





*The Adventures of Mabel*







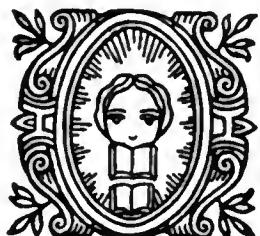
Look and all will be interested.

*The  
Adventures of Mabel*

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Harry Thurston Peck*

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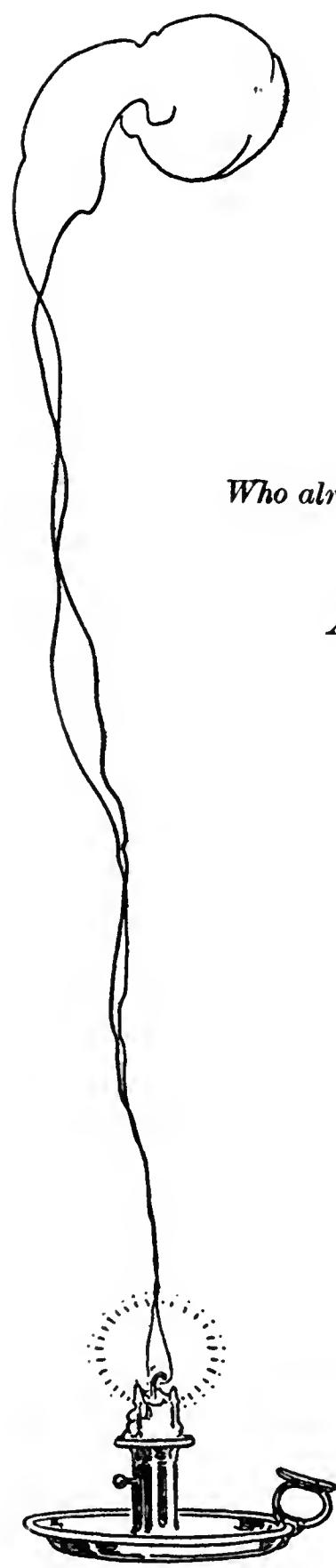
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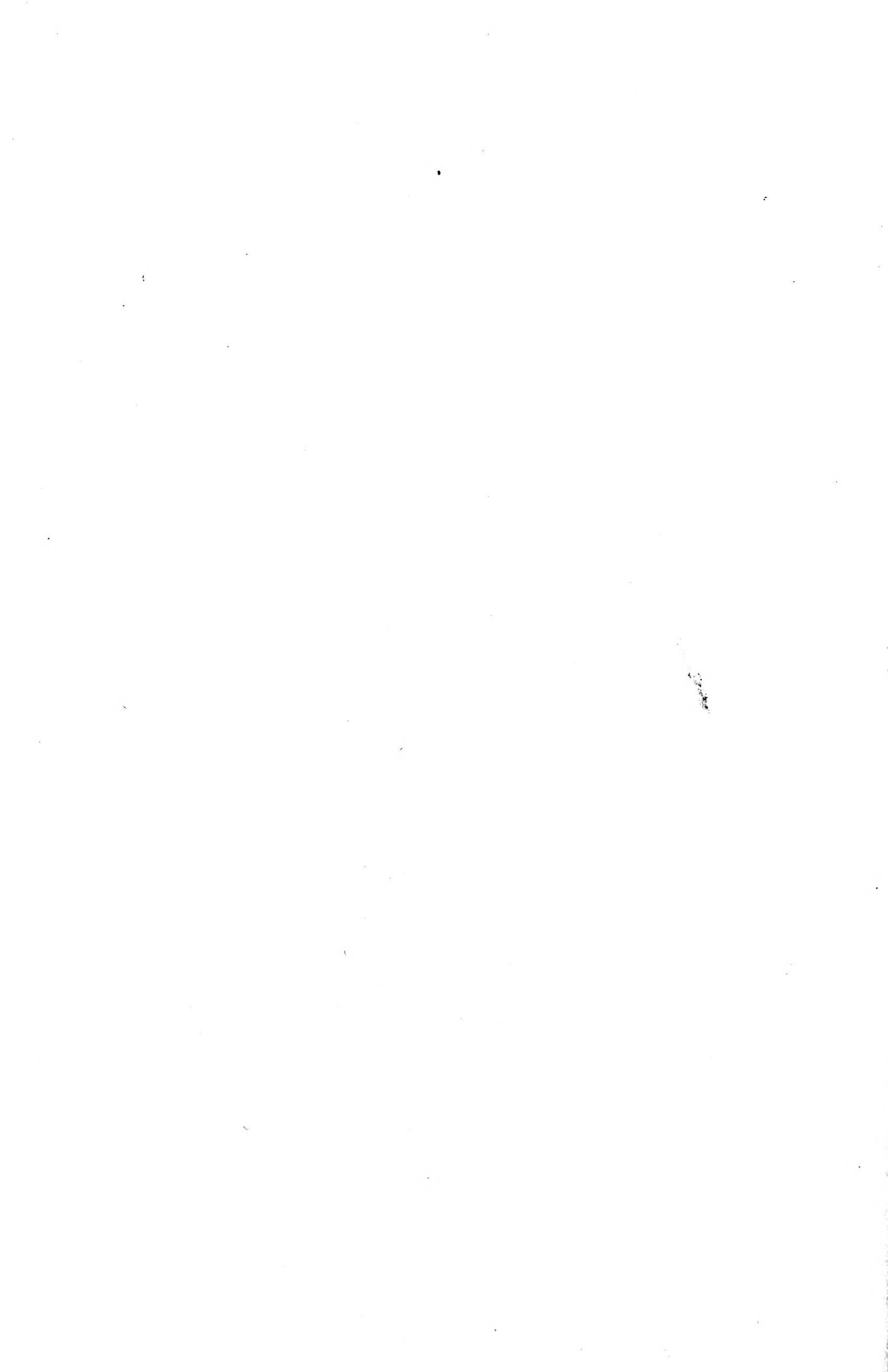
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To  
*Constance*  
*Who already knows them all by heart*  
*These Stories*  
*Are lovingly inscribed*

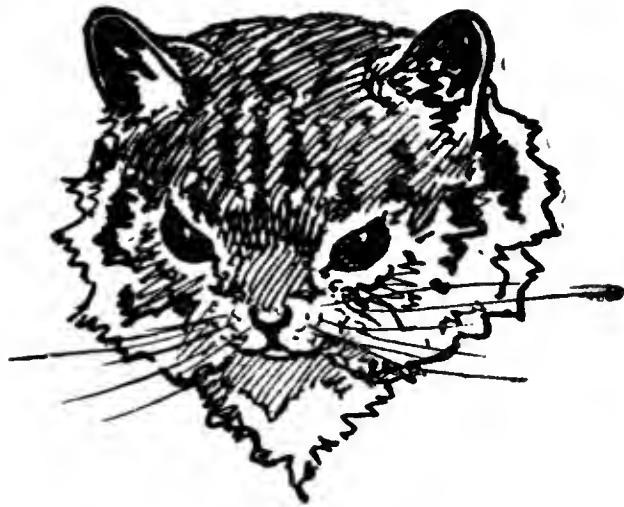


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*The Adventures of Mabel*





## I. THE GREEN LIZARD

ONCE upon a time there was a little girl named Mabel, who lived in a cottage with her Grandma, and her brother Walter, and Jane the cook. The cottage was not very near any other houses, but was away out beyond the village and near a large wood. The wood was very big, and the trees in it were great tall trees all covered with leaves, and having thick vines around them, so that even in the middle of the day it was shady and cool ; and when the sun began to go down it was so dark that you could hardly see.

Mabel loved the big woods because when the sun was hot she could go under the

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trees and play on the moss in the shade of the branches; and there was a lovely little brook there with real fishes in it, and sometimes Mabel would go in wading, and the little fishes would swim around her feet and make believe bite them; but they didn't really bite, because they were such little fishes and hadn't any teeth. And ever so far down in the woods, where it was very shady, Mabel used to find strawberries growing, and blackberries, and little red checkerberries all under the green leaves.

One day, late in the afternoon, when the sun grew very hot, Mabel was tired of playing with her dolls, so she got a little basket and said to Grandma:—

“Grandma, may I go down in the woods and see if I can pick some strawberries for supper?”

“It's pretty late,” said Grandma; “but you can go if you won't wander too far away and be out after dark. You know, Mabel, there are animals in the woods that might hurt you; and they come out from their caves as soon as it begins to grow dark.”

"Oh, I'm not afraid of animals!" said Mabel; "and I won't be late. I'll pick you a basketful of strawberries and then I'll come straight home."

So off she went, with her little sun-bonnet on her head and with her basket on her arm, down into the big shady woods. When she reached them she strolled along under the trees over the beautiful soft moss, where the shadows made it nice and cool, and where the birds perched under the thick leaves and sang when they saw her coming; for they all remembered Mabel, and liked to see her playing around in the woods.

Pretty soon she looked for the place where the strawberries were, and she picked and picked, and went further and further into the bushes, until she had gone a long way, and had filled her little basket nearly full of ripe red berries. And as she picked, the sun sank down behind the hills, and the evening began to come on, and the little frogs in the brook came out of their holes and peeped.

"Gracious!" said Mabel, all of a sudden,

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"it's getting late. I must go home right straight off."

But just as she had picked up her basket and was looking for her sun-bonnet on the ground, she heard a queer little sound like the squeak of a mouse.

"What's that?" said Mabel; and she looked all around her to see where it was. But there was nothing that she could find; only the same queer little squeak kept on, as though some one was hurt and was crying with pain.

Mabel looked up into the trees, and peered around in the grass, and looked among the bushes, but she couldn't find out where it was.

"Well!" she said, "that's funny!" and she stooped down to pick up her sun-bonnet: when all of a sudden right at her feet she saw what it was that was making the noise. There, down in the moss, was a little bit of a lizard about as long as Mabel's finger. It was bright green, and had a little yellow spot on its head like a gold crown; and when it saw Mabel looking down, it squeaked again as loud as it could.

"Dear me!" said Mabel. "What's the matter, little lizard? Don't you feel well?"

And then she saw what the trouble was. A big stone had fallen on the end of the lizard's tail, and held it down so tight that the lizard could n't get away.

"Why, you poor little lizard!" cried Mabel. "Here, I'll help you."

So she took both her plump little hands and gave the stone a big push, and away it went off from the lizard's tail. The lizard jumped up and whisked his tail around and felt of it to see if it was broken. When he found that the tail was all right, he climbed up on the stone and looked up into Mabel's face.

"You are a good girl," said the lizard. He had a pleasant voice and a very good-looking face, only his nose was rather long.

"Why, I did n't know that lizards could talk!" said Mabel.

"*I* can," said the lizard, "I am the King of all the Lizards. Don't you see my crown?" And he pointed with one foot to

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the little yellow spot on the top of his head. "I can talk and I can do other things, and I'm going to do something for you, because you were so good to me and because you rolled the stone off my tail."

"Oh," said Mabel, politely, "you're quite welcome. I hope your tail isn't hurt."

"Not a bit," said the lizard; "and see here; I'm going to do something for you that I wouldn't do for any other little girl. I'm going to make you so that you can understand animal talk, and so that all the animals will understand you when you talk. And besides, I'm going to teach you how to make all animals good to you."

"How's that?" asked Mabel.

"This way; just listen," and the lizard puffed out his cheeks and began to whistle a little call. It was like this:—



"Now," said he, "you do it after me."

So Mabel puckered up her lips and tried

to whistle the call; but she had never learned how to whistle and so she only gave a funny little wheeze that made the lizard laugh so that he nearly fell off the stone.

"Try again," said the lizard, after he had got his face straight once more.

So Mabel tried again and again. She made more little wheezes and she puffed and blew until she was nearly out of breath; and by and by she did make a noise that sounded something like the call.

"Good!" said the lizard. "That's the way! Try some more."

So Mabel tried some more, and pretty soon she could really do it quite well.

"Now," said the lizard, "if you want any animal to be your friend, just whistle that way to him. That's the call of all the animals. Be careful and don't forget it. Good evening."

And before Mabel knew what he was doing, the lizard had jumped off the stone and darted down into a hole in the ground.

"Well!" said Mabel, "that's the funniest thing I ever heard of. A lizard talk-

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ing and teaching me to whistle! But dear me! how late it's getting! I must hurry home as fast as I can."

It really was growing very late. The sun had gone away from the sky and the woods were so dark that Mabel could hardly see where she was going. All the little birds had gone into their nests and the butterflies were safe at home. It was very still except for the tree-toads and the frogs in the brook peeping mournfully, and every little while Mabel could hear strange rustlings in the leaves. She tried to remember the way home, but the woods looked so different now that she could n't think which way to go. She began to be frightened; and all of a sudden, way off in the distance, she heard a long howl.

"What's that?" said Mabel. "Oh, I'm so frightened!"

In a minute or two she heard the howl again,—"O-o-o-w!"—a long, wild cry. She knew it must be some animal, and she remembered what her Grandma had said. Again and again she heard it, and she knew that it was coming nearer. She

began to run, but the poor little thing had quite lost her way, and she was really getting further and further into the woods. It was so dark that she stumbled over the bushes and the roots of the trees, and twice she fell down. Nearer and nearer came the strange howl, and before long she could hear something moving through the bushes. She was now in an open place where it was a little lighter ; and, as she looked back, all of a sudden she saw a great wolf pushing through the underbrush, and coming straight at her. He was twice as big as the biggest dog, and his long red tongue was hanging out of his mouth between his teeth.

Mabel thought of Grandma and Walter and how they would never know what had become of her; and then she remembered what the lizard had told her. The wolf was almost touching her and she was frightened to death, but she made up her mind to try to whistle the call. Round she turned and looked right in the wolf's face. She could feel his breath, her lips trembled, but she gave the whistle.

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"O-o-o-w!" said the great wolf, and he stopped as quick as a wink.

Mabel whistled again. The wolf put his tongue in his mouth and hung his head down. Then Mabel saw that his face looked very pleasant, and she was n't afraid any more. After all, he was just like a big dog.

"Wolf," said Mabel, "I want you to be my friend!"

"All right," said the wolf. He had a big growling voice, and he spoke in wolf-talk, but Mabel could understand what he said.

"I've lost my way, wolf," said she; "please show me the way home. I live at Grandma's."

"I know," said the wolf, "I've seen you playing around in the daytime. "Put your hand on my neck and I'll show you the way."

So Mabel put her hand on the wolf's neck and they went along together. His fur was very soft and long, and Mabel rested her hand on it as she walked, for she was very tired. On they went through the woods. The wolf was not much of a talker, and



The wolf was not much of a talker, and Mabel could not think of anything to say, so they kept very still.

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Mabel could not think of anything to say, so they kept very still. At last they got to the edge of the woods.

"There!" said the wolf, pointing with his big paw; and Mabel could see through the dark her home with a bright light shining from the window.

"Good-bye, wolf," said Mabel. "Thank you very much. I knew you were a good wolf and wouldn't ever hurt little girls, would you?"

"No," said the wolf in a rather queer voice, and Mabel thought he looked rather sheepish, and that he hung his head rather low.

"Well, good-night," said she, and she put her arms round his big furry neck and gave him a hug.

"Oh!" said the wolf; and he licked her hands with his rough tongue, and then trotted back into the dark woods.

Mabel's Grandma was standing on the verandah. She was dreadfully worried because Mabel was so late.

"Mabel! Mabel!" she called as she looked out into the dark.

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"Yes, Grandma," said Mabel. And Grandma just rushed down the steps when she heard the little voice, and gave Mabel a whole lot of kisses, for she had been afraid that her little girl would never come back home again.

After Mabel had had a fine supper in her high chair in the cosy dining-room, and when Grandma had undressed her and was putting her to bed, she said :—

"Oh, Grandma, I left my strawberries in the woods!"

"Never mind, Mabel," said Grandma. "We can go together to-morrow and get them. But now I want to tell you how frightened I was to have you out so late. Don't you remember I told you how there were animals in the woods? Well, this afternoon, your Uncle Robert was here and he said that only yesterday, when he was going along the path, he saw something in the bushes that looked like a wolf! Think of that!"

"Oh," said Mabel, "I don't believe a wolf would hurt a little girl, do you, Grandma?"

"What, a wolf?" said Grandma. "Why,

Mabel, a wolf is the worst animal in the world! If you had met a wolf he would have eaten you all up,— every bit of you!"

Mabel didn't say anything, but she laughed a little to herself, and then turned over in her crib and curled up on her soft white pillow and went fast asleep.





## II. THE TAMING OF REX

THE next morning Mabel came down late to breakfast. She remembered what had happened the day before, but it seemed to her like a dream, and she could scarcely believe that she had really seen the talking Lizard and the good old Wolf. But she remembered the call, and before she got out of bed she whistled it over two or three times very softly to herself.

While she was eating her bowl of oatmeal and an egg, Grandma, who had finished her own breakfast, said : —

“ Mabel, did you hear your Uncle Robert come in last night after you had gone to bed ? ”

“ No, Grandma. Was he here ? ”

“ Yes ; he spent the whole evening with me, and he told me about a horse that he’s

bought. He's having ever so much trouble with it."

"Why? What's the matter, Grandma?"

"Oh, it's such a strange horse. Uncle Robert bought him yesterday because he was such a beauty — a great splendid black animal; but now they have found that no one can ride him. When any one goes up to put on his bridle, he starts up on his hind legs and kicks and rears and then runs across the meadow. Uncle Robert thinks that he'll have to sell him again or else give him away."

"Oh, that would be a pity, would n't it, Grandma? I *do* love horses so! May I go down to Uncle Robert's and see him, please?"

"Yes, after breakfast; only don't stay very long, and don't go too near the horse, because he might kick you."

So after Mabel had finished her egg, she slipped down from her high chair and got Grandma to put on her little coat and her straw hat, and off she went down the road. Uncle Robert's house was about half a mile away; and when Mabel came near she saw

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him walking up and down the front yard, talking to John the man.

"Hullo, Mabel!" said Uncle Robert, when he saw her. "Going to make me a visit?"

"Yes, Uncle Robert," said Mabel. "Grandma said I might come down and see the new horse."

"Oh," said Uncle Robert. "So she told you about the horse, did she? Well, he's an awful bother to me. John and I were just going out to the meadow to try him again to see if we can't put a bridle on him and make him mind. You know yesterday he wouldn't let us go near him. Come on, and let's take a look at him."

So John got the bridle, and they all walked down to the meadow back of the barn, Mabel following along behind, trying to keep up, with her short little legs. There in the middle of the meadow was a great big black horse quietly eating grass and swishing his tail around to keep off the flies. He was a splendid looking horse, with a long black mane, and a glossy coat that shone in the sunlight as though it had been polished with a blacking-brush. When

he saw that some one was coming into the field he cocked his head a little to one side and sniffed, but kept right on biting at the clover.

"Oh, is n't he a beauty!" cried Mabel.  
"What's his name?"

"The man who sold him to me said his name was Rex," answered Uncle Robert; "and he *is* a beauty to look at; only he's got an awfully bad temper. I wonder if he's any quieter to-day. Here, John, give me the bridle and I'll tackle him first."

So Uncle Robert took the bridle and walked very, very slowly into the meadow. Rex did n't stir, but kept on quietly eating. Nearer and nearer and nearer came Uncle Robert, creeping along as softly as he could.

"I guess he'll get him this time," said John to Mabel.

Uncle Robert was now almost up to Rex's head. He spread out the bridle and took the bit in his right hand and made one more move forward. In half a jiffy he would have had the reins over the horse's neck, when — bang! all of a sudden, just

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like lightning, up went Rex's head; he snorted a tremendous snort and stood straight up on his hind legs; then he gave a terrific jump into the air, kicked out his heels, and tore away through the grass, plunging and cavorting like a crazy horse.

"Pah!" said John, "he's just as bad as ever!"

Uncle Robert tried again and again, but Rex would n't let him come anywhere near him. He kicked and pranced and galloped about the field, until at last Uncle Robert gave it up and came back to where Mabel and John were standing. His hat had blown off, and he was puffing and panting, and his face was as red as a beet. He took out his handkerchief and wiped his forehead.

"The ugly beast!" he said. "What did I ever buy him for? He makes me so mad I could shoot him!"

"Let me try him, sir," said John. "Perhaps he's tired of running now."

Then John took the bridle out of Uncle Robert's hand, and started out in his turn.

Rex had stopped running, and was eating clover again, as quietly as you please. He cocked his head as John crept up, but did n't budge an inch.

"Whoa!" said John, as quietly as he could. "Who-o-a, old horse, who-o-a!"

Rex kept very still. John was now at his head, and was just about to slip the bridle on when — bang! up went Rex in the air again, — slash went his heels straight out as he turned. His hoofs with their iron shoes flew within an inch of John's ear. If they had struck him they would have knocked his head clean off.

"Ow! ow!" cried John, frightened half to death. "If he'd kicked me, I'd have been a dead man!"

