

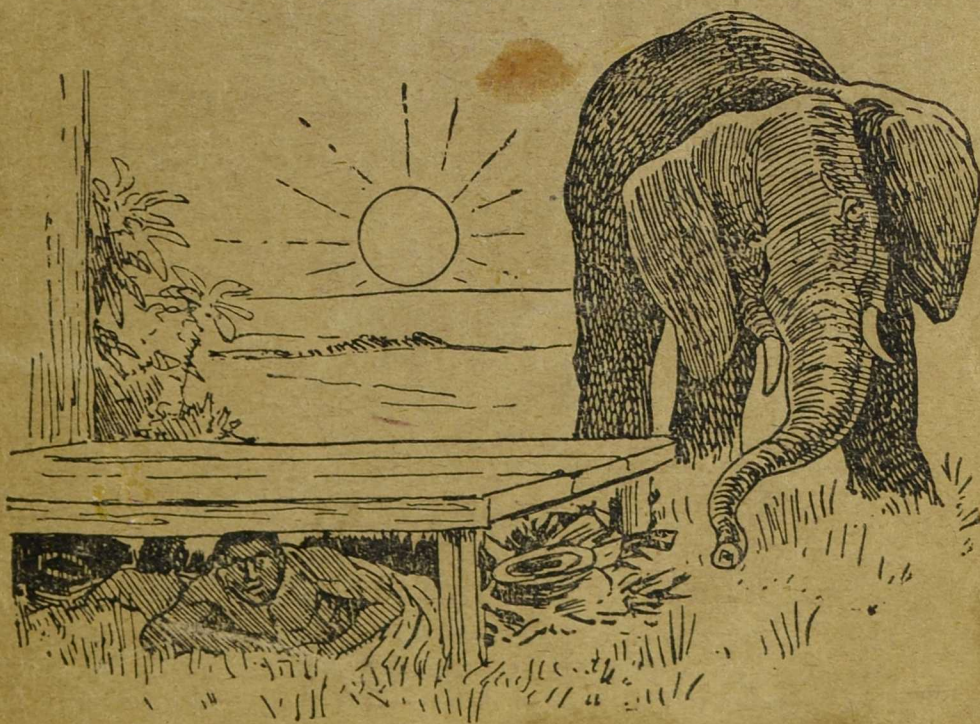
BOOKS FOR THE BAIRNS.—No. 79.

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FAIRY TALES FROM AFRICA.

COLLECTED AND EDITED BY
MARION L. ADAMS.

Illustrated by BRINSLEY LE FANU.



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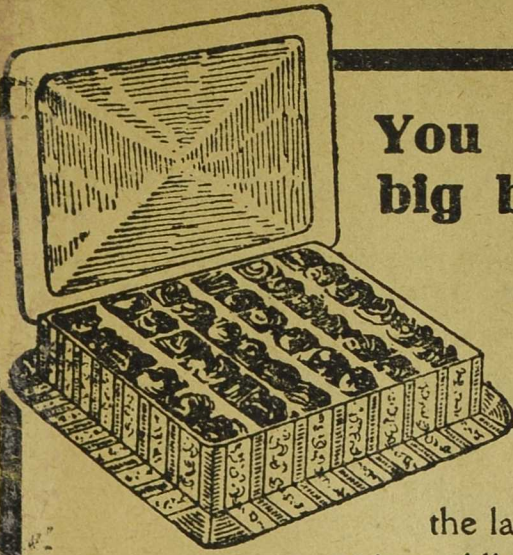
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OFFICE OF "BOOKS FOR THE BAIRNS,"
LONDON.

NOTE BY THE COMPILER.

HERE are some African stories which I hope you will like as much as the Indian and Chinese fairy tales.

They are a different kind—not so many princes and princesses, and wonderful adventures; but more about animals—elephants, and jackals, and lions.

Some of them were told long ago by the natives to a good missionary, the Rev. J. Rath, who was working among them; and some to the Rev. G. Krönlein, another missionary.

There is a book of African travel, by Miss Kingsley, which you must all read when you are grown up; and in it you will find the story of the Bush Spider, with many other interesting things. I think the boys would like it even now. She was such a plucky lady, and did such deeds of daring among the forests and rivers of Western Africa.

FAIRY TALES FROM AFRICA.



MORNING PEARL.

ONCE upon a time, there was a very pretty girl named Morning Pearl, and she lived, with her father and mother and two brothers, in a hut by the side of an African river. It was not a sunny, rippling river, like our English ones, but walled in on either side by a forest,

dark and gloomy-looking. It was full of crocodiles, too, which made Morning Pearl afraid of bathing in it. Although, however, she had nothing but the ugly brown river to look at in front, and the forest stretching away behind, she grew up very happily, and her first real grief came

when her two brothers left home to go hunting.

"The moon will rise and set many times before we come back, Morning Pearl," they said; "but when we come we will find you a good husband, and we will dance at your wedding."

"I don't want a husband," answered their sister, who was a bit of a tomboy. "Let me come with you, and hunt the elephants."

"No; girls are better handling the cooking-pot than the spear," said the elder brother decidedly.

"You may find that great river Tamil has told us about, you know," pleaded Morning Pearl.

"What river?"

"Tamil says the first men who were ever made lived by the side of a great river—up there," she answered, pointing vaguely towards the north.

"They were all black;

but some of them swam across to the other side, and the water washed them white. Since then the white men are always stretching out their hands and calling to the blacks to come across."

"Tamil is full of silly stories."

"Ah, but the white men do come from over there!" cried Morning Pearl, gazing northward as if she could see the river in the distance. "I should like to swim across and be washed white too."

The younger brother stared at her in astonishment.

"Well, there is no accounting for people's foolishness!" he said, at last.

Then he rubbed his spear with some kind of grease, which he believed would charm it to kill elephants, and sang this little song over it:—



MORNING PEARL AND HER TWO BROTHERS.



“When mine enemy
 Thou shalt see,
 Black and tall
 Like an ebony tree,
 Sing softly, softly, little spear,
 As to his heart thou drawest near.”

The next morning the two brothers started on their expedition, leaving their sister behind, and in her loneliness she sought out the witch-doctress, Tamil, oftener than she had ever done before, and talked to her of the river far away beyond the forest, and the

white men on the other side of it.

“If you really want to go there,” said Tamil, one day, “you must marry my son, and he can carry you on his back through the forest.”

Morning Pearl shook her pretty head.

“I should be too heavy. Besides, I don’t want to marry.”

“My son’s legs are as thick as tree-trunks, and

he stands twelve feet high, at least. You could not be too heavy for *him*," said Tamil, laughing. "As for not wanting a husband, that is what all girls say, but they don't mean it."

"He must be a giant!" cried Morning Pearl.

"He's not a giant. He is—but never mind, wait till you see him," replied Tamil mysteriously.

She was determined to get Morning Pearl for a daughter-in-law, if possible. So that evening, when the moon was shining softly through the trees, she stole away to the place where her son was usually to be found at night.

By and by she came across him, at the edge of a swamp, where he had been rolling about in the muddy water; and he was twelve feet high, and had legs like tree-trunks, as she had said.



For Tamil's son was nothing more nor less than a great, big, black elephant; and that very day he had had a narrow escape of being killed by Morning Pearl's brothers.

"Well, little mother, what now?" he asked, rubbing himself gently against a tree.

"I have found the prettiest little wife for you. But she will never marry an elephant. Will you let me turn you into a bushman for a little time?"

"How? And what for?" asked her son suspiciously.

His mother showed him some leaves she had picked up on her way through the forest.

"Eat one of these, and you will become a handsome young bushman, who can woo the girl and marry her. Then, when you are safely wed, and

have carried off your bride, you can eat another leaf, and your elephant form will come back again."

The elephant's eyes twinkled.

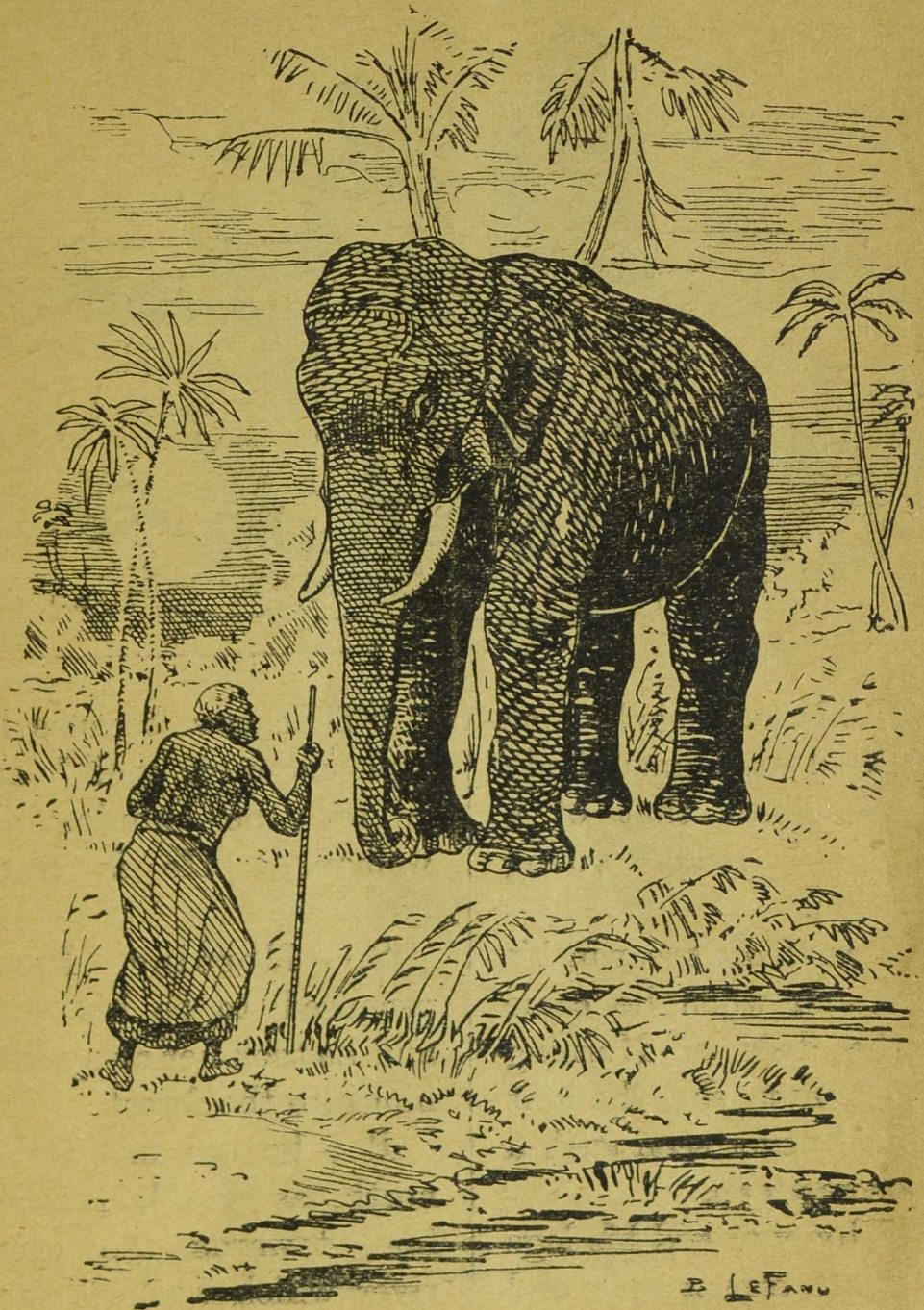
"Is she really a pretty girl, my mother? Can she cook fish and make cakes?"

