha! do you hear that, Squibbles; Farmer Brown doesn’t know his own world.”

“ Really, Squibbs ! you grow worse every day,” cried Squibbles, shaking him wrathfully by the shoulder. “ You forget that everything is strange to Farmer Brown.”

“ True, true, pray pardon me ; but come, I will make amends by telling you what I know about these planets ; not that I am much of an astrologer, but I have learned somewhat from our wise men. That large object which you see yonder is the earth, the planet on which you live, and which gives us a far more brilliant light than we give you, for the reason, that your planet covers a space on the sky more than a dozen times as large as that covered by ours, in full moon, as you call it. Look closely, now, and tell me if you can see the whole of the earth lit up.”

“ No,” answered Farmer Brown, “ I see only half lit up.”

“ Right ; but the other half you can plainly see by means of that ring of light round her, caused by the shining of stars as they pass behind her thick atmosphere. And now I must tell you about the way in which your planet is always trying to draw us away from the sun.”

“ Eh, I never heard tell of that,” said Farmer Brown, with his mouth and eyes wide open, as he listened in astonishment to Squibbs.

"No, I daresay you didn't," answered Squibbs, in a patronizing tone, "but it is a fact, as Squibbles there can tell you." Whereupon Squibbles gravely nodded his head.

"Your astronomers speak of our planet as the earth's satellite, and say that she journeys round the earth. Well, so she does; but at the same time, just as surely as the earth travels round the sun, so does the moon. So we are, you see, two sister planets, travelling round the same sun. Do you understand?"

"I—I—think so—you say our earth is a planet and your moon is a planet, and together we journey round—round—ahem! the—

"Sun."

"Exactly! round the sun; but wait a bit. I don't see how if your moon journeys round our earth she goes round the sun also."

"How stupid you are, Farmer Brown. Why, it is just as plain as plain can be——"

"Well, explain it to him," interrupted Squibbles.

"Oh, come now, I can't stop to answer such foolish questions, or I will never get through. I repeat they both journey round the sun, who pulls them with great force towards himself——"

“ Dear ! dear ! you don't say so. What does he pull them with ? ”

“ Farmer Brown ! if you ask me any more such questions I will stop. What does he pull them with, indeed ! Do you think anybody could answer such a question as that ? ”

“ It is so very extraordinary,” murmured Farmer Brown, somewhat frightened at the fierce tone of Squibbs ; “ but pray continue, and I will try and not interrupt you again.”

“ He pulls,” continued Squibbs, somewhat mollified, “ our planet quite as strongly as he pulls the earth. The earth, as I told you, pulls the moon ; so also the moon pulls the earth ; though the far greater weight of the earth causes her to pull the strongest. If the moon and the earth were of the same size, they could pull each other with equal force. So you see our planet is pulled one way by the sun and the other way by the earth ; but the pull of the sun is more than twice as strong as that of the earth, and if it were not that he pulls the earth quite as hard as he pulls the moon, he would soon overpower the earth's influence and drag us away altogether.”

Here Squibbs paused and looked at Farmer Brown, whose face by this time wore the look of one hopelessly dazed.

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“ I think you have had enough about astronomy for the present. I will tell you more later.”

Farmer Brown breathed a sigh of intense relief and nodded his head.

“ Bless my heart ! ” he said to himself, “ supposing he should question me about that pulling business ; I can’t for the life of me answer one question. Eh ! what is it,” he said, suddenly starting up, as one of the guards poked him with a spear. “ Oh, yes, to be sure, the sun pulls the earth ; no, I mean the earth pulls the moon—”

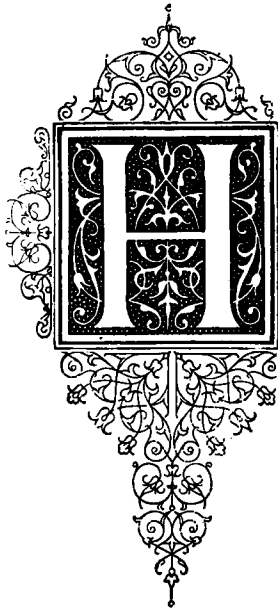
“ What is the man talking about,” cried the guard in astonishment. “ Here, I say, wake up ; it’s time to march.”

“ Ay ! ay ! to be sure ; to be sure. I thought you wanted to know something about——”

“ You have no right to think at all ; you have just to listen and obey orders.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

QUEEN VENUS AND HER FUGITIVE ARMY LOSE  
THEIR WAY AND COME TO A WEIRD AND  
AWFUL PLACE IN THE MOON.



“HOW singular,” said Squibbles, after they had been marching for a long time, but it is certainly growing dark, and it must be near morning.”

“You are right, Squibbles, it is growing darker, and look at the scenery we are passing through, it has been gradually becoming more and more rugged. See!” and Squibbs pointed to a lofty range of mountains, upon whose summits and sides not a tree or shrub could be seen. “Never before did I see aught so desolate in all our wanderings over the moon. What if we should have lost our way, and are coming to that

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dreadful place of which I have heard somewhat from our wise men. They say that nothing lives there, and that the mountains send forth fire."

By this time they had reached the mountains, and were passing through a gorge.

"Bless my heart, you don't say so!" cried Farmer Brown in great fright.

"Yes, and that day and night last a fortnight."

"Had you not better go and inform Her Majesty?"

"And get my head cut off for interfering!"

"I think," said Squibbles, in his grave way, "that it is our duty to inform Queen Venus of the danger that you think threatens us, even if we have to lose our heads for it."

Suddenly the order to halt was given as they came out of the gorge, and found themselves in a vast, desolate, rough plain, with ranges of rugged hills and towering cone-shaped mountains rising on all sides. Not a tree, bush or blade of grass was visible, while a deadly stillness pervaded the place. The atmosphere was charged with sulphurous vapor which rose from the various cone-shaped mountains. The heat was



intolerable. Hastily consulting with her officers, Queen Venus was advised by them to send for the three prisoners.

“For Your Majesty may learn somewhat from them concerning this dreadful place, whether it will be advisable to continue on our way or to turn back.”

So the three were brought before Her Majesty and questioned, whereupon Squibbs related all he knew, and that undoubtedly they were now in that part of the moon, and to penetrate farther would be certain death.

Scarcely had he finished speaking when a dense darkness settled down, and the ground began to work violently beneath their feet. And the next moment a flame of fire shot forth from one of the distant mountain peaks, while at the same instant a noise like furious cannonading rent the air, and from the sky there rained what looked like balls of fire. Fortunately but few fell where they were.

As soon as darkness had fallen, Squibbs and Squibbles had placed themselves one on each side of Farmer Brown, and taken firm hold of him, resolved to be true to the trust imposed on them by their king.

“Don't stir; keep where you are!” said Squibbs, as Farmer Brown showed signs of restlessness as he felt the ground shake beneath his feet. As the flame of fire shot from the mountain and lit up the darkness, Squibbs saw a large opening in a rock near them, and shouted as loud as he could, for the noise of the cannonading was tremendous.

“Your Majesty, I see ‘a large opening in the rock close to us. If you can follow me I will lead the way to it.”

“We will take advantage of the next flash and follow you. Obtain shelter for us, and you and your companions are free,” answered the Queen.

Before anyone had been hurt by the flying missiles, Squibbs had led them safely into an enormous cave; here they could breathe more freely, as the heat was not so great, and they were free from the balls of fire which kept raining fast and furious over the plain, which was now lit up for miles around by flames of fire bursting forth from not only one mountain, but from dozens of others.

It was a weird and awful sight, and brave warriors though they were, they trembled as they gazed upon it.

“I would that we were safe in our own beautiful Venus. Never

again will I invade the domains of the Man in the Moon. I am sorely afraid we will all die in this dreadful place, unless we can find the gorge by which we entered." And the Queen looked so mournful and sad as she uttered these words, that Farmer Brown jumped up and declared he would go and search for the opening, and was starting out of the cave when Squibbs and Squibbles dragged him back.

"You foolish earth-man, don't you see how these balls of fire are thundering down; wait till they stop, and Squibbles and I will go with you. I am afraid, Your Majesty," continued Squibbs, "that night has set in, and as it lasts for a fortnight we will have great difficulty in discovering the way out, but as soon as these meteorites cease falling we will go and do our best to find the opening."

After what seemed a wearisome waiting the meteorites at last stopped, and the three went forth into the darkness. They groped their way along for some distance. Suddenly Squibbs cried out "Oh my feet, my feet, help! help! Farmer Brown." While Squibbles at the same moment called out:—

"I am drowning, help! help! Farmer Brown."

"Bless my heart, you don't say so! Ugh! what is this! Hot

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water! No, it is too thick for water!" said Farmer Brown, as he made a dash forward and seized hold of Squibbs and Squibbles and dragged them higher up.

"It is lava running down from the mountains, and it is flooding the plain. See!" cried Squibbs in great excitement, as a flame of fire shot forth from a mountain and lit up the plain, "the whole place will be a lake in a few minutes more; already it is creeping up and will soon reach the cave—what are you doing?" and Squibbs turned and looked in amazement at Farmer Brown, who was taking frantic leaps in the air.

"I—I—don't know," gasped Farmer Brown, leaping higher than ever, "but I feel as though I must jump to the top of that flat rock. Oh! oh! I say, can't you hold me? I can't keep still!" They both made a rush to get hold of him, but before they reached him darkness had once more enclosed them.

"Where are you?" they shrieked. And a far-away voice answered:

"Here, on the top of the rock."

"Oh, Farmer Brown! you surely ought to know better than to play tricks at such a time as this; you couldn't possibly get up there, even if you tried to climb it."

Again came the voice like a whisper: "I tell you I am on top of the rock, and I reached it by one tremendous leap."

"Then come back, come back to us!"

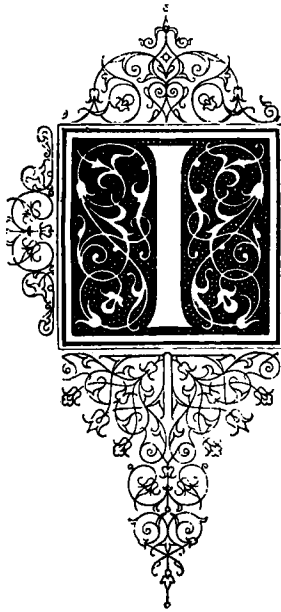
"I can't. I have no power left to stir."

"This is dreadful!" exclaimed Squibbles, who was trying to reach the side of the rock. Hardly had he uttered the words when he, too, began to take flying leaps in the air, and in another moment he had bounded up beside Farmer Brown. As he felt himself going, he called to Squibbs, "Stay where you are, and when the next flash comes make your way back to the cave and bring the rest close to this rock."

This Squibbs did, and before long he had conducted the Queen and her warriors to the rock, which they no sooner reached than away they went, leaping up and down, till finally, with a mighty leap, they reached its summit. And not any too soon, for the plain was now completely covered with the lava.

## CHAPTER IX.

### GREAT REJOICINGS AT THE COURT OF QUEEN VENUS.



It is very strange! very strange! Bless my heart, it can't be true!" murmured Farmer Brown.

Squibbles, who was sitting next to him—for as soon as they had reached the rock they had been compelled to sit down, all power of motion leaving them—asked anxiously:

"What is it? Do you notice anything about this rock we are on?"

"I do, indeed, Squibbles;" and here Farmer Brown lowered his voice, "it feels as though it were slowly sinking."

"Just what I thought myself; look at yon mountain, a moment ago we were nearly on a level, and now——"

“The rock! the rock is sinking!” burst forth from all sides, for the motion was now plainly felt by them all, as they descended with fearful rapidity, down, down, into unknown depths of darkness, black, intense darkness; then the horrible darkness vanished, and lo! before them, in all her wondrous beauty, appeared Venus. The dense cloud-laden atmosphere which usually surrounded her was parted and showed her in her full loveliness.

For a moment, not a word was uttered as they were hurried through space towards her, till the Queen broke forth into joyous praise of her planet, in which her army joined. As they drew near they could see great crowds of warriors hastening to and fro, as though greatly excited.

“They think it is some enemy coming to attack my domain, for they look not for my return in this manner. Ah!” she added, looking intently in another direction, “the path by which we reached the moon has been destroyed, but I care not; once back in my own kingdom, I will remain.”

“Then, Your Majesty,” what will become of us?” asked Squibbs, somewhat dismayed at the idea of not being able to return to his home.

“Why, you will remain with me. I will give Squibbles and you positions of high trust at my court, and marry you to two sweet maids

of honour. And you, Farmer Brown," she added, looking thoughtfully at him, "I have not quite decided what I will do for you, but rest assured it will be something worthy of the great service you have rendered us, for we should have all been lost but for your fortunate finding of this wonderful rock and——"

"Pray pardon me, Your Majesty," interrupted Farmer Brown, hurriedly, "but—you see—there's Molly."

"Molly! who is she?"

"Why, she's my wife, and I don't think she would like the idea of my staying in Venus."

The Queen thought for a moment, and then she said, "We will send for Molly, and I will make you my Prime Minister."







JOT.



# JOT.

## PART I.

### SAD HOUSE.



LITTLE boy named Jot lived in a gloomy mansion, which stood by itself in a great silent garden. This mansion was called Sad House. The trees spread their branches so that the sunbeams never reached the rank grass nor drooping flowers. Jot never played in this garden, for, strange to say, he never went out of doors. When it rained, he sometimes stood, his face pressed against a window pane, and watched the drops plashing against the leaves and the little streams of water trickling from the branches to the ground. Jot had an uncle who was most of the time away, and when he was at home, he used to sigh and groan so, that the little boy

would go away to another part of the house, because it made him so sorrowful to hear his uncle moan as he rocked himself back and forth like one in pain. When the uncle came home he always went straight to a certain window, which was in a far corner of the great drawing-room, and opened it. A very large bumble-bee would immediately fly



in and buzz angrily about his head, making a great noise, while the miserable man trembled and wept. Jot would steal softly from the room, trembling also, and wondering why his uncle feared the bee, and why he would always make so much haste to let in an insect who was certain to make himself so disagreeable. Indeed, there were times when neither Jot nor his uncle had a life to live with the conduct of this

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bee, whose buzzing would almost become a roar. Although Jot did not, so to say, understand a word that the bee uttered, still it was impossible to mark the tone in which he buzzed and not feel sure that his language was awfully bad; in fact, it must have been so bad, that it was a very good thing that Jot did not know bee-language. He was such a large bee too—many times the size of an ordinary bee, and belonged to no hive nor swarm. A very strange bee, with vagrant, un-bee-like habits.

One warm day, Jot felt lonelier than usual. He sat in an immense room, which was very grand, but dark and chill. It was all velvet and gold, but nothing shone, for the sunlight did not reach it. The little boy opened a window to see if any brightness could get in to cheer the grand place, which was so dismal in its finery. He leaned out far, which he had never done before. Perhaps for the first time he wished, in a dim way, to be out in the open air. It was very warm and still in the garden. Presently his ear caught a sound, an echo—a very, very faint echo—of rippling laughter. It gave to Jot a great happiness to hear that laughter, for he was so tired of gloom, and melancholy, and silence; even the old servant who waited on him was silent,

for he was deaf and dumb. He looked out in every direction, into the trees (for this was an upper window), down into the silent drives and walks, but he saw nothing. The sun was hot, and insects were humming about the sweet-smelling trees ; but nothing else was stirring in all the sad, damp place, shut in by its stone walls. Even the wind, when it did blow, seemed to get in by stealth.