Then he hurried back to where Uncle Robert and Mabel stood, while Rex went galloping around the meadow again, snorting like mad.

"Isn't that the worst beast you ever saw?" cried Uncle Robert, who was dreadfully vexed. "I'll sell him or give him away this very afternoon!"

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Mabel kept very still for a moment. Then she looked up into Uncle Robert's face, and said in her soft little voice:—

"Uncle Robert, will you let me try to put his bridle on?"

Uncle Robert stared at her till his eyes nearly popped out of his head. He was too surprised to speak at first, and then he began to laugh.

"Ha, ha!" he said. "What, *you* try to put a bridle on him? Ha, ha! that's a good joke!"

"Ho, ho!" roared John. "Well, that's the best I ever heard!"

"May I, Uncle Robert?" said Mabel.

"Why, Mabel," said he, "it's perfect nonsense for a little girl like you to think of such a thing. The idea of your managing a big ugly horse!"

"Sure," said John, "you're only a little baby yet, and the horse'd eat you up or kick you way across the lot."

"Well," said Mabel, "I could n't do any worse than you did, anyhow!"

Mabel was angry. She did n't like to be called a baby when she was nearly six years

old. Then she turned to Uncle Robert and said:—

“Please, *please* let me try.”

Uncle Robert laughed again.

“Well, Mabel,” he said, “he’ll just run away when you go near him, so it won’t do any particular harm; but you’re a silly little girl to think that you can do what John and I could n’t. Why, you’re so small you’ll make the horse laugh to see you coming up to him with a bridle.”

“Never mind,” said Mabel, stoutly. “I’d like to see a horse laugh. If I can’t put his bridle on him I’ll come back again.”

So she swung the bridle over her little arm and started out through the clover. She was so small that the clover-blossoms came up almost to her neck, and her fluffs of yellow hair touched them as she walked along. It was a pretty picture that she made, moving through the thick green grass, and perhaps this was why Rex stopped munching clover long before she came near him, and began looking at the little figure that was marching straight

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toward him as he stood with his head high up in the air.

Perhaps, though, he thought that he could frighten her when he saw how small she was; for he pawed the ground and snuffed the air, and shook his mane at her, and when she came near him he began to lash his tail as though he were very fierce. But Mabel looked up at him and held out her hand, and as he lifted his hoofs she whistled the Lizard's call.



Rex stopped as though he had been shot. He pricked up his ears and looked at her very hard. Then Mabel whistled the call once more.

"Good old horsey," she said to him.  
"You won't run away from me and be a  
bad horse, will you?"

Then she whistled the call for the third time. Rex put his head down low and gave a long soft whinny.

"Come here, Rex," said Mabel; and the big horse walked quietly up to her, and

rubbed his nose on her cheek, whinnying all the time as gently as if he had been only a little colt.

Uncle Robert and John could n't believe their eyes. They were too far away to hear her whistle the call, so they just stood there and wondered how on earth Mabel was making friends with the horse.

"Open your mouth, Rex," said Mabel.

He opened his mouth, and she slipped the bit in between his teeth. Then she drew the bridle over his ears and fastened the strap as she had often seen men do when they harnessed horses.

"Now, Rex," said Mabel, after she had patted his nose and smoothed his neck, "I want you to come up to the fence, so that I can climb up on your back and ride you."

Rex whinnied again and walked slowly up to the high stone wall near by. Then Mabel clambered up on the wall, and from the wall she crept upon Rex's broad back and took hold of the reins. When he felt her sitting on him he stood up in the air on his hind legs; but he did it so slowly that Mabel

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didn't mind it, for it felt as though she was on a big rocking chair, and she held on tight by the reins and Rex's mane. Then, when all his four feet were on the ground again, she spoke to him once more, and he started off with her across the meadow to the place where Uncle Robert and John were standing. As soon as he got there he stopped and stood beside them perfectly still with Mabel laughing on his back.

"O Mabel, Mabel!" cried Uncle Robert, whose eyes were as big as saucers. "How in the world did you manage to do it? Why, it's the most wonderful thing I ever saw in my life! Wonderful! Wonderful!"

"Oh, I just spoke to him, Uncle Robert, and he minded me all right," said Mabel. "I think he likes little girls."

"He seems to," said Uncle Robert, still wondering.

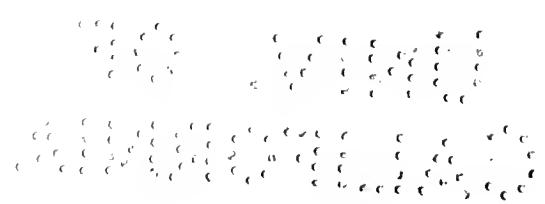
"Am I a little baby now, John?" asked Mabel.

"Sure, Miss Mabel," said John, "I'll never call you a little baby again. You're bigger than the biggest man *I* ever saw!"

"Well," said Mabel after a little while.



It felt as though she were on a big rocking-chair.



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"help me down, please, Uncle Robert. Rex is good now, and you can ride him all you want to."

"No, no," answered Uncle Robert. "You have done such a wonderful thing with him that I think he ought to belong to you after this; so I'm going to give him to you."

"What, to keep? For my owny own?"

"Yes," said Uncle Robert. "If Grandma will let you have him, you can keep him for your own horse to ride on always. I think you deserve to have him. And I'll get you a little girl's saddle and send it down to the house for you."

"Oh, goody!" cried Mabel; and she jumped so with joy that she nearly fell off Rex's back. "Would you like to be my own horse, Rex?"

Rex gave a loud whinny.

"Thank you ever so much, Uncle Robert. You are awfully good. May I ride him home now, this very minute, to show Grandma?"

"Of course," said Uncle Robert. "Only hold on tight."

So Mabel spoke to Rex and off they

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went, slowly cantering down the road to Grandma's.

Grandma was standing in the yard watering her flower-beds, when all of a sudden she heard a horse's hoofs clattering along the hard road. She turned around and looked, and then she saw a big black horse coming straight toward her in a cloud of dust. Her eyes were not very good, and at first she did not see that there was any one riding him.

"Dear me!" she said to herself. "That must be Robert's new horse. I wonder if he's broken loose and run away."

But in a minute she noticed something like a little white bundle perched up on his back, and a second or two later she saw that it was Mabel, laughing away as she rode the great horse right through the gateway and over the lawn till she stopped him at Grandma's side.

"Mabel! Mabel!" cried out Grandma. "You on a horse's back? Why, how can you ride like that? Aren't you afraid of falling off?"

"Oh, no!" said Mabel. "It's lots of fun!"

And, Grandma, Uncle Robert has given me Rex for my owny own horse to keep as long as I live, and *please* let me have him. There's room in the barn for him, and I'll feed him every day and take good care of him, and oh, won't it be lovely!"

"Dear me! dear me!" said Grandma, who did n't know what to make of it all. "I never heard of such a little girl riding a big horse. Why, Mabel, it's wonderful!"

"That's what Uncle Robert said," answered Mabel. "But you will let me, won't you?"

"Why, yes," said Grandma. "But I'm so surprised, I don't know what to say. Dear, dear!"

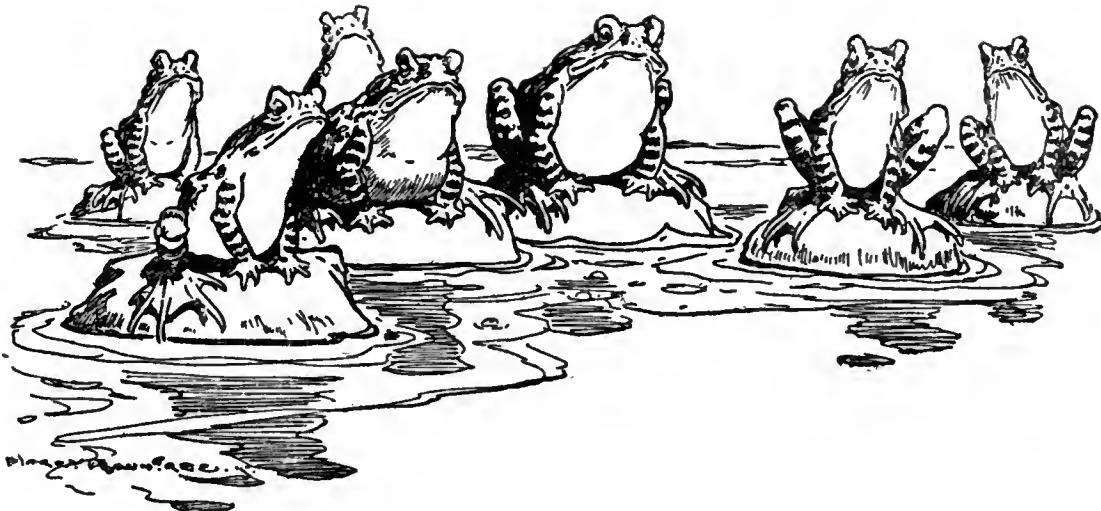
But by this time Mabel had ridden Rex to the barn, and climbed down off his back on the chicken-coop, and had led him into an old stall. Then she got a rope for his halter and tied him to the manger. Her brother Walter, who did n't yet know what it all meant, helped her put straw in the stall for a bed, and got a pail of water. Then Mabel pulled a lot of grass for Rex's dinner and got Jane to give her a plate of

## THE ADVENTURES OF MABEL

turnips for him and some salt, and when she had heard Grandma tell a man to bring a bag of oats and some hay, she felt that at last she owned a real, live horse.

But she told no one about the Lizard's call; for it was a secret, and she felt that perhaps the Lizard would n't like to have her tell it.





### III. THE FROGS AT THE BRIDGE

MABEL was very happy with Rex, and every day she took more and more pleasure in him. Each morning she would run out to see him before breakfast, and when he saw her coming he would neigh and stamp. Then, after she had had her own breakfast, she would go again to the barn to feed him. She always piled his manger full of sweet-smelling hay, and mixed his oats and his meal with her own little hands; and she fed him bundles of rich clover, and pieces of apple, and bits of fresh green cornstalks. Mabel and Rex were the best of friends. Mabel loved to perch upon the manger and rub his nose and talk to him by the hour, smoothing out his long mane and combing his forelock; and he in his turn would put

his great head against her face and neigh softly as she petted him.

After Rex had eaten his hay and his oats, John from Uncle Robert's would come down and curry him with a curry-comb, and put Mabel's new saddle on him; and then she would climb up on his back and start out for her morning ride. She almost always rode in the same direction: down the lane past a house where a cross dog lived; then over the bridge that crossed a pretty little brook; then up a hill past a field where there was a mooly-cow, and another house where Mabel often saw a kitty-cat sitting in the front yard; and finally down a long lane that went through the woods till she came out into the open country where a little pig lived in a small red house. There were other roads that went to the right and to the left of this road; but Mabel did not try any of them, because she did not yet know the way very well, and was afraid of getting lost. She loved to ride down the lane that went through the woods, for it was so shady when the sun was hot; and all the birds and squirrels and tree-toads that lived there

knew her. Sometimes when she looked down through the long green thickets she could see the Good Wolf lying among the tangled leaves, and she always called out to him, and he spoke back to her in a very gruff, but good-natured voice. When Rex first saw the big black wolf-head sticking out of the bushes, and heard the growl, he used to feel frightened, and would snort and stamp; but after he found out that Mabel knew the Wolf, and that the Wolf was very friendly with Mabel, he left off being afraid, and would whinny to the great black creature whenever he saw him.

In Mabel's morning rides she often stopped Rex in the woods and climbed down from his back, to pick berries or lie on the moss under the trees. Rex would always wait for her, so that she did not have to tie him. While she was playing about under the trees, he would nibble the sweet grasses that grew by the roadside, and now and then would put his head over the fence and neigh in a friendly manner to his little mistress, who always answered him in her cheery little way. Since she had learned to

know animal-talk she had come to take a great interest in all kinds of animals, for they no longer seemed strange to her, but just like little brothers; and when she talked with them they could now understand her; so that even the wildest of the squirrels and the shyest of the rabbits in the bushes would come out to meet her and eat out of her hands the nuts and acorns and tender green leaves that she picked for them. When she lay on the moss, they played about her without the slightest fear, running and jumping over her head, or nestling down by her face and taking a long nap beside her.

In the brook where the bridge was, there lived a family of frogs. There was the big green papa-frog, and a mamma-frog, and five little baby-frogs. They often sat upon stones in the middle of the brook and croaked to Mabel in their funny little voices as she went by, and she got to know them all very well. One day all seven of the frogs were out in the middle of the bridge fast asleep in the sun when Mabel came riding along. They were right

in the way, and Mabel was afraid that if she tried to cross the bridge Rex might step on some of them and crush them. So she stopped him and cried out to them.

"Wake up, frogs!" she said. "Come, wake up! I want to go by."

But the frogs did n't hear her and slept straight on. Mabel called and called again, but still they did n't hear. At last she rode Rex up to the stone fence near by and slipped down from his back. Then she walked up to the big green frog and took him by his fore-foot.

"Come, Frog!" she said. "Wake up! you 'll get stepped on."

The Big Frog woke up all of a sudden, with a start. At the same time all the other frogs woke up. They saw some one bending over them, and at first thought it was a bad boy who was going to catch them and put them in a bag and sell them to some cook who would cut off their hind-legs and fry them. So, without waiting to see anything more, they all gave a big jump and went splash! plunk! plunge! down into the brook as hard as ever they could go. Pretty

soon, however, they popped their heads out, and there they saw Mabel climbing up on her horse again. Then they knew how good she had been, and how she had taken all that trouble to get down and wake them up for fear they should be hurt. The Big Frog swam up to a large flat stone that stood out of the water, and as Mabel rode by on the bridge, he puffed up his cheeks and said in frog-talk and in his croakiest voice —

“Thank you! Thank you!”

“All right, Frog,” said Mabel. “Only don’t go to sleep on the bridge again, or next time some one may come along and walk on you, and smash you all into little pieces.”

Then she spoke to Rex and went galloping away home.

The next morning it began to rain, so that Mabel could not take her ride. It rained all day, harder and harder, and when night came it just poured great sheets of water. The next day it was just the same, — rain, rain, rain. Mabel stayed in the house and played with her dolls, and wished the rain would stop. Early on the third

day she got out of bed and went to the window. The rain was over, and the sun was shining, and everything glittered in the bright light.

"Oh, goody!" cried Mabel. "Now I can go out on Rex again!"

So she went down to the barn the first thing after breakfast, and as soon as Rex was fed and curried and saddled, up she got on his back and cantered out of the yard for a good long ride. Down the road she went past the Cross Dog's house, down the long hill, till at last she came to the bridge over the brook. Then she saw that the rain had filled the brook full, and had swollen it out and made it almost as big as a river. The water was high up, almost touching the bridge, and it rushed along all foamy and swift, roaring as it went.

"Dear me!" said Mabel. "Why, I never saw so much water before in my life!"

Just then she noticed that the seven frogs were all out of the water and were squatting across the road in a line just in front of the bridge. They reached all the way over the road so that Mabel could not

get to the bridge without riding over them.

"Good morning, frogs," said Mabel. "How big your brook is this morning! Come now, please get out of the road so that I can ride over the bridge."

But the seven frogs never budged, but just hitched up their shoulders and blinked.

"Come, frogs!" said Mabel again, very much surprised. "Don't sit there in the way. Can't you see that Rex will step on you if I try to get past?"

But the frogs never stirred, and only hitched up their shoulders and blinked again very hard. Mabel began to be angry with them.

"You stupid frogs!" cried she. "Come! hop away, quick! I want to go over the bridge."

Then the frogs all puffed out their cheeks and croaked in frog-talk —

"No! No!"

"Why, frogs!" said Mabel. "What do you mean? Do you want to spoil my ride? Aren't you going to let me cross the bridge?"

And the seven frogs all said in frog-talk —  
“No! No!”

Mabel was astonished.

“Dear me!” said she. “I don’t know what you want. Is anything the matter with you?”

They acted so strangely that Mabel rode up to the fence and got down off Rex and walked up to the frogs. When she came near the bridge all the frogs hopped in front of her and held up their fore-feet and croaked as hard as they could.

“What, don’t you want me to go over the bridge?” she asked. “Is anything the matter with it? Tell me about it, frogs.”

The frogs all hitched up their shoulders and blinked very hard indeed. But they did not say anything, for frogs cannot talk very much, only a few short words.

Mabel went to the side of the road and picked up a big stone, as heavy as she could lift. She carried it up to the bridge and threw it down on the planks — bang! No sooner had the stone touched it than — crack! the whole bridge fell to pieces and went down with a splash into the brook.

The water swept over it in a minute and carried it away, hissing and foaming.

Then Mabel saw that the brook had been so swollen by the rain that it had washed away all the posts that held the bridge up; and that if she had ridden on it, she would have broken through and fallen down into the deep water and been drowned. The frogs all croaked very loud.

"Oh, you good little frogs!" cried Mabel. "You knew that the posts were gone, did n't you, and wanted to keep me out of danger? Why, you have saved my life!"

The frogs hitched up their shoulders, and as they blinked they all laughed together.

"Dear, dear little frogs!" cried Mabel. "Thank you ever so much for being so good!"

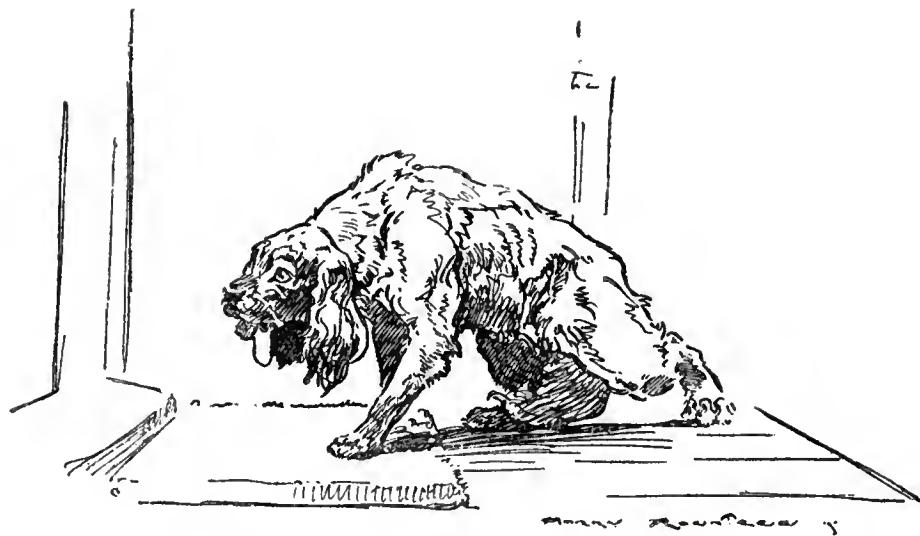
And she stooped down and patted all their seven green heads one after another. They all croaked in a satisfied way, and then gave a big hop, and went splash! plunk! plunge! down into the brook again as hard as ever they could.

Mabel climbed up on Rex once more and rode back home. On the way she met a

## THE FROGS AT THE BRIDGE 39

man, and told him that the bridge had broken down; so before long a party of men came and built a new bridge, with stone pillars underneath it, so strong that the brook could never wash it away again.





#### IV. THE ROBBERS

ONE morning Mabel sat eating her breakfast with Grandma and Walter, when she heard a sort of knock at the front door.

"What's that?" said she; "the postman?"

"Oh, no," said Grandma. "The postman always whistles. I don't think it's anything at all."

But pretty soon another knock was heard, and something began to scratch on the door, and whine.

"Let me go and see who it is," said Mabel; and she jumped down from her high chair and ran to the door.

When she opened it what should she see but a large black dog standing on the doormat and scratching the door with one paw.

He was a dog that looked as though he had been badly treated by some one and had run away. He was very thin, so that his bones stuck out all over him, and his eyes were sunk deep down in his poor bony head. He was all splashed with mud, and his hair was matted close to his body. When he saw Mabel, he crouched down as though he thought she was going to beat him, and whined pitifully.

"What do you want, doggie?" asked Mabel.

Her voice was so kind and she looked so pleasant that the dog knew that she was not going to hit him, and he wagged his tail feebly and began to lick her hand.

"Poor old dog," said Mabel. "You look awfully hungry. See, Grandma, here's a dog."

Grandma came to the door and looked at him.

"Oh, what a miserable, dirty-looking dog!" she said. "Come in, Mabel, and shut the door. Perhaps he's an ugly dog and will bite you."

"Ah, no, he won't," cried Mabel. "And,

Grandma, let me give him some breakfast. I don't think he's a bad-looking dog at all. He's only muddy because he's been running along the roads. You wouldn't bite me, would you, doggie?"

The dog put his nose up into the air and gave three loud barks, as if to say —

"No! No! No!"

"There, Grandma; I knew he would n't! Come now, let me give him something to eat."