"She is as sweet as the wild mango blossoms when they fall to the ground in spring. And I have tasted her baked fish and her broth. Ah. —Tamil rolled her eyes, remembering how good they had been, and a look of satisfaction stole over her son's face.

"I get tired of roots and plantain leaves," he said plaintively.

"That's because your mother wasn't an elephant. Well, she will need a big cooking-pot!—it isn't one baked fish that will satisfy you!"

Then his mother gave him the leaf, after eating



TAMIL AND HER ELEPHANT SON.



which his four legs became two, and his clumsy body changed into that of a tall, well-made young bushman.

He carried a spear in his hand, and when he came to the door of Morning Pearl's hut, she thought she had never seen such a handsome man.

"Why, you said his legs were like tree-trunks, and he was twelve feet high!" she cried.

"That was because he was under a spell," answered the cunning old woman. "He is cured now."

So Morning Pearl promised to be his wife, and he took her away with him into the forest.

But he did not travel north, as she had asked him, towards the great river which washed black people white.

No; they went south,

and south, always south, towards the plains where the elephant hunters were few, and where he thought he might live in peace with his wife.

At last they stopped in a beautiful country covered with green grass and flowers, for it was early spring; and there he built her a hut, or kraal.

"Now I will go fishing, and you shall cook my supper," he said.

He went down to the river and brought back thirty fish.

"Three will be enough," said Morning Pearl.

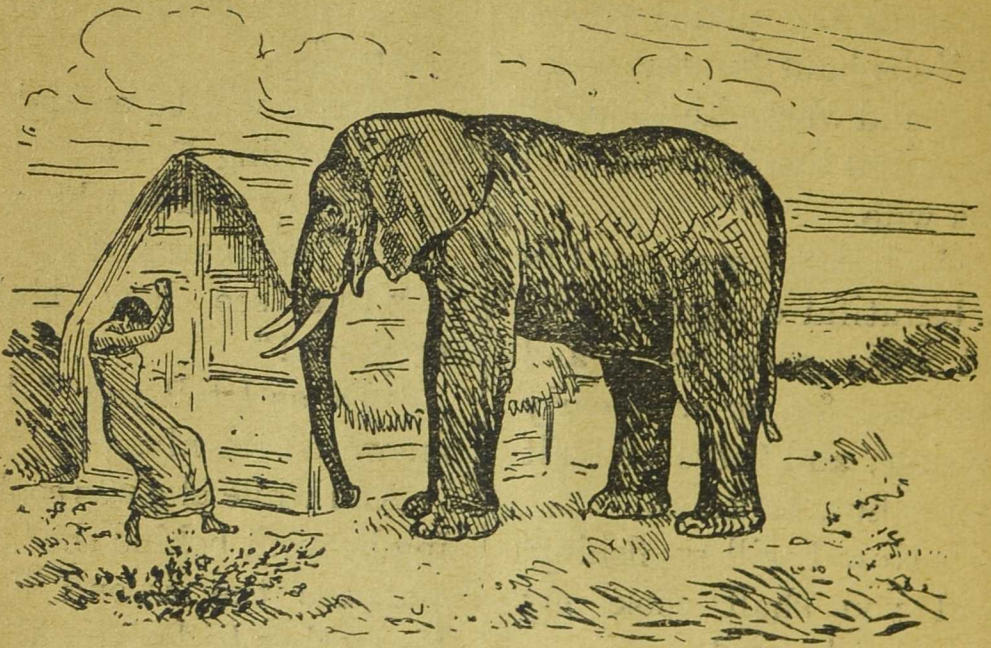
"Thirty will not be too much," he answered.

"But see how large they are!"

"Do as I tell you!" he answered sternly.

And while she was cooking he went behind the hut and ate the second leaf his mother had given him.





Immediately his nose grew into a trunk and his teeth into tusks, while his body changed into that of a huge elephant, standing four feet above the roof.

Morning Pearl looked up, and gave a loud cry.

"Oh, Momi! Momi!" she called out, "save me from the elephant!"

"Don't be frightened. I am Momi, your husband," he replied, talk-

ing to her across the roof of the kraal.

"Oh! oh! But I *am* frightened! I can't help it!" answered the poor girl.

She crouched on the ground, hiding her face in her hands, while her husband told her the story of the trick he had played on her.

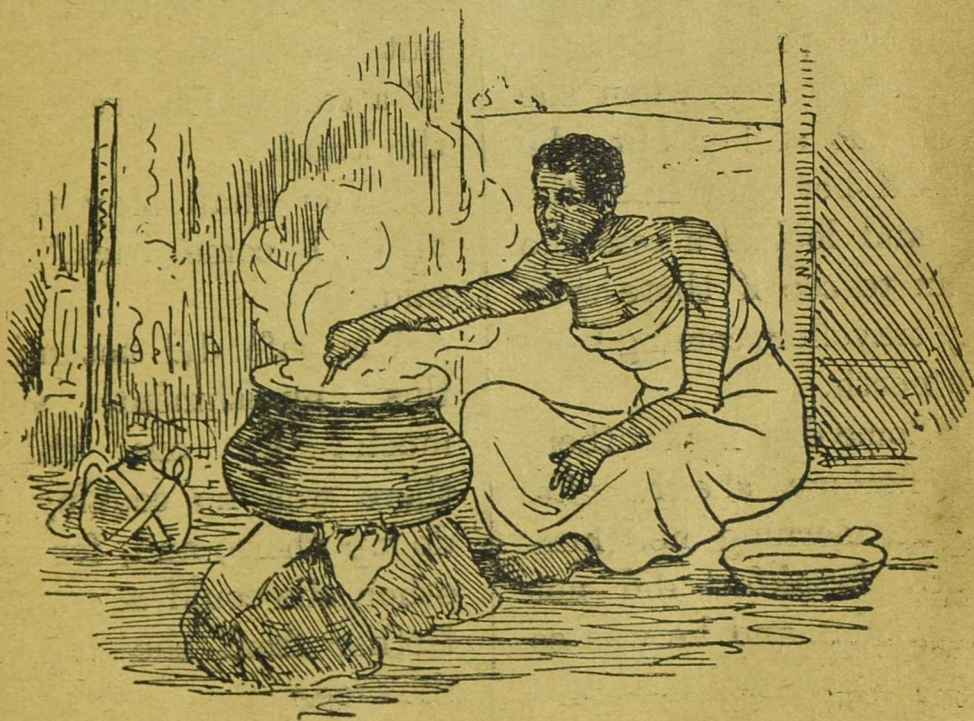
"And now," he said, "you must do your best

to please me, or it will be the worse for you. I am tired of elephant food. I want broth, baked meat, plenty of fish, and all the good things bushmen eat. It will be your business to attend to that while I go hunting."

Poor Morning Pearl soon found she could only satisfy her husband's appetite by cooking from morning till night.

He went out to catch the springbok and gemsbok—small deer which roamed about the plain—and she made broths and stews of these, as her mother had taught her.

Instead of running out in the morning to gather flowers, she had to go fishing, or collecting eggs to put into the soup. She grew so ill and thin that no one would have known her for the same Morning





Pearl who had left home with the young bushman. But every day, when she came out of her hut, she shaded her eyes from the sun and looked across the plain to see if there were any travellers coming from the north.

“Some day my brothers may find me,” she thought.

One morning her husband's breakfast did not please him, and he was so angry that he snatched

her up in his trunk and put her right at the top of a tree which grew near the kraal.

“You shall stay there until I come back,” he said.

His wife did not mind this punishment very much: for one thing, there was no cooking to do up there, and, for another, she could see much farther from the top of the tree.

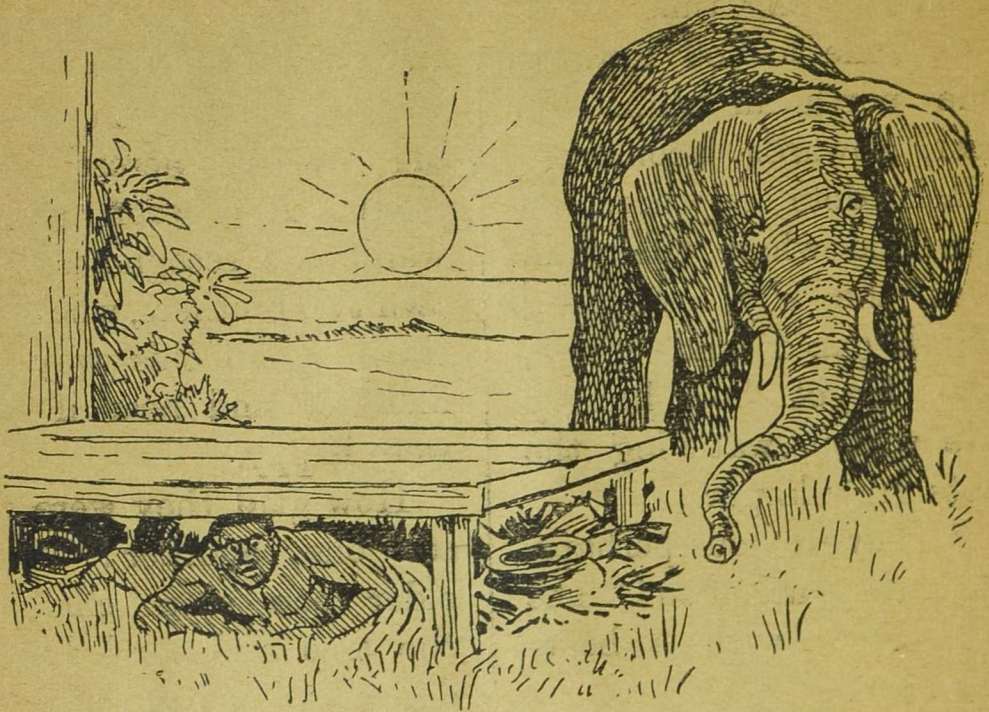
For a long time, however, she looked towards the north in vain. At last, towards noon, two black dots appeared on the line where the plain met the sky. Morning Pearl gazed and gazed, and forgot how hungry she was in watching the dots grow larger.

“They are lions, perhaps. No—they are men!” she whispered, with a beating heart.

An hour passed, and she could see that they were two bushmen, moving swiftly across the plain. And soon afterwards she recognized her own two brothers, who had travelled all this way to find her and hear if she were happy.