The light, faint laughter was repeated, and this time, as the little boy was listening attentively, it was easy to know that it was overhead. He leaned out and looked upward. Nothing was to be seen but bits of blue sky through the branches ; but he could hear again the laughter, which was for all the world like the tinkling of flower-bells, so faint and dainty. Listening, he thought also that he could hear light foot-falls—merry, soft, and numerous.

Now, Jot knew that the roof of this old house was flat, and that there was a dark stairway leading up to it. He had never climbed that stair, because it was so dark and dusty, and he had not supposed that it could lead to anything bright ; but now he thought that of all things, he would like to reach the flat roof and see what all the merriment was about.

Jot had never felt the smallest inclination to go out at the

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house-door ; until this moment he had never dreamt of doing anything else than wandering contentedly from room to room, or up and down the long corridors and galleries. But now his blood stirred at the sound of frolic and play. You see he was filled with wonder and pleasure, for he had never seen very joyous faces, nor had he ever looked on other children at play. He walked faster than was his wont to the door which opened on the narrow and steep stair. He was not afraid, for he had never known anything to be afraid of, so he did not pause at all, but climbed in haste from step to step.

At the top there was a trap-door like an old-fashioned cellar-way in a kitchen floor. He pushed it up, with his hands first and then with his little shoulders, and got out and stood on the roof. It always seems odd to be on the roof of a house. No matter how large it is, one feels unsafe unless one is used to it, it is so strange to have a floor under your feet and no walls nor ceiling. In any case, Jot would have felt queerly, especially as he was not used to being out-doors ; but you may fancy that he had very good reason on this occasion, for he found himself surrounded by what I can only call a mob—yes, a mob of tiny creatures !



They were not people, for they had wings, and their faces were as dainty and beautiful as sweet-pea blossoms. Indeed, Jot thought directly of flowers, and felt as though he were in the garden at which he had so often looked, through the window, when the wind made the blossoms boisterous. They bounded up and down as lightly as thistle-down, circling round him, mounting in the air close to his chubby, wondering face.

One alighted on his shoulder and peered round curiously into his eyes, holding on first to his ear and then to a lock of his curly hair. This one had gleaming golden tresses, and was clad in a garb of gossamer so fine, that it seemed more like mist with the sun shining on it than anything that could be woven, even in fairy-land, where educated spiders do all the weaving.

This lovely little creature also wore a sash, which looked like a piece of rainbow tied in a bow-knot. Her name was Iris. Jot smiled to her, and straightened out his arm to make his shoulder more level for her to stand on. She immediately walked out on the extended arm as far as his elbow, picking her steps carefully over the wrinkles in his sleeve. From her perch on his elbow she looked at him again for a

minute. Then suddenly facing the crowd of little creatures who jostled each other below, she clapped her hands and wings, which made the little boy think of a humming-bird, for her motions were so quick that one could only liken her to a bird glancing in the sunlight.

As soon as the throng was silenced, she began speaking in the tiniest of voices, like the tinkling of a very small musical-box—that is, it was like a musical-box when the fairy became at all excited and spoke her loudest. At other times it was very faint, and Jot could hear the beating of his own heart quite as distinctly. But the discourse was very, very interesting to him—personally interesting, in fact—and he strained his ears to catch all that he could. What he heard was the fairy seeming to introduce him to the company.

“It is Jot!” she cried; “it must be Jot! Jot, for whom we have so long waited! He has come at last, and we need wait no longer; Jot has come to finish the Story!”

But the other fairies were not too ready to jump to a conclusion, and first one and then another began to talk, and from the soft clamour, the little boy gathered that they did not believe that he was Jot.

They sang :—

“ He does not resemble the Bumble Bee,  
Nor is he yellow ;  
This curious fellow  
Must needs be of other pedigree  
Than the ill-starred flower  
Whose hidden bower  
Must be sought out by valour and secrecy.”

“ That is just it,” said the fairy who stood on his arm, speaking very positively, “ he is not the least like them. I noticed it at once, and therefore he reminded me of them. The way in which he is not like them is astounding. It is not possible to see him and not think of them at once. I have never seen a more striking case.”

This convinced them, and they clasped hands until they looked like a very long wreath, and floated and waved about in the air as they sang all together :—

“ To his *confrères* he is kin,  
Let us make a merry din,  
For the tale shall be complete  
When the persons all shall meet,  
And the *dénouement* enact,  
Spells and magic counteract.”

They said this over and over, as though it pleased them very much, and when they stopped, Iris, who seemed to be the only one among them who could talk prose, began again to argue and protest, as if they still doubted her.

“It is—it must be Jot,” she said; “you know we were all sure that he must be brave and strong, or he could not finish the Story; and here he is, brave as a lion and as strong as a giant, or he could not have come up here out of that dreadful cavern, breaking barriers and lifting part of the house on his shoulders as we have seen him do.”

I am afraid that the fairy, being very small, imagined the dangers and difficulties of climbing the crooked stairway to be much greater than they really were. Jot felt this, and might have tried to explain that these were no great things for a boy to do; but there was a difficulty in contradicting this fairy, she was so positive and so very determined in her small way. So instead of saying anything to lessen her opinion of his heroism, he simply asked, “What is the Story? and why have you all been waiting for me?”

“The Story! oh, the Story!” said Iris, clasping her hands and rolling her lovely blue eyes, “it is *too* delightful. It is the only story

that we have ever known, and it is about the Uncle, and the Yellow Jonquille, which is avenged by the Bumble Bee. We were passing this way—oh, years and years ago—when it was only beginning, and although we were bound for the Land of Enchantment, where roses bloom all the year round and Christmas comes every week, where figs are already candied when they grow, and the very roadside pebbles are sugar-plums, yet we delayed to learn the story of the Uncle, the Bumble Bee, and the Yellow Jonquille, and as we felt sure that you would sometime find a way to break the wicked spell of the Bee, and finish the Story for us,” said the fairy, “we have waited and waited for you to come and make an end of it.”

“To come and make an end of it,”

sang the chorus of little fairies after her.

“We waited long,  
A restless throng,  
For you to make an end of it.”

“But I do not know the beginning of it,” said Jot, “I know a Bumble Bee, but I have never heard of a Yellow Jonquille. Tell me

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about the Bee, and tell me why everything that I know is dark and sad, and why my uncle groans and weeps.

Then Iris called the audience to order once more, and as Jot's arm had begun to droop, she dropped lightly down, and Jot seated himself beside her to bring his ears nearer to her tiny voice.

"You are Jot," she began, "I know it, I feel it—"

"Yes," sang the chorus,

"We know it, we feel it,

All tokens reveal it."

"Yes," she said again, when the singing had ceased, "you are Jot, and—you—are—your—uncle's—nephew!"

Iris uttered these last words very slowly, stopping after each as if it were something new and astounding that she told him.

Feeling that he was expected to say something, Jot said, "Yes, I have always known that."

"Then you are untruthful," said the fairy, "for you said that you did not know the Story."

"That is not a story," replied Jot; "every boy is his uncle's nephew."

“It is the most important part of this story,” retorted the fairy, “and I am afraid that you are a stupid boy, and if you are stupid, you will not finish the story well. But I will tell it to you, and then if you cannot find it yourself I will help you, for I am very clever,” and the fairy looked patronizingly at Jot, who felt very small indeed and said nothing.

“Well,” she said, “the Story is this:—Many years ago, an uncle was travelling through a lovely country, when he plucked a Yellow Jonquille. It grew by a river-bank, and there were thousands and thousands of other jonquilles, and how could he know that this one was the Love of the Bumble Bee? And there were thousands and thousands of bumble bees in the air and among the flowers that hot day, and how could he know that this particular Bee was One of Us?” Here the fairy shrugged her small shoulders. “He is one of us,” she explained, “because he can work spells and overcome difficulties, but we do not favour him, because his part in the Story is ugly and cruel, and we will help you against him, Jot. He is your enemy, and it is his wicked spells and machinations that make it impossible for you to go out through door or window.”

“ I have never wanted to go out,” said Jot.

“ That is owing to the spell,” said his wise friend. “ Know, Jot, that when the Jonquille began to droop and fade in his hand, the uncle threw it away. He has never been able to find it since, though he searches vale and hill. In the heart of this blossom there was a golden token which the Bee had loved and understood. By that token he will recognize it, and until he finds it the Bee will not lift his baleful spell from you, which is stupid of him,” added the fairy, “ for with your wonderful strength and courage, and your shining eyes, you would be far more likely to find his lost sweetheart than the uncle, who is growing gray in the search.”

“ I shall set out to-day,” said Jot, with determination.

“ But the spell ! the spell ! ” cried the fairy ; “ you cannot leave this abode, neither by door nor window.”

Jot looked about him. Some branches touched the roof. Could he climb down that way ? No, for these branches were very slight ; the birds alighting on them made them sway and quiver.

Suddenly an idea seemed to strike Iris, and spreading her gossamer wings, she flew out over the garden. Her bright companions joined



her, and fluttering in the air like a great throng of butterflies, they appeared to hold a council. Jot stood waiting, for he was certain that they were going to help him. Presently they returned, flocking about him again, and Iris, who had grown very grave and important, as well as mysterious, spoke to him :

“ Return here to-morrow at sunrise. Come prepared for a journey. Go now, for we have much work on hand, and must not parley longer.”

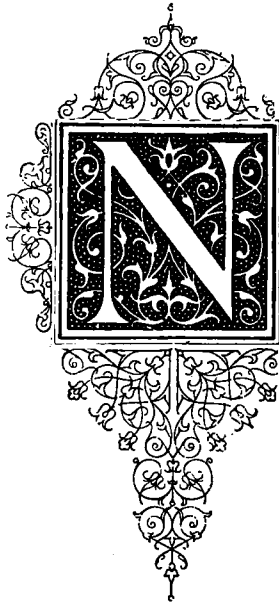
So saying, off she flew, and followed by the whole fairy train, descended to the garden below.

Jot rubbed his eyes and peered over the parapet that surrounded the flat roof, but in vain. The long grass and weeds hid them from view. He could only see the grass stirring like sea waves, and tall hollyhocks and golden rods bending seemingly of their own accord—such sights as we often see and wonder at when no wind is blowing. Then he went away down the crooked stairway, saying to himself :

“ Yes, I will certainly be here to-morrow at sunrise.”

## PART II.

### THE TRANSPARENT PALACE.



NEXT morning, just as the sun rose and painted the eastern sky the sweetest pink, Jot lifted the trap-door once more and stood on the flat roof. The fairies were in a great excitement as well as awfully tired, as they well might be, for they had worked all night weaving an immense net of grass and leaves, which was spread out on the roof. Iris explained to Jot that he was to stand on this green net, which would be lifted by all the company, who would then spread their wings and carry him with them to the ground.

“Once there,” she said, “you have only to wander abroad and look everywhere for a golden-hearted jonquille. This fellow” (pointing to a stout little fairy) “is going with you. He is called Daffy-Down-Dilly,

and he thinks that he is related to the Yellow Jonquille. That I cannot tell, but he wants to go, and he may be useful to you. If you want to mail any letters on your journey, he can fly up to the birds' nests and deposit them. You must be sure to write," she said; "it will all be part of the Story. Or if you have anything very interesting to tell, you may telegraph."

"How shall I telegraph?" asked Jot.

"Oh," replied Iris, "don't you know that? You just write what you want on a leaf, and go to the top of a pine tree and wait for a high wind to carry it for you. Sometimes the wind is long of coming, and sometimes it blows the wrong way," she continued thoughtfully, "and it may be better, on the whole, to post it. I have more than forty telegrams now on hand waiting for a cyclone, for they are important, and must go by a stiff breeze or not at all. Oh, Jot," and she clasped her hands, as she was fond of doing, "what you have missed by being shut so long into that cruel, dark house! Science has been making *such* strides!"

"Where will my letters go after they are deposited in the birds' nests?"

"To the Dead Letter Office," replied Iris; "the system is very

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complete. Once in the Dead Letter Office they are At Rest, and you trouble no more about them. But now you must make haste, the sun is getting high."

All the fairies flew to their posts, seizing, each one, hold of the edge of the net. They were hot-tempered little creatures, and there was a good deal of quarrelling as they jostled each other. When all was ready to start, they were hindered by the froward conduct of Daffy-Down-Dilly, who said that he was a traveller as well as Jot, and that he had a right to be carried down on the green net. This was unreasonable, as he could fly, and indeed ought to have helped to bear the net. The others were very indignant, and they all dropped their hold and ran back and forth scolding violently. The uproar might have lasted until noon if Iris had not seized Daffy by one leg, and dragging him to the edge of the roof, tossed him over. Of course, as he could fly, no harm was done.

"To carry *him* down!" she cried, returning to her post.

"Him!" cried all the indignant fairies.

They were ready to start when they said this, but they all dropped the net again and looked at one another in consternation. It was quite

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a few minutes before Jot understood what the trouble was. You see, it was against all custom for the fairies to speak in prose, and now they had uttered just one word, "*Him*," and you cannot by any stretch call one word poetry. As soon as Jot understood their difficulty, he said :—

“ Him,  
By a limb,  
They dragged to the brim,  
And cast overboard in a punishment grim.”

This delighted them, and they repeated it over several times, clapping their hands.

Then for the third time all was ready, and up they rose, Jot standing in the middle of the net. He felt very gay going through the air in this manner, and was almost sorry when they reached the ground. He was sorry also to take leave of his little friends, especially of Iris, who was beginning to weep, when she was startled by a scream from some of the others, who had just found Daffy stretched on the ground under a rosebush. His eyes were shut, and the fairies began to wring their hands and sob. But Iris, who knew Daffy well, went right up to him, and taking a thorn from the rosebush, she said :

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“There is nothing like a little blood-letting in a case like this,” and proceeded to prick his fat cheek. But the thorn had scarcely touched him, when up he bounded rubbing his face and screaming in verse that he was killed. It took some time to get him quieted. All the fairies were very kind to him, although, as Jot could not help thinking, he did not deserve it, as he had given them so much trouble in the beginning, and had only pretended to be dead to frighten them. But after a while all the good-byes were said, and Jot found himself walking along the highway, Daffy following close at his heels. They went a long way in silence, for Jot was thinking about this enterprise which he had undertaken. It took pretty hard thinking too, and he had to wrinkle his forehead and nod a good deal. Once he spoke out aloud and said, “Oh, why did my uncle throw the golden-hearted flower away?”

Then Daffy wagged his head knowingly, in a very self-righteous way, and said :—

“’Tis a sin to pluck a flower,  
Growing in its leafy bower,  
And to cast that flower away,  
Sorrow brings a later day.”

Soon after this, they saw a bank where strawberries grew. Daffy

flew at once to the feast, and began picking the berries and stuffing them into his mouth. Some that were not as red as the rest he threw away. The pretty strawberry blossoms were on the same stalks with the berries, and soon the ground was covered with torn flowers and crushed berries. Then Daffy, who had eaten too many, became very cross, and threw himself down among the plants and rolled peevishly about.

Jot waited until he had stopped fretting, and then said, "I thought you would not pluck flowers, nor throw them away."

"Strawberry blossoms are different," replied Daffy, angrily, without trying to make a rhyme, for he was in such a bad humour, that he was quite reckless. This might have got him into trouble, so Jot finished it for him :—

" Strawberry blossoms are different quite  
From buds that can never be eaten,  
And the berries, they are such a beautiful sight,  
Adapted so well to be bitten."

But nasty little Daffy did not say "Thank you." On the contrary, he seemed offended that Jot had noticed his conduct in the strawberry

plot, and after whimpering and sulking a little longer, he said that he was going back to Sad House, and off he went up the road, muttering and grumbling.