So Mabel went to the breakfast-table and got a big plate. On it she put three or four chop-bones with plenty of meat on them, a large piece of omelet, some bread, and a bit of buttered toast. Then she carried the plate out to the verandah and set it down beside the dog. Oh, how he wagged his tail and jumped when he saw it! But, hungry as he was, he would n't touch a scrap of food till he had licked Mabel's hand again as if to thank her for being so good to him. Then he just rushed at the plate, for he was nearly starved, and ate and ate as hard as ever he could. First, he gnawed every bit of meat off the chop-bones, then he gobbled the omelet, and then the toast. Finally, he

licked the plate clean and went back to the bones again, crunching them all into little pieces between his teeth.

"Well, you *are* hungry!" said Mabel.  
"I'll give you something more."

So she brought him out a large bowl of warm milk with some oatmeal in it, and watched him as he lapped it with his long tongue down to the very last drop. While she was standing there, Grandma came by and looked at him.

"Now, Mabel," she said, "as soon as he has finished, drive him away. We don't want such a looking dog as that around."

"Oh, he is n't really so bad-looking," answered Mabel. "He's just a little muddy."

Grandma went upstairs; and as soon as she was out of sight, Mabel ran into the kitchen and got Jane to give her a large bowl of warm water and a sponge, and a cake of soap. Then Mabel sat down beside the dog and dipped the sponge into the water.

"I'm going to give you a nice bath, doggie," said she; and he wagged his tail and stood very still.

First, Mabel soaked the sponge full of

warm water and wiped off the mud from the dog's face; then she wrung it out and dipped it in the water again and went over his body and his legs, going over and over him till every bit of mud was gone. Then she got a fresh basin of clean water and sponged him all over once more, till he was as clean as he could be, down to the very tips of his black paws and the end of his tail. Last of all, she brought a big clean towel from the kitchen and rubbed him as dry as a bone.

"There, doggie!" she said proudly when she had finished.

He looked like a different dog. His coat was glossy and smooth, and shone in the sunshine; and he felt so strong and well after his big breakfast that he no longer kept his head down and his tail drooping on the ground; but he held them both high up in the air, and his eyes were as bright as jewels. Just then Grandma came down the front stairs and looked out.

"Why, Mabel!" she cried. "Another dog? Where did *he* come from?"

"What do you think of him, Grandma?"

asked Mabel, while her eyes twinkled with fun.

"Oh, he's a very good-looking dog," said Grandma. "Whose dog is he?"

"Ha, ha!" laughed Mabel. "Why, Grandma, it's the same dog that came while we were at breakfast. I've just washed him."

Grandma was tremendously surprised.

"Well, well!" said she. "I shouldn't have known him."

"Now, Grandma," said Mabel, "you see he's a good, handsome dog; so won't you let me keep him? You know there's a dog-house in the yard by the barn, and I could take care of him. Do say yes, Grandma, for I should dearly love to have a dog of my own."

"What, a dog?"

"Yes, please, Grandma."

"Well, I don't know that I care. Only his owner may come for him, and then you'll have to give him back."

"Oh, I don't believe he's got any owner; and if he has, the owner ought to be ashamed for letting him get so hungry and thin."

So Mabel kept the dog. When he found that she was going to let him stay, he was wild with joy, and frisked and jumped around like mad, barking and yelping as loud as he could. Mabel took him out to the dog-house, and put some straw in it for his bed, and a large bowl for him to drink out of.

"Now," she said, "there's your house, and you must be a good dog. I'm going to call you Towser, because I've got a story-book in the house about a dog named Towser, and I like the name."

So Towser walked into his new house and curled up on the straw and went fast asleep. The next morning when Mabel took her ride on Rex, Towser ran behind them, and the three were good friends at once.

That same afternoon two men walked slowly by the house where Mabel lived. One was a very tall, dark man with a heavy black beard. The other was shorter with a smooth face. Both of them wore slouch hats that partly covered their faces, and high, thick boots. Round their necks they had mufflers of dirty red flannel. Each carried a long,

sharp knife in his pocket. They were robbers.

As they walked slowly by, the tall robber looked into the yard and saw the stable-door open and Rex inside eating hay out of the manger.

"Huh!" said the tall robber. "That's a mighty fine horse. I wish I had him."

"Well," said the short robber, "why not steal him? We can come here in the dark to-night and get him out of the barn. I don't believe they lock the door nights."

"That's a good idea," said the tall robber; "and maybe they don't lock the house-doors either; so perhaps we can get in and rob the house."

Then, after they had looked very carefully at the barn and at the house, they went away to the place where they lived. It was a small brown house a good many miles away. When they reached it, they went inside and waited till the sun sank down and darkness came on. Then about midnight they got a dark lantern, a bridle, a saddle, and four large towels, and set out through the dark toward Mabel's house. When they came

near it, they crouched down by the fence and crept carefully along, keeping very still. On they went till they came to the garden-gate. They opened this as quietly as possible, and glided into the yard. The house was all dark. The lights were out and everybody was asleep.

"I wonder if the house is locked," whispered the short robber.

They crept up to the verandah, and the tall robber fumbled in the dark till he found the door-knob. He turned it and pushed against the door. It was locked.

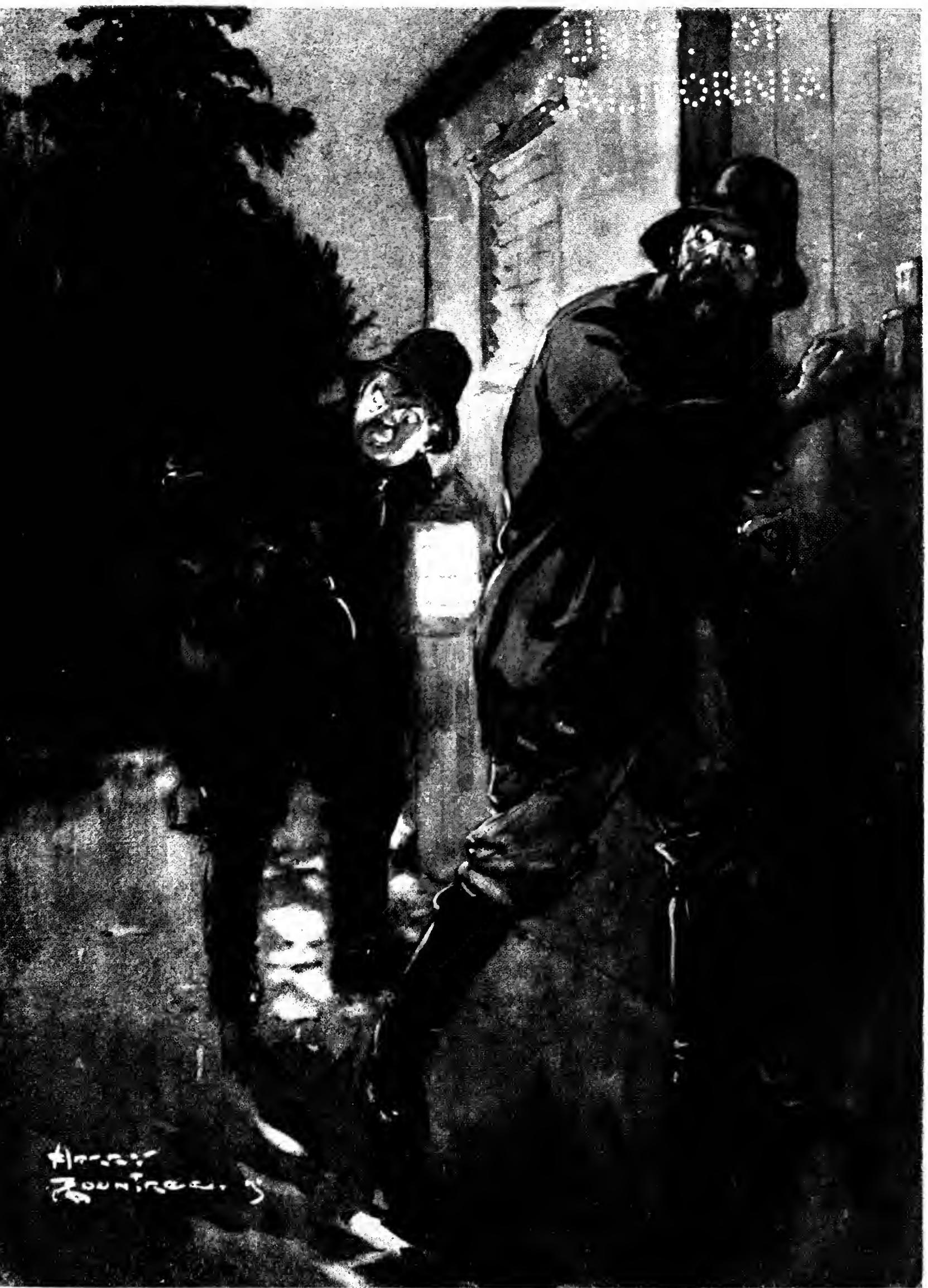
"Pah!" said the robber.

The short one tried the windows, but they were locked too. Then they went noiselessly around to the back of the house and tried the kitchen-door and the windows, and the cellar-door; but they were also safely locked.

"Say!" said the tall robber. "I'm afraid the stable's locked too."

"Let's see," growled the short robber.

They made their way silently up to the stable-door. One of them put his hand on the big wooden latch and pushed it.



Hector  
Bourneau. 18

They made their way silently up to the stable-door.



"Ha!" said he. "This ain't locked. Good!"

They opened the great barn-door and went inside. When they found themselves safely in, the tall robber took the dark-lantern out of his pocket and flashed the light around. There was Rex standing in his stall, half asleep. He opened his eyes when he saw the light, and wondered what was going on, and who these men were.

"Come!" said the tall robber; "let's get him out."

They untied his halter and led him out of the stable upon the soft grass. Then they took the four thick towels that they had brought, and muffled his hoofs up so that he would not make a clatter in going down the driveway. Next they put on him the bridle and saddle. Poor Rex was still half asleep, and had a sort of notion that they were the blacksmith's men who had come after him; so he kept quiet and let them do whatever they wanted to. Finally, the tall robber got up into the saddle and took the reins, and the short robber climbed up behind him. They clicked to Rex, and

he started slowly down the drive to the road. The moment they passed out of the gate and got into the road, the tall robber hit Rex with a piece of rope and away they went at a full gallop. They had stolen Rex and got away safely.

Now all this time Towser had been asleep in his dog-house near the barn ; but the robbers had moved about very quietly and he had not heard a sound, for he was very tired after his long run with Mabel and Rex in the morning, so that he slept like a top. But when Rex began to gallop down the road, the sound of his hoofs, even though they were muffled up in the towels, startled Towser, and he sat up in the dog-house and looked sleepily out into the darkness. As he did so, he got a glimpse of two figures riding swiftly away down the road and finally disappearing. Then he looked all around and in an instant he saw that the barn-door was wide open. His eyes nearly jumped out of his head. He gave one big growl and ran to the barn and looked in. Rex was gone. Oh, how badly Towser felt then ! He knew that Mabel's horse had been stolen, and it

made him wild to think he had slept so soundly that he had not waked up and fought the robbers. His heart almost stopped beating. Then he ran as fast as he could to the kitchen-door and struck his head against it, and scratched and whined and yelped and barked as hard as he could. Banety-bang! he went on the kitchen-door — scratchety-scratch — bow-wow-wow!

Pretty soon Mabel stirred in her bed and half-awoke. She heard the barking and banging and scratching below.

"Goodness!" she said to herself.  
"What's the matter with Towser?"

Banety-bang! scratchety-scratch! bow-wow-wow!

"Why, the poor dog must be sick!" said Mabel.

Banety-bang! scratchety-scratch! bow-wow-wow!

"Dear me!" said Mabel, who was now thoroughly awake. "I'd better go down and see what he wants, or he'll wake up Grandma, and she'll be angry with him."

So up she got in her little nightie, and

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went pattering down the stairs in her bare feet to the kitchen-door. She turned the key and opened the door, and there was Towser barking and yelping like mad.

"What's the matter, Towser?" said Mabel. "What do you want?"

For answer, Towser leaped up and put his paws on her shoulders, and then darted off toward the barn. Then he came back and pawed her again, and once more darted off. This he did three or four times, every time barking as loud as he could. Mabel was puzzled. She could not understand what he wanted.

"Why, Towser," she said, "I think you're going mad."

Just then Walter, who had also been awakened by the noise, came downstairs partly dressed and with a candle in his hand.

"Oh, Walter!" cried Mabel. "See how strangely Towser acts! He paws at me and then runs out into the dark, and then runs back and paws at me again. What do you suppose he wants?"

"Why, it looks as though he wanted you

to go somewhere," said Walter. "Here, I'll go with him."

So Walter went out with the candle, for the night was very still. Towser gave three loud barks and ran straight toward the barn. Walter followed, and in a minute he saw that the barn-door was wide open. He looked in and found that Rex was gone. He hurried back to the kitchen.

"Oh, Mabel!" he said; "Rex is gone!"

Mabel did not know what to say.

"I think he must have broken out," said Walter. "Perhaps you forgot to shut the barn-door."

"No, I did n't," said Mabel.

"Well, anyhow," said Walter, "I'll go and finish dressing, and then go down to the Farmer's house and see what he says."

In a few minutes Walter had dressed, and with a lantern in his hand he ran down to the road to the Farmer's house. He knocked at the door and waked up the Farmer, who dressed himself and followed Walter back to the barn. By this time Grandma had come down and heard about what had happened. She dressed Mabel

and herself, and they both came out into the yard. The Farmer went into the barn and looked all around by the light of Walter's lantern.

"Huh!" he said. "That horse did n't break away, because his halter's here, and it's been untied."

Then he went outside again and held the lantern down to the ground.

"Footprints!" he said.

Then he looked at the grass, and found it all trampled.

"Two men have been here," he grunted. "Robbers. The horse has been stolen. You'll never see him again. Why did n't you have a lock for the barn?"

Mabel burst into tears. Her dear Rex stolen! Never to see him again! She cried as though her little heart would break.

"It's no use crying," said the Farmer. "By this time he's miles away from here. Well, well, it's a bad business, but there's nothing to be done. Good-night."

And he gave the lantern back to Walter and walked off down the road through the darkness to his own house. Grandma

carried Mabel up to bed again, and tried her best to comfort her; but the little girl kept sobbing and crying, and would not stop.

"Oh, my poor Rex!" she said. "They've taken him away, and I'll never see him any more. And we had such good times together,—the dear, dear thing! And now maybe they won't give him enough to eat, and perhaps they'll be bad to him."

So she cried and cried all night long.

Out in the darkness in the yard lay Towser thinking about everything that had happened. He thought how good Mabel had been to him, and how she had given him a nice home; and then he remembered how he had slept too soundly and had not waked up, so that the bad robbers had stolen his little mistress's horse away.

"I am no good at all," he said to himself. "Even a poodle would have done better than I did. I ought to be killed."

And when it was morning again, and Mabel came down with her eyes all red from crying, he felt worse than ever. She would not eat any breakfast, but went out and sat on the manger just as she used to do when Rex

was there ; and her tears fell down her cheeks as she thought how she would never see him again. Towser's heart nearly broke with grief as he lay on the grass and watched her cry. All the morning he lay there with his nose between his paws, thinking. When Mabel went back into the house, he still stayed there, keeping his eyes fixed on the barn, and on the marks of the robbers' feet in the dust. Oh, if he could only do something for Mabel !

Presently a thought flashed into his head. He noticed the foot-prints further down the drive, and the marks on the grass where the robbers had ridden Rex out of the yard. He pricked up his ears and sat up on his hind-legs. He wagged his tail.

“ There *is* something that I can do, after all ! ” he said.

Then he trotted across to the foot-prints and began sniffing at them. He had a keen nose like all dogs, and he sniffed and smelled on the ground for a long time.

“ I could find them by the smell,” thought he.

In an instant he began following the

hoof-prints on the grass with his nose close to the ground. He didn't stop to think what he could do if he should find the robbers, but he started down the lawn to the front gate still sniffing. He was very eager. His tail was in the air, his eyes were big with excitement, and as he went out of the gate he gave a big bark. One last look behind he gave, and saw Mabel standing by the window drumming with her fingers on the panes and with her eyes still red with tears. She took no notice of Towser as he went by.

"Poor little thing!" said he to himself, "I'll do something for you as sure as I'm a dog!"

So out into the road he went, sniffing as hard as ever he could.

It was a very hot day, and the sun shone down like fire. It blazed on Towser as he went along the open road, till he was half melted by the heat. The dust flew up into his nose and filled his eyes; and when he opened his mouth to pant, it blew down his throat and choked him. People looked at him curiously as he went nosing his way

along; and one bad boy threw a big stone at him and hit him in the hind-leg so that it made him limp at every step. But he kept right on following the trail of Rex. Sometimes he lost it for a few minutes, but he always found it again, and went on, on, on, past the house where the Cross Dog lived, over the bridge where the Frogs sat on the stones in their brook, by the Mooly Cow's house, and the Kitty-Cat's house, through the dark woods where the Good Wolf hunted, beyond the Little Pig's red house, on, on, on, all the afternoon.

Late in the day, just as the sun was setting, the hoof-tracks turned aside from the road and seemed to go into a yard. Towser stopped and looked up. It was a great yard with a high stone fence around it, and an iron gate which was half open. Towser peered in and saw a dark gloomy-looking house, with its blinds closed tight, and great bars on the door. Rusty red stains were streaked across the steps. Towser's heart stopped beating. He knew that this must be the robbers' home. He peeped in between the stone gate-posts, and wondered

where Rex was ; but he did not dare to go in for fear the robbers would kill him. Pretty soon, however, he crept around the outside of the fence, crouching on the grass, until he had gone all the way around to the back of the house, still hidden by the fence. Then he lay down quite worn out. He wanted to look over the fence to see what there was in the back-yard ; but he was afraid that the robbers might be there. Before long, however, he could not hold himself in any more ; so he stood up on his hind-legs and put his fore-paws on the top of the fence and peeked very cautiously into the yard. Then his heart gave a great jump, for there under a tall apple-tree stood Rex ! The big black horse was tied fast to a limb of the tree by a thick rope, and he looked very sad.

Towser was so delighted to see him that he forgot all about the danger, and gave a tremendous bark. Rex turned his head as quick as a flash, and there was Towser's face looking at him over the top of the wall. Rex gave a great jump of joy, and lashed his tail and whinnied loudly.

Just then the tall robber hurried out of the house. He had a red shirt on, and a broad leather belt with a big knife stuck in it. He looked very ugly, for he was scowling horribly.

"What's all this noise?" he snarled as he went up to Rex. "Stop it, I say!"

And he struck Rex with his hand — slap! right across the nose.

"I heard a dog, too," said the tall robber; and he began to look all around the yard. Towser crouched flat on the ground behind the wall, and kept as still as a mouse.

"Huh!" said the tall robber. "I'm sure I heard a dog."

But after looking all about, he could not see Towser, so at last he went back into the house and shut the door with a bang.

Towser had been frightened half to death; so he still lay very quiet behind the wall. By this time it was evening, and it was growing darker and darker all the while; but Towser made up his mind not to do anything more till the robbers had gone to bed. He was so tired that he wanted to take a nap in the grass; but he felt that it would

not be safe. So he just lay there and listened and waited.

About nine o'clock, the short robber came out and walked around the yard. He was not so bad as the tall robber and, before he went in, Towser heard him giving Rex a pail of water to drink. The robbers locked up their house soon after; but there was a light in the upper windows, and Towser could see them inside walking back and forth. About midnight, however, the light went out, and then he knew that they had gone to bed. He sat up on his hind-legs.

"Now is the time," said he, and with one big bound he jumped right over the wall into the robbers' back-yard. The moon began to come out from behind a cloud, and he saw Rex and Rex saw him. Neither made a sound, however, for fear the robbers should hear them; but they rubbed their noses together for a moment, and laughed softly to themselves.

Towser put up his mouth and began to feel of the rope by which Rex was tied to the tree. It was a very thick strong rope, and it did not seem as though it could ever

be broken in any way ; but Towser put his fore-paws up against the slanting trunk of the tree to brace himself, and took the rope in his teeth and began to gnaw it as hard as he could. He bit and twisted and chewed and gnashed and pulled and snapped. His long sharp teeth sank down into the rope, and began at last to cut it a little bit. Finally one of the small strands of the rope gave way. Towser almost barked with joy, but he checked himself just in time, and went on biting and gnawing harder than ever. Little by little the rope began to part. First one strand and then another was bitten through, until only about a quarter of the thickness was left. Then, all of a sudden, Rex, who had kept very still, gave a great pull with all his might, and the rope snapped like a paper string. Rex was free !

He shook his mane and pawed the ground. He was free ! Towser, too, jumped about him, while his heart beat fast with joy. He had done something for Mabel at last. A moment later, after he had picked the bits of rope out of his teeth with his claws, he beckoned to Rex to follow, and they both

went very softly out of the robbers' yard, walking on the grass so as not to make a noise. But the moment they were out in the road, Towser waved his tail and gave a terrific bark, and plunged away toward home as fast as he could go, with Rex galloping after him like mad.