How glad they were to see one another! The elder one soon climbed the tree and carried her down, and she gave them





some dinner. While they were eating she told them how unhappy she was, and made them promise to take her away.

"But we must wait until night, or Momi will catch us," she said. "I will hide you in the kraal until it is safe to start."

At the back of the hut there was a raised wooden platform, called the stage, and underneath it Morning Pearl kept the fuel for

her fires, rugs for sleeping on, and all kinds of odds and ends.

It was the very place in which to stow away her brothers; and although Momi sniffed suspiciously round the hut when he came home, he did not catch a glimpse of them.

At midnight, when Momi was fast asleep, his wife roused her brothers, and took them outside the kraal.

"We will kill the ele-

phant before we go," whispered the elder brother.

"No, you must not do that," she answered.

"Then you must let us take his cattle, at least," said the younger.

Morning Pearl had to agree to this; but she left one cow, one ewe, and one goat behind, telling them to make as much noise as they could during the night.

When the elephant heard them he made sure

that all his cattle were safe, and shut his eyes, and went to sleep again. But early in the morning he found out his mistake.

By this time Morning Pearl and her brothers were far away across the plain, but Momi went after them as fast as he could.

On, on they flew, driving the cattle before them; but the terrible Momi got over the ground more quickly than any of them,





MORNING PEARL REPEATS THE SPELL.

and he was soon less than half a mile away.

By this time they had come to the foot of some rocks, too steep to climb, and so high they seemed to touch the sky.

“Now we are lost!” said the elder brother.

But his sister remembered a spell which Tamil had taught her, and cried out:

“By the lilies which grow
On the still lagoon,
All silver white
Under the moon,
Stone of my fathers,
Divide! Divide!
Let us pass through
To the other side.”

Immediately the rock opened, and Morning Pearl, with her brothers and the cattle, went safely through.

At the other side there was a lagoon shining in the

moonlight, with silvery white lilies floating on the water, and it looked so beautiful that Morning Pearl ran, with a cry of joy, to bathe her hands and face in it.

“Did Tamil’s spell bring it here? Or was it here all the time?” she asked, in bewilderment.

They stayed and rested a little time, and went on again; for Morning Pearl said she would try and find the river which Tamil had spoken of so often.

But whether they ever succeeded, and were washed white in the waters, I do not know.

Only, Momi never saw his dear little wife again, which served him quite right.



THE BUSH SPIDER.

VALLA was a great hunter, and until he married Gulu he never failed to bring some game back from the bush with him.

He used to smear grease on his spear—putting medicine on it, he called it—and say :

“ Kill, kill, spear of mine,
Earth-pig and porcupine,
Bush-cow and bush-deer,
Kill, kill, little spear.”

But Gulu did not want him to go hunting, and after he married her his spear was always getting fast in the trees, or gliding past the bush-cows without touching them; and he would come home empty-handed. This was because Gulu knew a better charm than his, and rubbed a different medi-

cine into the spear after he had finished with it, saying:

“Bush-deer and bush-cow,
Say, who shall hurt you now?
By my spell you shall be
Safe and free, safe and free.”

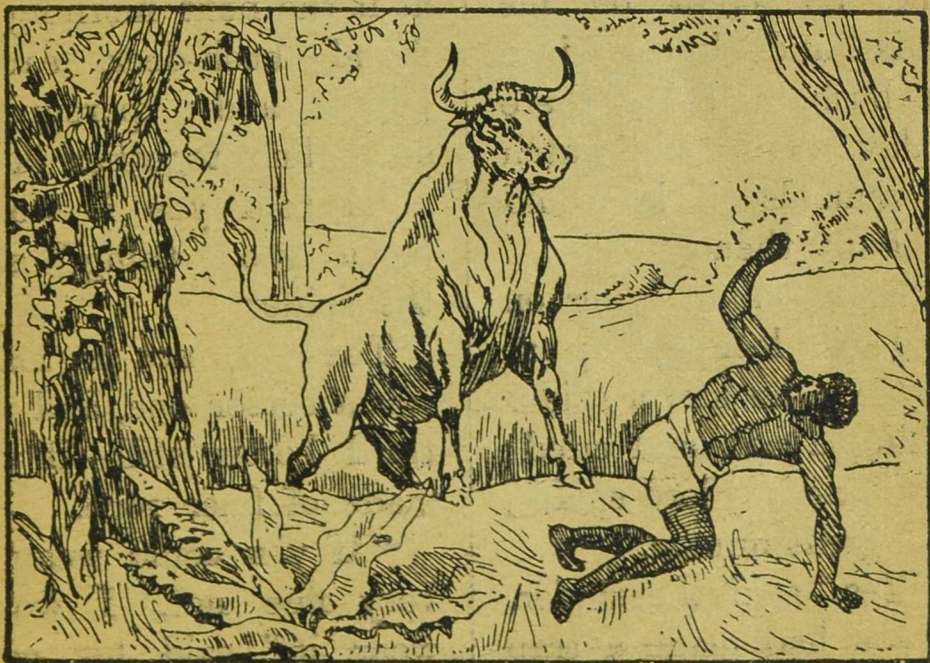
One day, when she had done this, Valla went out after a big, savage bush-cow, and although he threw his spear as skilfully as usual, it glided between the animal's horns, and the point went into a tree behind.

Then the bush-cow rush-

ed furiously upon him, and gored him, injuring him so much that he could hardly creep home.

He lay in his kraal many days, in great pain, and when his friends found out that it was Gulu's fault, they punished her severely.

But they need not have done so; Gulu was as sorry as she could be for her husband, and she nursed him very tenderly.



"I witched your spear to make you give up hunting, because I am afraid of the danger for you," she told him one day.

"Once a hunter, always a hunter, Gulu," he answered. "I shall never give it up while I can drag myself into the bush."

His wife tried to persuade him to stay in the kraal until he was better; but after a week or two, when still too weak to walk, he crept on his hands and knees into the bush, and lay there all day. He could watch the animals, if he could not hunt them.

One morning, lying on his back looking up at the trees, he saw a spider making a net, and cried: "You also, my lord spider, are a great hunter."

"Yes," said the spider, "if you had made a trap like this, and caught the

bush-cow in it, you would not have been hurt."

"It is a safer way, certainly," thought the man. "I will make a net of bush-rope."

Bush-rope is the stem of a creeping plant which grows in the African forests; it is very strong and tough.

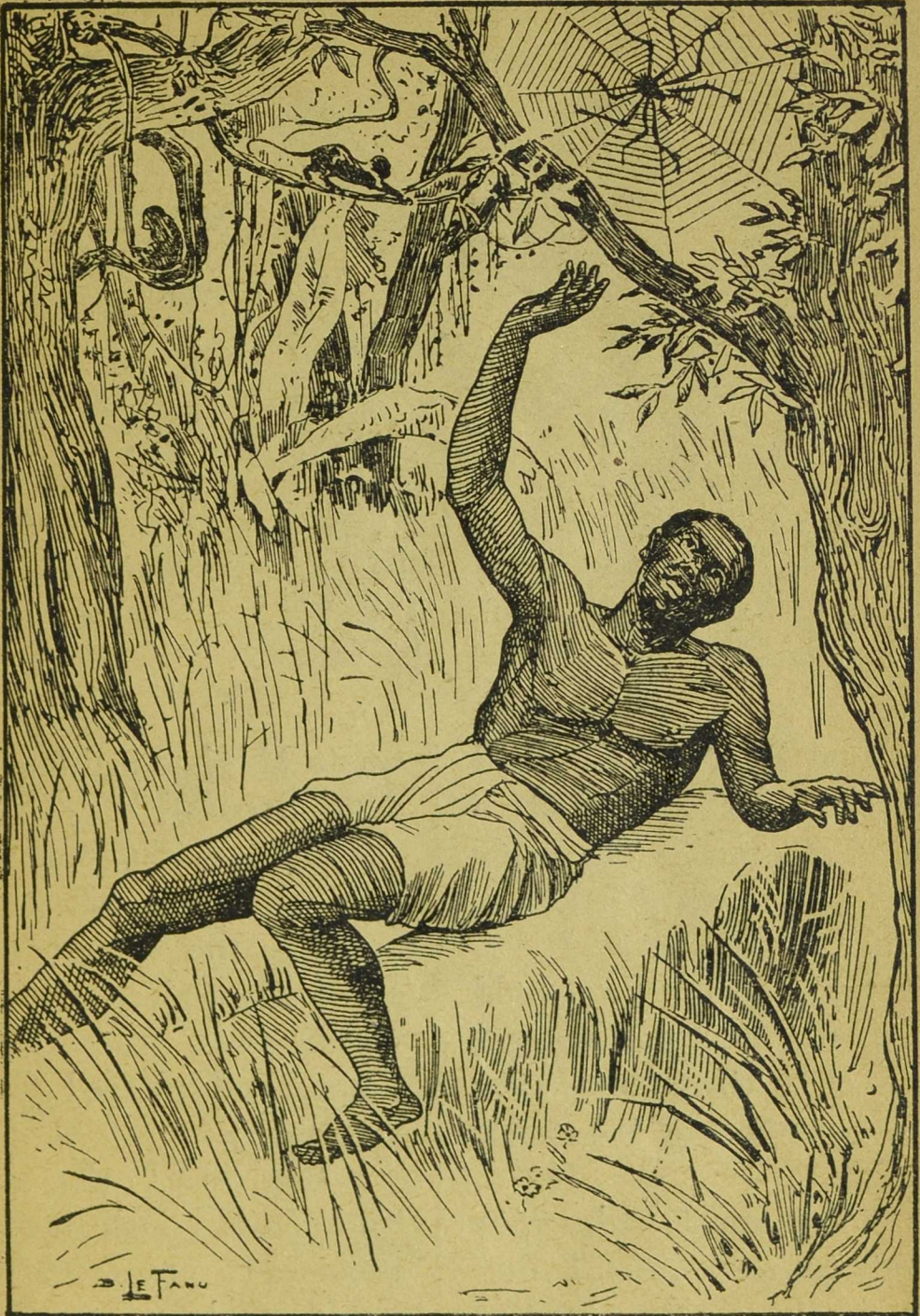
Valla took the thickest he could find, and made a net, and put it between two bushes.

When he went to look at it the next morning he found bush-deer, earth-pigs, and porcupines struggling together in it.

"I told you it would be a good thing," said the spider.

The next net he made was a better one, and the third better still—it was made of finer rope.

"If you could weave a very fine net, I would wear it," said his wife. For Gulu and the other



VALLA LEARNS A LESSON FROM THE SPIDER.



women in the forest had nothing to wear but a kind of coarse cloth made of bark, which shrank when it was wet.

Valla said he would try, but he could not get the cloth the right shape; so he went to the spider again.

“You must make your net on sticks, as I do,” said the spider. “But will a mighty hunter

waste his time making his wife’s dresses?”

Valla brought some fine rope, and fixed his sticks up near the spider’s net, and made a piece of cloth which was the right shape, and pleased Gulu very much.