Jot was alone now, and he felt sorry that Daffy was gone away, for any company seemed better than none. He could not help wishing that Iris herself were with him, for she had seemed so wise and helpful. Thinking of her as he walked along, he at length came to a shady nook in a wood, and then he lay down to sleep.

It was evening when he awoke. He stretched and rubbed his eyes, and then, to his great surprise, he saw a very queer-looking Brownie seated on a log watching him. When Jot sat up, the Brownie seemed very much frightened. He trembled and held on tightly to the log. Jot spoke in a friendly tone and held out his hand, for he was a very polite little boy, but the Brownie just peered into the hand to see what it held, and finding it to be empty, he looked up at Jot and shook his head.

"Do not be afraid," said Jot, "I am not afraid of you. Let us be friends, and perhaps you can tell me something that I want to know. I am looking everywhere for a jonquille with a golden heart. Can you tell——"



He stopped, because the Brownie was laughing so much that his eyes went out of sight, and he had to hold his sides, while his cheeks were swollen like balloons. When at last he could speak, he said :

“ I beg your pardon, but I have seen that Jonquille, and I am laughing because I helped her to hide it.”

“ Helped whom to hide it ? ” asked Jot.

“ Oh, the Lady who lives in the Transparent Palace,” replied the Brownie. “ You see, I am her woodman, and when she heard that someone was searching for the Yellow Jonquille, she took it out of her garden into the Palace, and ” (here the Brownie went into explosions of laughter again) “ the Palace is transparent, and it could be seen from the outside, no matter where we put it. I nearly died laughing while we dragged it round from room to room ; but we got it hidden at last,” and the Brownie laughed afresh at the thought of it.

“ Tell me where and how you hid it,” said Jot.

But the little brown man put on a very cunning look and shook his head.

“ That is a secret,” he said.

“ I am fond of puzzles,” said Jot. “ Let me try to guess this one.

Tell me where the Transparent Palace is, and I will go and search for the hidden Jonquille, and when I fail to find it, I will come back here and tell you where there is a bank covered with the first ripe strawberries."

The Brownie became excited over this, and came close to Jot, quite forgetting his fears. "Quite ripe?" said he, "and big ones?"

"Yes," replied Jot, "but I will not tell you any more until I come back—without the Jonquille."

"Ah," said the Brownie, "but you might come back with it, and what would become of my situation then?"

"Well, it would not matter," said Jot, "would it, for I suppose you can't be paid a great deal for just being a woodman?"

"I am not paid anything," replied the Brownie, "but then, I have the situation, you see," and he nodded his head knowingly.

"I have no situation," said Jot. "Are not you sorry for me? Could you not get me one as woodman too? The work must be too heavy for you to do alone."

The Brownie considered for awhile.

"You better come home with me to-night," he said, "and then we

will go up together to the Palace in the morning, and see if she likes your looks. Are you stupid?" he asked, quite suddenly. "The Lady won't employ anyone who is clever. I am the most stupid creature that she ever saw; she often says so, and therefore I suit her."

"Well, I have been called stupid quite lately," said Jot, thinking of Iris, "and I know very little, so perhaps I would do nicely, and I would be great company for you, besides."

"So you will," cried the Brownie, and they set off together to the queer little home, which was in an enormous hollow stump.

It was very cosy and nice inside, being lined with moss and decorated with lichens, bright stones, and a fungus or two, on which the Brownie had drawn pictures. One of his pictures was, he explained, the Lady, and although you could see that it was not well done, still you felt at once that the Lady was not a pleasant person, and that a better picture would only have made her disagreeableness more distinct. He also had a tame tree-frog which sang in a cage. Over the doorway he had fastened a horse-shoe for luck.

"Why is it lucky?" asked Jot.

"Because it is so well fastened up," said the Brownie. "It is

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very heavy, and if it came down on one's head it would be very unlucky."

He was very kind and civil as a host, and insisted, after they had eaten their supper of nuts and roots, on sleeping in the cellar, giving up his bed of squirrel skins to Jot.

Jot lay awake very long thinking, which made him sleep long in the morning. He slept until the sun was high, and might not have awakened then only that the groaning of the Brownie disturbed him.

"Oh," moaned the poor little man, "I am so ill, I am so ill, I have so many pains all at once."

"It is rheumatism," said Jot, going to him, "and you have caught it by sleeping in the cellar. It is too bad. I will carry you to your own bed, and then I will make a hot drink for you."

"And you will have to go to the Transparent Palace alone," groaned the Brownie, "and tell her that I am ill, or I will lose my situation."

This Jot readily undertook to do, and as soon as the Brownie was made comfortable he set out. The Brownie had told him where to go to find the Palace, so he walked straight and fast into the depths of the forest.

Long before he reached the Palace, he saw it gleaming through the trees. It was like a giant soap-bubble, or like a large hill made of soap-bubbles. Its colours were enchanting, but there was a curious want of reality about it, and in some lights you could not see it at all. It was like a dim but lovely dream, and there were moments when Jot thought that after all he was mistaken, and that he had not really seen it. But at last he was close to it, and could descry the wonderful furniture, which seemed made of pearl, and crystal, and shadow. In one of the rooms he saw the Lady reclining on a silken couch, and as he stood looking at her through the thin walls, which were almost like air, she stirred restlessly, as though she felt that someone was regarding her, and presently she looked out at him. She had a very forbidding countenance, her eyes were so small and glittering, and her gaze made one feel creepy. She was dressed curiously in a robe of silk, striped in bright green, and yellow, and brown. Jot wondered why he felt so strangely. She beckoned him with her hand, and he went in at the door, and through halls and rooms, she watching him all the while until he reached her side.

“Are you stupid?” she asked, in a cold, strange voice.

“ Yes,” replied Jot.

“ I want a servant,” she said, “ who is too stupid to guess anything, and who talks little and knows few words.”

Jot thought that if she disliked speech, the less he spoke the better, so he nodded his head, and she went on, her glittering eyes fixed on him the while : “ I have a woodman who could easily do all that I want, but he is funny, and his hateful laughter sickens me. Let him go on gathering his faggots, but I want you to catch flies—and—to—bring—them—to—me.”

The Lady brought out these strange words slowly and unwillingly, as if ashamed of such an odd fancy. Jot, for his part, was so surprised, that his eyes grew large, and a look of rage came into the Lady’s strange, strange face.

“ What is it to you,” she said, angrily, “ if I would have flies ? Am I always to be denied the pleasures of life ? Is it not enough to be buried in the heart of this dark forest, where I never feel the sun’s warmth, but I must also eat my heart out, dreaming of flies and never seeing one ? ”

Jot was careful not to show any more wonder at anything she said,

and she soon engaged him to be her servitor. His principal duty, she explained, would be to catch flies on the edge of the forest, where they buzzed about in the sunlight.

He did not forget the Brownie's message, but when he began to explain the matter, he was interrupted by a heavy sigh, and the Lady, who was not listening, and did not care about other people's rheumatism, said :

“ I have a secret which I must tell to you ere you enter into my service. It is this : There is a word, one baleful word, which you must not utter whilst you are within these glassy walls. Once utter that word here, and you bring disaster, and shame, and ruin on me, and on yourself—death ! For—I—will—kill—you ! ”

She fairly hissed out her last words, and Jot's blood ran cold. As soon as he could speak, he asked if it would not be better to tell him this perilous word, that he might be sure of avoiding it.

“ Fool ! ” shrieked the Lady, “ to suppose that I myself dare utter it ! ”

There seemed nothing to gain by conversing with his new mistress, so he promised to be back in the evening with as many flies as he could catch, and off he started.

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“Get fat ones,” said the Lady, in a hungry, pathetic voice, as he left her.

He found the Brownie still in his squirrel-skin bed, but recovering rapidly from his rheumatism. He listened with eyes like saucers to Jot’s story, and seemed particularly interested in the fly-catching part of the narrative.

“She’s going a-fishing,” he said, knowingly; but Jot did not think that very likely.

That afternoon they went together and caught a great many flies in a mosquito net which the Brownie had. These Jot carried to the Lady, who emptied the whole lot into her handkerchief, and impatiently bade him be gone.

“Off, off with you, out of my sight,” she hissed, “and look not back as you go.”

So for many days Jot and the Brownie ran about in the sunshine catching flies. It was not very easy work, and of course it takes a great many to fill a handkerchief. They caught as many big bottle-flies as possible, because they would go further and make the most show. Each evening Jot carried the result of the day’s sport to that



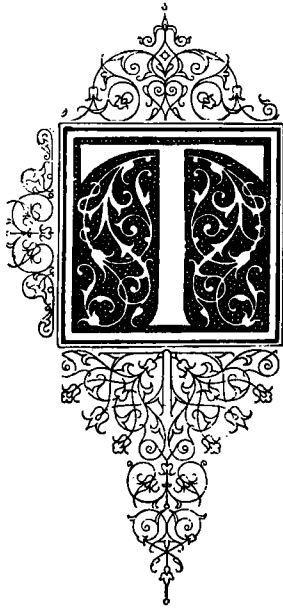
strange, unreal-looking Palace, every visit hoping that he might linger and cast his eyes about him amongst the transparent walls, and perhaps espy the yellow flower of his quest. But each time he was dismissed in the same fierce haste, and if he disobeyed orders and looked behind, he saw, always, the Lady's wicked eyes fixed on him waiting for him to disappear. So he began to consider if there were not a better way of attaining his desire.

"Of fly-catching there is no end," thought he, "I must try some other way."



## PART III.

### SHAM AND SUCCESS.



THE Brownie was very sorry when Jot told him one evening that he meant to leave him and live close to the Transparent Palace, braving the lady's anger. He grew very down-hearted, although of course he was obliged to own that Jot was never likely to obtain even a peep at the hidden Jonquille, if things went on in their present way. He loved Jot's company, the evenings in the hollow stump had been so cheerful, and chasing flies all day just suited him, although it made him neglect his duties as woodman sadly. When he knew that Jot was determined on leaving him, he sat clasping his sharp little knees and rocking back and forth, while the tears ran down his cheeks.

“The worst of it is, Jot,” he said, “that I have no keepsake for you. You may have my pictures,” he added, sadly.

“No,” said Jot, “they would be too inconvenient to carry about, thanking you all the same; but if you want to give me a keepsake, you have something better than that, and the best of it is, that after giving it to me, you would still have it. We would each have it, and so would be constantly reminded of each other.”

The Brownie got excited at once, as was his wont when at all interested.

“Is it a riddle, Jot?” he asked.

Jot nodded his head. “Guess it,” he said.

The Brownie knitted his brow and shut his eyes, and was still for several moments. Then he brightened up with a jump. “My tree-frog!” he shouted.

But that was not it, and Jot explained to him that the frog would also be troublesome to carry with him, and that in parting with it the Brownie would be losing instead of keeping it; that, in short, the tree-frog did not fill the bill. So the little man tried again: “Half my cellar-full of nuts?” he said.

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“No,” replied Jot, “that also you would lose in the giving.”

“I would still have the other half,” said the Brownie.

“But this is not to be half a gift,” said Jot. “I want you to give me the whole of it, and when you have given it, you will still have it.”

But the Brownie could not guess, he was not given to deep thinking and it tired him. He began to nod and grow sleepy from mental exertion, so Jot hastened to startle him into wide-awakeness by answering his riddle himself.

“Give me the secret of the hiding-place of the Yellow Jonquille,” he said, “you will have it still, and I will also have it and keep it to remember you by.”

The Brownie was frightened at this.

“I dare not,” said he, whimpering, “I would lose my situation, for sure.”

“But you must have lost it already,” answered Jot, “for you have not made a single faggot for ever so long.”

This made the woodman cry more, for he had quite forgotten his own work through being so happy with Jot. The little boy now tried

to comfort him, and, as it was getting late, they set out together to carry to the Transparent Palace what Jot said would be their last catch of flies. On the way Jot tried very much to persuade him to give up the secret, pointing out that, having lost his post already, through neglecting his work, it could not matter what his disagreeable mistress thought of him, but the little man fretted, and was very miserable, mixing his lament for the lost situation with tearful leave-taking of his friend, and Jot was just despairing of bringing him to himself sufficiently to get the secret from him, when the Brownie suddenly clapped his hands, and, with the tears still on his queer little face, bent himself nearly double with laughter. He choked and rolled and for a good many minutes could make no response to Jot's questions. When at last he *could* speak, he just gasped out :

"Are you hungry?" and then went into fresh explosions of merriment. Jot was glad to see his friend so cheerful once more, but he was greatly puzzled to know the reason for so much mirth. He replied wonderingly :

"It is not time to be hungry yet. I shall be hungry before bed-time."

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“And where will you look for something to eat,” fairly screamed the Brownie, holding his sides again.

“I am sure I do not know,” said Jot, “in the Lady’s larder perhaps.”

As he said this, he thought that something rustled beside him, but when he looked, nothing was to be seen. *But it was growing too dark to see well.*

The Brownie now tried to stop laughing and speak seriously.

“Jot,” said he, “*be hungry*. I must not tell you what you want to know, but it is like a riddle, and you must find the answer your own self. Be hungry, and go to the larder and find there something that you think is the greatest delicacy in the world. Guess what it is?” and he showed signs of laughing again.

“Ice cream?” said Jot.

“*No !*”

“Plum cake?”

“*No !*”

“A frosted birthday cake?”

“*NO-O-O !*”

"Well, said Jot, "I don't know what more to say, unless I begin again, and say more ice cream, or twice as much cake, or two birthday cakes."

"No, no, none of them," screamed the Brownie, in the greatest excitement. "Guess the thing of all others that mortals like to eat. You like it so much, that the children have to spend their play-time outdoors in making it. Especially after rain," he added, thoughtfully.

"The children make it!" said Jot. "Children cannot cook, they don't make anything except mud-pies."

At this the Brownie fairly shrieked with excitement.

"Oh," he cried, "mud-pies! And don't you love mud-pies? I have seen rows of children making them, and looking as if they loved them."

"Don't you love to eat a mud-pie, Jot?" he continued, anxiously, seeing that Jot was looking very much astonished.

Again Jot heard a rustling noise that seemed to follow them, but the dusk was now deepening. They were very near now to the Palace, and through the shadows they could see it gleaming. It all made Jot nervous.

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“Stop your laughing, Brownie,” he said, impatiently, “and tell me what you mean by this mud-pie nonsense. I have never played outdoors, and so have never made mud-pies. Where do you want me to look for this one?”

The Brownie stood up on his long, pointed toes, and making a trumpet of his two hands, he said, in a shrill whisper:

“Look for a mud-pie in the Lady’s larder, and find a secret worth knowing in that p——”

But the poor little woodman could not finish that last word, for a cruel white hand was fastened tightly round his wizened throat, and a long, gleaming arm held him up in the air. The Lady had him in her grip! The Lady of the Transparent Palace, white with fury, foaming at the mouth with rage, her strange, striped robe of yellow, brown and green tossing about her as though there were a tempest.

“Miscreant!” she hissed, as she shook the poor little Brownie, “I will destroy you! I will swallow——”

Was the Lady actually going to say that she would swallow her woodman? Her ugly mouth opened wide enough to take them both, and a strange tongue darted out. *It was forked!*



Jot shouted to her to put the Brownie down, for the poor little woodman was becoming black in the face ; but she was too greatly enraged to hear him. She was a very awful sight, her long, slender body swaying about. Jot sprang up into the air in the wild hope of reaching the arm that held his friend. In vain—he could not reach nearly high enough—but in the effort, he dropped the mosquito-net which held the flies. It spread open, the flies were free, and filled the air instantly. In another moment the Lady had dropped to the ground, loosening her grasp of her victim, and Jot and the Brownie looked on with horror as, her long, forked tongue darting hither and thither, she swallowed fly after fly.