It was nearly morning, and the sky was beginning to grow pink all around the edges. On went Rex and Towser, on, on, on, over hill and dale, through valley and on the level road, till they passed the Little Pig's red house, and went through the woods where the Good Wolf hunted, by the Mooly Cow's house, and the Kitty-Cat's house, over the bridge where the Frogs sat on the stones in their brook, past the house where the Cross Dog lived, until at last, just as the sun was rising, they came thundering into Mabel's yard, all safely home again !

Mabel was lying awake in her crib. She had slept very little all night, and was so sorrowful that she thought she could never be happy any more. All of a sudden she heard a tremendous clattering of hoofs in the yard right under her window.

"Why, what's that?" she said.

She got up slowly and went to the window and looked out.

REX!

She gave a scream so loud that every one in the house heard it. Then she made one big rush for the stairs, slid down the banisters like a flash of lightning, and flew out into the yard in her bare feet and with nothing on but her nightie.

"Oh, Rex! Rex! Rex!" she cried, and threw her little arms around his neck. He whinnied as loud as he could, and put his nose against her cheek; and she petted him and cooed over him as though she would never stop. By this time Grandma and Walter and Jane, the cook, had all come down, and were looking on in astonishment. They could not understand how Rex had come back from the robbers. Poor Towser lay on the grass with his tongue out of his mouth, and his coat covered with dust; but no one noticed him at all or cared anything about him. He was tired and hungry and lame, and he was the one who had found Rex and brought him back from the rob-

bers ; so he hoped that Mabel would speak at least one word to him. But he saw that she was n't thinking of him at all ; and as he looked up wistfully at her, two big tears came into his eyes.

Just then the Farmer came by on his way to milk the cows. When he saw Rex standing in the yard he walked in.

"Well, well, well!" he said. "If there ain't your horse back again! How did you get him?"

"He came back himself," said Mabel. "I don't know how he did it."

The Farmer saw the rope hanging to Rex's neck.

"Must have broke his rope," said he. "Here, let's look. Why, this rope ain't broken; it's bit. Looks as though a dog had gnawed it. Mighty curious thing."

At that moment he noticed Towser, lying beside the driveway and all covered with dust.

"Hullo! There's that dog of yours! Looks as though he'd been on a journey. Suppose *he* could have done it?"

Everybody turned and looked at Towser.

"Why, he was away all yesterday afternoon," said Walter, "and did n't come back all night."

Mabel ran up to Towser.

"Tell me, Towser," she said, "did *you* go and get Rex back?"

Towser stood up and wagged his tail, and gave a great bark.

"*Did* he, Rex?" said Mabel.

Rex nodded his head yes, and gave a loud whinny.

"Oh, you *dear* dog!" cried Mabel, as she ran and threw her arms around his neck with a big hug that nearly choked him. "You good, good dog! And I never noticed you!"

Towser was so glad that he did n't know what to say. He just rolled on the grass, and then jumped up and down and put his paws on Mabel's shoulders and licked her face. Pretty soon Jane brought out a big platter of meat and a bowl of milk for him, and he ate and ate as though he had never eaten anything before.

"Eat away," said Mabel. "After this I am going to love you as much as I do Rex;

and you shall always have everything you want."

That same day Grandma sent for a man who came and put a great iron padlock on the barn-door; and every evening after that Mabel and Walter locked it up tight so that no robbers could get in again to steal.





## V. REX PLAYS POLICEMAN

**A**BOUT a week after Towser had brought Rex home, Mabel rode out one morning into the town, instead of going along the country roads where she nearly always went. Grandma wanted to send a message by her to the ice-man. When she reached the main street she found great crowds of people there, because a regiment of soldiers was going to march through that morning, and everybody wanted to see them. There were flags in the windows, and the sidewalks were packed with men and women and children, all facing the street. As Mabel rode slowly along, suddenly Rex gave a snort.

"What's the matter, Rex?" asked Mabel, patting him on the neck. But before she knew what he was doing, he had left the

middle of the street and was trotting right up to the sidewalk, still snorting.

"Whoa, Rex!" said Mabel, but he would not whoa. Mabel was rather frightened, and looked hard at the crowd of people on the edge of the sidewalk to see what there was to make Rex act so strangely. Right at the front of the crowd she saw two men standing. One was a tall man with a black beard, and the other a short man with a smooth face. Both had mufflers of dirty red flannel about their necks, and they wore big boots. As soon as Rex got near them, he opened his mouth and made a rush at them as if to bite them.

"Whoa! Whoa, Rex!" cried Mabel, pulling hard at the reins and trying to stop him. The two men turned very white when they saw Rex, and they tried to run back into the crowd; but the people were packed so closely together that they could scarcely move; and, besides, everybody pushed forward to see what was the matter. Rex snorted and neighed fiercely, as he snapped at the men, and they dodged and jumped to get away from him. Mabel kept pulling on

the reins and calling out to Rex, when all of a sudden an idea flashed into her little head.

"Dear me!" she said. "The Farmer thought there must have been *two* robbers who stole Rex. Maybe these are the very ones."

She was fearfully excited.

"Rex," she cried, "are these men the robbers who stole you?"

Rex gave a tremendous snort. Mabel knew that she was right. She leaned over and pointed with her riding-whip at the men.

"Robbers! Robbers!" she cried.

Just then two big policemen came running down the middle of the street to see what the matter was. They saw a great black horse holding a tall man by the coat, and another man struggling to get away through the crowd. The policemen rushed up to Rex and seized him by the bridle.

"Here, here, little girl," they said; "what's the matter with your horse? Who let you ride such a dangerous animal?"

The two men struggled frantically to get through the crowd.

"Oh, Policeman," cried Mabel, pointing with her whip, "there are two robbers! Catch them quick! Hurry, before they get away!"

She could hardly speak, she was so excited. The policemen rushed in after the men, and seized them by the necks.

"What do you want?" snorted the tall man, turning around.

"This little girl says that you two are robbers," said the Head Policeman.

"We ain't!" cried the tall man. "We're good people, and we was n't doing nothing but just standing here peaceable, when her old horse tried to bite us. You ain't going to arrest us because a horse tried to bite us, are you?"

"They *are* robbers!" cried Mabel. "I know they are. They stole my horse a week ago; and that's why he tried to bite them just now."

"Did you ever see them before?" asked the policeman.

"No," said Mabel.

"Then how do you know that they are the men who stole the horse?"

"Because Rex — that's the horse — said so," answered Mabel.

The policemen laughed and looked doubtful.

"We can't arrest them because a horse said so," said the Head Policeman.

Just then the other policeman, who had been feeling of the short man's coat, put his hand down into the pocket of it.

"What's this?" said the policeman, as he pulled out a long knife and an iron tool called a "jimmy," such as robbers use to break into houses. Both the men turned very pale.

"Oh — er — ah — I found this just now in the street," said one of them, very much confused.

"You did, eh?" said the Head Policeman. "Well, it's unlucky to find things like that. I'll have to take you to the Judge anyway, and see what *he* says. Come along, little girl."

So Mabel rode along, following the policemen, who dragged the two men with them by their coat-collars. Pretty soon they reached the Court House, and then four

more policemen came out to meet them. One of them helped Mabel down, and said that he would hold Rex while Mabel went in to where the Judge was.

The Judge was a fine-looking old gentleman who sat high up on a kind of throne. There were two men at a table in front of him, writing, and ten policemen stood with their backs against the wall ready to do anything that the Judge wanted done.

The Head Policeman went up to the Judge and told him what Mabel had said, and showed him the knife and the jimmy. The Judge looked keenly at the two men, and then called Mabel up beside him. He spoke to her in a very kind, gentle voice.

"What's your name, little girl?" he asked.

"Mabel."

"Well, Mabel, so you think that these men are the ones who stole your horse, do you?"

"Oh, yes, sir! I am sure of it. When I asked Rex, he neighed ever so loud, and that meant 'yes.' And the Farmer said that the footprints in our yard after Rex was

stolen showed that there were just two robbers."

Then she told him all about the robbery, and how Towser had brought Rex home again. The Judge smiled.

"That's a curious sort of story," said he. Then he turned to the two men and asked, "You say you are honest men, do you?"

"Oh, yes, your Honour," said they both. "We are good, honest men, and live very quietly in our own house."

"Where is your house?" asked the Judge; and they told him.

"Well," said the Judge, to the Head Policeman. "You lock these men up for a little while, till I can decide what to do."

When they had been taken away, he told Mabel to sit down; and then he sent four policemen to find the men's house, and to do some things that he told them in a whisper so that Mabel could n't hear.

"Now," he said to Mabel, "you go into my office, and wait till the policemen come back. I'll have some lunch sent in for you, as you must be hungry."

So Mabel sat in the Judge's office for two

or three hours; and a man brought her a glass of milk, and a chicken sandwich, and two nice long chocolate éclairs that were so good that Mabel was glad she had had to wait. After a while the four policemen came back, each with a great bag. Then the Judge called Mabel into the court-room, and the Head Policeman brought the two men out of the place where they had been locked up. When they came before the Judge, Mabel saw that they had iron handcuffs on their wrists. They looked very angry.

"Now," said the Judge, "you say that you are good men, do you, and not robbers?"

"Oh, yes, your Honour!" cried they both. "We're good honest men, and never stole in our lives!"

Then the Judge motioned to a policeman, and he brought the four big bags and emptied them out upon the floor. There were gold watches and diamond rings and bracelets, and silver forks and spoons, and long pieces of lace, and strings of pearls, and a great many other very fine things. All of

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them fell out of the bags in a heap on the floor in front of the Judge.

"Where did these come from?" asked the Judge.

"From the men's house," said one of the policemen. "We found them in the cellar. And some of them are marked with the name of the jeweller who was robbed last week, and some of them show the name of a person who was robbed here a month ago."

"Now," said the Judge to the men, "where did you get these things?"

The men both hung their heads, and had nothing to say.

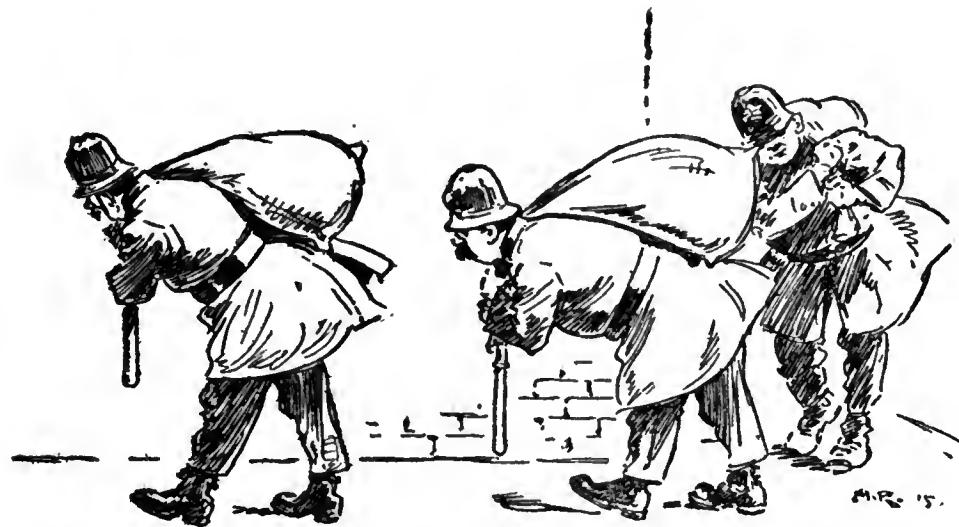
"Perhaps you found these, too, in the road," said the Head Policeman.

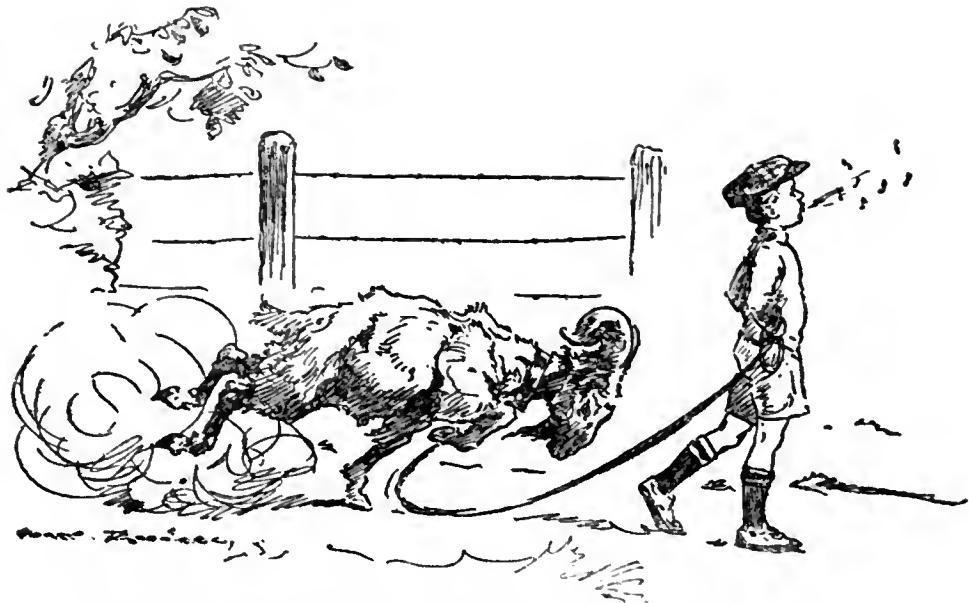
"There's something more still, sir," said one of the other policemen to the Judge. "We questioned the people who live near the robbers' house, and they said that a week ago they saw a black horse, just like this little girl's, tied to a tree in the back-yard all one afternoon."

"It's a clear case," said the Judge. "Take these men back to the cell, and next week they shall be tried and sent to prison."

Then he took Mabel, up on his knee and patted her head. "Do you know," he said, "that you and your horse have caught two robbers whom all the policemen in the town have been trying to catch for a year, and never could do it? You are a very wonderful little girl; and your horse is a very wonderful horse. Good-bye, now."

Then he put her down, and the four policemen went ahead of her to the door, while the ten policemen all marched after her. They put her on Rex's back, and as she rode off she waved her whip to them, and all fourteen of them stood in line and saluted her with their clubs.





## VI. WALTER AND THE GOAT

**W**HEN Uncle Robert gave Rex to Mabel, Walter felt rather hurt to think that he had no pet of any kind for his own, and after Towser came he grew more and more unhappy. He was a whole year older than Mabel, and he was a boy, too; and it seemed hard that she should have two animals and he none. He used to complain about it to Grandma, and she told him that perhaps he could have a pony when he grew older. But this did not satisfy him, and sometimes he was very sulky about it all.

One day, when both Mabel and Grandma were out, he said to himself that he would have a ride on Rex, because it was n't fair that Mabel should have the horse all to herself. He led Rex out of the barn, and

managed to get the bridle on him, and to climb up on his back; but the next minute Rex made a rush across the yard, and the clothes-line caught Walter under the arms and pulled him off, and gave him a bad fall on the ground. When Grandma came home, she found Rex eating grass on the lawn, and Walter crying on the kitchen steps, with his legs and arms all black and blue.

After that he did n't want to try riding Rex any more; but he made up his mind that he would like some kind of a pet that he would be better able to manage. At last when his birthday came, he went down to see Uncle Robert, who always gave him a birthday present. This time Walter decided to ask for what he wanted.

He found Uncle Robert sitting on a steamer-chair under the big oak-tree on the lawn, smoking.

"Good-morning, Uncle Robert," said Walter. "It's my birthday to-day."

"So it is," said Uncle Robert. "You're getting on in life, aren't you? What do you think you would like for a present?"

"Well," said Walter, hesitating a little, "I've been thinking it over, and I've made up my mind that I should like a goat."

"A goat!" cried Uncle Robert. "Well, well! What do you want a goat for?"

"Oh," said Walter, "a goat would be just splendid! I could play with him just as Mabel does with Rex; and I could harness him up to a goat-wagon, and make him carry me all around. It would be lots of fun! Do give me a goat, won't you, Uncle Robert?"

"Ha, ha!" laughed Uncle Robert. "Why, I've got a goat on the place now that you can have if you really want him; but I fancy he's a pretty frisky sort of a goat. Do you think that you can manage him?"

"Oh, yes!" cried Walter. "Just give him to me and see. Please, Uncle Robert."

"Well, come on," said Uncle Robert. "I'll let you have a look at him. He's out back of the stable."

So they walked around to find him, Walter getting greatly excited. Sure enough, there he was, — a large black goat with a long beard and two horns that curved back

over his head like crullers. He was fastened by a rope to a big post, and was eating the advertisements out of a newspaper. When he saw Uncle Robert and Walter coming, he cocked his eye at them, but said nothing.

"Oh," cried Walter, "isn't he a splendid big goat! Just the kind I wanted. I'll make him drag me all over everywhere!"

The goat smiled.

"Yes," said Walter, "I think he's even big enough for me to ride on his back the way Mabel does on Rex."

The goat bit a large Sapolio advertisement out of the newspaper, and laughed very softly, all to himself.

"So you like his looks, do you, Walter?" said Uncle Robert. "Well, then, he's your goat,—that is, of course, if your Grandma says that you can keep him. I'll let you take him home with you now, and you can ask her about it."

So Uncle Robert unfastened the rope from the post and gave the end of it to Walter. He took it, and thanked Uncle

Robert many times. He was proud to think that he owned a live goat, and he thought to himself what good times he was going to have with him.

"Come on, Goat!" said he. "You're going to your new home now. Come on!"

The goat followed along very quietly, with the rope around his neck. Walter went out into the road and started off towards home, with the goat following along meekly behind him. Walter felt very large and like a man to think that the goat was all his own. He held his head up very high, and walked along as happy as a king. When they got down the road a little way, the goat suddenly put down his head and made a rush — whack! plunk! he butted Walter right in the middle of the back and knocked him off his feet flat in the dusty road.

"Oh! Oh!" cried Walter. "I'm killed!"

He was not really hurt, but his clothes were all dust and his face was dirty. When he got up again, the goat was standing quietly by the side of the road eating

a large burdock-leaf. He looked very thoughtful.

"I think it must have been an accident," said Walter, doubtfully. "Perhaps I was walking too slowly, and so he ran up against me."

He picked up the rope again and called to the goat to come on. The goat took another bite of the burdock-leaf and started along once more very meekly. Walter walked on, a little anxious at first, but pretty soon he began to think of how he would astonish Grandma and Mabel when he reached home. Just then the goat put his head down and made a second rush. Whack! plunk! he struck Walter right in the middle of the back again, and this time he knocked him away over into the grass by the side of the road. Walter was thoroughly frightened and began to cry. He did not dare to get up, but just lay there calling for help.

Uncle Robert had been watching the two, and when the goat first knocked Walter over, he had walked down the road and followed him. He was now very

near, though neither the goat nor Walter had seen him. When Walter began crying for help, Uncle Robert ran up. He took the rope, and with the thick end of it he gave the goat a good whipping. The goat bleated with fright and pain.

"There! take that, you brute!" cried Uncle Robert, as he gave the goat a last blow across the back. "If you play any more of your tricks, I'll tie you up and whip you with the carriage-whip."

Then he picked up Walter and comforted him. It was a long time before he could persuade him to lead the goat any more; but finally he succeeded, and the two went on again. This time the goat, who was very much afraid of Uncle Robert, kept very still and followed Walter quietly all the way home, like the best goat in the world.

Grandma and Mabel were in the front-yard when Walter led the goat in and told them that this was Uncle Robert's birthday present to him. Grandma said that Walter might keep him, and they all went out into the back-yard to see where he was to

be put. Walter tied the goat to a clothes-post, and brought him some turnips to eat.

"To-morrow," said Grandma, "I'll have a man come and make a goat-house for him; and I'll get the harness-maker to make a little harness. We can buy a goat-wagon in the village, and then you'll be all ready to drive him around. But what's the matter with your clothes, Walter? They're all covered with dust."

"I—I—I fell down," said Walter, rather sheepishly. He was ashamed to say that the goat had butted him.

All that day the goat stood in the yard as quiet as could be. The children gave him his supper at night and some water to drink, and when they went to bed he seemed to be quite satisfied with his new home. The lights were all put out and the whole family were just getting to sleep, when they heard a fearful noise in the yard.

"M-m-a-a-a!"

Every one sat up in bed to listen.

"M-m-a-a-a!"

"Oh! oh! what's the matter?" cried out Walter, in a frightened voice, from his room.

"I think it's the goat," said Grandma. "You'd better put on your clothes and go out and see."

Walter slipped on his trousers, and ran down into the yard. Just as he went out of the door, the noise was heard a third time—

"M-m-a-a-a!"

It was the goat.

"What's the matter?" asked Walter, when he reached the place where the goat was tied. "Are you feeling sick?"

The goat said nothing. He looked as calm as could be as he stood there in the moonlight. There was nothing the matter with him.

"Don't do that again," said Walter. "You'll keep us all awake."