“But why,” she said, “do you use bush-rope instead of grass, which would make the cloth finer still?”

She showed him the place where some long silky grass grew, and he gathered it and took it to the spider.

"I have made nets of thick bush-rope and thin bush-rope. Can I make one now of this?" he asked.

"Women are never satisfied!" growled the spider, who was an old bachelor.

However, he showed

Valla how to weave a fine, beautiful cloth of grass.

Gulu was a proud woman when she wrapped herself in it and walked past the other kraals.

"Her husband is not only a mighty hunter, but he can make finer cloth than any one," said the other women enviously.

For Valla still made bush-rope nets for the





game, and caught so much that he and his friends feasted all the year round.

He and Gulu lived to a great age, and saw their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. And even when he was old and grey-headed they called him "The

Great Hunter." But when they would have christened him "The Master Weaver" too, he pointed to the bush where the spider wove his web of silver.

"There sits the Master Weaver," he said, "who taught me all I know."

THE GOLDEN LADDER.

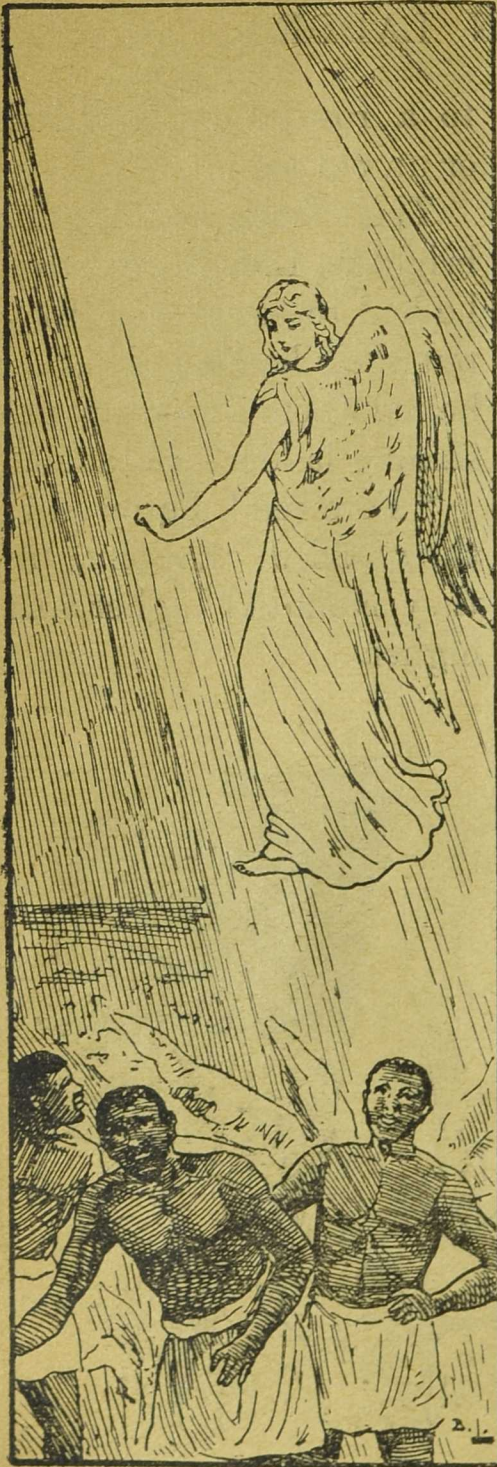
IN olden days, when the people of Africa were innocent and happy, like little children, there was a golden ladder stretching up from earth to heaven. Down this ladder, from time to time, a white-robed messenger came, bearing a message for some one on earth—sometimes to a child, sometimes

to a rosy young maiden, or an old man.

Their faces would grow bright as they heard what he had to say; then they put their hands in his, and he led them away, up the shining ladder to heaven.

“Farewell! Farewell!” they cried happily, as they mounted higher and higher.





“Come back soon for us, heavenly one!” pleaded their friends, stretching out their hands towards the messenger.

But, as years went on, a change came over the world. People who had been content to live in kraals made of the boughs of trees built themselves houses, surrounded by beautiful gardens, and they did not like to leave these, even to mount the golden ladder. They grew fond of feasting and dancing, and when the heavenly messenger came they turned their faces from him.

“Let us alone,” they said; “earth is good enough for us.”

One day the messenger had to go back to heaven all alone—no one would listen to his message.

“I went to call a little child,” he said, “but mothers have taught their

children to be afraid of me, and she ran away. Then I spoke to a rich man, but he would not leave his fine house and his slaves and cattle."

He sat down and hid his face in his white robes, weeping.

But some one touched him on the shoulder.

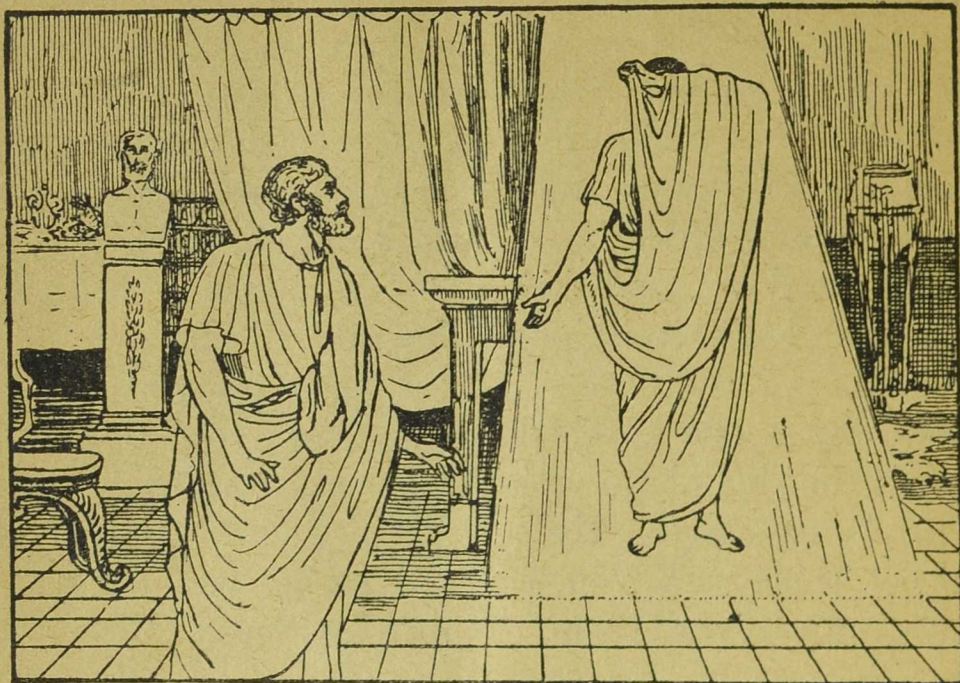
"Brother, since they will not come with you, I must go down to call them."

The first messenger was a fair, rosy-faced youth, with golden hair; but the second was pale and stunted, and there was a look of pain in his eyes.

"My name is Disease," he said to the rich man. "I have brought a message for you from the heavenly country."

"I know. But I am not ready yet," the rich man answered.





Disease went sadly back up the ladder, and another messenger was sent.

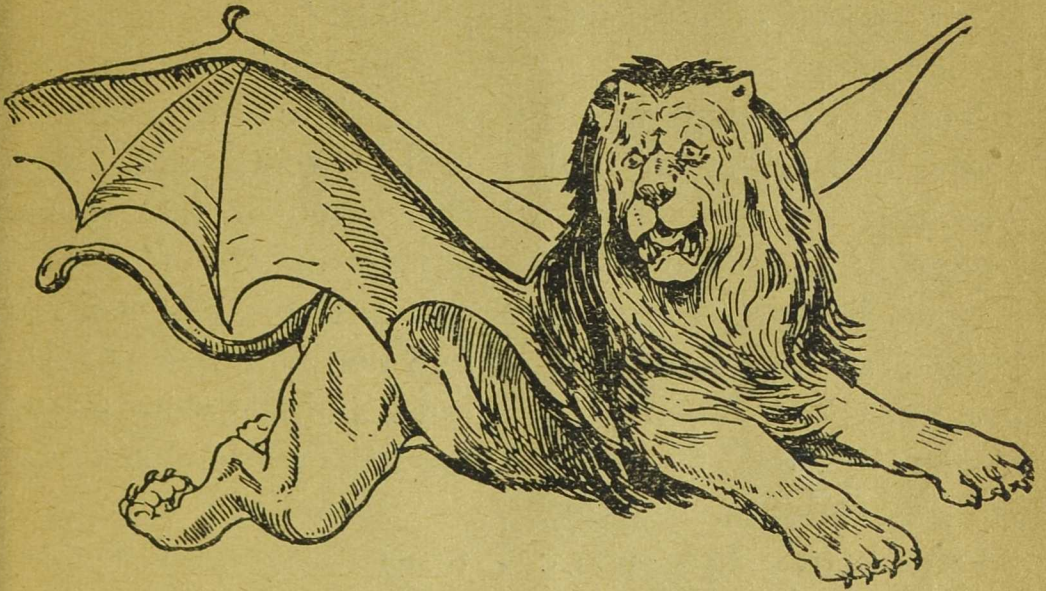
And when he took the rich man's hand, the man forgot all about the supper he was giving that night, and his splendid house and beautiful slaves.

"I will come," he said, in a moment. For the name of the third messenger was Death, and no one could refuse to hear his message.

People were afraid of him at first; but one day a mother who was watching him lead her baby boy up the golden ladder saw the veil slip from his face, and it was that of a glorious angel.

He took the little child in his arms, and the boy looked up at him, smiling.

"I will tell everybody that they need not fear him any more," said the mother.



RED BLOSSOM AND THE FLYING LION.

THERE was once a King's daughter named Red Blossom, who was so clever that every one came to her for advice. She knew what medicine to give people when they were ill, the kind of plants and herbs which were good to eat, and the crops which would grow best in different kinds of soil.

She understood what animals said to one another, and could tell when it was going to rain, or when the rain would cease. Only one thing she did not know: and that was how to get rid of the Flying Lion.

The Flying Lion was a terrible beast; he devoured everything he came

across ; and people said he had built himself a palace of the bones of creatures he had eaten.

The only thing which made Red Blossom sad was the thought of the Flying Lion. "He is like a cloud hanging over our kraals," she told her father one day. "When the women go out to wash, or the children to play, no one knows how many will come back."

"Ah, well, don't think about him ! It is not a woman who will rid us of him, at any rate," said the old King.

He spoke kindly, but he had no great opinion of his daughter's abilities, and he thought his subjects had rather spoilt her by making so much fuss of her.

This was not true, however. Red Blossom was too sensible to be conceited, and she only wanted

to be kind and good, and help others as much as possible.

The next morning she went into the forest to gather roots, and there she found a tall woman sitting at the foot of a cotton tree. She was fair, and her hair was reddish-gold, and she wore a long, trailing, white garment.

"Who are you ? I never saw you before," said Red Blossom.