She did not quite forget their presence, for from time to time she cast her dreadful glance on them and hissed.

Jot could neither speak nor move, and it was the Brownie who first found speech.

“ She eats them herself,” said he, “ fishing was all a SHAM ! ”

The word “ *Sham* ” ended in a shriek of terror, for just as he was saying it, a terrible light filled the place, and in one and the same instant they saw the Transparent Palace expand enormously and burst,

while the Lady writhed on the ground, casting what seemed a dying glance at them, as her body, growing yet more slender, transformed into a serpent, which crawled in haste out of their sight among the bushes !

They looked at each other, and they looked at the ground where she had been. Then they took one another's hands, and walked in silence to the place where they expected to find the ruins of the Palace. But lo ! there was nothing there in the vacant space except a mud-pie on the ground. It was a very large, and particularly a very high mud-pie. The Brownie ran to it when he saw it.

"It is my pie," he cried, "I made it, and I give it to you, Jot, for a keepsake. Open it, quick."

Then, as Jot knelt to pric open the top-crust of the mud-pie, which had become very hard indeed, the little man asked, thoughtfully, "Why was it not destroyed too in the explosion ?"

And Jot, who had been thinking hard, said :

"Because it was the only real thing in the sham palace, and *Sham* was the word that, when spoken, was sure to ruin the serpent's dream."

When the clay top-crust was lifted, the Brownie gave a shout of glee, and Jot almost joined him, for there inside this very odd hiding-

place was a yellow flower with a golden heart, which he knew must be the Jonquille of his search. Carefully he took it out, root and all, for it must not be broken a second time, and with a very light heart set out for home.

There is not much more to tell; the joy of Iris and her companions over his safe return cannot be described. They grudged the Bumble Bee his happiness, after all the unkindness of which he had been guilty in the past; and indeed it did seem unfair, but he settled the matter himself by dying of joy. Jot and the fairies buried him beautifully in the garden, and planted the Jonquille on his grave. It was truly, as Iris said, a beautiful arrangement. The Uncle, no longer tormented by his enemy, lived happily in the mansion, which was no longer sad.

And Jot—well, the prettiest thing of all was, that Jot joined the fairy band, and seated once again on the green net, was borne through the air by them to the Land of enchantment, where he lives in perpetual sunshine and sugar.

CAPTAIN PEPPER,  
THE VALIANT KNIGHT OF THE LAURENTIANS.

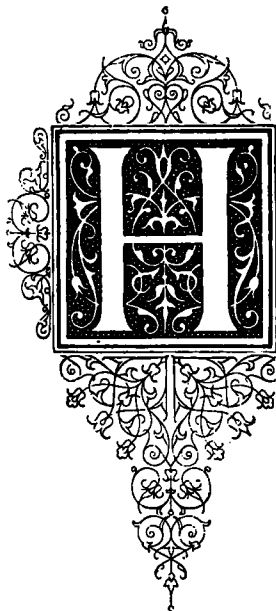


# CAPTAIN PEPPER, THE VALIANT KNIGHT OF THE LAURENTIANS.

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## PART I.

### FRED MAKES THE ACQUAINTANCE OF THE KING.



OW very sultry it has been to-day," hummed a bumble-bee, as he poised lightly on a flower.

"Yes, I never felt the heat so much," answered a little wren, who was sitting on the edge of the fountain enjoying the cool sprays as they fell softly into the basin below.

"Well, I remember," said the bee, as he paused for a moment in his search for the hidden sweets of the flower, and looked at the wren, who could not help trilling a laugh, for the bee looked so funny with the pollen smeared over his face—"I remember," continued the bee,

gravely brushing the pollen away, "a day when it was so"—Just then a book came flying through the air, and fell upon the flower, and over into the grass tumbled the bumble-bee.

"Very trying to one's nerves these sudden shocks," he said, as he picked himself up, and rubbed his sides down with his wings. "I suppose it's that boy again."

"It is," answered the wren, looking over at a bench. "It is Fred, poor boy; you must forgive him, I expect he could not stand it any longer, and just threw the book away in desperation."

"I do not see what good that is going to do him," buzzed the bee, as he flew off in search of another flower.

"I suppose it eases his mind," murmured the wren, "for he must be tired studying on such a warm day. Ah! he is speaking. I wonder, now, what he is saying," and the wren put her head on one side to listen.

"Bother the Laurentian Mountains!" cried the boy, getting up from the bench and throwing himself down on the grass. "Here I have been studying about them all the afternoon, and I cannot remember on which side the St. Lawrence they are. Let me see, now, I think it must be

the north ; no, it is the south—oh, well, I am not going to think about them any longer ; they are not of much consequence, anyway ;” and settling himself into a comfortable position, Fred closed his eyes and fell asleep. He had not slept long, when he was suddenly awakened by a shrill voice saying :

“ Of not much consequence are they ! that shows what a dunce you are ! You stupid boy ! ”

Quickly raising his head, Fred looked wonderingly about him to see who was speaking, and what did he see standing by his side but a queer little figure dressed in green, with a three-cornered scarlet hat perched on his head.

“ You ought to be ashamed of yourself to be such a dunce,” again shrieked the little man.

“ I am not a dunce,” said Fred, losing his fear of the strange little figure at these taunts.

“ You are,” screamed his visitor, stamping about in a pair of high boots, and getting purple in the face with rage.

“ No consequence, indeed ! I would have you know, stupid boy, that they contain some of the oldest rocks in the world, and have been



visited and written about by some of the most eminent men of the age. For want of breath, the little man paused and glared at Fred.

"I don't know what you are talking about," said Fred, rubbing his eyes to make sure he was not dreaming.

"Come, now, that won't do; I heard you well enough when you threw your book away."

"Oh!" cried Fred, suddenly remembering his geography lesson, "is it about the Laurentian Mountains you are speaking?"

No sooner had he uttered the name of the mountains, than the whole garden seemed to be filled with a number of the same quaint little people as the one who was speaking to him.

Racing up the garden paths they came, jumping on the sides of the fountain and playing hide-and-seek among the bushes.

"You see these?" said Fred's visitor, pointing to them. "These are my comrades, who, with many others, guard the precincts of the mountains. And now, stupid boy, I have resolved that you shall return with us and see for yourself the glories of these mountains." And without more ado, he seized upon Fred, and with the help of the rest, carried him off.

In vain did Fred struggle and try to escape. Firm and fast they held him as they flew over hill and dale. So swiftly was he borne, that it seemed but a short while since they had left the garden when the chain of mountains loomed up before his astonished eyes. As they made their way to a broad plateau, half way up the side of the mountains, they were sharply challenged by a sentinel posted on the summit of a rock.

“How now, whither away, Captain Pepper?”

“To His Majesty, King of the Laurentians,” answered the Captain.

“Nay, that cannot be; His Majesty must not be disturbed, he is hunting stag-beetles.”

“Say you so; well, then, we will tarry here for awhile, so as to give my prisoner time to recover his breath.”

“A likely-looking mortal, and where did you pick him up?” asked the sentinel, as he eyed Fred over.

Fred remained standing where his captors had left him, gazing in wonderment at the scene before him. From the plateau the mountain sloped gently down to a wide grassy plain; in the distance a waterfall tossed itself in a foaming mass from a lofty height. Suddenly the

silence of the place was broken by the merry tooting of horns, and hurrying over the plain came a number of the same quaint little people as his captors.

"As I am a valiant knight, here comes the hunting-party!" cried Captain Pepper, "and see! the stag-beetles are making this way. At them! at them! my brave warriors!" he called out, as the infuriated beetles dashed up the side of the mountain.

"Seize them! hold them!" said the sentinel, looking very fierce as he brandished his spear; but as one of the beetles made a dash for him, he dropped his spear and ran behind Fred.

"Save me! save me!" he cried, wildly clinging to Fred's legs. Fred stooped down and seized hold of the enemy, and held him fast.

"Well done!" said Captain Pepper, coming up with a second beetle. "That is a fine big one you have captured."

"Yes, he is a fine fellow," said the sentinel, "and the mortal and I had a fierce fight before we overcame him."

"Precious little fighting *you* did," thought Fred.

"Here comes His Majesty," called out one of the little men, as the leader of the hunting-party was seen advancing.

“The stag-beetles, they come this way, have you seen aught of them?” he asked, on seeing the group.

“Yes, Your Majesty,” answered Captain Pepper, “we have got two of them here.”

“Bravo! now my complement is complete. Six stag-beetles for my chariot. But whom have we here? another mortal have you brought us, my doughty Captain?” The Captain gave Fred a push forward, whispering, at the same time, “Make a bow, you stupid boy!” Thereupon Fred made a low bow to His Majesty. “It is all so strange,” thought Fred, “that I am quite forgetting my manners. I must really look out or the Captain will be saying I am rude as well as stupid: but it is enough to make any boy forget what he is about to see all these wonderful things; little did I think, when I was studying in the garden this afternoon, what was going to happen to me.”

“What is he here for, Captain?” asked the King, as he looked at Fred.

“For instruction, Your Majesty; he is shamefully ignorant of our mountains—thought they were of no consequence.”

“Of no consequence!” screamed the King; “and does he mean to

say I am of no consequence? Look at me, and dare to say I am not of vast consequence!"

"Indeed, you are," stammered Fred, in a great hurry, for he thought the King was going into a fit, he looked so fierce.

"The Queen, the Queen," whispered some one, and instant silence fell upon the group of little men. Fred turned to look and saw an enormous bat come swiftly flying to where they stood. "So that is the Queen," thought Fred, "what a funny looking little thing she is!"

"Turmoil and strife wherever I go," she cried, as she alighted from the bat and hurried up to them. "Vainly do I impress upon you the need of repose. Your Majesty," she continued, walking up to the King, who had upon her arrival endeavoured to assume a look as though he were mildly contemplating the stars, "has disobeyed my instructions and have been getting excited again."

"I assure you, my dear Madam," began the King, glancing nervously at a flask the Queen held in her hand——"

"Count twenty," interrupted the Queen.

"One, two, three, four," repeated the King hurriedly.

"That is a great deal too fast, commence again." This the poor

King did, and it was not till he had tried several times that the Queen was satisfied."

"Now you are calm again, and you require but a dose and a visit to the Hall of Repose." Saying this she held out the flask to the King, who with a woe-be-gone look slowly swallowed some of its contents.

"She will be coming to us," groaned the little man next to Fred.

"I shan't take any," said Fred.

"Who spoke?" cried the Queen.

"I did," answered Fred, coming forward, for he was beginning to be quite at home with these funny little people.

"Ah! I see you are the cause of all this excitement under which I find them labouring. Drink, and attain repose with the rest."

Transfixed by the stony glare of her eyes, Fred dare not refuse. As he quaffed the liquid, he felt himself overcome by a drowsy feeling, and slowly sinking to the ground, he lay among the rest of the little people, who, like himself, had each in turn to drink of the contents of the flask. As he lay there, he was conscious in a dreamy way of what

was going on. He heard the Queen hum these words, as she slowly rose into the air on the back of the bat :—

Moon and stars glimmer and glow,  
Rock upon rock bend and break,  
Slowly sink, deep, deep, below ;  
Earth and stone crumble and show  
Man, and beast, and creeping snake,  
Wrapped in rest that none can wake.

Was he dreaming or were they really sinking down into the mountains. At first Fred could hardly tell, he felt so drowsy, but it gradually dawned upon him that they were sinking into the depths of the mountains.

Down, ever down, they went, till, after what seemed a long distance, they suddenly stopped in a large chamber, or rather, lofty hall, the sides of which were covered with bright crystalline rock of the most charming colours.

At first Fred could do nothing but lie still and wonder at the many strange things which had happened to him, but gradually the stupor left him and he was able to get up and wander round the place.



*The Queen rose slowly into the air.*





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He searched everywhere to see if he could find a way out, but search as he might no outlet was visible. "I wonder if the Queen will come and take us out of this," he said aloud.

"Do you indeed! Well, you need not flatter yourself, she will not be here for a long time. You see you are here for repose."

Fred glanced quickly towards the motionless group of figures to see if it were one of them who was speaking, but no, they showed no signs of consciousness.

"Who is speaking?" he called out.

"The King's valet-de-chambre," came the answer.

"Well, I wish you would show yourself."

"I cannot do that, for I am on the outside of the hall, and you are in it."

"I wish I could get on the outside."

"No doubt you do; well, why do you not get on the outside; you see I am on the outside, and I shall stay on the outside, for if I were to go inside, I should become like the rest of you."

"Oh dear!" sighed Fred, "then why did you speak to me at all, if you are not going to help me?"

“ Because I want you to hear how well I can sing—listen !

For I am a merry, merry little elf,  
I dance and I frolic hither and thither  
With many a hop, skip, and a jump ;  
No Hall of Repose do I desire,  
So I shall stay on the outside.  
Oh, yes, I shall stay on the outside.

“ How provoking he is,” thought Fred, “ I won’t take any more notice of him.”

Presently the same voice called again, “ Halloo, there ! ” but Fred paid no attention ; again came the voice, “ I say, boy, why don’t you howl ? ”

“ I wonder what he means now,” thought Fred, as he paused in his walk. “ Suppose I try,” and raising his voice, Fred gave a howl that rang through the hall with a roar that it knocked several large stones out of the wall. Creeping through the opening that this made, Fred found himself in another hall.

“ Whatever did you mean by giving such a loud howl ? ” grumbled the King’s valet-de-chambre, as he advanced to meet Fred. “ It will

be a wonder if the Queen does not hear it and come down to see what is going on."

Scarcely had he uttered the words when a sudden rustling at the end of the hall made them glance that way in fear. Sure enough, there was the Queen bearing down upon them with her flask and stony glare. In despair, Fred looked round for a place to hide in, and perceiving an opening in the wall he made his way to it. After creeping through this for some time he once more found himself on the mountain-side. As he was standing there, wondering what he would do next, he heard a low chuckle, and there, sitting on one of the bushes was Captain Pepper.

"Hush! do not speak loud," he said, as Fred uttered an exclamation at seeing him, "for we must get out of this before the Queen sees us."

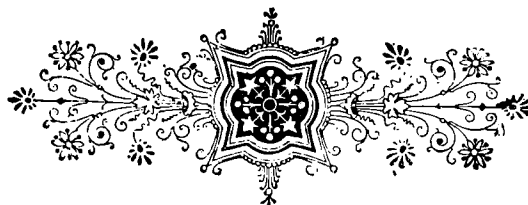
"But I thought you were in the Hall of Repose," said Fred.

"Not I; I am getting too wary. I made my escape, and have been sitting here waiting for you; but how was it that the Queen released you so soon?"

Then Fred told the Captain all that had taken place.

"Well, for a stupid boy, it was remarkably well done; but no

doubt it is the air of the mountains having an effect upon you. But come away," he cried, jumping down from his seat. "Let us make our escape while we may. Her Majesty is evidently determined on a state of repose for some time, so you and I will away to other parts in search of adventures, eh, my stupid boy !"



## PART II.

### CAPTAIN PEPPER AND FRED IN SEARCH OF ADVENTURES.



SO the Captain and Fred set off on their travels, and presently came to the waterfall which Fred had seen in the distance. As they were trying to get across, two water-nymphs sprang up, and taking hold of them, cried: "Now, stay your course, fair travellers, for we are in need of two witnesses. And before either could reply, they were borne swiftly through the water to the palace of the Water-King. Here they found a great crowd assembled to see the marriage of two of their people.