The goat said nothing. Walter went back into the house, and got back into bed. Just as he was getting asleep again, the goat began once more—

"M-m-a-a-a!"

This time he roared it in a deep voice

like a great horn; and in a few minutes he repeated it.

"This is fearful!" said Grandma. "Walter, go out again and see if you can't stop him."

So Walter went out a second time, and talked with the goat, who kept very still till Walter was gone, and then he began again. All night long he bleated and bellowed, and neither Grandma, nor Mabel, nor Walter got any sleep at all.

In the morning they all went out again and argued with the goat, and scolded him till he looked as though he was ashamed; and then Walter gave him some breakfast.

"Perhaps he was hungry," said Walter. "To-night I'll leave him some food to eat when I go to bed."

All that day the goat kept very still. The harness was not yet ready for him, so Walter could not make any use of him, but just amused himself watching the goat eat and drink. At night he left a pile of chopped-up vegetables by the side of the clothes-post; and every one went to bed feeling sure that the goat would be quiet

and not disturb them. But as soon as the lights were out, he began his noise again, bleating and bellowing just as before. At last Grandma got up and dressed herself, and she and Walter went out and unfastened the goat and led him down to the orchard, further away from the house, and fastened him to a peg in the ground. After that he kept bleating; but they did n't mind it so much because it did n't seem so loud.

The next morning the harness-maker brought the harness, and the goat-wagon also came. Walter was greatly excited.

"Now then!" he said, "I'm going to have some fun."

He led the goat into the yard, and put his harness on. First he put the bridle on the goat's head, then he fastened on the straps around the goat's body, and finally he hitched the traces to the wagon. He took the whip in his hands, and got up on the wagon-seat and picked up the reins.

"Hurrah!" he cried. "This is better than a horse! Just see me drive!" Then he said to the goat, "Get up!"

But the goat did n't stir. He just waited, and stood perfectly still.

"Get up!" said Walter again.

The goat never budged. Then Walter grew very angry and lifted his whip and struck the goat over the back as hard as he could.

"Get up!" he cried.

Like lightning the goat gave a great jump. He put his head down and made one rush across the yard, lickety-split, slam-bang, over humps and hillocks, jouncing the goat-wagon so that it nearly upset.

"Whoa! Whoa!" cried Walter, frightened half to death.

But the goat kept on whirling around and around, and tearing back again the same way he had come, jumpety-jump, till all of a sudden the wagon struck the clothes-post and split in two. One wheel went one way, and another another, the seat flew up, and Walter was thrown like a cannon-ball across the yard, striking on his face. The harness broke, and the goat was set free; but he still kept dashing about till he had rushed through Grandma's

flower-beds and trampled all her flowers down under his hoofs. Then he stopped and gave a tremendous bleat—

“M-m-a-a-a!”

Grandma ran and picked up Walter. His clothing was torn and covered with dust, and his face was cut open so that the blood streamed down his cheeks and smeared them all over red. He screamed with fright and pain. Grandma took him in her arms and carried him into the house. She washed his face, and put on a big piece of court-plaster, changed his coat, and then got him to lie down on the sofa. Then she went out and took the goat back into the orchard, and tied him once more to the peg in the ground. Coming back to the house she put on her bonnet.

“I’m going down to Uncle Robert’s,” she said to Mabel, “to ask him to come and take the goat back again. I never saw such a dreadful animal. We haven’t had a moment’s peace since he came!”

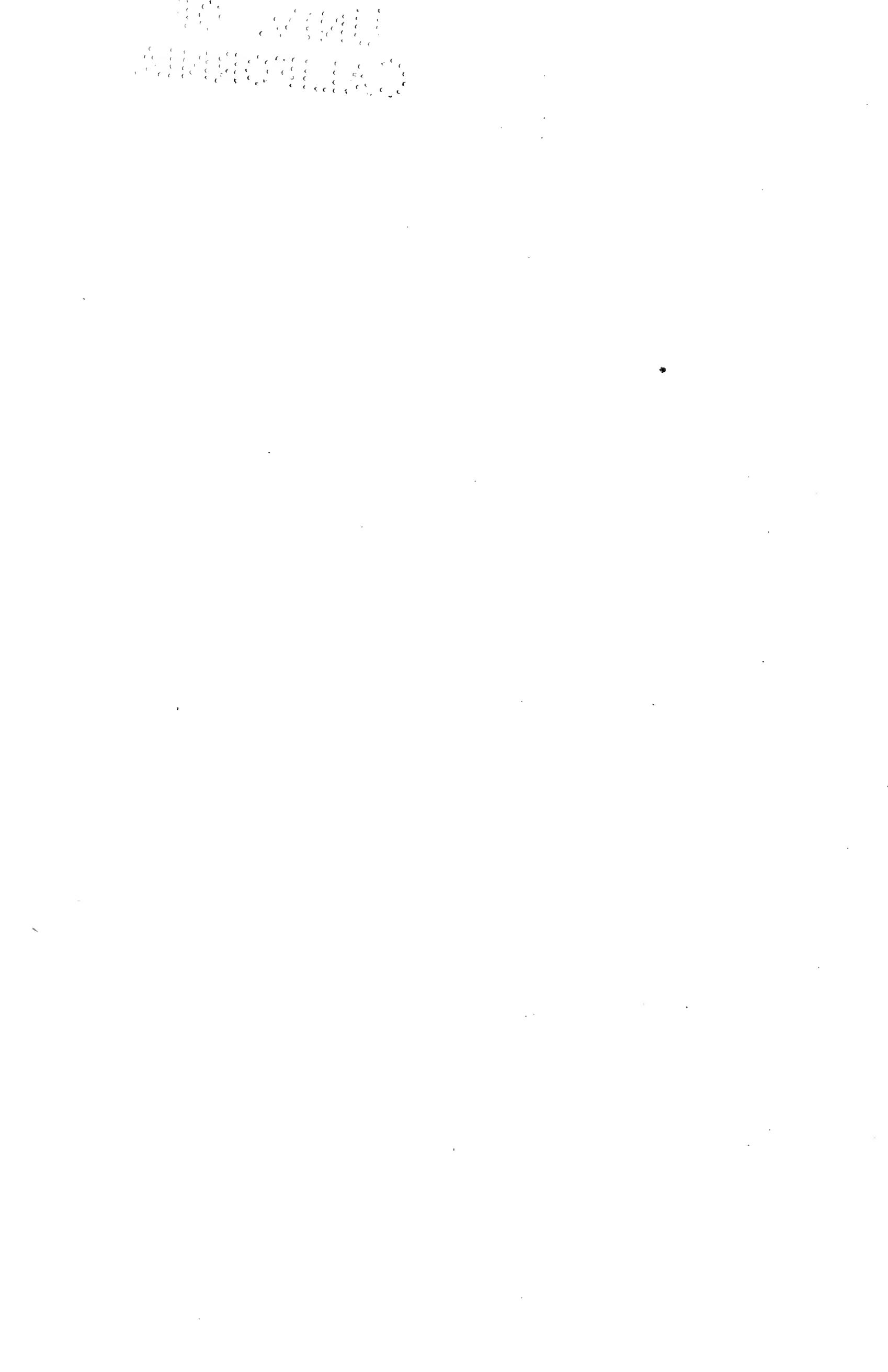
Mabel was very serious.

“Very well, Grandma,” she said; “but the goat will never be bad again.”



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Pawnee

The goat kept on whirling around and around.



"What do you mean, Mabel?" asked Grandma.

"I'm going to talk to him while you are away," said Mabel; "and I promise that when you come back he will be a good goat."

"Nonsense, Mabel!" said Grandma, sharply. "What good is it talking to a goat—and such a goat?"

"Never mind, Grandma," said Mabel. "You wait and see."

As soon as Grandma was out of sight, Mabel went down into the orchard. There was the goat tied to the peg. When he saw her coming he cocked one eye impudently and laughed.

"M-m-a-a-a!" he said. He was very proud of what he had done.

"Goat," said Mabel, looking him straight in the face, "you have been a very bad goat. We have been good to you, and fed you, and petted you, and you have done everything you could that was naughty. You have kept us awake all night, and now you have hurt Walter, and broken his wagon, and trampled down Grandma's flower-beds. How can you be so bad?"

The goat looked very saucy, and wrinkled up his nose.

"M-m-a-a-a!" he said, as loud as he could.

"Now, Goat," said Mabel, "if you keep on being naughty, you'll be very sorry. I am going to stop you from ever doing anything bad again. I will —"

"M-m-a-a-a!" bellowed the goat.

"Stop!" cried Mabel. "Don't you bleat again!"

"M-m-a-a-a!" bellowed the goat.

"All right for you!" said Mabel. "Now I'm going to punish you."

"M-m-a-a-a!" bellowed the goat, and he put down his head and tried to butt her.

Mabel didn't say another word, but ran back to the house and put on her sunbonnet. Then she went straight down to the woods. When she got there, she looked all around and whistled the Lizard's call as loud as she could. The first time she whistled she got no answer; but when she whistled the second time, she heard a big deep growl away off in the distance, and pretty soon footsteps pattering among the

dried leaves on the ground. Then a great black head was thrust out of the bushes, and the Good Wolf came trotting up to her.

"Do you want me?" growled he, in his deep rough voice.

"Yes, I want you right away," said Mabel. "I want you to come with me to my house. No one will see you except a bad goat, and I want you to help me punish him."

"Can I eat him up?" asked the Wolf eagerly, beginning to lick his chops.

"No," said Mabel; "not unless I tell you to. I want you to hide in the currant-bushes, and when I whistle, run out and pretend you are going to eat him up. Look as fierce as you can, but don't really touch him unless I say so."

"All right," growled the Wolf; "but I'd rather eat him anyway."

So the Wolf went along with Mabel to the house, and followed her down near the orchard, where he hid in the currant-bushes. Then Mabel walked up to the goat again.

"Goat," she said, shaking her little finger at him. "This is the last time I'm go-

ing to ask you to be good. If you don't mind, I'll make you so sorry that you'll never forget it as long as you live."

"M-m-a-a-a!" bellowed the goat, and tried to butt her with his horns.

Mabel gave a loud whistle. In half a second, out from the currant-bushes rushed the great black Wolf, his hair bristling up all over his body, his eyes blazing like coals of fire, his big mouth wide open, and his long white teeth gleaming. He made a plunge toward the goat. The goat gave one look, and then began to scream with terror. His eyes nearly popped out of his head, and the end of his nose turned as white as a sheet.

"Stop, Wolf!" cried Mabel, raising her hand.

The Wolf stopped. His jaws were close to the goat's face, and he gave a roar that made the goat's blood run cold.

"Now, Goat," said Mabel, "perhaps you will believe me next time. Here is a wolf who will eat you up in a minute if I tell him to. Do you want to be eaten?"

"No-o-o!" screamed the goat.

"Then you've got to promise to be a

good goat hereafter. Are you sorry for being so naughty?"

"Y-e-s!" bleated the goat. He was shaking like a leaf.

"Will you promise to let Walter ride you and drive you whenever he wants to?"

"Y-e-e-s!" bleated the goat.

"Will you promise never to make a sound in the night?"

"Y-e-e-s!" bleated the goat. Then he knelt down and put his head between Mabel's feet and shivered.

"Well, Wolf," said Mabel, "you hear what the goat has promised. Now if he breaks his promise, I will send for you again, and the next time you can eat him up every bit."

The Wolf gave a terrible growl that made the goat nearly jump out of his skin.

"All right!" said the Wolf.

"Good-bye, now," said Mabel; and the Wolf turned around and went slowly off through the fields into the woods. When he had gone, the goat looked up and bleated pitifully to Mabel. Just at that moment

Grandma came in at the front-yard. Mabel called her.

"Uncle Robert wasn't home," said Grandma; "so we'll have to wait till to-morrow."

"Never mind, Grandma," said Mabel. "You know I told you that the goat would never be bad again. Well, he won't. Just see."

Then Mabel untied the goat and got up on his back.

"Trot," she said to the goat.

He trotted quietly around the meadow and came back again to where Grandma was standing.

"Dear me! Dear me!" said Grandma. "Why, he seems like another goat!"

"Now follow us quietly to the house," said Mabel.

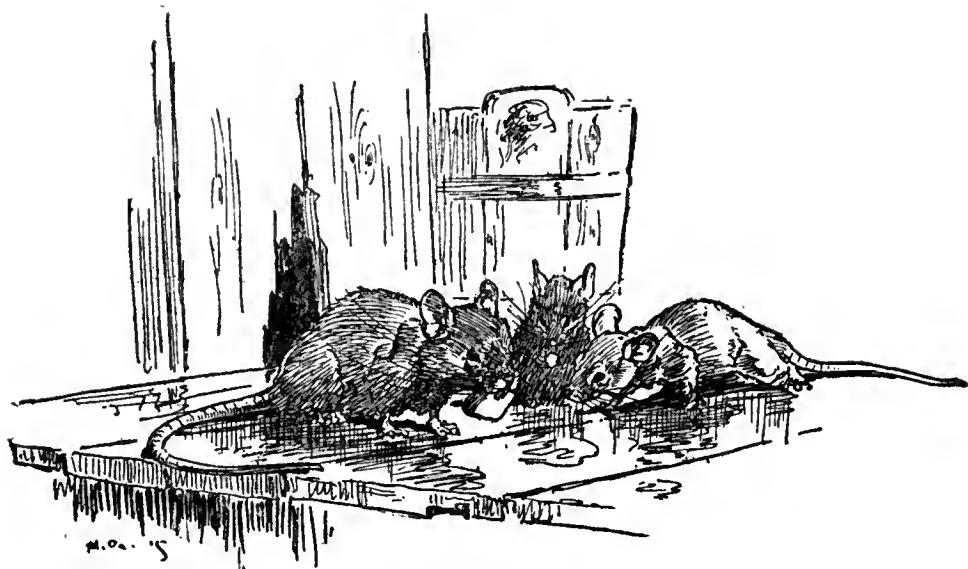
The goat followed them. They called Walter down and told him to get on the goat's back. For a long time he was afraid to do so, but finally he tried it, and let the goat trot around with him. When he told the goat to stop, he stopped; and he minded every word that Walter said to him.

"Now," said Mabel; "you get the goat-wagon and the harness mended, and you'll never have any trouble with the goat again as long as he lives."

"Well, this is wonderful!" said Grandma. "What on earth did you do to him while I was away, to make him so good?"

"Oh," said Mabel, smiling a little to herself, "I just talked to him."





## VII. THE GREY RAT UNDER THE PUMP

**I**N the yard at one side of the house where Mabel lived stood a large wooden pump with a long handle. It was set upon a sort of platform which was very old, so that the sides of it were beginning to crumble away, and there was quite a large hole in it. One morning, just after breakfast, Mabel was standing at the dining-room window and looking into the yard, when all of a sudden she called to Walter.

"Oh, Walter!" she said. "Look here! There's a rat coming out of the hole under the pump!"

Sure enough there was a rat, — a large rat with a long tail, a sharp pointed nose, and whiskers that stood out straight on each side of its face. It was a very old rat, for

its fur had turned grey, and it looked very wise. Mabel and Walter watched it poking its head out of the hole under the pump, at first very cautiously, and then, when it saw no one there, creeping into the grass. It went smelling about until at last it found a bit of apple that lay near by. Then it gave two funny little squeaks, and all of a sudden out from the hole ran two little baby rats. They trotted up to the old rat, who gave them the bit of apple to eat. They poked their little noses into it, and nibbled away as hard as they could.

"Oh, are n't they cunning!" cried Mabel, as she watched them. "They must live under the pump."

"Yes," said Walter, "and I tell you what I'll do. When they go back I'll get Jane to give me a pail of hot water to pour down the hole and kill them."

Mabel's eyes grew very big and her face very red.

"What, kill the little rats?" she cried. "Walter, how can you be so cruel? They don't do us any harm. They live out in the yard, and only eat what they find in the

grass. It would be just wicked to hurt them!"

"Well, I'm going to do it all the same," said Walter. "They're only rats."

"Never mind," said Mabel; "you've no right to be cruel to them even if they *are* rats, so long as they're not doing any harm, has he, Grandma?"

"Certainly not," said Grandma; "and don't let me hear of your touching them, Walter. If you do, I shall punish you. You seem altogether too ready to hurt any harmless little creatures."

So that settled that; and pretty soon Mabel took some pieces of broiled bacon off the breakfast-table, and a bit of cheese from the closet, and went out into the yard. When the rats saw her, they all ran back to the hole; but she went up to it very softly and put the bacon and the cheese down by the opening, where the rats could smell how good they were; and then she whistled the Lizard's call and stepped back a little way. In a minute the old grey rat poked its nose out and looked about.

"Come, you good rat," said Mabel. "I

won't hurt you. I'll bring you something to eat every morning after this."

So the three rats all crept out and made a fine meal of the bacon and cheese; for these are the things that rats love better than anything else in the world. As they ate, they looked at Mabel now and then, and squeaked little squeaks which meant "thank you" in rat-talk.

Mabel watched them quite a long while, and then Grandma called her in to help dust the upstairs rooms. Grandma thought that Mabel was already old enough to begin to learn how to take care of a house; so twice a week she had her take a little dust-cloth and a small broom and whisk around the rooms with them. Mabel loved to do this, and she rubbed the backs of the chairs and polished the tables until there was n't a speck of dust to be seen; and with her broom she swept away any spiders' webs that she could find in the corners of the wall. She had a great deal of trouble with the spiders' webs, because there were four brown spiders that lived in the house, and they were not satisfied with having the gar-

ret to themselves, where nobody disturbed them, but used to come down into the bed-rooms and spin cobwebs whenever they could. Mabel always brushed these down ; and so the four brown spiders hated her, and would have liked to do her some harm if they could. On this particular morning, Mabel found four spiders' webs in Grandma's bed-room, for each of the brown spiders had spun one during the night ; and she swept them all down with her broom. The four spiders were very angry at this ; and as they sat in the garret they talked about it to each other, and declared that if they ever had a chance they would get even with her ; for they were very bad spiders.

That afternoon about three o'clock, Grandma had to take Walter to the town for a pair of new shoes, and as it was Thursday, Jane was to be out ; so Grandma left Mabel at home to look after the house.

" I 'll be back in about two hours," said Grandma. " I may want to make a call or two on the way home."

When she had gone, Mabel played in the nursery for awhile ; but it was so warm in

the house that she soon went out into the yard and sat down under the big tree on the lawn. It was a sultry summer afternoon. The sun was very hot, and there was scarcely a breath of air. The bees hummed in the flower-beds; the locusts made a lazy sound in the branches overhead; and everything seemed drowsy. The shade of the tree was so pleasant, and the grass was so soft, that little by little Mabel felt her blue eyes closing and her head nodding. Gradually she leaned further and further back until she had stretched herself on the grass, and in a few minutes she was sound asleep.

The four brown spiders were sitting up in the garret-window looking out into the yard and watching Mabel. When she went to sleep, they all knew it.

"Ha!" said the First Spider. "There she is now, sound asleep. And it's going to rain, too. She'll get wet."

Sure enough, a great black cloud was coming up from the South and was spreading slowly over the whole sky. As the spiders spoke, a low rumble of thunder was heard.

"I hope she will," said the Second Spider, "I hope she'll get soaking wet. And *I* shouldn't be sorry if the lightning struck her."

"Nor I," said the Third Spider, "only it won't. But why can't we do something ourselves. She's asleep and wouldn't see us coming. Let's all go down and bite her hand."

"No, no," said the Fourth Spider, who was older than the others and knew a great deal; "that would n't be safe, because she'd wake right up before we could get away; and then she'd see us and step on us. No, no! But there's something we *could* do. We could tie her up tight in a cobweb so that she could n't get up; and then when the rain came it would pour all over her and wet her to the bones, and give her a bad cold, so that she'd have to stay in bed; and then we could go all over the house and spin webs wherever we like."

"Pooh!" said the First Spider. "That's all nonsense. We could n't spin any webs big enough to hold her down. She'd break them in a jiffy."

"Of course *we* could n't," answered the Fourth Spider; "but I know who could."

"Who?" cried the other three spiders all together.

"Why, the King Spider, of course. Don't you know he 's so big that he can spin webs as thick as packing-thread, and that a little girl like that could n't break them?"

"Good! Good!" cried all the spiders, clapping their claws. "That 's a splendid idea! You know where the King Spider lives, don't you? Come on, and we 'll get him to do it for us!"

So they slid off the sill of the garret-window, and crept swiftly down through the house till they reached the yard. The Fourth Spider led the way past Mabel, past the barn, out into the orchard, and then over a stone wall into the open field beyond. It was a large lonely field full of bushes and small scrubby trees, and was near to the woods where the Good Wolf lived.

"This is the King Spider's field," said the Fourth Spider. "He owns it all."

Then he led them to one corner of the field where there was a dense mass of thick-

leaved weeds and wild plants. There, under a huge burdock-leaf that spread out like a green umbrella, sat the great King Spider. He was an enormous creature, with a body as big as a footstool, and legs as long as a pikestaff. He had monstrous claws and a mouth like an oyster; but he looked rather good-natured as he sat there in the shadow of his leaf eating a large blue-bottle fly.