"I have always been here, although you haven't seen me," was the reply. "I whispered in your ear all you know about the things in the forest. How did you think you learnt so much about plants and animals ?"

"I just sat under the trees and thought about them," answered Red Blossom, after a pause.

"I was with you, teaching you. My name is Sassa, and I live inside



RED BLOSSOM AND THE FAIRY IN THE FOREST.

the cotton tree. Will you come and see my house?"

Red Blossom said she would, and Sassa took her through a door into the tree, where there was the dearest little house she had ever seen. The carpet was green moss, the walls were covered with flowers, and it was lighted by fire-flies and glow-worms.

"Now," said Sassa, making her sit down, "we are old friends; for although you have never seen me, I have told you nearly all my secrets. Is there anything else you want to know?"

"How to get rid of the Flying Lion — can you tell me that?" answered Red Blossom eagerly.

Sassa sat silent a little while.

"It will be rather difficult," she said, at length. "Yes; that's the most difficult thing you could

have asked me. But it might be done if you could stay three months with me."

"Three whole months?"

"It will take you a month to weave yourself an invisible robe; and unless you have *that*, you can't meddle with the Flying Lion."

"No, of course not. If he were to see me there would be an end of it."

"And of you," said Sassa. "Then, after that, you will have to learn the language of the crows and the frogs. That will take two months, because they are more difficult to understand than the rest of the animals."

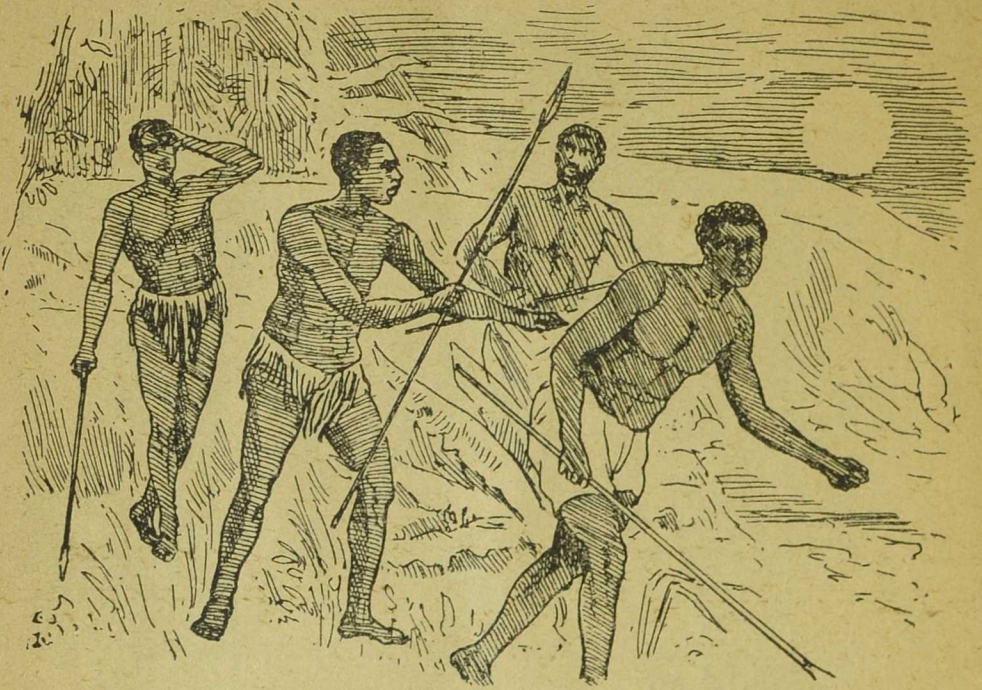
"I see," said the princess thoughtfully. "May I go home first and tell my parents where I am?"

Sassa shook her head.

"It must be a secret, or the Flying Lion will get to hear of it, and he



THE FAIRY'S HOME IN THE COTTON TREE.



will know what you are doing."

"Well," said Red Blossom, after a long pause, "it will be all for the best in the end. I'll stay."

The King and Queen were distracted with grief when night came and the princess had not come back from the forest, and they sent the bushmen far and wide in search of her. But although they sought for

many days, they could not find her, and every one thought the Flying Lion had eaten her.

Meanwhile Red Blossom sat in the cotton-tree house, weaving herself a robe which would make her invisible wherever she went. When it was finished, she learnt the language of the crows and the frogs.

Then Sassa told her the

three months were at an end, and she had better go and listen to the crows in the forest, and find out what to do about the Flying Lion.

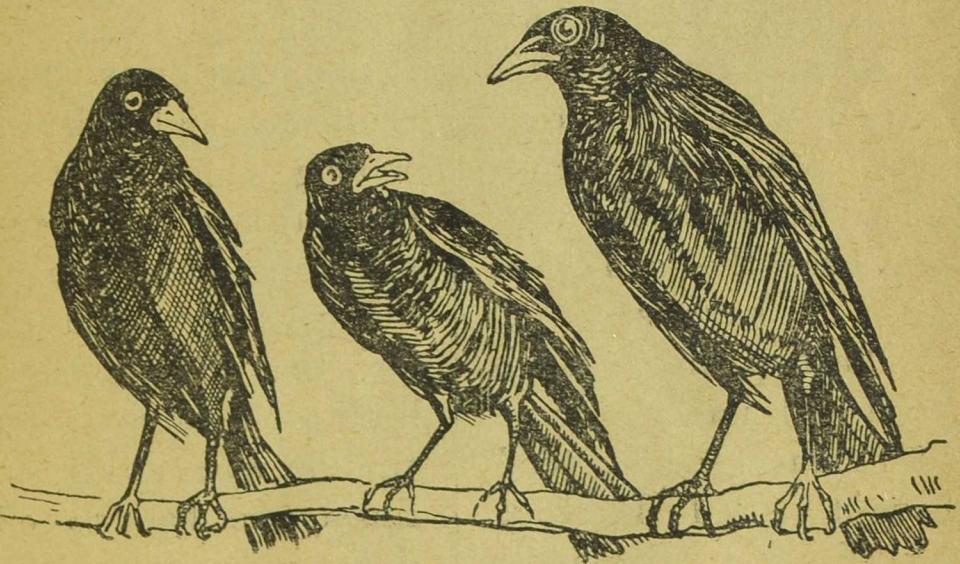
Red Blossom crept quite close to the crows, but they could not see her, because she had put on her invisible robe.

“There is some secret about his wings,” said one of them. “The white crows know it, but they dare not tell.”

“Yes, he leaves two white crows to guard the bones every day when he goes hunting. There are piles and piles of them, and he won't have one of them broken. I have seen them,” added a young crow proudly.

“Bones of what?” asked one of the old crows gruffly.

He could not fly as far as the younger ones, and was inclined to make little of their wonderful tales.





“The bones of the creatures the Flying Lion has eaten. He has built a kraal with them over there”—the young crow nodded towards the west—“where the sun goes down. I have seen it,” he added, puffing out his breast with importance.

“I must see it, too,” thought Red Blossom, “and listen to the white crows talking. Perhaps

they will let out the secret.”

She went away through the forest, and walked for a long time before she reached the kraal where the white crows were.

It was very hard walking, too. Sometimes the bush-rope caught her feet and threw her down; sometimes she had to climb over great fallen trees, sometimes to creep under

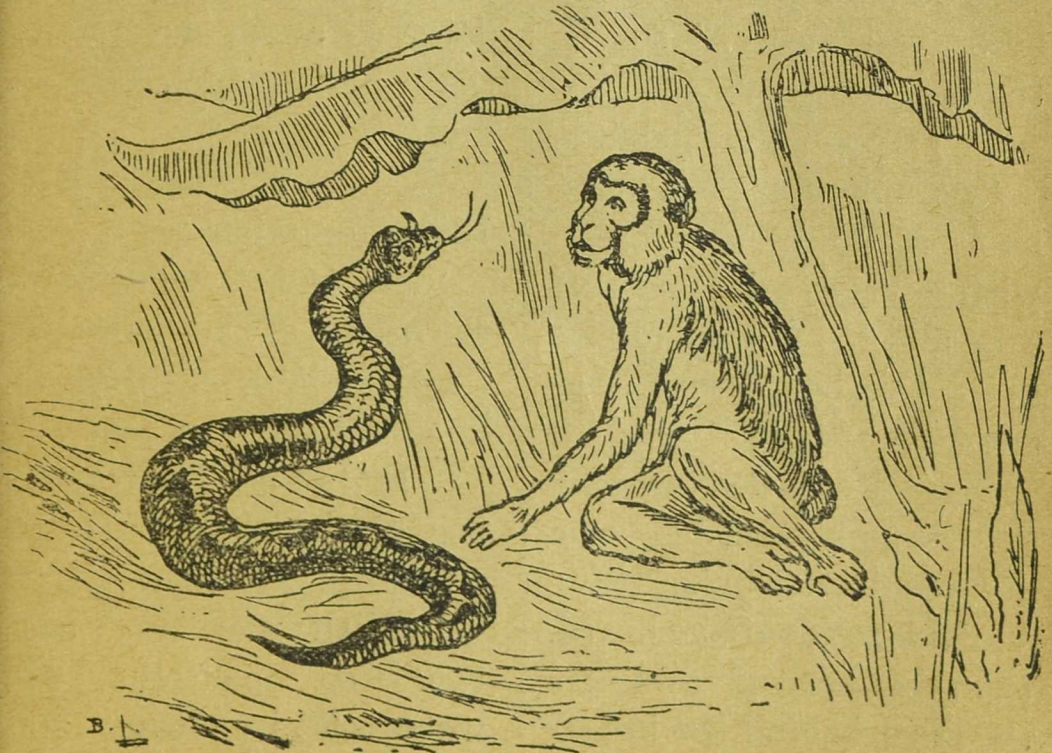
bushes. It was lucky that she could talk to the animals, for the bush-crows and the monkeys and snakes came and showed her the way, and were all very kind to her.

Her way of appearing and disappearing rather puzzled them, for of course she had to slip off her invisible robe while she spoke to them.

But, as the snake said

to the monkey, "Human beings are queer creatures at the best of times. And being a princess makes her a little queerer, perhaps!"

The white crows were flying round and round the lion's kraal when she got there. It was very large, all built of bones, and there was a pile of bones in front of it three times as high as Red Blossom. By and by the



white crows settled on a tree near her, and began to talk.

“Why doesn't he want any of the bones broken? Tell me that?” said one.

“The Great Frog is the only person who knows,” answered the other.

“Then they don't know the secret, after all!” said Red Blossom to herself, greatly disappointed.

“The Great Frog who lives in the pond behind here, you mean?” asked the first crow.

The second one nodded.

“And he won't tell until he is asked by a princess with gold bracelets on her arm and red flowers in her hair. I've heard that ever since I was born.”

Now, Red Blossom had gold bracelets on her arm and red flowers in her hair; and the moment she heard this she hurried away to the pond behind the kraal.

The Great Frog was

green in colour, with a white chest, and he was three feet high and one foot broad.