"I should say you had enough witnesses already," grumbled Captain Pepper, as they were led up to where the wedding-party stood.

“It is our custom always to have present, two strangers on such occasions; but be still and take your places, the King is about to read the service.”

The two took their places, but not without a protest from the Captain, who said weddings were not much in his line. When the service was about half-way through the Captain took a violent fit of sneezing.

“You had better stop,” whispered Fred, “the King is looking this way.”

“I cannot,” groaned the Captain; “I have taken cold coming through the water; oh! oh!” and another violent fit seized him. As he danced about in his efforts to stop it, he approached so near the bride’s train that Fred hastily made a grab at him, but alas! it was too late! he had already alighted on the silken gown, richly embroidered with sea-pearls.

A shriek of rage came from the bride. “Oh, my pearls! my beautiful pearls! wretch that you are!” and seizing a large shell which held the ink, she threw it at the Captain. It hit him a violent blow on the nose, and started him off sneezing harder than ever.

“Away with him to the lock-up!” shouted the King. “How dare

he sneeze and disturb the ceremony." And poor Captain Pepper was hurried off by some of the officials.

"The wedding will proceed," said the King.

"No, it will not!" cried the bridegroom, a nervous-looking little man. "See what a temper she has; I will not have her!"

"You shall!" yelled the King. "Everything is in readiness, and the wedding-cake has got to be eaten. You shall marry her!"

Thereupon the poor bridegroom fell to crying, "Ah me! ah me! I have caught a Tartar." Fred felt sorry for the poor little man and called out, "I forbid this marriage."

"You hear! he forbids the marriage."

"And who is he, that we should pay any attention to him," answered the King. "Lock *him* up."

A great hubbub now arose among the guests, some saying one thing and some another. In the midst of the tumult Fred made his escape, just as the bridegroom shouted in a triumphant tone, "There is no ink, she has spilt the ink, so we cannot sign the contract!"

After walking a long way and climbing up a steep ascent, Fred came to a noble avenue of trees. On looking down this avenue, he saw



a long table, round which were seated a number of the curious little people who lived in the mountains.

"I wonder, now, what is going on. I wish the Captain were here," said Fred.

"Hoot! hoot!" sounded from one of the trees. Fred looked up, and saw a large white owl solemnly regarding him. As he stood looking at him, the owl put his head on one side, and, half closing one eye, gave utterance in a very rapid tone to a number of names.

"I wonder, now, why he is saying all those queer names." Then, to Fred's astonishment, he made out that the owl was saying: "Jacques Cartier, John Cabot, Sebastian Cabot, Champlain. No, Columbus; yes, that is the name: Columbus—Christopher Columbus—it was who came over in three ships."

"Oh, you are all wrong!" exclaimed Fred, unable to keep quiet any longer. "It was Cartier who came over in three ships."

"No such thing; do you mean to tell me he could separate himself into three parts. Oh, you clever boy! you wise boy! Did you take the prize in history in your class?"

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“ No, I did not,” said Fred, getting angry at the bird’s tone ; “ but I know it was Cartier who came over in three ships.”

“ And pray how many ships had Columbus ? ”

“ Fred could not answer this.

“ I tell you what, my boy,” cried the owl, in a triumphant tone, “ never again attempt to correct any of us. An owl, you know, is the bird of wisdom.”

“ I think you are a very stupid bird, for all you look so wise,” answered Fred.

“ Go to court, they are waiting for you,” said the owl, quite unconcernedly.

Just then something ran against Fred, and looking down, he saw a little man dressed like a lawyer. “ The court is sitting,” and but waits for you to transact its business. Come this way,” and off went the little lawyer down the avenue.

“ Well, I suppose I have got to follow,” said Fred, as he went after him.

As he approached the table where the court was sitting, the eyes of all present were fixed upon him.

At the head sat the Judge, a grave little personage with an enormous wig. He eyed Fred severely for some time, and then said, "Yes, you will do very well for the mission. What think you, my friends?" said the Judge, turning to the rest of the company.

"He will do very well indeed," they answered with one voice.

"Then it is decided. You will accompany Colonel Diplomacy at once. Everything is in readiness for the start, is it not, Colonel?" he asked of an imposing-looking little man, dressed as an officer.

The Colonel bowed, and said that everything was in readiness. "Then you may depart on your mission." Fred would have liked to have asked what the mission was about, but the stern aspect of all present was such as to deter him.

"No doubt the Colonel will tell me," he thought, as he followed the little man down the avenue. He came up to him as he was loosing a row-boat that lay moored by the side of a stream.

"Oh, how jolly!" cried Fred. "So we are going for a row?"

"Be careful!" called out the Colonel, as Fred was getting in somewhat roughly. "You will upset her."

"It is rather small," Fred said, as he squeezed himself into the boat.

“Not if you sit still, and that you must do, no matter what you see,” said the Colonel, taking up the oars and rowing swiftly down the stream. Fred thought this a good opportunity to ask about the mission upon which they were going. But the Colonel was deep in thought, and did not hear him. So Fred repeated the question in a louder tone.

“To visit the seals, of course,” was the answer.

“The seals! what seals?”

“Why the seals connected with our mission,” said the Colonel, somewhat impatiently, as if he thought Fred ought to know all about it.

Fred had no further time for questioning, for his attention was taken up with looking about him. They had entered a subterranean passage, through which the stream flowed. And now it became exceedingly rapid and they were hurried along at a tremendous speed. Gradually the channel became broader and broader and the current less swift, and presently the boat glided into an open sheet of water.

“This is Crystal Lake,” said Colonel Diplomacy. “Look down into its depths and you will see a pretty sight.” Fred did so, and saw a number of gold and silver fish sporting about in the beautiful clear water.

Rowing out of Crystal Lake they once more entered a narrow

channel, and were borne along as swiftly as before. Again they came to another charming lake.

"This one is called Emerald Lake. See how beautifully the walls and the roof of the cave glisten, they rival in colour the deep green of the water." As the Colonel was speaking, he had headed his boat shorewards.

"We shall have to land here, for the waters are no longer navigable after we pass this lake. As you see, there is no outlet except through yon hole," and he pointed to a low arch at the further end. "The waters plunge through there, and fall into a cave of unknown depth in which there is a whirlpool. Listen! and you will hear the roar of the waters as they are lashed against the sides of the cave."

Leaving the boat, the Colonel turned sharply to the right, and led Fred through several vaulted chambers, and at last came to a winding staircase cut out of the solid rock.

As they ascended the staircase, the light grew brighter, and a gentle breeze told them they were coming to an opening in the rock. This proved to be correct, for presently the staircase opened on a broad

terrace overhung with vines and various creeping plants, and perched high up on a cliff.

“No seals here,” thought Fred, as he looked round.

“We shall continue our journey by flying,” announced the Colonel, taking down a curious-looking machine from the wall of the terrace.

“Well I never!” said Fred to himself. “What next, I wonder, will I see in this strange place.” Meanwhile, the little Colonel had opened the flying-machine. It resembled an umbrella with two handles.

“Take hold of one,” he said, as he grasped the other, “and jump with me from the cliff.”

“Is it quite safe?” asked Fred, who felt a little nervous about throwing himself from such a height.

“You don’t mean to say you are afraid!” exclaimed the Colonel in such a tone that Fred hastened to take hold of the handle at once. “Now, jump,” called out the Colonel.

With much trembling Fred obeyed, and the next moment it seemed as though they were going to be dashed to the rocks below; but it was only for a moment: the next they were soaring through the air at a tremendous rate. After flying along in this way for some time, the

Colonel shrieked out to Fred, for the wind was making such a roar that they could hardly hear each other :

“ Pull the string near your handle, for we are close to the sea.” As Fred did so, the curious machine began to descend, and there below them was the sea, dashing its waters against the coast with a mighty roar. As they drew nearer, Fred saw a vast concourse of seals gathering together in a sheltered bay, and making for the land. One of the seals, who was stationed on the look-out, gave notice of their arrival. Immediately the whole assembly set up a furious barking.

“ They see us,” said Colonel Diplomacy, waving his hat to them. “ And now, my dear sir, remember to act discreetly ; above all, be cool, no matter what may happen.”

Fred at once said he would, and felt highly elated at being called “ sir.” “ He evidently thinks I am somebody of importance, and so I must be careful not to make a goose of myself, and must make believe I know all about the mission.”

By this time they had alighted, and were standing in the centre of the circle made by the seals.

“ Time is short, my friends, so we will to business at once,” the

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Colonel said, taking a paper from his pocket and making a bow to the presiding seal, a grave old fellow with white whiskers. He then began to read aloud the following notice:—

“ WHEREAS, you have this day been charged by the Undersigned, One of Her Majesty’s Subjects in the said Mountains of the Laurentian Range, for that you wilfully, feloniously, and designedly Waylaid, Entrapped, and Stole from the Plaintiff in this Case *A Boat*, the whole, sole, and real Property of the said Plaintiff, General Mullicocoloram, of the Laurentian Range.

“ These are, therefore, to command you, in Her Majesty’s name, to be and appear before the said Plaintiff, at twelve of the clock, midnight, at the Court of the said Mountains, to answer to the said charge. Herein fail not, at the Peril of Losing the lives of many of your subjects.

“ Given under my Hand and Seal, in the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety-two.

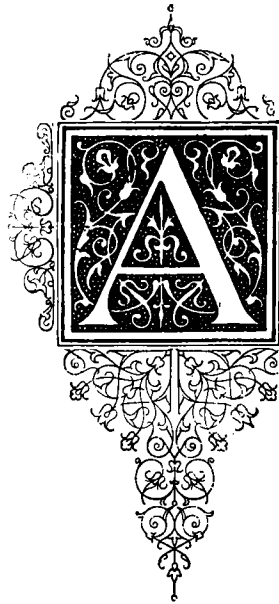
“ LONG SUFFERING, *Justice of the Peace.*

“ (Signed), COLONEL DIPLOMACY.”



### PART III.

#### DEW-DROP, QUEEN OF THE AIR.



AS soon as the Colonel finished reading, the seals commenced to talk excitedly among themselves.

Thereupon Colonel Diplomacy turned to Fred and bade him address them. "Try and have the matter arranged so that things will be satisfactorily concluded without the seals having to come to court, and above all, keep cool."

Fred raised his voice, so as to make himself heard above their clamour, and began his speech with no little fear at his heart at to what he had to say, for all he could make out of what the Colonel read was, that they had stolen a boat, and that they must return it or make it good. "Your Worship must know," began Fred, "that it is very wrong to steal, so

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you must return that boat at once, or get another in its place." Here he was interrupted by cries of "He was trespassing on our waters, in spite of the signboards we had put up. He had no right to be there."

"He had," yelled Fred, not at all liking to be interrupted.

"Keep cool! oh, *pray* keep cool!" murmured the Colonel, in an excited whisper.

"The signboards were up," again called out the seals, "and he could read plainly enough that they said: 'No trespassers allowed on our sea.'"

"Oh, that is all nonsense!" said Fred, in a still angrier tone, in spite of Colonel Diplomacy's begging him to keep cool. "The sea does not belong to you or anybody else, it is free to all."

"Yes, it is free to all," called out another voice. Everybody turned to see who it was that was speaking, and there, standing on a rock, was no less a person than Captain Pepper, with drawn sword in hand.

He looked very fierce indeed as he stood there, and the seals hushed their loud talking, and turned to listen to him.

"I say the sea is free to all," he repeated. "It has been so from time immemorial, and who shall dare alter an ancient custom? Where

is General Mullicoloram's boat? Bring it forth, or off goes the head of yon old seal." Upon which fierce threat the seals immediately dragged forth from its hiding-place the General's boat. The Captain sprang nimbly down from his perch, and calling upon Fred and the Colonel to follow, stepped into the boat.

"Now, up with your flying-machine, and we will away to other parts," said the Captain, as he began to fasten the boat to the machine.

"I object to the way in which proceedings have been carried out; not in accordance with 'diplomacy at all,'" said the Colonel, as he followed Fred into the boat.

"To the wind with diplomacy," cried Captain Pepper impatiently. And leaning over the side of the boat as it began to mount into the air, he doubled up his fists and shook them at the seals.

"Remember, you scamps! you rogues! that the sea is free to all," shouted the Captain.

After this, Colonel Diplomacy refused to speak, and sat in the stern writing despatches.

"Well, my stupid boy, I was not long in finding you out, was I?" said Captain Pepper, as he settled himself down in the boat.

“Lock me up, indeed!” he went on, indignantly, “and all because of my sneezing. A nice way to treat one! But, never mind,” he said, with a chuckle, “I soon made my escape and——”

“See! see! that light,” cried Fred, interrupting him and pointing to a broad stream of light high in the heavens. Before the Captain could answer, there floated downwards to them the sound of music. Now clear and pure, like the note of a bird; then, dying away in sweet low strains, it would burst forth into a triumphant peal.

“It is Dew-Drop, Queen of the Air,” whispered Captain Pepper, “and she comes this way; we are indeed fortunate.” Brighter and brighter grew the light, there was a sound of rushing wings, and lo! Dew-Drop, in all her loveliness, appeared with her attendant Court floating about her in the light.

“Ah! Captain Pepper, my trusty friend, it is with pleasure I greet you,” she said, in a sweet low voice, as she floated lightly up to the boat.

“You honour me, gracious lady,” answered the Captain, as he rose from his seat and bowed low. “It doth delight me to be called friend by such as you. But why so sad?” Dew-Drop made no answer—she was looking at Fred with a wistful glance.

"You are so beautiful! oh, so beautiful! dear lady," cried Fred, in boyish delight, as he gazed upon her.

And, in truth, a fairer vision of loveliness he had never seen. A wealth of hair fell about her like a golden cloud, and from beneath her open brow looked forth her eyes of deepest blue. Sweet calm eyes, that were saddened now by troubled thoughts. She smiled at Fred's words, and the smile chased away the sadness, and she looked more beautiful than ever.

"Captain," said Dew-Drop, "with your permission, I would like to show this boy the country in which he lives."

"Certainly; I am sure the stupid—I—mean—the boy will be delighted."

Dew-Drop then placed her hand on the boat, and it, obeying at once her will, swayed gently round in the course she wished.

"You know but little of the country in which you live, my boy," said Dew-Drop, turning to Fred.

"Yes, dear lady," answered Fred. "I have not seen much of it."

"Then you shall see it now, you shall feast your eyes upon its beauties."

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“Is it, then, so beautiful?” asked Fred, wonderingly. The Queen of the Air smiled as she answered, “Wait and see.” And now they floated downwards to the earth, and so, flying low, there were revealed to Fred great rolling prairies covered with luxuriant vegetation. Here and there a narrow silver ribbon wound through these plains, broadening out into many beautiful birch-girdled lakes. Leaving the plains behind, they came to rising ground, and as they floated on through the stillness, a vast chain of lofty mountains loomed in sight, down whose sides thundered mighty cataracts. At the foot of these mountains, in sombre shadow, grew vast forests of whispering fir, while high overhead towered lofty peaks glistening white with snow.

Leaving the mountains behind, they passed over many a winding gorge, down whose narrow rocky bed thundered foaming rivers. Passing another range of low mountains, they came to a coast washed by a mighty ocean, and on an island not far from the mainland Fred saw a fair city.

“Oh, how beautiful everything is!” he said, as he gazed upon the scene with eager eyes.