The four brown spiders walked slowly up to him. They were very bashful, for they had never spoken to a King Spider before, and only the Fourth Spider had even so much as seen him.

“What do you want?” asked the King Spider.

The four spiders hardly knew how to begin. They nudged each other, and shifted around on their legs. Finally, the Fourth Spider started in as well as he could.

“O King of all the Spiders,” he said, “we have come to ask your help. A girl has been very cruel to us. She has broken our webs, and driven us out of many pleasant places with brooms; and she is a dangerous and dreadful creature. Now she lies asleep

under a tree, and we ask your help to punish her. Come, O King of all the Spiders, and spin around her a web as strong as packing-thread, so that she cannot get up again when she wakes, but may lie there and think about the wicked things that she has done to us, the four brown spiders!"

The King Spider swallowed the left fore-leg of the blue-bottle fly, and then coughed slightly.

"I don't like to meddle with human beings," he said. "But I suppose you don't mean to do her any great harm."

"No, O King," said the Fourth Spider; "we are too weak to do her harm; but we ask you to help us punish her, so that she may fear the spiders hereafter, and not do wrong to them or to their webs."

"If I help you," said the King Spider, "you must reward me; for this is the Law of the Spiders."

"Yes, O King," said the Fourth Spider. "What shall we do to please you?"

"You must each of you bring me every day for a week a live fly," said the King Spider, thoughtfully; "a fat, fresh fly that

has been fed in a house. Only for this will I give you any help."

"We promise," said all of the spiders. "Every day for a week will we bring, each of us, a live fly, fat, fresh, and fed in a house. We promise this."

"Cross your hearts," said the King Spider. And they all four crossed their hearts.

Then the King Spider came out from his shady nook; and the four spiders showed him the way through the orchard into the yard, where Mabel still lay very sound asleep under the big tree.

"There she is," said the four spiders.

"Good!" said the King Spider.

He went up to her and began to spin. First, he spun a great web around her feet, back and forth, round and round, strong and fast,—a web as thick as a packing-thread. Then he spun a web about her legs, then about her arms, and then around her neck. When it was done, he fastened the ends to the trunks of the tree and to the limbs overhead. It was a strong, stout web, and he made it tight and firm. The four spiders watched him, wondering at the size of the

threads, and at the quick way in which he worked. Some of the barn-spiders also came out and looked on.

"There!" said the King Spider. "It's done."

"We thank you, O King," said the four spiders, bowing; "and we will remember our promise."

Then the King Spider left them and went back to his home under the burdock-leaf. The four spiders hurried into the house, and up to the garret-window to watch; for the storm was coming, and they were afraid of getting wet. In fact, by this time, the sky was black as ink, and the lightning was beginning to flash. Before long the storm would burst upon the yard. Louder and louder the thunder began to roll, and a strong wind made the leaves in the trees rustle. Suddenly, as the storm came nearer, a great crash of thunder pealed out like the roar of a cannon. It was so loud that it waked Mabel, and she opened her eyes.

"Oh!" she said, "I've been asleep. Dear me! It's going to rain; I must go into the house."

She tried to lift her head ; but it was fastened tight to the ground. She could not stir it. She tried to put her hand up to her head to feel what it was that held her down ; but she could not even move her fingers. She tried to pull her little legs up ; but they, too, seemed to have grown fast to the ground. A dreadful feeling of helplessness came over her. She was terribly frightened.

"Oh, dear ! Oh, dear !" she cried. "What has happened to me ? I feel as though I were fastened down."

A fiery streak of lightning blazed across the sky like the red tongue of a wild beast, and soon after came a crash of thunder that shook the very earth. Mabel screamed with terror.

"Help ! Help !" she cried. "Oh, help !"

Grandma and Walter and Jane were not there to hear her ; but one little friend of hers was near by. The Grey Rat under the pump was just poking its nose out of the hole to get a whiff of the cool breeze, when Mabel's cry for help came to its ears.

"What's that ?" said the Grey Rat.

"Help ! Help !" called Mabel.

"Why, it's Mabel!" said the Grey Rat. It ran quickly out from under the pump, and looked around. There lay Mabel under the tree, crying and calling as loud as she could. The Grey Rat ran up to her, and in a minute saw that she was fastened down.

"Help! Help!" called Mabel.

"I'm here," said the Grey Rat, standing by her face. "I'll help you."

The Rat rushed at the thick spider-webs and took them in its mouth. Its teeth were as sharp as little knives. Snip! snip! snip! and the web around Mabel's neck was cut. She lifted up her head.

"Why!" she cried. "It's you!"

"Yes," said the Rat, rushing at the web around her waist.

"Hurry!" cried Mabel. The thunder crashed again. The wind roared in the tree-tops.

The Rat worked like a beaver — snip! snip! snip! The web around Mabel's waist gave way, then the web around her legs, and last of all the web around her feet.

"Done!" cried the Grey Rat. "Now up and run!"

Mabel rose quickly to her feet and made a dash for the house. The Grey Rat ran swiftly down the hole under the pump. Scarcely were they both under cover when a terrific blaze of lightning hissed across the sky, a fearful crash of thunder bellowed, and a torrent of rain came swishing down like a cataract.

Five minutes later, Grandma and Walter rushed in at the front-door, streaming with water. They had been caught in the rain.

"Oh, Mabel!" cried Grandma. "What an awful rain! Why, what's the matter? You look so strange,— your eyes are as big as tea-plates!"

"Grandma," said Mabel, and her voice trembled, "a very strange thing happened to me while you were away. I fell asleep under the tree in the yard, and when I woke up I was fastened tight to the ground by threads. I couldn't get up; and if the Grey Rat from under the pump hadn't come and bitten the threads, I should have been kept there in all this rain."

Grandma smiled.

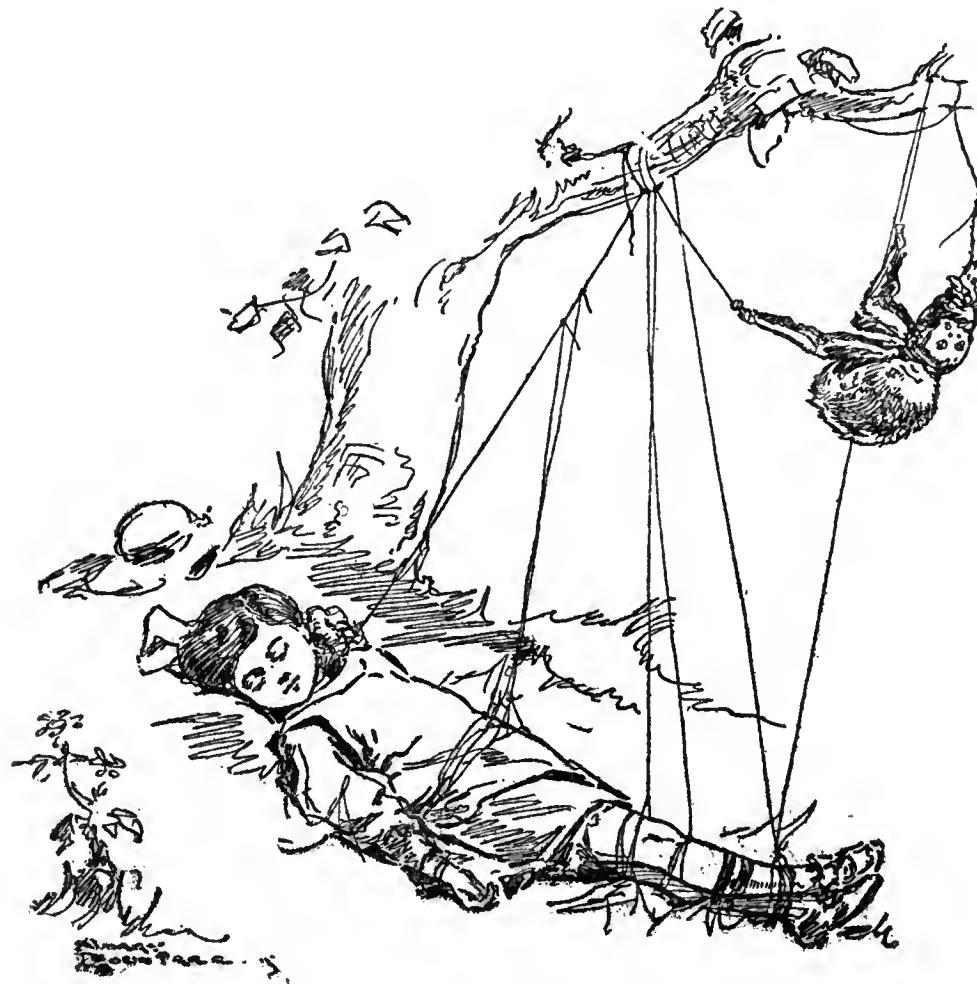
"Well, Mabel," she said, "you've evidently been dreaming." But just at that moment she caught sight of something on Mabel's dress.

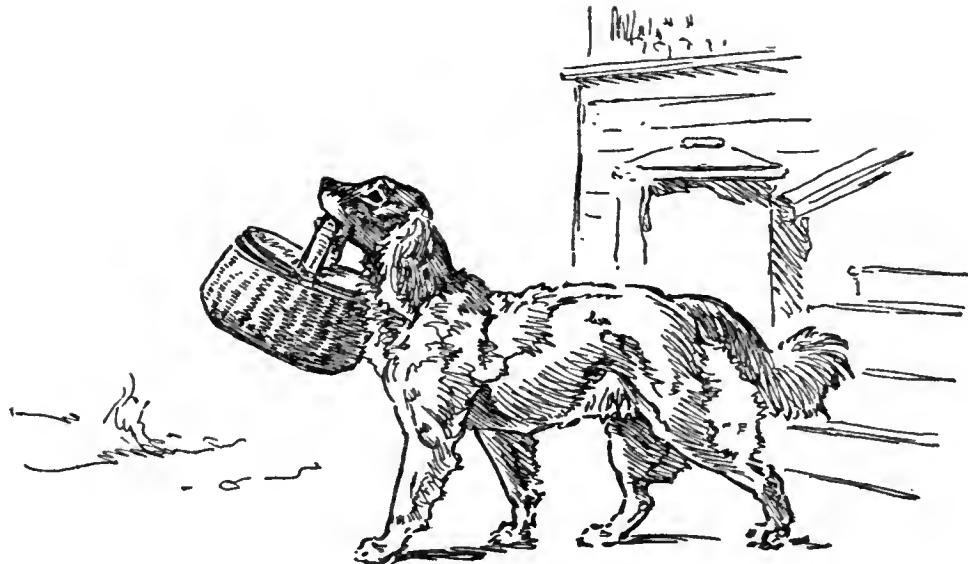
"What's this?" she said, as she picked it off. It was a great knot of spiders' webs as thick as a packing-thread. "And here's more!" she cried, looking at Mabel's feet. Last of all she found a big web on Mabel's neck.

"Spiders," she said, and then stopped.

She did not talk about it any more; but all that day she had a very curious look on her face. The next morning she took a broom and went over the whole house hunting for spiders. She even went into the garret, and there she found the four brown spiders sitting on the window-sill. When they saw her coming, they slid out of the window and down the side of the house. They knew that they could never come back again. They went to the barn and tried to make a home for themselves there; but the barn-spiders, who were big and fierce, drove them out. So after that they had to live in the orchard, where they were often rained

on, and got very little to eat. They could not pay the King Spider the flies they had promised him; so that one day when he saw them he caught them in his big claws and ate them all up.





## VIII. THE ANIMAL PARTY

"**M**ABEL," said Grandma one morning, "do you know what to-morrow will be?"

"No," said Mabel, who did not understand the question. "What will it be?"

"Why," said Grandma, "your birthday."

"No!" said Mabel. "How old shall I be to-morrow, Grandma?"

"What? Don't you remember? Why, to-morrow you'll be six years old."

"Really?" cried Mabel. "Dear me! Why, Grandma, I thought that I should feel so different when I grew up; but I don't. I feel just the same as I did when I was only a little girl."

Grandma smiled.

"That isn't strange, Mabel," she said. "Do you know, I am more than sixty years old, and I think I feel just the same as

when *I* was only a little girl. But we must do something for your birthday, because you have been so good and thoughtful all the year. What would you like best?"

"Oh, let me see. Why, I should like best of all to have a party. You know I've never had a party; and now that I'm real old I think I ought to have one. Let me have a birthday party, will you, Grandma?"

"A birthday party?" said Grandma. "Well, I should be very glad to let you have one, only you don't know enough children about here; and there isn't time to send out invitations to your cousins, because they live so far away. You see there are no children of your own age near by except Walter, and the Farmer's little daughter, and Jack who lives over the hill. That wouldn't be enough. No, I'm afraid you'll have to think of something else."

Mabel went away and sat in the window for a while, thinking. Pretty soon she came running back again.

"Oh, Grandma!" she cried. "I've got a perfectly lovely idea. I can have the party after all."

"Why, how so, Mabel?" asked Grandma.  
"What kind of a party can you have?"

"An animal party!" cried Mabel, her eyes sparkling. "It will be such fun!"

"A what?" asked Grandma.

"An animal party. I'll ask all the animals I know, and get them all together in the grove in front of the house, and give them a nice dinner, just as though they were children. Won't that be splendid!"

Grandma laughed.

"Well, Mabel," she said, after a moment, "you are really a very original little girl. Now what animals would you ask?"

"Oh, let me see. There are our own animals, first of all. There's Rex, and Towser, and the Goat (if he will be *very* good), and the Grey Rat under the pump. They can all come and help receive the other animals with me. Then I'll ask the Frogs from the bridge, and the Mooly Cow, and the Kitty-Cat, and the Little Pig. Won't it be fun getting them all together!"

"Yes, it will be very droll," said Grandma, who was much amused at the idea. Then Mabel thought a little and hesitated.

"Grandma," she said.

"Well, Mabel?"

"There's one more animal that I'd like to ask, only—only—I don't quite know what you'll think about it when I tell you."

"Why, what animal is that, Mabel? I think you've mentioned all the animals that you know. You surely aren't going to ask the Cross Dog."

"No," said Mabel shaking her head; "it isn't the Cross Dog."

"Then what animal is it?"

"Well," said Mabel, slowly, "it's—it's a wolf."

"Wha-a-t?" gasped Grandma, her eyes opening very wide. "A wolf? What on earth do you mean, Mabel! Why, a wolf eats little girls! A wolf is a terrible wild beast!"

"Oh, no, Grandma," said Mabel. "This is a good wolf, and he wouldn't hurt anybody. I've known him some time, only I didn't want to say anything to you about him, because I knew that you'd be afraid. But please let me ask him, because he's one of my best friends."

Grandma said nothing for a long time, but looked at Mabel very intently. Finally she said :—

“ Mabel, it seems to me that you are a very strange little girl, and that things happen to you in very curious ways. I have thought so for a good while, only I did n’t know how to explain it, and I don’t know now. I remember how you tamed Rex ; and I believe that you can do things that no one else can do. If you ask the wolf, I feel that you will be safe where any other little girl would be in great danger ; and so I shall not forbid your doing it. But I shall stay in the house myself, for I am afraid of wolves, and Walter must stay in, too. I will look out of the window and watch everything that goes on. Some day, perhaps, I may understand it all ; but I certainly don’t now.”

Then Grandma took her work-basket and went upstairs to her room. Mabel clapped her hands, and ran down to the barn where Rex was standing, all saddled and ready for her morning ride. Mabel told him about the party, and that she was going to invite

the other animals. So when she had climbed up on his back, they went down the road, first of all to see the Frogs at the bridge. Mabel invited all of them; but after the Frogs had talked it all over, they thought that the five baby frogs were too small to go to parties yet; and so, as they could not be left alone, the Mamma Frog would have to stay with them. So the Papa Frog said that he would be the one to come to the party. Next, Mabel asked the Mooly Cow and the Kitty-Cat, and finally the Little Pig. They all promised to come. Then Mabel rode into the woods, and stopped in the darkest part and whistled the call. Pretty soon she heard an answer, and the Good Wolf appeared among the bushes.

"Wolf," said Mabel, "I want you to come to my birthday party to-morrow afternoon. I'm going to have a Goat, a Pig, a Mooly Cow, a Kitty-Cat, a Rat, and a Frog."

"Ha!" said the Wolf, licking his chops. "That'll be good eating. Yes, I'll come."

"No, no!" cried Mabel, "I did n't mean that! You must n't eat them, because they're my company."

"Oh!" said the Wolf, looking rather disappointed. "I did n't know."

"Yes," said Mabel, "they 're my company. You 'll have lots of meat to eat; but you must promise to be very, very good, and look as pleasant as pie, and not growl once. Will you ?"

"All right," said the Wolf.

"The other animals are coming at about half-past two," said Mabel; "but I want you to come at three o'clock."

"What does that mean ?" growled the Wolf. "What 's three o'clock ?"

"Oh, Wolf !" cried Mabel. "Don't you know how to tell time yet? You ought to be ashamed of yourself,—and such a big Wolf, too! Well, I 'll tell you in another way. When you hear the big bell in the church steeple across the fields go boom ! boom ! boom ! to-morrow, then you come as quick as you can to the party. It 's in the grove in front of my house. Now don't forget, will you, Wolf ?"

"No, I won't forget," said the Good Wolf; and Mabel rode home at a gallop.

"They 're all coming, Grandma !" said

Mabel, gaily, as she clattered into the yard.  
“Every one of them.”

“And is the—the Wolf coming?” asked Grandma, in an anxious voice.

“Oh, yes; he’ll be here.” And Mabel went on to the barn. Grandma wondered more than ever.

The next day at two o’clock, Mabel had made all her plans for the party, and was being dressed in her best party dress. She had her hair curled in long ringlets all about her merry little face, and Grandma fastened a rose-bud at the side of her head. She wore a light-blue silk with knots of ribbon, neat little shoes with tiny silver buckles, and a big lace collar fastened by a dainty pearl pin. Around her neck was a string of pearl beads that Uncle Robert had brought her from Rome. She was as pretty as any picture when she went out into the grove, after looking at the nice things that she had got together for the animals to eat. She stood in the centre of the grove, in the shade of a big elm tree, all ready for her company to come. First of all came Rex, trotting down from the stable. John had curried

and brushed him till he was as glossy as satin.

"Ah, good afternoon, Rex," said Mabel, cordially. "I'm so glad you've come early, for I want you to receive with me. Stand right here beside me."

Rex neighed politely, and did as she asked. Scarcely had he taken his place, when Towser trotted in, with his tail in the air. Mabel shook his paw, and put him at her left. Next came the Goat, and soon after the Grey Rat. The Rat looked a little uneasy at being so far from its home under the pump, and seemed a little afraid of Towser; but Mabel was so friendly as to put it quite at its ease in a minute.

Then a sound of heavy steps was heard in the road, and presently the Mooly Cow walked in, swishing off flies with her tail.

She knew Rex and Towser, and, after being introduced to the other animals, went up and stood by Rex, who was about her own size. Next the Kitty-Cat pattered in. She had washed her face and paws till they were beautifully clean, and she wore a pink ribbon around her neck. She looked rather

hard at the Rat for a moment, but then went over by Towser, and sat down by his side. Not long after, they heard a sharp trot, and the Little Pig ambled in. He was as clean as could be, and his tail was curled up tight over his back, in his best party style. He went up to the Goat, and began to talk to him about the weather. Presently a sort of hippety-hop was heard, and the green Frog appeared, his back shining in the sun. Mabel shook his damp claw, and talked with him a moment, and then gave him a place next to the Grey Rat. All the animals were now paired off, and were talking in a lively way, all of them having a splendid time.

It was nearly three o'clock. Mabel looked down the road, and then raised her little hand to show the animals that she had something to say to them. They all stopped talking to listen.

"Animals," she said, "I think I ought to tell you that there is one other animal coming who will be here in a minute. I want to tell you about him now, so that you'll not be a bit afraid when you see him. He

is an old friend of mine, and you may be sure that he will be very, very good, so you need n't worry about him."

The animals all pricked up their ears, and looked interested.

"Yes," added Mabel, "he will be here in a minute, and I will tell you who he is. He is a — Wolf."

The animals gave a big jump, and looked greatly frightened,— all except Rex and Towser.

"Now, mind," said Mabel; "he is a Good Wolf, and won't hurt any of you. I think I hear him coming now."

Sure enough, the sound of footsteps was heard on the road. All the animals except Rex and Towser were very nervous.

"Here he is," cried Mabel, as she went forward to the opening in the grove; and just at that moment the great Wolf came moving through the grass in plain sight. The animals stared at him as hard as they could. Most of them had never seen a wolf before, and their hearts beat very fast. He seemed enormous, as he walked into the grove. His great thick legs, his big head

and jaws, his sharp claws, his big eyes, all looked fearful to them at first.