He sat sunning himself on the bank; and Red Blossom, who, of course, never knew what it was to be afraid, being a King's daughter, slipped off her invisible robe and went up to him.

“Oh,” he said, when he found out what she wanted. “If the Flying Lion is doing so much damage as that, it is time to stop him.”

“Can you?” asked Red Blossom anxiously.

“Anyone can who knows the secret of the bones. If they are broken, he won't be able to fly any more.”

“Is that it?” asked the princess. “Then will you go and break them?”

“With pleasure,” said the frog politely. He went off by leaps and bounds to the kraal, and



THE GREAT FROG EXPLAINS THE MYSTERY.



pulled it down, breaking all the bones in pieces.

“Tell your master, if he wants me, to come to the pond and look for me,” he said to the white crows.

By and by the lion came home in a great rage, crashing through the bushes, and roaring.

“What have you done that I can’t fly?” he cried.

“The Great Frog has been here and broken the

bones. He says if you want him you may go to the pond,” answered the white crows.

The lion stopped roaring, and began to creep softly towards the water to catch the frog, who was sitting on the bank. But the Great Frog slipped into the pond just as he was within a yard of him, and dived to the other side, and sat there.

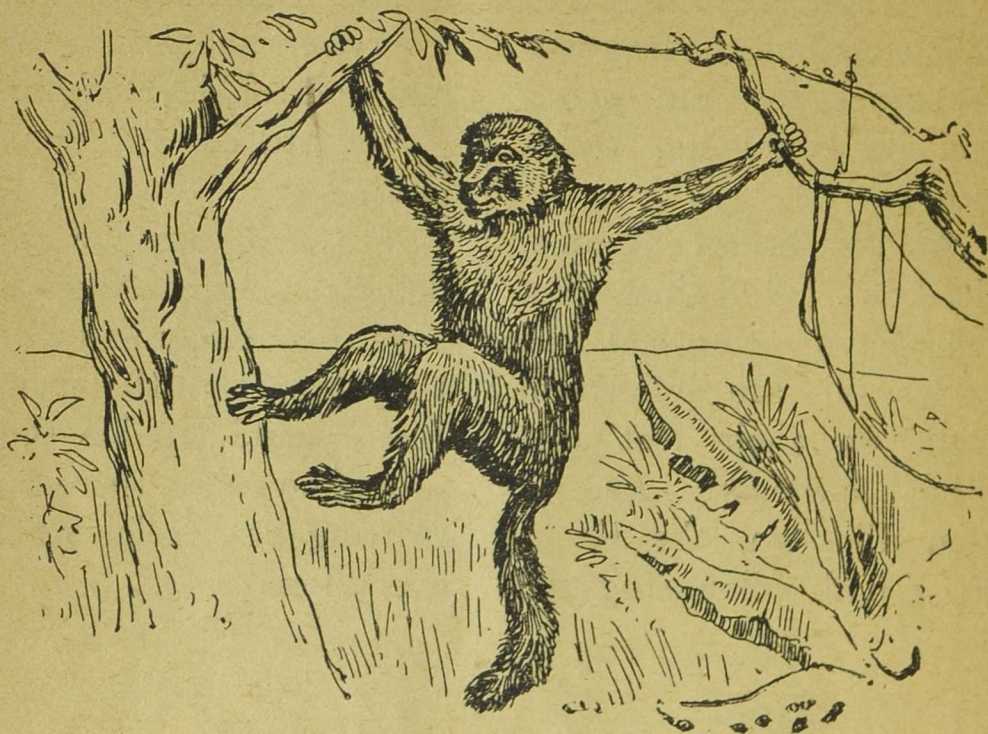
The lion crept round to that side, but the frog was too quick for him again, and he could not catch him.

At last he went home, tired out. And since then lions have never had any wings, but are obliged to walk on their feet like other animals. As for Red Blossom, the Great Frog had fallen so much

in love that he wanted to marry her; but she thanked him, and told him she must go back to her father and mother.

You may imagine how delighted her parents were to see her again; and when they heard that the Flying Lion would trouble their people no more, there was feasting and rejoicing in every kraal.





KING JAN.

KING JAN was a wise old baboon—not quite so wise, perhaps, as he imagined, which is the case with many of us; but quite sensible enough to be a good ruler over his corner of the forest. He could swing himself from one branch to another, by his long arms, as quick as lightning, and could run

so fast and so far that no one could catch him.

King Jan walked on two legs, and he was respected for this more than anything. But here is the sad story of how he, and all the baboons after him, lost the power of walking erect, and had to go on all-fours, like the rest of the animals.

The biggest of King Jan's subjects was an elephant, and his smallest an ant. Besides these, his kingdom contained a dog, a cat, a mouse, a pool of water, a stick, and a fire lit among the brambles.

I suppose you have seen water put out fire, with a great fizz and splutter, haven't you? The strange thing about King Jan's pool was that however much water was thrown

on the fire, the fire burnt all the better for it.

"That's because they are friends," said King Jan.

In the same way his cat would never bite the mouse; and the cat and dog played nicely together; and the stick went quietly about its business without beating the dog; and the ant never dreamt of giving the elephant a nip.

No; they all lived in peace and harmony to-





gether, until a wretched little tailor, named Itkler, came to the King to complain of the holes some one had made in his cloth.

You know how it is, just when we are enjoying ourselves most, somebody comes and interferes. Nurse says it's bed-time, or Miss So-and-so says it's time for lessons, or the gardener says he shall complain to father if we make any more mess, digging.

Well, it was like that in King Jan's kingdom. They were all as happy as they could be, when Itkler, the tailor, brought him a piece of cloth with six holes in it.

"Your Majesty, I must have satisfaction," he said. "I thought the mouse had done this, but she blames the cat, and the cat says she saw my cloth in the dog's mouth. But the dog says it was the

stick ; the stick declares it was the fire ; and the fire says the water did it. The water denies it, and says the elephant tore the cloth ; and the elephant lays the blame on the ant."

"Well?" says King Jan, looking very wise.

"They are all quarrelling about it. Bring them together and try them, that we may find out the

truth," continued the tailor.

"Quarrelling? Dear me! Such a thing never happened here before! I will talk it over with my Prime Minister, and see what can be done. Pray take a seat."

Itkler sat down cross-legged on the grass, and pulled out his thimble and thread.

"Don't darn the holes,



or they'll say there never were any," said the wise baboon.

"Don't consult your Prime Minister. He is sure to give you some foolish advice," retorted the tailor.

This annoyed the King very much. He had great faith in the jackal, who was his Prime Minister; and, besides, like other royal personages, he did not like to be addressed in a rude and familiar manner.

What Itkler said was quite true, however. The jackal was a mischievous fellow, and people who took his advice were generally sorry for it afterwards.

King Jan told him what had happened, and they whispered together a long time, then the King nodded his head, and the jackal went off to assemble his subjects.

They stood in order—the little brown mouse, the cat, the black curly dog, the stick, and next to the stick the fire was burning, and at the other side of the fire the pool of water lay. Beyond the water stood the elephant, and next to him, on the top of a blade of grass, a tiny black ant.

"Itkler," said King Jan, "hold up your cloth."

The tailor held up the cloth, and there were six round holes in it.

"Which of you has done this?"

"The mouse!" cried Itkler.

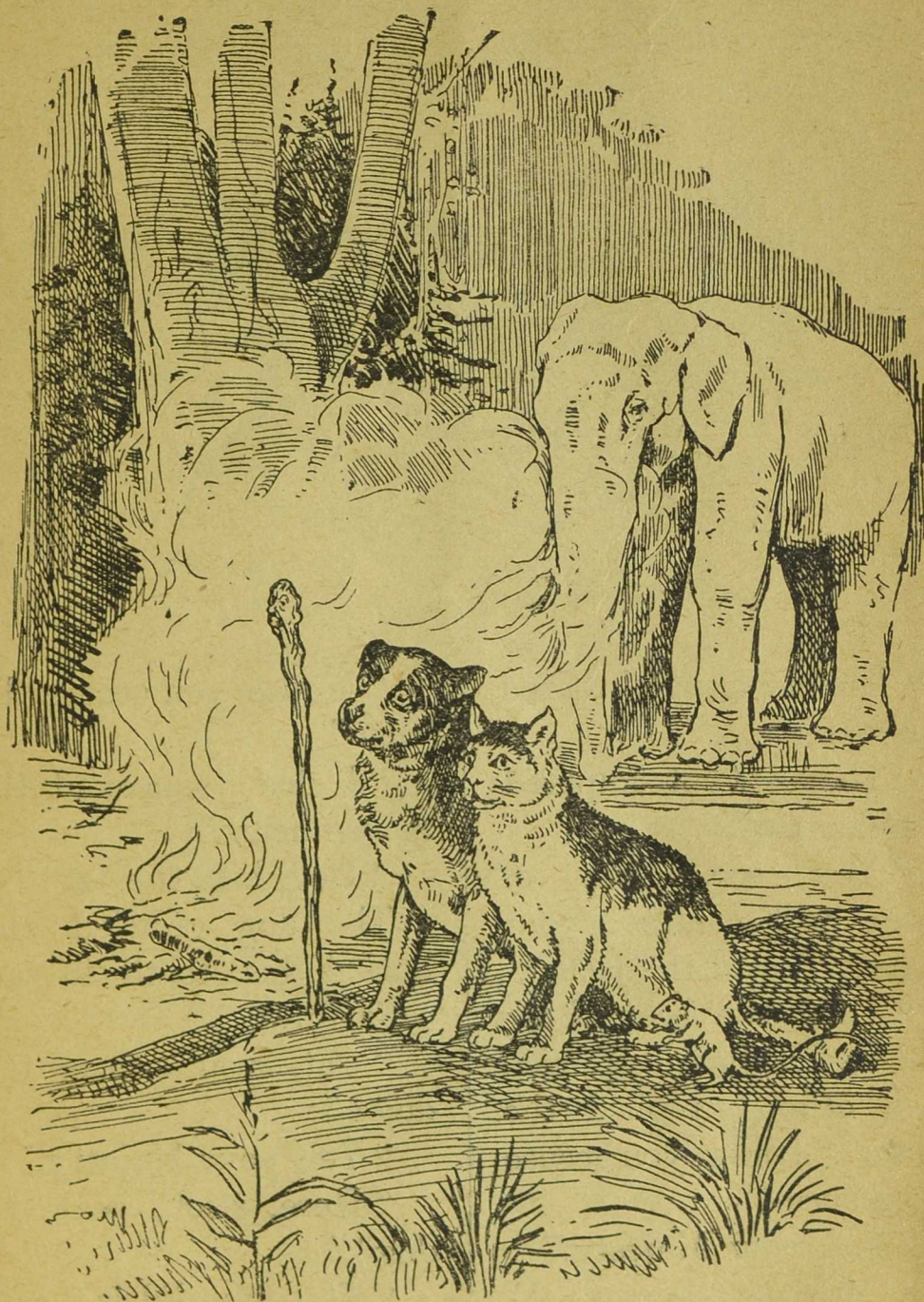
"The cat!" squeaked the mouse.