“And now we will to other parts,” said Dew-Drop. “I would

have you see as much as possible in our short time." Then they came to a part of the country rich in meadow lands, fields of waving wheat, silver-sheathed barley, full-eared oats ; past peaceful little villages, nestling among vine-clad hills and orchards full of tempting fruits ; past a mighty chain of lakes, and long winding rivers. Cities rich in commerce and beautiful buildings, and on, and ever on, till the waters of another great ocean were reached.

" Will you cross the ocean with me, my boy ? " asked Dew-Drop, as they paused for a moment on its brink.

" Willingly, oh, beautiful lady ! " cried Fred. And now they floated outward over the waters, till Fred could see nothing but the vast ocean, over which white-winged ships sped on their way, the stillness only broken by the lone cry of a sea-gull. But Fred felt no fear, as ever and anon his glance rested on the sweet countenance of the Queen of the Air. After they had travelled in this way for some time, Dew-Drop touched Fred on the arm, and pointing downward, said, " See ! there lies the home of the mighty nation you have sprung from." And Fred looked and saw embedded in the ocean an island, from whose shores a thousand lights sparkled. Pausing at length before a noble pile of

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buildings, the boat, in obedience to Dew-Drop's touch, sank to the ground.

"Come with me," said the Queen of the Air, as she alighted on the ground, and led Fred through the garden surrounding the place.

As they reached one of the windows which opened into the garden, she motioned to Fred to look within. He did so, and saw a large pleasant room, in the centre of which stood a table filled with writing materials, and seated by it was a lady busily writing. As he gazed upon her face, he caught his breath, and looked again more earnestly. "Yes, yes," he murmured, half to himself, it is she, I know her by her portraits; she looks just like one we have at home. Oh, if I could only speak to her," he cried, in an intense whisper, turning to Dew-Drop. But she shook her head, and with a smile, beckoned him to follow her back to the boat. Fred gave one long, lingering look at the noble face, and then with a half-sigh, turned and followed his guide.

As they started on their homeward trip, Dew-Drop turned to Fred and said, "Are you satisfied with what you have seen?"

"Oh, yes, fair lady!" cried Fred. "You have been so good to me; oh, I shall never, never forget what I have seen. And my



country, I shall love it now as I never loved it before, it is so grand, so beautiful, so vast. Oh, I could die for it!" cried Fred, his face aglow with excitement. "And I am so glad we belong to that gracious lady we have seen."

"Enough!" cried Dew-Drop, with a bright smile that chased all sadness from her face. "Once more I rejoice. Greed and gain will yet be over-reached and conquered by the clarion tones of patriotism. 'Down with all treason towards our beloved country' shall be heard ringing throughout the land, and he, who for so long manfully strove for the glory of his country, will hear and rejoice. Oh, youth, remember that should the time ever come when thy country shall need a strong arm to defend her rights, see to it that thine is uplifted in her defence." Taking her hand from the boat, Dew-Drop floated lightly upwards with a last look at Fred from her clear eyes. Then, like a crystal bell, her voice came down to him: "Farewell, my boy; farewell, it may be in after years we shall meet again."

Then her attendants followed her, and all clashed their musical instruments in a low refrain as they sang "Farewell, farewell."

"Oh, come back, come back!" called Fred, as he clasped his hands

and gazed upward, where naught was now to be seen but the faint light which marked the track of the Queen of the Air.

No sooner had she left them, than the boat began to descend towards the earth. When it stopped, Fred heard Captain Pepper say, "Alight, alight, the time has come for us to part. No longer a stupid boy will I call thee, for thou hast now seen the wonders of our mountains, and been in company with the Queen of the Air. Hark! the birds are whispering that it is time for me to be gone. So alight, my boy."

Mechanically Fred stepped forth, seeing, as in a dream, the boat flying away, and Captain Pepper waving his hand to him, while in the stern sat the Colonel still writing his despatches.

And so we will leave him,  
All in a garden fair,  
Wondering if or no he ever left it.





## THE ELF'S SONG.

# SWEET EVENING STAR.

Music by F. W. SAFFERY.

The piano introduction consists of six measures. The right hand features a series of chords and moving lines, while the left hand provides a simple harmonic accompaniment with eighth and quarter notes.

Sweet Evening Star, I pray thee stay in the blue  
The pale prim - rose all day a - hide now sweetly

The first system of the song includes a vocal melody line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a rest for two measures before the lyrics start. The piano accompaniment continues from the introduction.

air that trembling ray..... that hastes a - way..... that hastes a - way, that  
blows at e - ven tide..... for thee to bide..... for thee to bide, for

The second system continues the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are spread across two lines of the system.

hastes a - way. The gen - tle dew..... it weeps with me, With tears we  
 thee to bide. Tho' things all bright..... Most soon are flown, Oh! stay thy

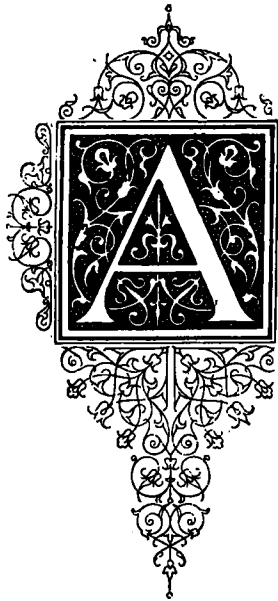
strew This hap - py lea, Most dis - mal - ly, most dis - mal - - - ly.  
 flight To be my own One Star a - lone, one Star a - - - lone.

FINALE 2nd VERSE.



## THE ELF'S SONG.

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AN Elf lived in a broad meadow. It was a very pretty meadow, and he had it all to himself. Gay flowers and sweet clover abounded in it, and the trees bore golden clusters of nuts. The Elf, whose name was Pensero, ought to have been perfectly happy, but he had a secret woe which often made his face pale and his eyes heavy. It was this: he greatly loved the Evening Star, and the thought that it must each night fade away saddened him even at noon-day. Throughout the warm, pleasant afternoon he would mourn and weep, thinking that the star of his love, which would presently shine and tremble so beautifully in the sky, would also, alas! so



soon die away forever. For one very distressing feature in this Elf's woe was, that he never felt quite sure if it really was the same bright orb whose lamp shone again night after night, and so he lamented its nightly setting as its death. Looked at in this way, it really was very melancholy.

Well, one evening Pensero sat with streaming eyes watching the long rays of the sun as they slanted across the sky. He did not at first see a person who stood beside him. I do not know whether she was large or small, for in fairyland you cannot be sure of trifles like that. Half the charm of such a manner of life is its inexactness. Nobody ever measures anything, and certainly no one would think of counting. But, although one might not know anything about the height of this person, one would see at a glance that she was a shepherdess, for she carried a crook. Her short skirt was looped up with pink roses, and her yellow curls were tossing about her dimpled face, which wore an anxious look. When Pensero at length saw her, she was shading her eyes with her hand and peering into the shadows under his nut-trees. He knew who it was when she did this, and stopped his lamentations to say civilly :

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“ Have not you found them yet, Bo-peep ? ”

The shepherdess shook her head.

“ I cannot find them,” she said, “ but I do not weep like you. I follow, follow, hoping all the time to come up with them.”

“ But I cannot follow my star,” said Pensero, and his tears flowed again.

“ But why do you not sing your grief ? ” asked Bo-peep.

“ A song is soon forgotten too,” sobbed the Elf.

“ It is forgotten because it floats so far away out of our hearing,” replied Bo-peep, “ but a song never dies. Every song that was ever uttered is sounding somewhere.”

Pensero stopped crying, because he was interested, and Bo-peep went on :

“ Some songs are floating in the wind, some have gone to the mountains and got situations as echoes, some of the prettiest hide in sea-shells, but all the noblest are soaring far above us, never reaching anywhere.”

“ That is hard,” said Pensero, “ the prettiest ought to rest in the beautiful rose-pink ocean-shells, for that must be the best of all.”

“No,” said Bo-peep, “there is better than that for the songs that do not rise above us. To rest in a human heart is better than to hum a sweet ditty in the fairest shell.”

“What becomes of the worst songs?” asked Pensero.

“They become very Popular,” replied the shepherdess, promptly. “But sing your song, and it may follow the Star of Evening.”

Then she went away, and one could hear her calling her sheep in a voice that was growing tired. What a pity that Little Bo-peep once fell so fast asleep!

The Elf pondered what he had heard, and presently he made a pipe of grasses and played sweetly upon it. It pleased him to think that his music had taken unseen wings, and was carrying the story of his love and loss far, far away.

“I will make words too,” he said, “and then who knows but my song may rise up to my beloved star, and it will listen and understand.” And as he wrote, he hoped that his song might be so sweet that the stars might listen, and this bright particular orb return to him and wish to hear it again.

So he took a bunch of leaves, and wrote on them these words:—

## I.

Sweet Evening Star !  
I pray thee stay  
In the blue air,  
That trembling ray  
That hastes away.

## II.

The gentle Dew,  
It weeps with me,  
With tears we strew  
This happy lea,  
Most dismally.

## III.

This pale Primrose,  
All day a-hide,  
Now sweetly blows,  
At eventide,  
For thee to bide.

## IV.

Tho' things all bright  
Most soon are flown,  
Oh ! stay thy flight  
To be my own,  
One star alone.

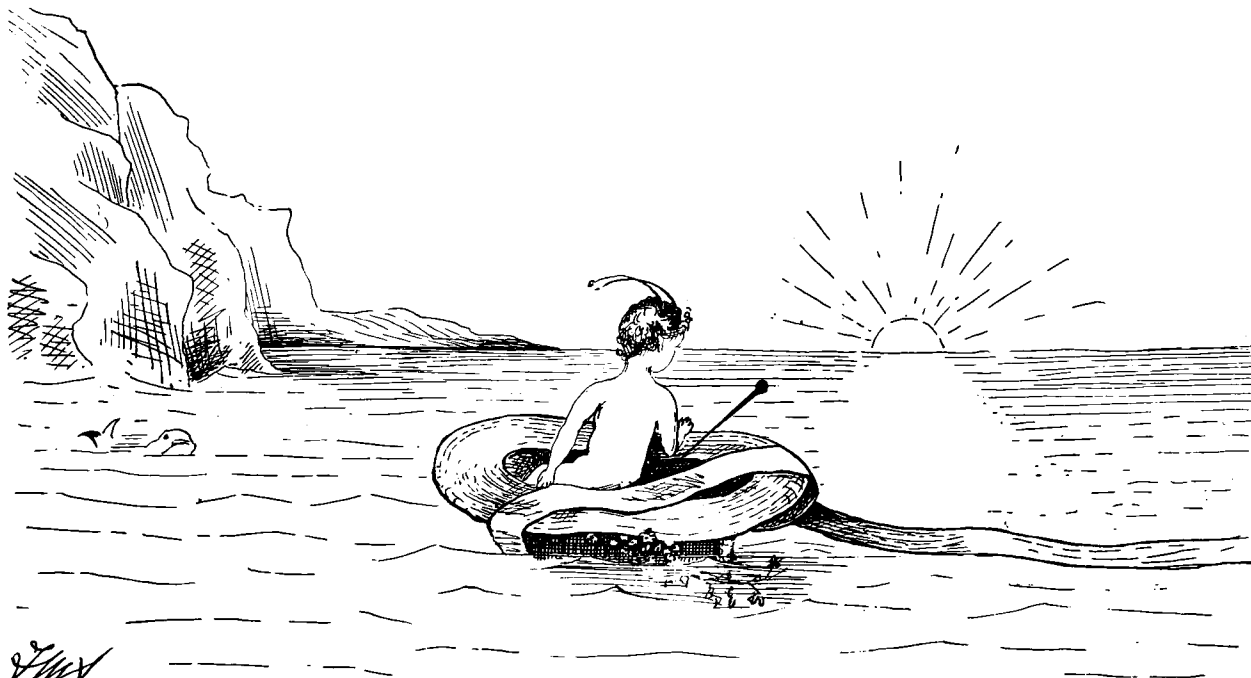
When he had finished writing this, he began to wish very much that he could find a high peak somewhere in the west, on which he might stand and sing it most beautifully, and have it wafted away. He had an idea, you see, that it would carry further from a hill. But there was no peak in his meadow, which was just a beautiful clover field, and he saw that to get what he wished he must sally forth in search of a more hilly country. So, although it seemed a great undertaking to him, he at once packed his song in a nut-shell, and prepared several wreaths

to take with him, so that he might have changes of raiment on his journey. A wreath on his head and an umbrella made of a morning-glory turned upside down, or a gaily-speckled toadstool, were what the Elf meant by a suit of clothes. A very full and complete suit, for, in fact, he seldom carried an umbrella. He rolled his wreaths, when he had finished them, into a bundle tied together with vine tendrils. He used tendrils also for straps, with which he slung the bundle across his shoulders. He carried the nut-shell which held the song in his hand, for he was afraid that if he lost that, he might not write another as good. It was a very lovely morning when at last his preparations were complete, and he set out on his travels.

Now, in fairyland there are different trades and professions just as with us, and fairies follow many callings. Some are ignorant and some are very wise. Pensero knew where there lived a very wise elf, who followed the calling of a Learned Man, and it was to this fairy's abode that he now directed his steps, hoping to get advice from him about the best way of going westward and finding a suitable hill for his purpose.

To get to this wise elf's home he left his meadow and travelled





*Pensero afloat.*

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through a wood until he came to a lovely valley, where flowed a wide, wide river. Here he found a boat, which was really nothing else but a very pretty hat, which some little girl must have lost. Probably it had been blown off its owner's head as she stood on the deck of a steamboat, for this was a wide and deep river, and large boats were steaming up and down. The hat was trimmed with daisies, and had long white ribbons streaming from it. Pensero was very much pleased with it, and at once embarked.

"It was so nice to trim a boat with flowers," he said, "and these long strings must be meant to fasten it to shore when one lands. It is very well built."

There was a hat-pin sticking in it too, this he took to be the oar, but when he got well out on the water he laid it down, "for what is the use," said he, "of an oar, when it goes without any help?" And indeed the current here was as strong as a mill-race. So he sat down in the bottom of his odd boat and sucked his thumb contentedly as he sailed swiftly on. He was out in the middle of the broad flood, and now and then he sailed past green islands, at which he peeped and wished that he might land. But this was impossible, he must go



wherever the current would take him. He began to wish that he had brought some provisions with him, for he was becoming hungry. However, there was plenty of honey in his wreaths, and he took some of that. He called it bee-wine, and it strengthened him very much.

Night came on, and the stars came out. Pensero would not look up to the sky for fear that tears would dim his eyes and then he would not be able to see the way before him. To keep himself from looking upward he leant over the side of his boat and gazed into the water, and lo! there, deep, deep down, shone and trembled the Evening Star. He gave a cry of delight, and instantly, without stopping to think, he plunged headlong into the flood. Down, down he went, peering in every direction for the brightness that he had seen so plainly just a moment before. It was nowhere to be seen now. To add to his trouble, he had become entangled in the long white hat ribbons, which, being of course wet, clung to him in a very disagreeable manner, and he could not get free. The hat also was dragging him to the surface again.

Whilst he struggled in the ribbon-snare, splashing about a great deal, the fishes and frogs gathered around to see what the matter was. Some of the fishes were dear little things and only looked out of

curiosity, but others were great, large creatures, with cruel, hungry mouths. These came very close, and if poor little Pensero had not laid hold of the hat-pin to defend himself, they would very soon have made an end of him.