"Good afternoon, Wolf," said Mabel. "You are just in time, and we are all very glad to see you. You know Rex and Towser; let me introduce you to the other animals. This is the Grey Rat; this is the Frog; here is the Mooly Cow, and the Kitty-Cat; and this is the Little Pig. I think you have met the Goat before."

The Goat ducked his head, and looked embarrassed. He would have liked to run away; but the Wolf looked so pleasant that he felt better in a minute. All the animals noted how politely the Wolf smiled and bowed when he was introduced to them.

"Now," said Mabel, "as you're all here, I will have refreshments served. Towser, will you please go over to the kitchen-steps and bring the basket to me in your mouth?"

In a few minutes Towser was back again, carrying the basket which Mabel had very carefully got ready that morning. She took it from him, and opened the cover. The animals all looked interested. First, she took out something for the Wolf; because

she thought it just as well to give him something to do. So she handed him a great roast-beef bone, with about two pounds of beef on it, almost raw. He was so glad to get it that he gave a big growl of joy. The animals all jumped. Then she took out some toasted cheese for the Grey Rat, a package of dried flies for the Frog, and some chop-bones for Towser. The Goat had three apples in a paper-bag. He ate the bag off very carefully first, and then began on the apples. Then she gave the Cow four large turnips, and brought out a bag of oats for Rex. At the bottom of the basket was a large square of pig-cake, that she had cooked herself for the Little Pig. It was made of bran and potato-peelings, mixed up together, and was stuck full of horse-chestnuts, which pigs like as much as children do plums in a pudding.

When the animals had had their food given them, they all fell to eating as fast as they could. They munched and chewed and nibbled, stopping now and then to chat; and Mabel was delighted to see that they were having a splendid time, all except the

Frog. He seemed to be uneasy. He hitched his shoulders up, and rolled his eyes, and finally he stopped eating altogether, though he had only half finished his dried flies.

Mabel went up to him, to see what was the matter. Then she noticed that his skin had a curious cracked look, and that its green colour had grown very dim.

"What's the matter, Frog?" she asked softly so that no one could hear.

The Frog wriggled uneasily, and shifted about on his fore-paws, and then croaked out,—

"No water!"

Mabel understood in a minute. She knew that he was not used to being out of the water for so long a time, and she saw that the skin was getting parched and dry on his back. She looked around. All the animals were busy eating and talking.

"Come," she said, "I'll give you some water."

Then she took him quickly up in her hands, and slipped away with him to the house. She carried him upstairs very carefully into the bath-room, where there was a

fine big tub lined with porcelain. The Frog looked into it eagerly, and then groaned.

"No water!" croaked he.

"Oh, but there will be water," said Mabel. "I can have the tub full of it in a minute."

The Frog looked doubtful. He did not see how she could fill the tub with water when there was no water there. He croaked sorrowfully.

"Now see," said Mabel, putting one hand on the faucet.

The Frog looked; she turned the handle, and, swish! a great stream of cold water began pouring into the bath-tub. The Frog was so surprised that he nearly fell out of her hand.

"Do you see that?" said Mabel, laughing. The Frog thought that it was magic.

Pretty soon the tub was half full.

"Jump!" said Mabel.

The Frog gathered up his hind-legs and gave a jump — plunk! splash! down into the bath-tub. Oh, how good the cool water felt to him! He swam about, sometimes sinking to the bottom, and sometimes floating on the top, as happy as if he were in

his own brook. When he had had a good swim, Mabel lifted him out, his skin all glistening and shiny with the water that dripped from his back, and carried him carefully in a soap-dish back to the grove. Then he croaked in a contented sort of way, and nestled down in the grass to eat the rest of his dried flies with a splendid appetite.

The animals were now as much at home as could be. They walked about chatting together, and they were no longer afraid of the Good Wolf. They were even glad that he had come; because now they could tell all their friends how they had seen a real, live wolf, and how they had heard him talk. The Little Pig went up close to the Wolf, and walked all around him, looking at him very carefully; and the Grey Rat even went up behind him, and touched his hind-paw, so as to be able to say that it had actually felt of a Wolf.

About five o'clock the Mooly Cow noticed that the sun was going down, and knew that it was time for her to go home and be milked. So she went up to Mabel, and told her how she had enjoyed the party,

and said good-bye. Next the Little Pig left, then the Frog, then the Kitty-Cat, and last the Wolf. Mabel's own animals then went to the back-yard,—Rex to his stable, Towser to his dog-house, the Goat to the orchard, and the Grey Rat to the pump. They had all had a splendid time, and so had Mabel. She picked up the basket, and went back to the house with a sigh of satisfaction.

"I think I've had a lovely party," she said to Grandma, as she went in at the door.

"Yes, I really think you have," said Grandma, who had watched the whole affair rather anxiously from an upstairs window.





## IX. THE TRICKS OF THE BAD WOLF

**D**OWN in the woods where the Good Wolf lived there lived also a Bad Wolf. He was a long, lank, hungry-looking animal, with mangy fur, and great jagged yellow teeth. He seldom came out in the day-time, but slept from sunrise till sunset in a dark den where he had one small cub. When it grew dark, the Bad Wolf would come slinking out of the den, and go prowling around in the night looking for little rabbits that were asleep in their burrows. When he found them, he would break their necks and carry them back to his den to eat. He did not like the Good Wolf and the Good Wolf did not like him; though they were fairly polite to each other when they met.

The day after Mabel's animal party, just at sunset, the Good Wolf was walking past the Bad Wolf's den, when the Bad Wolf looked out and saw him going by.

"Hullo!" growled the Bad Wolf. "I heard a funny thing about you last night. The Fox told me that he saw you out in the road near a house in the daytime."

"Yes," said the Good Wolf. "That's so. I went into the yard of the house, too."

"Wha-a-t?" cried the Bad Wolf. "Into the yard! Did any one see you?"

"Why, yes," said the Good Wolf, carelessly. "The little girl who lives there saw me, and came out where I was."

"Really?" said the Bad Wolf, who was greatly interested. "And did you eat her up? Aha, I wish I could get a little girl to eat! My brother once caught a little girl and ate her; and he said that she was the tenderest bit of food that he ever had in his life! Maybe you've got a little piece of her left, hey? If you have, you might give me just a taste, you know."

"No," said the Good Wolf, shortly. "I didn't eat her."

"No? Why not? What a stupid thing!"

"Well," said the Good Wolf, "you see, she knows the Call."

"Oh!" said the Bad Wolf. "I wonder how she learned it."

"I don't know," answered the Good Wolf. "But anyhow, I would n't touch her, for she's a dear little thing."

"Pooh!" sneered the Bad Wolf. "You're no kind of a Wolf to talk like that. Was there anything else to eat there?"

"Yes," said the Good Wolf. "There were lots of animals,—a horse, a cow, a dog, a pig, and a goat, besides some small animals."

"Well, of course you killed *them*," cried the Bad Wolf. "What a lot of meat you must have now!"

"No," said the Good Wolf, "I didn't touch one of them. You see the Little Girl made me promise not to."

"Ugh!" snarled the Bad Wolf. "You're a regular fool-wolf. The idea of not killing them, just because a little girl asked you not to. Ugh!"

"Don't call me any names," said the Good Wolf; and he bristled up the hair on his neck and showed his long white teeth. The Bad Wolf felt afraid.

"Oh, I'll take it back," he said hastily. "I didn't mean anything. But where do these animals live?"

"I don't know where most of them live," said the Good Wolf. "But the horse, the dog, and the goat stay on the place where the Little Girl lives. Not that it's any of your business," he added, roughly.

"Ho!" said the Bad Wolf, sulkily. "You need n't be so cross about it."

But the Good Wolf did n't want to listen to the Bad Wolf any longer, so he turned his back on him and trotted off through the underbrush. The Bad Wolf watched him till he was lost to sight in the gathering darkness.

"Hateful beast!" snarled he. "I'd like to stick my teeth in his throat!"

Then he went back into his den and lay down on his bed of dried leaves to wait till it should be really dark. As he lay there, he thought over all that he had learned from

the Good Wolf. He remembered how the Good Wolf had said that the large animals lived in the yard at Mabel's; and he wondered whether he might not be able to creep in there and get one of them. He did not think much about killing a horse, because he was afraid of being kicked by his hoofs, nor did he like dog-meat; but he thought of the Goat, and the more he thought the more he felt that a goat would be very good eating for himself and his cub. A whole goat would last them for at least a week. Finally, he could n't stand it any longer.

"I 'll do it," he said to himself.

He slipped out of the den in the darkness, and prowled around till he found the Fox. He asked the Fox where the house was at which the Good Wolf had been the day before, and the Fox told him. Then the Bad Wolf went out into the bushes and sharpened up his teeth on a long flint stone; and about midnight he stole out of the woods into the road, and went stealthily along it, over the bridge where the Frogs lived, past the Cross Dog's house, and finally came to Mabel's front gate. He raised the latch

with his nose, and went into the yard, gliding around to the back of the house.

The moon was not shining; but the sky was full of stars so that the night was not so very dark. As the Bad Wolf peered about, he saw the Goat lying fast asleep near the barn. The Wolf slid along in the grass, and got ready to make a leap at the Goat and catch him by the throat so as to choke him and keep him from making a noise. He glared at the poor sleeping Goat so hard that he did n't notice Towser, who lay in his dog-house not far away, with his head toward the door.

Towser was not asleep, for the mosquitoes had been troubling him a good deal, and his eyes were still open. All of a sudden he saw a great black body gliding across the yard toward the place where the Goat lay sleeping. In a minute he was wide awake; and three sniffs of his nose told him that the creature stealing into the yard was a wolf. Towser was a large dog, but he was not so large as a wolf, nor so strong; yet he was very brave. He did not stop to think whether or not he could beat a wolf. He

was ready to fight at any time; and now he was glad to think that he had not been asleep. He rose softly in his dog-house and stood all ready to spring, watching the movements of the Bad Wolf, and opening his mouth to bite him. The Bad Wolf was now only about six feet from the Goat; in a minute more he would have rushed upon him; when Towser gave a fearful yell and leaped like a streak of lightning right on top of the Wolf, and buried his teeth in the Wolf's back.

Now wicked wolves like wicked men are apt to be cowards, and Towser's rush was so sudden that the Bad Wolf was frightened half to death. He didn't know whether it was a dog or a lion; and he didn't wait to see, but gave one awful howl and turned and ran out of the yard as hard as he could go. As he went out of the gate he scraped Towser off his back, and then ran down the road toward the woods, howling at the top of his voice.

The Farmer happened to be sitting up late that night mending a harness; and he heard the howls of the Bad Wolf long

before he reached the house. A moment later, looking out of the window, the Farmer saw a great black animal running down the road.

"Ha!" said the Farmer. "I'll get my gun and just pepper him!"

So he snatched his shot-gun down from the wall and poked it out of the window. Bang! went the shot-gun just as the Wolf was passing the house; and it filled his skin full of shot. It was bird-shot and not very large, so that it did not kill him; but it stung him fearfully, and he gave a yell ten times as loud as before, and plunged off into the fields. When he reached the woods, he dashed into his den, and rolled on the leaves in pain, rubbing his sides with his paws, and grunting and snarling.

"What's the matter?" cried his little wolf-cub, waking up and running over to him.

"Get along with you!" snarled the Bad Wolf, cuffing him over the head, and driving him back to his corner of the den.

All the next day he lay on his leaves and grunted and moaned. The Good Wolf, who

had heard all about it from the Fox, came in, pretending that he had heard nothing.

"Good-morning," said he. "Why, what's the matter? You don't look well."

"No," said the Bad Wolf, who did not want any one to know what had happened. "I—I—I—had a fall last night off a high fence, and bruised my back."

"Curious thing," said the Good Wolf. "Why, your back looks as though it was full of little holes!"

"Ugh," grunted the Bad Wolf. "Yes—I fell down into a lot of briar-bushes, and the thorns stuck into me."

"Oh!" said the Good Wolf, smiling. "Then if I were you, I should n't walk on fences. Wolves generally don't, you know."

The Bad Wolf lay there all day in a very unhappy state of mind, slowly picking out the shot from his skin with his teeth, and rubbing his wounds with rattlesnake-oil, which is the great medicine for wolves. He thought a good deal about what had happened, and he felt a dreadful hate for the Farmer.

"I wasn't doing anything to *him*,"

thought the Bad Wolf. "What did he want to shoot at me for? I'll get even with him some day."

So he thought and thought and thought, until he was simply wild with hate; and he said to himself that as soon as he was well he would do something to punish the Farmer.

The next night the shot-holes were beginning to heal up, so he crept out of his den once more and caught a rabbit. After he had eaten it, he went through the fields near the Farmer's house, and prowled around there in the dark a long while. He did this every night for a week, and in that time he found out some things that interested him very much. One was that the Farmer had a little daughter; the other was that, in the warm summer weather, many of the windows of the house were left open all night long. The Bad Wolf thought over those things a great deal. If he could only get into the house some night through the windows, he could carry off the little girl to his den and eat her. He had always wanted to eat a little girl; and besides, to do this would

punish the Farmer worse than anything that he could do. But he was too much of a coward to try such a thing all alone. He was dreadfully afraid of the shot-gun; and so he said to himself that he would get some other animal to fight the Farmer, while he himself caught the little girl. He was very mean in this, for he rather hoped that the Farmer would kill the other animal while the little girl was being carried off.

"If he does," said the Bad Wolf to himself, "then I can have the whole of the little girl for my own eating."

So he went about, looking for some one to help him. He knew that the Good Wolf would not have anything to do with such a plan, so he went first to the Brown Bear who lived among the rocks in the middle of the woods. But the Brown Bear, as soon he heard of it, grew very angry with the Bad Wolf, and struck him a blow with his big paw that knocked him head over heels. Then he tried the Wild Cat that lived in a great beech-tree near the edge of the woods; but the Wild Cat did not like the Bad Wolf, and told him so.

"You are a thief and a coward," said the Wild Cat; "and you only want to get me into trouble so that you may have something to eat for yourself. Go on, or I'll claw your fur off!"

So the Bad Wolf had to give up the idea of getting help from any of the animals that he knew. Yet he would not give up his plan; and at last he became so set upon it, that he decided to do a very desperate thing.

"I'll go to the Red Wolves in the Lonely Forest!" said he. Now the Red Wolves were wolves that had nothing to do with the wolves that were black. They were much bigger and fiercer, and usually hunted in packs, so that even men with guns never liked to meet them. They lived in a great forest called the Lonely Forest, about twenty miles away from the woods where the Bad Wolf's den was. The Lonely Forest was as dark as night even in the daytime; for the vines grew all over the tops of the trees and shut out the light; and there were great marshes and black pools in it, and gloomy caverns and huge dark dens where the Red Wolves prowled all day and night. It was

a fearful place; and if the Bad Wolf had not been very wicked and very revengeful he would never have thought of going there for help against the Farmer.

Nevertheless, he did make up his mind to visit the Lonely Forest; so one night after midnight he set out on his journey, and reached the Lonely Forest just at daybreak. When he crept into its gloomy shadows and saw how dark and dreadful it looked, he shivered with fear; but he had gone too far to stop; so he tried to look brave as he slunk along through the thick fern and the matted ivy that tangled his feet at every step. He had gone about half a mile, and was in the very darkest and gloomiest part, when all of a sudden he heard a low growl that made his blood run cold. A moment later, a great head was thrust out of a thicket, and two red eyeballs glared at him like coals of fire. It was an enormous wolf that squatted there as a sort of sentinel.

“What do you mean,” said the Red Wolf, in a terrible voice, “by coming into the Lonely Forest,—you a Black Wolf, whom we tear in pieces whenever we find him?”

The Bad Wolf's voice trembled as he answered :

" I come as a friend," he said ; " and I wish to do you a favour. If you will let me tell you what I want, it will bring you meat for many days."

" Ugh ! " growled the Red Wolf. " We ask no favours of the Black Wolves. They are weak and cowardly. But come ! Follow me."

The Red Wolf led the way through the Forest, and the Black Wolf followed him. He was sorry enough now, to think that he had ever come to this fearful place. He fancied that perhaps the Red Wolf was only leading him to some dark cavern to be torn in pieces and eaten. His legs trembled so that he could scarcely walk ; but it was now too late to turn back. He must go on.

Presently the Red Wolf turned into a gloomy sort of glade, and came to an open place where the ground was cleared of bushes and was perfectly level. Great rocks rose on three sides of it, and walled it in like a room. At the end was a spring of water, by which lay three wolves. The

one in the middle was the biggest wolf that the Bad Wolf had ever seen. He was covered with shaggy, red hair, so long that it swept the ground, and on the top of his head was a thick tuft of fur almost as red as fire. He was a terrible-looking creature. The two wolves that sat on each side of him were not so large; but they were strong and fierce looking. One of them was almost grey. The wolf with the tuft on his head was the King of the Red Wolves; and the other two were his messengers.

When the King saw the Bad Wolf coming with the Guide, he sat up on his haunches.

"What have you there?" he asked, in a voice that made the rocks ring. "A Black Wolf? Ha! Why did you not kill him, and bring his body here?"

"He asks to speak with you," said the Guide, bowing low and rubbing his nose on the ground. "He promises much meat, if you will hear him."

"Speak on, Black Wolf," commanded the King; "but use few words. I like not the voice of the Black Wolves."

"Great King of the Red Wolves," said the Bad Wolf, "I come to offer you a rare hunt. Near the woods where I live stands the house of a man, a Farmer. In it live the Farmer and his wife and his little girl. At night they do not close their windows, but leave them open. Send one or two of your best fighters with me, and I will lead them to this house. They can enter in the night, and kill the Farmer and his wife and his little girl. Good eating for you, O King of the Red Wolves!"

"Ha!" growled the King. "Why do you come here to tell me this, and why do you not keep this eating for your own kind, — you, a Black Wolf and no friend to us? You mean some trick, some treachery, ha?"

"No, King of the Red Wolves," said the Bad Wolf, "I mean no trick. I will speak the truth. I hate the Farmer, and I wish him eaten; but I am not strong enough to enter and to fight with him. It is you and your wolves who are strong and brave."

"Good!" said the King. "I understand. I will give you the two you ask; but you are not to expect for any portion of the

meat yourself. Yours shall be all the revenge, and ours shall be all the meat."

The Bad Wolf looked crestfallen at this; but he thought to himself, "Aha! while they are fighting, I'll make sure of the little girl, and slip away with her."

But he said aloud:—

"I agree. Send with me two of your wolves."

The King spoke to his Messengers.

"Go you," he said, "with the Black Wolf, and hunt as he shall direct. And do you go, too," he said, turning to the Guide.

"There is no need of three," said the Bad Wolf. "Why do you send him also?"

"To watch you!" said the King, in a terrible voice; "and if he finds you playing any treacherous trick, he shall tear you in pieces and drink your blood!"

The Bad Wolf trembled.

"I — I — am a faithful ally," said he. "I — I play no tricks."

"You had better not!" growled the King. "Now go! These wolves will stay with you here till nightfall; and then all of

you can go forth on the hunt for man's meat."

The three wolves then led the Bad Wolf back to a great dark cave whose sides were slimy with toadstools, and kept him there all day. They gave him a piece of bull-meat for his dinner, and some water in a turtle-shell. When it was nearly night, they called him ; and the four set out together on their long run across the open fields. The Grey Wolf ran on one side of the Bad Wolf, and the other Messenger on the other. The Guide followed close behind him.

On and on and on they went, trotting swiftly over hill and dale, through bushes and briars, past groves and swamps, swimming through rivers, and wading through brooks. At about midnight, they passed around the Bad Wolf's woods, and came to the Farmer's yard.

"There!" said the Bad Wolf, pointing. "There is the house where the Farmer lives."

The lights in the house were all out; but the starlight showed where it was. The four wolves crept up to the house, and then

lay down for a while to rest a little after their long run, and to get their breath for the fight.

Now it happened that on this particular evening, a strong breeze was blowing, so that the night was very cool; and the Farmer had shut the lower windows of the house, and locked them fast. Consequently, when the four wolves had got their breath, and had crawled stealthily up to the house, they found no opening within their reach. The Red Wolves turned fiercely on the Bad Wolf.

"You have lied to us!" snarled they.  
"You have lied to us, and you shall die!"

"No, no!" cried the Bad Wolf. "I told you the truth; only it is different somehow to-night. But see! see! there is an upper window open!"

Sure enough, an upper window on the second floor was still unfastened. The reason of it was, that the Farmer, after undressing himself and putting out the lights, had felt like smoking his pipe before going to bed, and was sitting in his chair by the window at that very moment. But of

course the wolves did not know this. They only saw that the window was open.

"It's very high," said the Grey Wolf. "We can never jump so high as that."

"No," said the Guide; "but we must get in. Let us make a pile of wolves. I will stand at the bottom; the Black Wolf, here, can climb on my back; you two can get up on him; and the top wolf can easily climb into the window."

"Yes," said the Grey Wolf; "but there will then be only one to fight the man. Is that enough?"