"The dog!" said the cat.

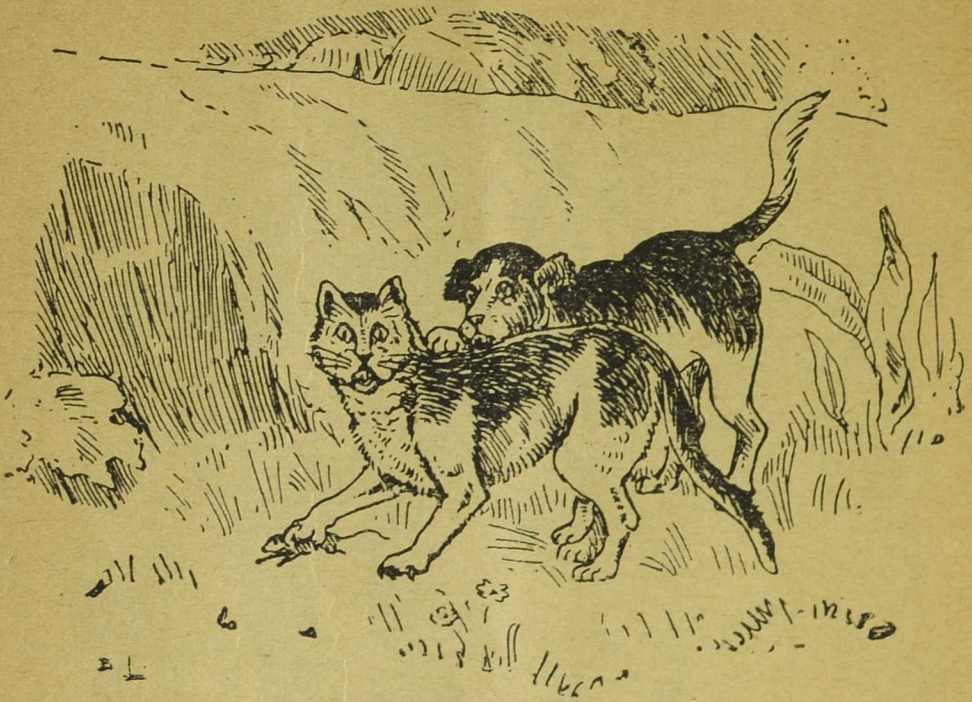
"The stick!" growled the dog.

"The fire!" shouted the stick.

"The water!" hissed the fire.



THE TRIAL.



“The elephant!” roared the water.

“The ant!” trumpeted the elephant.

“You see, none of them will confess, your Majesty,” said the jackal.

“Then the best thing will be for them to punish each other,” replied the King. “Itkler, you accuse the mouse?”

“Yes, your Majesty.”

“Cat, bite the mouse!”

The cat bit the mouse as hard as she could.

“Mouse, you accuse the cat?”

“I do!” squeaked the mouse heartily.

“Dog, bite the cat!”

The dog growled and buried his teeth in the cat’s fur.

“Cat, you accuse the dog?”

“Yes, your Majesty.”

“Here, stick, beat the dog!”

“The fire did it,” said the stick, in a sulky tone.

“Fire, burn the stick!”

Water, put out the fire!
Elephant, drink the water!
Ant, bite the elephant!"
commanded the King.

"Ah," cried the jackal, capering about with delight, "there will be no more peace in this kingdom for many a long day!"

And so it proved; for from that time to this the cat has always bitten the mouse, the dog the cat, and the ant the elephant,

while fire has burnt wood, and water quenched fire.

"I have made a nice mess of it, thanks to your advice," said King Jan.

And as a punishment for his foolishness, King Jan lost the power of walking on two legs, and had to go on all-fours, like the rest of the animals. He lost his name of Jan, too; and he and all his race after him were called baboons.



THE JACKAL'S ADVENTURES.

WHEN the lion went out hunting, he took Gobi, the jackal, with him.

Gobi was a much better hunter than the lion, but whenever he killed the game, and said, "That is mine, Uncle Lion!" his uncle looked at him with such an angry glare that Gobi would contradict himself, and say, "No, it is yours, of course!"

Then Uncle Lion would eat it up, while Gobi went without.

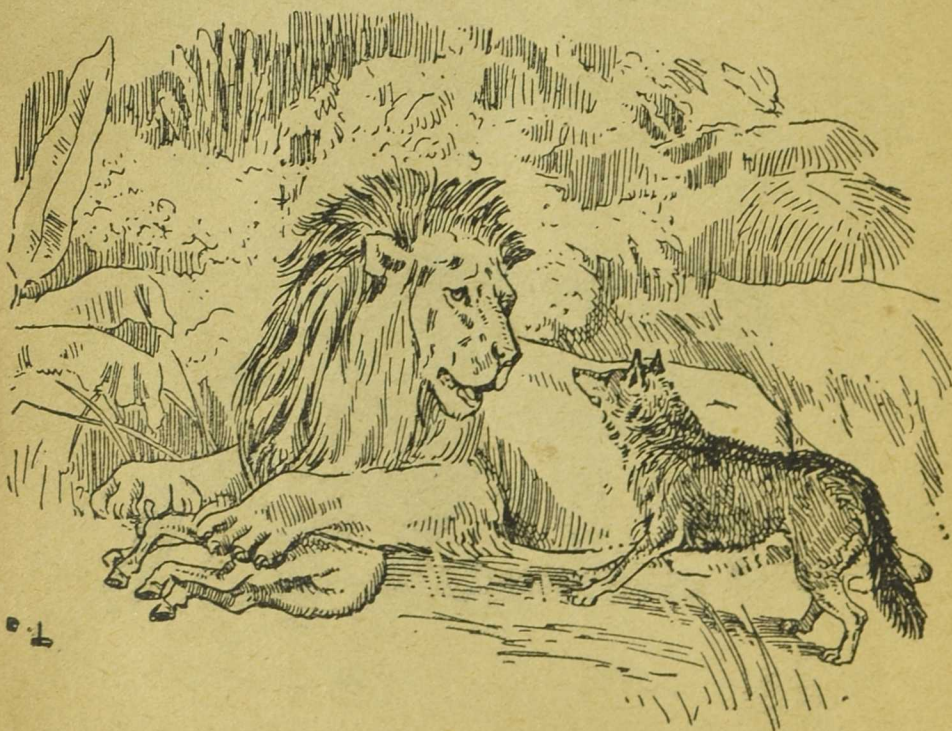
"I only take the lion's share," explained his uncle.

"Yes, Uncle," replied Gobi humbly.

"And how much is that?" asked the lion, fixing his eye on him.

"Everything, Uncle Lion," answered poor Gobi.

"That is right. You



shall hunt with me again to-morrow," said the lion approvingly.

But the next day Gobi avoided him, and went off to hunt on his own account.

During the morning he met a friend of his, the leopard, flying across the plain as though a dozen hunters were after him.

"Don't stop me! Don't!" he cried out. "There is a terrible beast looking out

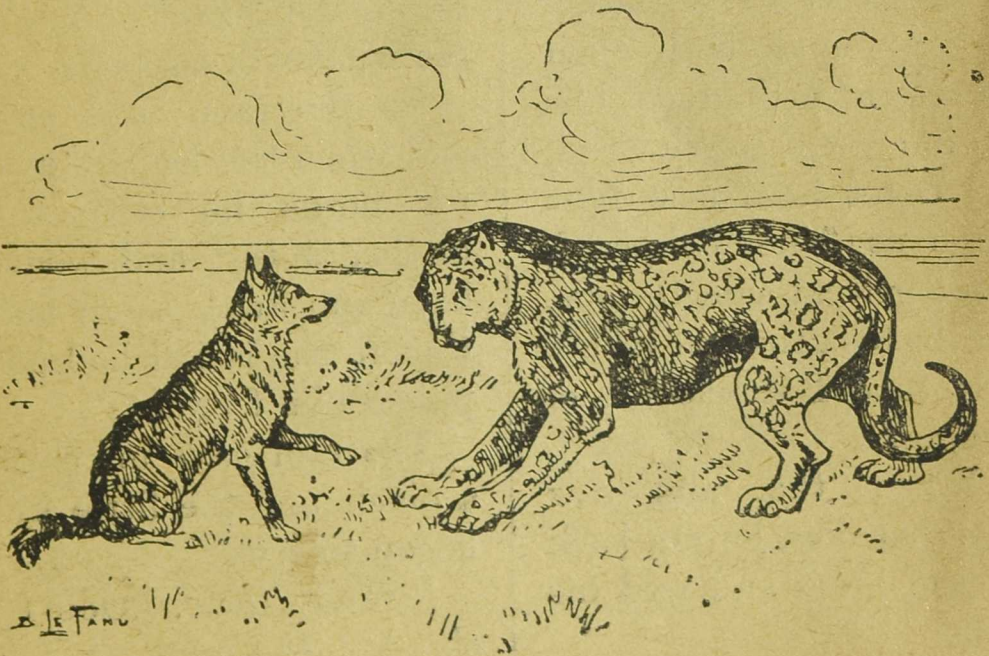
of the door of a kraal down there! It has great horns, and is four times as big as you. Let me get out of the way!"

"Wait!" said the jackal.

He caught hold of the leopard, and insisted on hearing a little more about the creature which had frightened him.

"Why, it is only a ram!" he said, laughing.

"He can't do you any



harm. Come and catch him for dinner. I am starved to death."

Gobi found it rather hard work to persuade him, but at last, when the leopard heard how badly the lion had treated his friend the day before, he agreed to go with him.

"You must tie me to you, or I shall be sure to run when I see him," said the leopard, his teeth chattering.

Gobi fastened a leather thong round both their bodies, and dragged him off in a great hurry.

"Don't let Uncle Lion catch us!" he whispered, looking from side to side. "If he took the lion's share this time I should die of hunger."

When the ram saw them coming, he ran back to the kraal and told his wife.

"What shall we do?"

he cried. "Gobi and the leopard are coming to devour us."

"Nonsense!" answered his wife. "Here, take the child, and go out to meet them."

She gave him their little kid, and told him to pinch it and make it cry.

"What then?" asked her husband, who was rather stupid.