As it was, he had a hard time of it, and might soon have been overpowered and swallowed, weapon and all, for some of these fishes did not care what they ate, and would only have laughed if told that hat-pins were unwholesome. But just as he began to feel that he could not escape, a band of creatures that were not fishes appeared. They were river-sprites, and their homes were in grottoes and caverns under the islands that dotted the river. They had heard the uproar, and believing that the frogs and fishes, over whom they ruled, were engaged in some brawl, they had come to quell the disturbance.

They were lovely creatures, with hair so long that it floated after them like the tail of a comet. They wore clinging white and green robes, and swam gracefully about as they ordered the fishes back and themselves surrounded Pensero. Great was their indignation when they heard that a fairy had been so nearly devoured by their subjects. They caressed him and bade him welcome. And they plied him with

questions too, for it was not often that they saw an elf from the fields and woods. They wanted very much to know why he had journeyed abroad. So he told them the story of his hopeless love, and showed them the nutshell which held the song. They thought it all very beautiful, and told him that a very wise elf lived in the island under which some of them dwelt, and that they had no doubt of his being the very one whom he sought. They promised to show him the way to this wise person's abode, so he consented to visit them, and they all turned in together to a cavern under the island, some of them dragging after them the hat, which was now greatly battered. They told Pensero that they were the guardians of the river, and that they led very laborious lives, owing to the wicked behaviour of the fish and other creatures that inhabited the water. They asked him what he did, and, as he did not like to own that he really did nothing, unless pining for the Evening Star be called something, he answered that he sold the daisies with which his boat was loaded.

“It is loaded on the outside!” said the sprites amongst themselves as if they thought that an unusual arrangement. You see, living in the water, they were naturally better informed about shipping and that sort of

thing than Pensero, who had not thought that there was anything odd in carrying his cargo under his boat.

They inquired what use daisies were.

"To make daisy chains," replied Pensero.

At this they became quite excited, and offered to buy them, explaining that in their duty as guardians of the peace they often had need of chains. They had an unruly crab then in prison whom they would be very glad to leg-cuff.

"Are the chains quite strong?" they asked, and Pensero, who knew no use for a chain except to be worn as a necklace, replied readily :

"Oh, very strong, as strong as any chain can be."

So when they reached their home, which was a very beautiful grotto, they all gathered round him, and he made a long chain of the artificial daisies, and all the sprites looked on, interested and delighted. When it was finished, they tried to entertain him by showing him their treasures, which were mostly shells, and lovely weeds that grow only in water. Some of the shells served as flower-pots, and the plants were growing in them. The walls of this grotto glittered with spars and crystals, and it was all exceedingly pretty. They prepared a banquet also, at

which all the dishes were salads, of watercress and other things of that sort, which they cultivated, for they had a wonderful garden too. After the banquet, they ordered in their musicians. They had quite an orchestra of frogs, who were highly trained, and really performed on their different instruments very well indeed. Then they pressed Pensero very much to sing his song. So, not wishing to appear disobliging after all their kindness, he opened the nut-shell and unrolled the precious manuscript.

Now, it was a great pity that he consented to do this, for his music was so much sweeter than any that the river-sprites had ever heard before, that they became very loath to lose him. They were melted to tears whilst he sang, and said that they could never listen with pleasure to their trained musicians again. They made him sing it over and over, and became each time more entranced, and when at length he rolled up the song and was for bidding them good-bye, they would not hear of his leaving them that night, but conducted him to their guest-chamber, where there was a very beautiful snow-white pond-lily, in which he would, they assured him, slumber well. In vain he pleaded that he was in haste to proceed on his journey, or that he



F. M. S.

*The water-sprites entertain Penso.*



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feared that the bed was damp. The bed was, in reality, dripping wet, but the sprites passed their hands over it, and assured him that it was as dry as a sop. They did not mean to deceive him, but they really were no judges of such a matter.

So, by much persuasion and many endearments, Pensero was finally induced to curl himself up in the middle of this fragrant cradle, and the motion of the water soon rocked him to sleep. No sooner did this happen, than they twined about him the daisy chain, binding him, as they thought, securely to the lily. Then they glided softly away, and Pensero, who was very tired, would certainly not have awakened until next day if left to himself.

But something very strange was about to happen. One of the river-sprites, whose name was Coralie, had been more deeply touched by his song than the rest, so much so, in fact, that she had fallen in love with Pensero, and wished that she alone might hear him sing. She stole softly at midnight to the grotto where he slept, and awakened him. When she had related to him the perfidy of her companions, she proceeded to untwine the daisy chain and set him free, but he burst the flimsy bond himself, greatly to her surprise.



She then bade him follow her, and led the way to the cell in which was imprisoned the unruly crab, of whom Pensero had heard the night before. The sprite liberated this captive also, and mounting on its back, she told Pensero to seat himself beside her. She then commanded the crab to carry them up to the island. Pensero had never seen a crab before, and was greatly astonished by his going backwards, as, of course, a crab prefers to do. In this manner they travelled through winding, watery ways very slowly for a good many hours. A crab cannot go fast. Sometimes Pensero prodded it with the hat-pin, for they were afraid that their escape might be discovered, and that they might yet be caught. But they found that this only offended the crab, who would then move frontwards, which was his way of balking.

At length, after a great deal of slow climbing, they emerged from a hole in the centre of the island, and stood upon the turf in the sweet morning air. It seemed very nice to Pensero, who began at once to run about in the sun to dry himself.

But their arrival on the island had not been unseen. The very person whom they sought stood at the entrance of his cave regarding them.

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Now, of course, elves and fairies are never old, they live forever, and never grow any older ; but as this one had taken up the calling of a Learned Man, he put on an appearance of being very aged. He wore large glasses, and hobbled when he walked, and he lived in this remote spot because he knew that he ought not to be social. But he was of a very friendly disposition, and was glad to see his visitors. He looked with much interest at the crab, and took off his glasses to see him better. He thought it very odd that the crab should move backwards.

"I thought," said he, "that the elephant was the only animal that did not know which end of him was the front. This is an important discovery. I will class the crab with the elephant."

He really was very learned, and after they had dismissed the crab, who gladly tumbled into the hole again, he related to Pensero and Coralie some of his discoveries and researches. He had, he said, been long seeking a vegetable which would so nearly resemble an animal specimen, that the two kingdoms might be said to merge in one another. As Pensero had often played "Animal, Vegetable or Mineral?" he understood this very well, and was quite interested when the Learned Elf told him that he believed that he had at last discovered this link.

"It is," said he, "in the sausage that the animal race reaches its lowest expression; this, again, is most closely resembled by the banana. In short, in the sausage and banana the animal and vegetable kingdoms unite. I claim, therefore," he concluded, "that the banana is a vegetable, and not a fruit."

The Elf knew a great deal, and his conversation was delightful, and might have proceeded through the livelong day had not Coralie descried, through the bushes, something that made her exclaim: "Oh-h-h, how exquisite!"

This was nothing else than the loveliest pink lamb. Its fleece was just the tint of a June rose, and it was no wonder that the sprite admired it so much. But the Learned Elf explained it very easily.

"It is a lamb," said he, "that came here one day, and as it has no tail, I thought that it might be of Bo-peep's flock, so I have kept it waiting for her, as she may sometime pass this way."

"I have never before seen a pink lamb," said Pensero, and Coralie said the same.

"Oh," said the Learned Elf, "that is easily accounted for, I have a theory that this lamb must have gone to the west, where the Sun

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and all the lights disappear in the pink air, and that is how its fleece became dyed. It has taken the sunset colour, you know."

Pensero, who was seated on the moss, sprang up on hearing this.

"Oh, tell me where is the west," he cried, "I, too, would go westward!"

This was a poser, and the Learned Elf put his finger on the side of his nose to consider it; finally, he tried putting on his glasses again, and then the answer came to him at once.

"Too far east is west!" he cried triumphantly.

"Ah, yes, that is very well, but where is east?" But when Pensero asked this question the Wise Elf did not hesitate a moment.

"Not so far west," said he. This seemed simple enough, but when Pensero thought of really directing his travels by the light of these replies, he felt doubtful and almost wished to know more. The river-sprite also grew silent, because it made her sad to see Pensero so eager to continue his journey.

"He loves only the Evening Star," she thought.

The Learned Elf, seeing them both so grave and serious, was disturbed, and wished very much to make them cheerful again.

"I'll tell you what I will do," said he, "I'll let you have the lamb. You shall both mount upon its back, and, no doubt, it will when turned loose go westward again, and so you will arrive certainly in the Sunset Land.

This seemed a very sensible plan, so upon the back of the gentle lamb they climbed, and sure enough, when bidden to go, it went forward quite readily. This was much better than travelling on the crab's back had been, and as the lamb needed no prodding Pensero threw the hat-pin away. He was very gay, and talked very much of his Star, but Coralie's replies were short. Once she said that fire-flies were prettier than stars, which astonished Pensero very much, and he began to tell her of the stars that in the sky look like a diamond cross, and of the shining crown that an angel once hung there when he was on his way to earth,

"Where, relic sad, 'tis cherished yet,  
A fallen angel's coronet."

He told of many more, and then she said they were very beautiful; but when she said this, she was looking into Pensero's eyes, which were nearly as bright as stars just then.

The lamb, which thought nothing of obstacles, swam rivers and leaped fences in fine style, and Pensero pointed out to Coralie the flowers and trees, and many pretty and nice things which were new to her, and she said that travel was splendid, and that her mind was improving. She knew it, because the wreath which he had given her now stayed on her head instead of slipping off, as it had done at first.

They were so much interested, that Pensero did not notice how familiar everything was becoming. They went through wood and valley, and never rested until at last he looked about him, and, behold! they were in his own, dear, broad, flowery meadow! How pretty it was! He began to show Coralie all its beauties in haste.

"We will rest here," he said. And Coralie was very willing to go no further. And there they are resting still, and keeping the pink lamb for Bo-peep. Now and then they have a visit from the Learned Elf, but he comes in the character of a sportsman, having grown tired of philosophy. He is armed with a butterfly net now and a sling.

So Pensero's song has not yet been wafted away, but lingers about the grass and bloom of his own clover-field. He no longer weeps for the Evening Star, but that may be because he is no longer alone.



THE ENEMY UNMASKED.





# THE ENEMY UNMASKED.



Far away in the heart of a forest there lived an old man who was feared and disliked by all who knew him. He made his living by fishing in a large lake, famed for its fish, which he sent to market by his little boy, who had to walk many a weary mile before he reached the place, and woe to him if he should return with any unsold !

The boy was beloved by all. His beauty was so wonderful, that none could pass him by without stopping to admire him. There were those who shook their heads when they saw him, and uttered grave doubts of his being the son of the old man, but none dared inquire about him, for

their dread of old Paul. One day, as little Pierre was selling his fish, the people noticed a great bruise on his body. They questioned him about it, but his only answer was a sad shake of the head. Loud and fierce were the threats showered upon old Paul, who, they knew, ill-treated the boy.

The last fish was sold and Pierre turned his steps homewards, and as he went he ate his supper which had been given him by some kind-hearted peasant. The sun was just sinking behind the mountains, and the whole sky was bathed in rich mellow tints. Pierre stood and watched it with a cry of delight, for he loved the beautiful, and could, for a time, forget his sorrows amid the delights of nature.

Spellbound, he stood, till the last flickering light went out. And then, with a lingering look, he turned and plunged into the gloomy depths of the forest.

Silence everywhere, except for the hooting of owls and the falling of withered branches. But Pierre was used to these sounds and felt no fear.

Presently he came to an open dell, where he was wont to rest. It was one of his favourite spots, for here he could lie on his back and

gaze upwards into the sky. Here grew the richest flowers, and at the little stream, which trickled quietly along, came the birds of the forest to drink. But above all, it was famous for being one of the haunts of those wonderful beings called fairies. He had never seen any, but then they only came out at midnight; he liked to sit in the dell and fancy it peopled with them.

This night he sank upon his favourite seat, utterly worn out. Stretching himself upon the soft grass, he gazed upward at the sky, dotted here and there with the stars as they came slowly into view. The dreamy stillness of the place steals upon him so quietly, that before he is aware of it he is fast asleep. Sleep on, tired little spirit; thy awakening will be far different!

The moon rises, and the whole dell is flooded in silvery light, but still Pierre sleeps on. Hark! What is that? Ah! surely mortal ear never heard such a strain of melting music as now falls upon the stillness, while up the dell comes a long procession of maidens, headed by one who surpasses them all for beauty and richness of attire.

Fair as the noonday sun is she, with eyes as blue as yon sky. Upon her head she wears a diadem of pearls, which the Shah of Persia

might envy, and in its centre flashes a diamond of such brilliancy as to dazzle all who behold it. In her hand she carries a shell of peculiar form which, from time to time, she raises to her lips and sends forth a note of such sweetness that one could liken it to the voice of the nightingale. And now they approach the spot where Pierre is sleeping.

“ Ah ! my maidens, what have we here ? ”

Clustering eagerly around their leader, they gaze down upon Pierre, who, all unconscious, sleeps peacefully on.

“ Here, Wisdom and Truth, my two trusty advisers, come and read me what you see written upon this boy’s face.”

Thereupon the two fairies thus called came, and, bending over him, regarded him intently for a few moments. Then, addressing their leader, they said :

“ It is with pleasure, Your Most Gracious Majesty, we give the result. Behold ! here lies one in whom we find truth, honesty and virtue.”

“ Enough,” answered their leader. “ We have at last discovered one in whom these three things are to be found. Bear him away to our kingdom. It may be he is the one to help us in our difficulties. But, lest he escape us, give him to breathe of thine herb, Irene.”

Then there steals one from her place and softly holds to his nostrils the potent herb. Down the glen they bear him away, till they reach a large rock, upon which their leader taps with her wand. Immediately the rock opens, and, as the last one enters, closes again.

When at last Pierre opened his eyes, he beheld a sight which took his breath away. In the centre of a room (lined with mother-of-pearl, from which the light was reflected in the most brilliant colours), was a fountain, round which birds of all sizes and colours flitted about.

Poor Pierre rubbed his eyes again and again, wondering what it could all mean. He remembered coming home from market, and resting in the dell—and then he must have fallen asleep—and no doubt this was all a dream. But no! he was wide enough awake; to convince himself he got up and began to walk. Scarcely had he done so, when there appeared to him a little maiden of such fairy-like proportions, that he held his breath lest he should blow her away. Making him a low courtesy, she told him she would now bring him to Her Majesty's presence, and hoped that he felt refreshed after his long sleep.

Pierre made haste to say he was, and would be delighted to see Her Majesty, as he felt anxious to find out what it all meant.

Telling him to follow her, she tripped lightly along through innumerable rooms. When on opening a door there appeared before him a large garden, Pierre uttered a cry of delight at the sight. Flowers, flowers everywhere, while birds of the most gorgeous plumage fluttered about, mingling their joyous songs with the music of falling waters from the many fountains. He would fain have lingered, but his guide hurried him along.

Pausing at the end of a narrow path, there opened to Pierre's view, a large plain covered with soft green moss.

And there, seated with her maidens was his midnight visitor. She advanced to meet him, and in the sweetest of tones bid him welcome to fairyland.

"I am called Queen Mab," she said, "and these are my subjects, while all around, as you see, lies my kingdom."

Pierre's heart gave a great bound, so he was really in fairyland at last. How beautiful it all was, just as he had so many times pictured it in his own mind.

He made the Queen a low bow, and thanked her for the great honour done to him. She smiled, and told him to be seated, and then

she related to him all that had happened the night before, how she had found him and brought him away.

“Ah, how happy must your Majesty be, to dwell in such a beautiful place,” and Pierre sighed as he thought of his own unhappy lot. “Yes, one would think to look round and see my beautiful home, that sorrow had not entered it, but know, Pierre, that at this very moment I and my maidens are consumed with grief.” And thereupon, the Queen fell to weeping, much to Pierre’s astonishment.

He begged her to tell him what her trouble was, and assured her he was willing to help her to his uttermost. The Queen smiled and dried her eyes at his words, and then, dismissing her maidens she related to him how this great sorrow had come upon her.

“Sometime ago there came a visitor to our court. From the first I mistrusted him: gay, witty and entertaining though he was, I felt that beneath his pleasing manner there lurked the germs of deadly poison. As time passed on, and still he showed no signs of going, I grew more and more uneasy as I noticed the increasing influence he possessed over my people, and especially over the young. At last I held a council with some of my wisest and best subjects, and unfolded to them my



fears and begged them to be on their guard. But alas ! he had already won them over by his enchantment, and so beguiled their senses, that they could see no harm in him. Thus left to my own resources, I determined to watch him closely and find out, if possible, the secret of his power.

One night, feeling oppressed by a nameless sorrow, I wandered out into the garden, and so wandering from one path to another, found myself on the edge of a dark forest, which we seldom used. Pausing a moment to look into its gloomy depths, I was startled to see a light, and at the same moment the sound of some discordant laughter was borne to me by the night wind.

Here then was a matter which required looking into. Where were my guards that they allowed such things to take place ? Hardly had the thought passed through my mind, before I was hastening to the spot.

As I approached, the noise grew louder, till it seemed as if all the hobgoblins and gnomes had met together to perform some abhorred rite, and there in the gloomiest shade of the forest this is what I saw." The Queen paused a moment and Pierre noticed that she shuddered. Then, sighing deeply, she went on with her story.

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“ At a table spread with delicacies of every kind, sat Comus (for such was our visitor’s name) surrounded by a crowd of what I at first thought to be strange faces, but on looking more closely I saw them to be my own subjects, though so changed as to be scarcely recognizable, yet in what manner changed, I could hardly tell. But as I looked upon them there came over me a feeling of repugnance, a sense of shrinking from the strange light of their eyes. While the faces of some resembled the grovelling swine, others had the likeness of sundry wild beasts. Each held in his hand a goblet, which from time to time Comus filled with a liquid which seemed to sparkle as with a thousand lights. But I noticed the oftener they drank of this the wilder grew their actions, while over their faces crept this hideous change. Bewildered and overcome by what I saw, I fled shrieking away, but no one noticed me for their own uproar was so great.

I fled to Wisdom and asked her counsel.” ‘Try and break his spell at once or all will be lost.’ “Alas! I said, it is too late.” ‘Then banish them, or they will drag you down.’ “Banish them! when I know I cannot depend on half my warriors, that is impossible.”

Wisdom thought for a moment, and then she said: ‘Why not

train your maidens to take their place.' "Ah, Wisdom, that was a happy thought. So I went to work at once with the help of a trusty old warrior, who had himself instructed me in the use of all warlike weapons. So well did we succeed, that when Comus excited them to revolt (thinking to make an easy prey of me), we were able to drive them out of my kingdom.

Not that all my warriors went over to him. I have, as you see, some still with me.

But though we have driven him away, we have to use every precaution, for by his insidious arts, he so blinds and captivates the fancy, that it is difficult to struggle against him. And now, Pierre, you asked me if you could not help me in my trouble. You can, but the conditions are so hard, that I tremble to ask you."

"Nothing shall be too hard for me, Your Majesty, if I can do aught to relieve you from this monster, who, under the guise of friendship, has worked you so much harm." And as Pierre finished speaking, he drew himself up to his utmost height, while his eyes shone with a clear determined look. No wonder the Queen nodded her head, as much as to say, "You will do." Next morning, he had another long

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talk with the Queen, and it was decided that he should set forth that afternoon on his difficult undertaking.

“ Let me warn you again ” she said, of the dangers that await you on your journey. The way seems pleasant, but beware of falling into any of the ambuscades laid by our enemy, and if some come to give you assistance be careful how you trust them, for they do but hide their evil intentions under a pleasing manner.” Pierre promised to be careful, and waving them adieu, started on his journey. His old clothes were gone, and in their place, he wore a suit of silver armour, while his sword, a gift from the Queen, hung by his side.

At first his way lay along a broad smooth path, but by and by it commenced to twist and turn, while it was no longer smooth, but rough and uneven, while two or three times Pierre was sure he heard the sound of mocking laughter. Suddenly there appeared coming towards him what looked like a boy of his own age. Just then Pierre fell into a large hole, which had been concealed from view. Pierre tried in vain to climb up the steep sides. Looking up, he saw the strange boy regarding him, who said :

“ Would you like me to help you up ? ”

"Yes," said Pierre, who was beginning to think he would never get out.

The boy got a rope and pulled him up. Of course, Pierre thought it very kind of him, and thanked him warmly, and then each continued on his way. And now the path grew still more rugged, so that he had to pick his way carefully along.

Passing a lofty rock, he was suddenly assailed by a shower of stones, but could see no one. One hit him with such force that he fell stunned by the blow, and as often as he tried to get up, the stones fell upon him. Just then the same boy appeared who had helped him before. Pierre wondered how it was he had got there so quickly, but then he remembered he was in fairyland.

"So ho! my friend, you are in difficulties again? But come; I will help you." Taking Pierre by the hand he helped him up. "And now, I think, you had better come with me. I will conduct you safely to Comus' palace, for that is where you are going, is it not?"

"Oh! thank you," said Pierre. "Surely," he thought to himself, "there can be no harm in this one. He certainly is very kind to me."

So away they went together. And now the path became broad and smooth again, while everything appeared charming in Pierre's eyes, especially his companion. What wonderful tales he did tell! And he lavished such praise upon Pierre that his mind was all in a flutter of delight. And as for Queen Mab, he could hardly say enough in her favour.

"Oh! so you know the Queen?" said Pierre.

"Yes; I know her very well. But see! here is a delightful spot. Let us rest for a while."

Pierre, who by this time was feeling very tired, gladly consented; and, resting his head against a rock, he was soon fast asleep.

How long he remained thus he could not say, but he awoke suddenly with a start, to find himself possessed by a burning thirst. His companion had vanished, and in his place sat a queer little figure, holding in his hand a beautiful goblet filled with some sparkling liquid. It seemed to Pierre's fevered imagination the one thing to be desired. Reaching out his hand, he was about to take hold of it, when the warning words given him by Queen Mab recurred to his mind. Down fell his hand. But, oh! how thirsty he felt. It seemed worse than

ever, while the liquid appeared to sparkle all the more brightly as it was held out to him by the strange-looking creature, who never left off nodding and grinning at him, till Pierre felt as though he would like to knock him over. The whole place seemed filled with voices, which cried out, "Drink! drink!" He stopped his ears and shut his eyes, but it was of no use, the voices seemed to increase.

Suddenly he felt something touch his lips. Opening his eyes, he saw the smiling face of his friend bending over him, with the goblet in his hand. "Come, drink," he said, in his sweetest tones. "Drink! drink!" was repeated on every side. "Ah! here was his good friend asking him. He could surely wish him no harm." So Pierre thought, and grasped the goblet and raised it to his mouth, and was about to drink it, when he heard distinctly a whisper, as though far away, "Beware! it is Comus himself." In an instant he dashed the goblet to the ground, where it fell shivered to atoms, while great flaming tongues of fire shot up wherever the liquor had touched the ground. In the midst of this dreadful scene he saw himself surrounded by strange shadowy beings, who, with threatening aspect, crowded quickly round him. In their midst was one more terrible than all. He said to Pierre:

“ Did you think to escape from me ? Did I not help you on your way ? ” and he commenced to laugh, in which he was joined by his crew—such a horrible laugh as it was ; Pierre had never heard anything like it before, and he shuddered to think that this was the one he had thought so kind and nice a little while ago. “ Thus will I bind you,” he said, untwisting a fiery coil from his arm and preparing to throw it round Pierre. But he felt the time had come for him to act, so drawing his sword, he rushed at Comus, and pierced him through with it.

No sooner had he done so than the whole place became dark as midnight, while the air was filled with all kinds of horrible noises ; the ground beneath him seemed as though it were giving way, and then Pierre felt himself lifted up, and the next moment dashed to the ground.

Stunned by the fall, he lay unconscious for some time, and then gradually his senses came back. And as he lay there, afraid almost to open his eyes in case he should see again the dreadful sight, he heard the sound as of running water, while he became conscious of a strong light shining upon him.

Raising himself he looked around. The next moment he bounded up with a rapturous cry. Could it be the same place ! had that dreadful

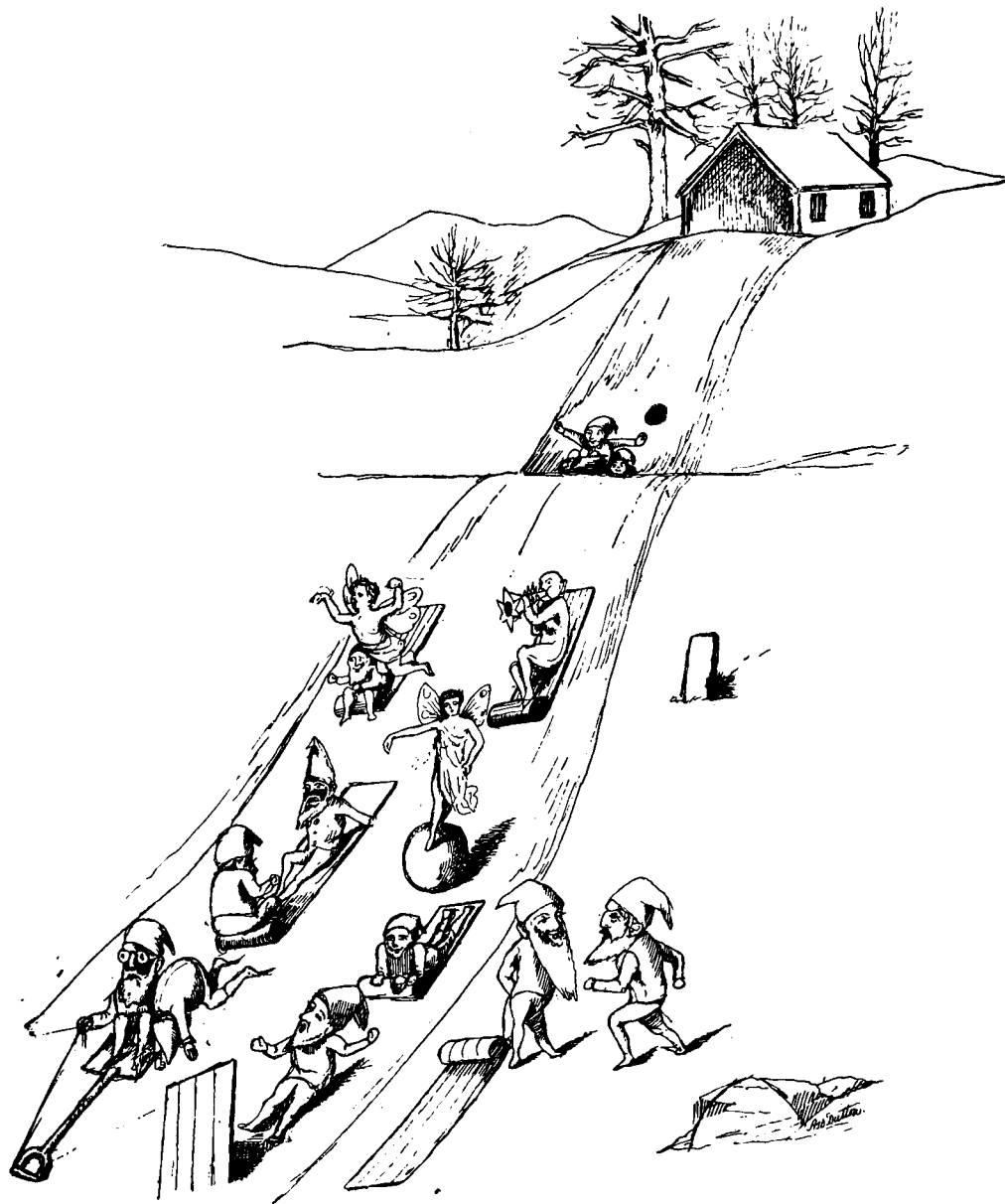


sight been but a dream? Such were his thoughts as he gazed on the scene that now met his view.

A brilliant light illumined the place, and where Comus had fallen, there bubbled up a clear stream of water. Standing by the stream was one, who beckoned him to approach. Pierre at once went. Fear and doubt fled, as he gazed upon that face, for never had he seen a countenance with such benignity. The eyes were clear and shone with such brightness as to dazzle him, while the longer Pierre looked, the more he felt himself drawn as by an irresistible force. "Know, Pierre," he said in a voice peculiarly sweet, "you have overcome our great enemy, one before whom many have fallen. Your reward shall be sweet. And now you shall bear this to Queen Mab, as a token that you have fulfilled your mission.

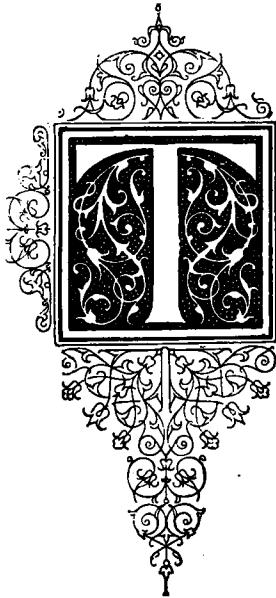
So saying, he stooped and filled a large vase of exquisite design with the water from the spring, and handing it to Pierre, vanished.

A MOONLIGHT FROLIC.



*The motley crowd in their boisterous play.*

## A MOONLIGHT FROLIC IN DECEMBER.



IS winter, and where are the elves of June ?

They came one night in the pale moonlight,  
When the pine trees groaned like a great bassoon,

And every wight

Squeaked with delight

When they found the Toboggan slide eftsoon.

For everyone was resolved to know

How it felt to glide down the mountain side,  
Over that wonderful thing called snow ;

And the fays beside

Were bound to slide,

But the foremost of all was a Shetland Trow !

For nobody knew how the thing was played,  
Till this bold elf went off by himself,  
Over the dip on a wooden spade ;  
Then a little Oaf,  
With a pointed hoof,  
Went down with a motion retrograde.

But the best of all, I think, was a Fay,  
Who lightly led, with wings outspread,  
The motley crowd in their boisterous play ;  
And " Look ! " he said,  
As down he sped,  
Flying through the air, " See ! this is the way ! "  
And up again he flew like a spark  
That flashes clear through the atmosphere,  
And down again like shaft to its mark,  
Crying " Oh dear !  
I think that we're  
Out on a most enormous lark ! "

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And two together went down on a skate,  
And one little wight, by an oversight,  
Was left on the mountain-top to his fate ;  
And by morning light,  
In a woeful plight  
Was the poor little Brownie thus belate.

And him I found in the early morn,  
And so was told of the antics bold  
That ended in his being left forlorn,  
“ Away from the fold  
And the eerie wold,”  
Said the poor little wight, “ I was left to mourn.”

But whilst he talked with me, a sound came borne on the frosty morning breeze, a weird, uncanny sound, “ the horns of Elfland faintly blowing.” My little Brown Man pricked up his ear, listened, heard it again, waved his elfish, tasselled cap, and vanished in the bare, wintry woods of Mount Royal.