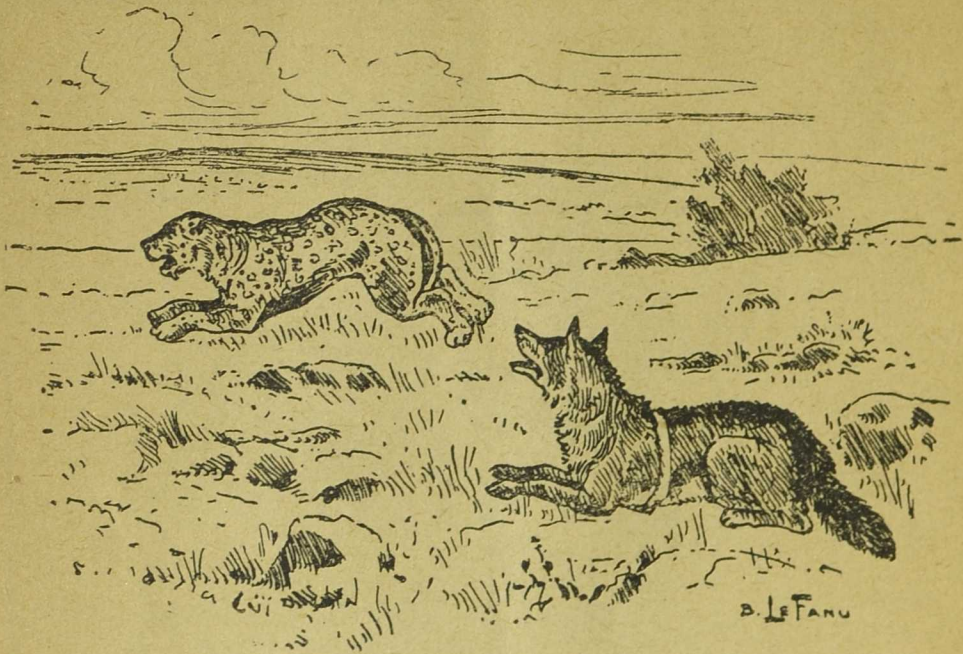
"Why, shout in a terrific voice: 'Just in time! Just in time! My child is crying for food!' You'll see what will happen!"

So the ram came out, and when the leopard saw his horns he gave the leather a tug, and would have run away there and then if the jackal had not pulled him forward.

The ram gave his child a pinch, and the little kid began to cry.

"Well done, Gobi!" shouted the ram. "You have brought the leopard





just in time! My child is crying for food!”

“Let us be off!” cried the Leopard, in terror.

They both tugged at the leather—Gobi determined to go on, and the leopard to go back. But the leopard was much the stronger, and in a minute or two he was dragging the jackal with him at a terrific rate.

On, on they rushed, un-

til they were out of sight of the kraal, and Gobi fell down exhausted. He was too faint with hunger to go any further, but the leopard, who could not get over his fright, unfastened the thong and went on.

By and by a waggon laden with fish came past, and as it was going very slowly, the jackal tried to jump into it from behind.

“Even fish is better than

nothing," he said to himself.

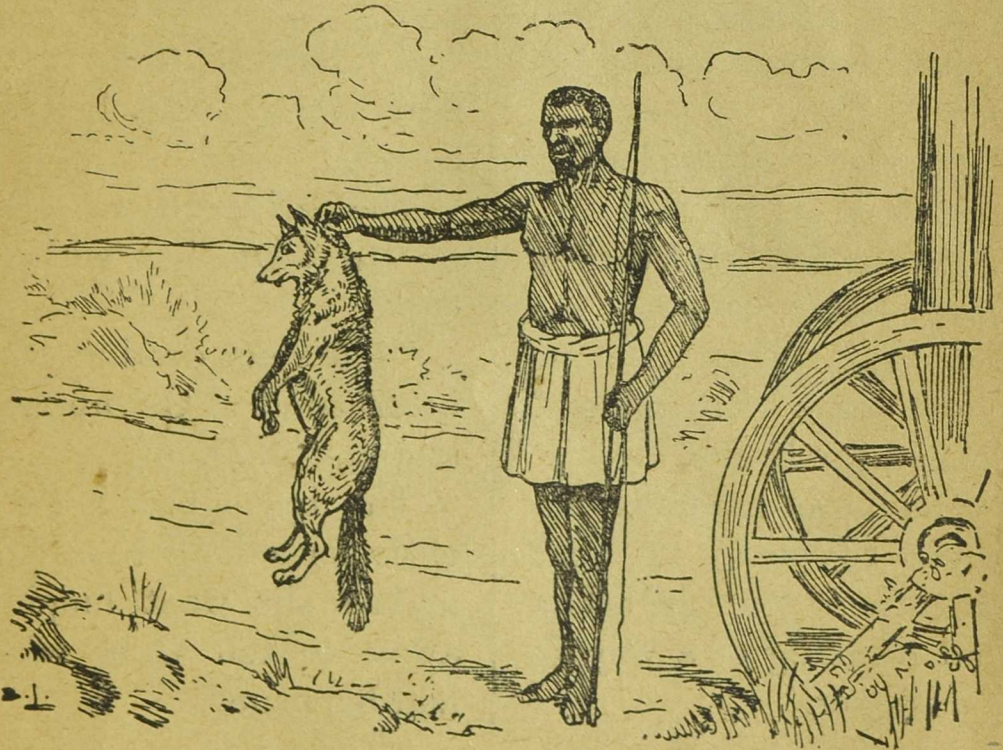
But he was too weak to manage it, and the waggon passed by.

However, another was following it at a little distance, and this time Gobi stretched himself in front of it, as though he were dead.

"His skin will make a nice kaross for my daughter," said the driver, when he saw him.

He picked him up and flung him into the waggon, which was exactly what Gobi wanted. For although he did not intend to be made into a cloak for the Kaffir's daughter, he wished to be near the fish.

When he had satisfied his hunger, he began throwing them out, one by one, into the road. The daylight faded, and the moon rose, but he was still busy



with this, until the fishes lay like a silver streak as far along the track as he could see.

At last he jumped out himself.

"Four hundred!" he cried. "One for every day in the year, and thirty-five over! Now I must carry them to a place where Uncle Lion won't find them."

But as he was collecting them a hyena came up, and ate as many as she wanted without asking his permission.

"Leave my fish alone!" said Gobi angrily.

"Your fish! Why, they have fallen out of the waggon! They are no more yours than mine!" replied the hyena.

Gobi was too much annoyed to speak; he went on gathering up the fishes, and thinking of a way to punish her.

"Look!" he said, at last.

"There's another waggon coming. Lie down in the road, and you'll get as much fish as I did."

"Really?" asked the hyena, opening her eyes.

"Really. But you must keep perfectly still. Pretend to be dead."

Now the hyena's fur was not soft and silky like Gobi's, and when the leader saw her stretched out in front of the waggon, he kicked her out of the way.

"What is this great ugly thing doing here?" he cried.

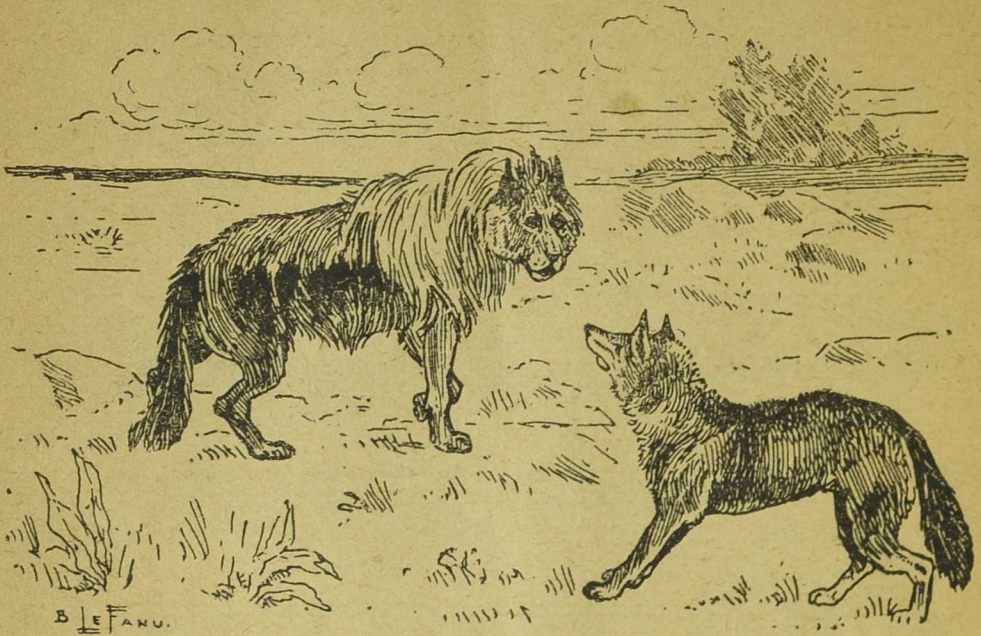
The driver then came up to beat her with a stick.

"She's not dead at all," he declared. "Get up, you stupid, and be off!"

The hyena bore it patiently for a long time, but at last she went limping away to tell Gobi what had happened.

"There was no fish," she





said, "and I am beaten to a jelly."

"You are sure you lay perfectly still," he asked, "and right in the middle of the track?"

"Exactly."

"Then the driver didn't think you were handsome enough for a kaross! That's it, my dear friend. Well, your want of beauty is your misfortune, not

your fault," said Gobi, in a sympathetic tone.

"It is a great misfortune to be plain," sighed the hyena, with tears in her eyes.

"And a still greater one to be stupid!" added Gobi.

Then he ran off, with another fish in his mouth, leaving the hyena to wonder what he meant.

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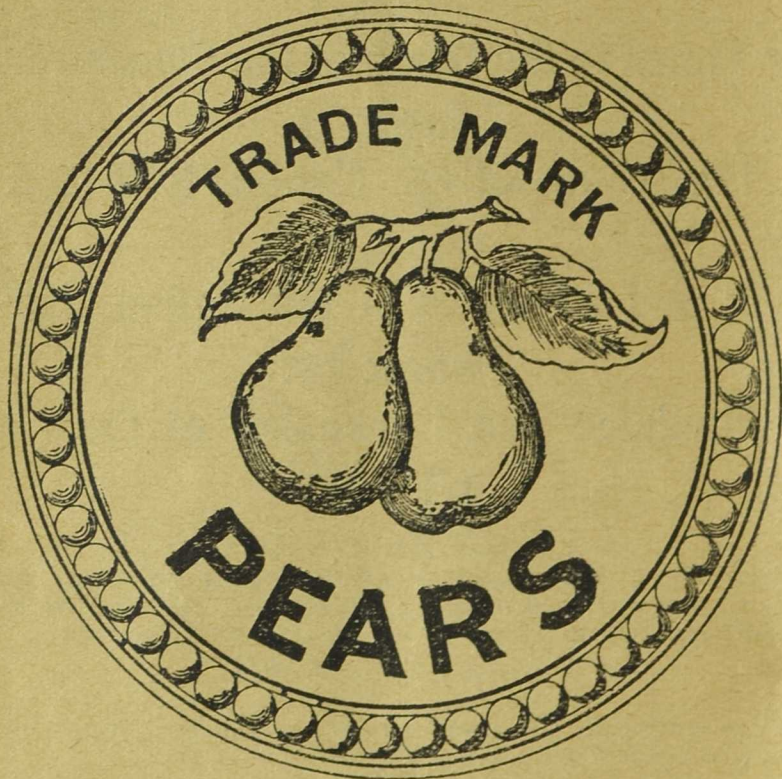
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