"There'll be no fight," said the Guide. "They're all asleep. Do you slip softly in, and find their sleeping-room, and kill them while they sleep. One good bite in the throat for each will be enough. Come! Make the pile."

As he spoke, the Guide took his place under the window, and the Bad Wolf tried to climb upon his back. But he was clumsy, and the strange thing that he was doing so excited him that he could scarcely keep his balance upon the Red Wolf. He had to try it several times. The other

wolves helped him; and when he showed himself so awkward, they growled at him, and threatened him with their teeth.

Now the Farmer, as he sat inside the room smoking, heard the growls and the scuffling of paws on the ground below; and he leaned over very cautiously and looked out. There were four great wolves right under the window.

"Jiminy!" said the Farmer to himself. "What's all this?"

The Farmer had been a great hunter when he was a young man, and he knew in a minute that the wolves were Red Wolves, strong and fierce, and not cowardly like most of the Black Wolves. He knew, too, that they had come to enter his house and to kill him and his wife and his little girl. He could not at first see how they expected to get in; but a second peep showed him their plan,—that they were going to climb up upon each other's backs to the open window.

"Jiminy!" said the Farmer again. "The pesky critters! I'll pepper their hides."

So he took down his gun and his powder-

horn, and began to load. He put in a tremendous charge of powder and then felt for his bag of bullets. All of a sudden, he remembered that it was empty.

"Jiminy!" said he, "I'll have to use shot."

But when he took up his shot-pouch, he found that he had no shot left either, not even bird-shot. He was greatly startled. He put his gun down, and took another peep out of the window. By this time, three of the wolves had got into place,—the Guide on the ground, the Bad Wolf next, and one of the Messengers on his back. In a few minutes more the Grey Wolf would be climbing into the window. The Farmer thought hard. An idea came into his head.

"Hurray!" said he, under his breath. "*I'll fix 'em!*"

He remembered that the next day was his wife's washing-day, and that everything in the kitchen was ready for it. He hurried downstairs in his bare feet to the basement. There, on the big stove, was a great copper cauldron full of hot water, all ready

for the morning's wash. It held about eight gallons of water, all steaming and scalding hot.

"Aha!" cried the Farmer, joyfully.  
"We'll have a wolf-wash!"

He lifted the cauldron off the fire by the handle, and carried it quickly up the stairs to the open window, and rested it on the sill. Just at that moment the huge head of the Grey Wolf appeared at the opening, his jaws wide open, his teeth gleaming, and his eyes glaring in the darkness.

"Take that!" roared the Farmer; and he upset the whole cauldron out of the window.

A perfect cataract of scalding water went sizzling right into the face of the Grey Wolf, and down the backs of the other wolves below. Every drop was as hot as a coal of fire, and burned and scalded straight through their fur. The four wolves gave a horrible yell of pain; and the whole pile of them tumbled to the ground, writhing and squirming and howling. Just then the Farmer, who was watching them, remembered something. He turned back into the

room, struck a match, and took down from the shelf a paper of long tacks.

“Why did n’t I think of this before ? ” he said.

He picked up his gun and poured the whole paper of tacks into the gun-barrel, and then rammed down a piece of paper after it. Then he went to the window and took aim at the four wolves that were writhing in a solid mass below.

“Bang ! ” went the gun, with a great spirit of fire ; and in half a second about a thousand tacks were sticking all over the skins of the wolves, like cloves in a pudding.

This was more than they could stand. With loud howls, they rushed across the lawn, and tore down the road as fast as their legs could carry them. Their skins burned so from the scalding water that, when they reached the brook where the Frogs lived, they jumped right into it, and lay down in the cool water. Oh, how good it felt ! But the moment the Red Wolves felt a little better, they all three leaped upon the Bad Wolf, who had brought them into so much trouble. They seized him by the

neck and held him under the water till they thought he was drowned, all the while biting him and snapping great pieces out of his back. When they supposed that he was dead, they came out of the brook and hurried home to the Lonely Forest; for they knew that it would be daylight very soon, and that if they should be seen, parties of men would come out with guns, and shoot them.

The Bad Wolf was not dead, but he was almost dead; and when he crawled out of the brook, it took him all the rest of the night to hobble back to his den. His ears were bitten off, big strips of fur had been scalded out by the hot water, and his skin was full of tacks. The next morning he lay on his bed of leaves groaning, when the Good Wolf happened along, and came in. The Fox had told him something of what had happened.

"Good-morning," said he to the Bad Wolf. "Why, what's the matter? You don't seem well!"

The Bad Wolf was too miserable to think of any new excuse, so he said,—

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"I—I—I fell off a fence and hurt my back."

"What again?" said the Good Wolf, with a grin. "Well you look as though when you fell, you'd fallen into a sausage-chopper!"

And he went away laughing.





## X. THE GIANT'S CASTLE

FOR a long time Mabel always took the same morning ride, going along the straight road that led to the Little Pig's red house, because she was afraid that she might get lost if she tried any new and unknown roads. But when she found that she was six years old, she felt that she could do things that she had never done before; and besides, she was growing tired of always riding over the same road and seeing the same things every day. So one beautiful morning she made up her mind that she would take a ride in a different direction, and try to see some parts of the country that she had never seen before.

"I'm going a different way, this morning, Grandma," she said, as she went out of the house. "There's a road that goes to

the left after you pass the Kitty-Cat's, and I'm going to ride that way."

"Very well," said Grandma, "only don't go too far. Be back to luncheon."

"Oh, I'll be back in time," said Mabel, as she went to the barn and climbed on Rex's back for her new ride.

Down the road she trotted, past the Cross Dog's house, and over the bridge where the Frogs lived, and past the Mooly Cow's and the Kitty-Cat's, till she came to the road that branched off to the left. Mabel pulled on the left rein, and Rex, much to his surprise, turned into the new course. It was a winding road, going in and out of groves and small woods, and passing between meadows that were bright with flowers. Mabel was so pleased with the change from the old sights, that she went farther and farther, now making Rex trot, and now making him gallop. The sun shone bright; the air was soft and warm; and both Mabel and Rex enjoyed every minute of the time. At last, as she came out of a dense grove, Mabel saw before her a great, broad river, shining like silver in the sunlight. Over it

was a splendid stone bridge. She had never seen a river before; and she rode quickly upon the bridge, and looked up and down the vast stream that flowed along with a million ripples among the arches. Then she crossed it and came to a road, wider than any road that she had ever seen before, and passing between fields fenced with stone. Each field was so large that she could scarcely see the fences on the other side; and here and there she saw men working, dressed in red from head to foot.

"How strange!" said Mabel to herself.  
"It's like a picture-book."

On she rode, and still she saw these great wide fields and groups of men in red. At last she found three or four of the men working near the fence by the side of the road, so she went up to them and spoke to them.

"Good-morning, men," she said. "Who owns all these great fields?"

The men looked at her and laughed.

"Don't you know?" asked one of them.  
"Why, the Giant owns them."

Mabel laughed in her turn.

"They're making fun of me," said she to Rex, and rode on.

Pretty soon she found some more men near the roadside, all dressed in red like the others; and she stopped and spoke to them also.

"Who owns these fields?" she asked. And the men answered with a look of surprise,—

"Why, the Giant owns them, of course."

"Dear me!" said Mabel. "Do they really mean it?"

And then she asked:—

"What's the Giant's name, please?"

"Ha, ha!" laughed the men. "Where have you been that you don't know about the Giant? His name is Cormoran, and he lives in the castle over the hill."

"Really?" said Mabel. "And why do you all dress in red?"

"Oh, because red is the Giant's favourite colour," said they; "and all his people dress in red."

"Well, well!" said Mabel. "Where did you say his castle is?"

"Straight ahead of you, over the hill," said they.

"And is he a good Giant?" asked Mabel, curiously.

"W-e-l-l, pretty good," said one of the men, rather doubtfully. "When he ain't put out, he's pretty good; but when he don't feel just right, we have to get out of his way, I can tell you!"

Mabel thought a moment.

"Anyway," she said, "I'll just ride up to the top of the hill and take a peep. Nobody'll notice me; and I'd love to see a Giant's castle, just for once."

So she rode up the steep hill, and when she reached the very top she gave a cry of wonder. There beneath her, in a beautiful green valley, was an immense great castle, so enormous that it seemed like a whole city. It was built of grey stone, and its roofs were peaked, and covered with thick gold-leaf so that they glittered in the sunlight. Immense towers, each one as big as ten church steeples, rose above the roofs, and on the central tower there floated an enormous red flag.

"Is n't it wonderful!" cried Mabel, as she looked.

There was no one in sight anywhere; and Mabel was so astonished by the vast size of the castle that she forgot to be afraid; and she began to want to ride down the hill so as to see everything better.

"I'll just go up to the front gate," said Mabel to herself. "If I see any one coming out, I can turn around and make Rex gallop away quick. I'll do it!"

So down she rode into the valley, looking at the castle all the time with her mouth wide open. As she came nearer and nearer to it, she saw how large the blocks of stone were, and how immense the windows were, and she wondered more and more. It was stranger than anything in her picture-books.

Presently, she reached the front entrance, and found a double door of iron studded with brass nails, and with great spikes on the top of it. The door was almost as high as an ordinary house; and Mabel wondered how any one could be strong enough to push it open. She noticed that the lock was bigger than her whole body, and the key-hole wide enough for her to put her head in.

"I wonder if I could peep through the cracks in the door," said Mabel to herself; and she was making Rex go nearer to the entrance when — all of a sudden the great door flew wide open, and a man rushed out, all dressed in red from head to foot. Mabel gave a scream, and tried to make Rex gallop off; but as soon as the man saw her, he gave a jump and caught at the bridle.

"Hurray!" he said. "What luck! Here's one now!"

Mabel was terribly frightened.

"Let me go! Let me go!" she cried, trying to pull the reins out of the man's hand.

"No, no, don't go," he said, "please don't go! Don't be afraid; nobody's going to hurt you."

Mabel looked at him carefully. He had a good face, and did not seem like a cruel man.

"Don't go," he repeated.

"What do you want?" asked Mabel.

"Why, I want you to come inside the castle for a little while. It won't do you any harm; and if you don't come, why I

shall be eaten up by the Giant at sun-down."

"How do you mean?" asked Mabel.

"Well, I'll tell you," said the man. "You see the Giant's little girl has been dreadfully sick for a long time, and she's just getting better. But she can't go out yet, and has to lie on the sofa in the nursery all day long. She's terribly lonely without any one to play with; and the Giant thinks she'd get well faster if she could be amused. So he's just sent me out this morning to find a playmate for her, and said that if I didn't bring one back to-day, he'd eat me up. Now you're just what I want — a nice good-looking little girl. So please come in and play with her a while, won't you?"

"Oh," said Mabel, who was sorry for the man, "I'd like to oblige you, but I'm afraid of the Giant."

"Pooh!" said the man, "if you'll play with his little girl, he'll be as good as can be; and besides you won't be likely to see him anyhow. Will you come in?"

"And can I come away again when I want to?" asked Mabel.

"Oh, yes! You just play a little while, and then say you 'll come back again some other day, and they 'll let you out."

Mabel hesitated. She was very curious to see the inside of the castle, but she still felt a little afraid.

"What is the little girl's name?" asked she.

"Elsie," said the man; "and she 's a real pleasant little girl, too. She 'll be awfully glad to see you."

"W-e-l-l," said Mabel, slowly, "I 'll come in, if you 're sure they 'll let me out as soon as I want to leave."

"Oh, yes," said the man, who looked very happy, now that he saw Mabel was going to go inside. "Thank you very much, little girl. Now I won't have to be eaten."

He went up to the great double door and pulled a chain.

Clang! Clang! went a big bell, and the door flew wide open. Mabel looked in and saw a vast courtyard as large as a meadow. It was paved with stone, and the inner windows of the castle opened upon it. On one side was a great inner doorway with stone steps. A number of men dressed



Honor Frostreece '15.

Mabel looked up, and her heart nearly stopped beating, for out of the window came an enormous face.

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in red and looking like soldiers, were standing about. They carried spears and had iron hats on their heads.

The man led Rex into the courtyard, with Mabel still seated in the saddle.

"Who comes here?" asked one of the spearmen in red.

"A playmate for the little Lady Elsie," said Mabel's man.

The spearmen all bowed very low.

"She is welcome," said they all.

"Come, take care of her horse," said Mabel's man, "while I show her up to the nursery."

So one of them lifted Mabel off Rex's back, and another took Rex by the head to lead him to the stable.

"This way, little girl," said Mabel's man, and he started to show her toward the door on the right. Just at that moment a window above was opened with a loud bang. Mabel looked up, and her heart nearly stopped beating, for out of the window came an enormous face. It was the Giant. His head was as large as a haystack, and was fringed with a long red

beard. Tufts of red hair stuck out under his helmet, and his eyes were like great lamps as he looked down into the courtyard. He opened his mouth and spoke; and his voice was like the roll of thunder.

"WHAT HAVE YOU THERE?" he bellowed; and Mabel nearly fainted when she heard his tremendous voice.

"A playmate for the little Lady Elsie," answered Mabel's man.

"OH!" roared the Giant; and he smiled a smile six feet long. He was evidently very much pleased.

"GOOD!" he continued. "SHOW HER UP TO THE NURSERY."

And he banged the window down again and went away.

"See," said the man, "he's all right now. He'll be pleased all the rest of the day. Come on."

They went in through the doorway, where there was a tall flight of stairs. Each step was so high that Mabel could not stretch her little legs up from one to the other; but the man took her under the arms and boosted her a step at a time, till at last they reached

the top of the stairs, where was a white, enamelled door. The man knocked on it, and blew a silver whistle.

"Come in!" said a loud voice inside.

The man pushed the door open, and told Mabel to go in. She found herself in a long, high room, about the size of a small church. It was a very pretty room. It was papered in white and gold, and carpeted with soft, fleecy rugs, and had a great many tall, silver vases here and there, filled with big clusters of roses and pinks; and at one end was a big bay-window curtained with exquisite lace and rose-coloured silk, through which the sunlight streamed in and flooded the room with warmth and colour. At one side of the room was a sofa about as long as two ordinary beds, with pillows of pale-blue silk, and a pretty spread of silk and lace. There lay the Giant's little girl, looking eagerly toward her new playmate. She was about eight feet tall, being small for her age, and she had dark hair and brown eyes. Her cheeks were pale; but she had a beautiful face which lighted up as she saw Mabel.

"Oh, goody!" she said, "now I've got some one to play with! But ain't you awfully little! Why you must be a dwarf!"

"No, I'm not!" said Mabel; "but you're awfully big. Why, they said you were a little girl!"

"So I am," said Elsie; "but you see I'm a Giant. What's your name?"

"Mabel."

"And how old are you?"

"Six," said Mabel, proudly.

"Why, so am I!" said Elsie; "I was six last week. Come over here, and I'll show you some of the toys that Papa gave me on my birthday. Here's my doll."

And she pulled out a doll from under her pillow. It was as large as Mabel herself.

"And here's my toy horse," she said, pulling out from behind her a wooden horse about the size of a Shetland pony.

"My! what big toys!" said Mabel.

"Oh, do you think so?" asked Elsie. "Here's my tin soldiers. Here's my jack-in-the box. Here's my new tea-set."

The tin soldiers were so heavy that Mabel could not lift them. The plates in the tea-

set were as big around as the top of a table.

"How funny!" said Mabel, laughing.

Just then a loud rustling and flapping made Mabel look behind her, and then she noticed a sort of bird-cage as big as a chicken-coop. In it was a great yellow bird rustling its wings.

"Oh!" said Mabel, "where did you get the eagle?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Elsie; "that is n't an eagle; that's my canary."

Mabel laughed too.

"It must be awfully queer to be a Giant," she said. "Don't you feel too big sometimes?"

"Oh, dear, no," said Elsie. "You see I was born big; and I should think *you*'d feel much too little."

"Not a bit," said Mabel. "You see *I* was born little."

"Well, have some candy," said Elsie. "My Papa gave me a lot of it on my birthday; but I can't eat any till I get well, so I'll give you some."

She drew out a pasteboard box from

under the sofa. It was about the size of a packing-box; and when she took the lid off, Mabel saw that it was lined with lace paper. Elsie took out a great lump of something that was brown in colour, and set it on the floor beside Mabel. It came up to her knees.

"What's that?" she said, looking at it curiously.

"Ha, ha," laughed Elsie. "Why, where have you been all your life? Did n't you ever see a chocolate-cream drop?"

"Gracious!" cried Mabel. "Is that a chocolate-cream drop? Why, just that one would last me for two weeks."

She tried to lift it up to her mouth to take a bite; but it was too heavy. Then she got down on her knees, and tried to bite a piece out of it; but it was so big that she could n't get hold of it with her teeth. Elsie looked on and laughed as though she would never stop.

"I can't get any," said Mabel, who had only succeeded in smearing the end of her nose with chocolate; "and I love chocolate-cream drops, too."

"Dear me," said Elsie, "there must be some way of doing it. I know! Look in my toy-box by the table, and you'll find a toy axe."

Mabel found the toy axe, which was as large as an ordinary hatchet, and with this she knelt down on the floor, and began to chop the chocolate-cream drop. Pretty soon she had chopped off some good-sized chunks, small enough to be held in the hand. They were delicious; and she sat on the floor eating them, while Elsie shook with laughter at the idea of taking an axe to a chocolate-cream drop.

Just at that moment a noise was heard in the hall, — bump! bump! bump! making the very walls tremble.

"What's that, Elsie?" asked Mabel, with her mouth full of chocolate-cream.

"Oh, that's my Papa coming downstairs," said Elsie; and, sure enough, a moment later the nursery-door opened, and Cormoran strode into the room.

Mabel knew that he would not do her any harm; but still she could not help feeling a little startled at being so near to a

Giant. He seemed bigger than ever, in the small nursery. He wore enormous jack-boots, and carried a long knife by his side. As he came in, he looked at the children. When he saw the toys scattered over the floor, and Mabel eating the chocolate-cream drop; and when he noticed how Elsie laughed, and how bright her eyes were, and how her pale cheeks were once more flushed with colour, his great face beamed with happiness, and he smiled hugely.

“HAVING A GOOD PLAY, ARE YOU?” he asked in his thunderous voice. “THAT’S RIGHT, PLAY AWAY! I HAVE N’T SEEN YOU LOOKING SO GAY IN MANY A WEEK, ELSIE.”

Then turning to Mabel, he said :

“YOU’RE A GOOD LITTLE GIRL. YOU MUST STAY WITH US.”

“Oh, no, I really can’t stay,” cried Mabel. “My Grandma would be so frightened. But I’ll come back and play with Elsie as often as you want; for I love her, and we’re having splendid fun together.”

"WELL, WELL," said the Giant. "I WON'T KEEP YOU; ONLY DON'T FORGET TO COME BACK EVERY FEW DAYS. AND WHEN YOU GET READY TO GO TO-DAY, JUST STOP AT MY DOOR ON YOUR WAY OUT, AND I'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING FOR A KEEPSAKE."

And with these words he went out of the nursery and shut the door. The children played together a long while, until Mabel suddenly remembered that it must already be after her luncheon-time, so she told Elsie that she would have to go.

"Well, good-bye, dear," said Elsie. "Don't forget to come again soon; and be sure you stop at my Papa's door at the other end of the hall."

They kissed each other; and Elsie rang a bell for the man in red to show Mabel the way out. First, he took her to the Giant's den, and knocked on the door.

"COME IN!" said a great voice, and the door opened, and Mabel found herself in the den. It was the largest room she had

ever seen. The walls were hung with clubs of every kind,—plain clubs and spiked clubs, and clubs with great knobs on them—besides spears, swords, knives, axes, and pikes. A long table was covered with books, each one as large as a door. Mabel, who had just learned to read a little, spelled out the names on the backs of two of them: *The Life of Og*, and *Men I have Eaten*. There were also a good many pictures on the walls, showing other Giants who were probably the relatives of Cormoran.

“WELL, LITTLE GIRL,” said the Giant kindly, “SO YOU’RE GOING HOME ARE YOU? I WANT TO GIVE YOU A LITTLE PRESENT.”

So he drew out a large drawer in the table, and told Mabel to take anything she liked. There were long strings of bright stones, blue and red and white; and even in the dark drawer they gleamed and shone as if they were darting sparks of fire. Each one was as big as a robin’s egg.

“HAVE A NECKLACE?” said the Giant, pulling out a dozen or more of them.

"No, thank you," said Mabel. "My Grandma says that it isn't nice to wear glass."

"HA, HA, HA!" roared the Giant, bursting into laughter so loud that Mabel stopped her ears up with her fingers. He was greatly amused to hear Mabel call the stones glass, for they were really the largest and finest gems in the world,—sapphires and rubies and diamonds.

"WELL, THEN, HAVE A RING," said he, still chuckling; and he showed her a box full of rings.

"I'm afraid they're too large," said Mabel; for the smallest was as big around as a hoople.

"BLESS ME!" said the Giant, "SO THEY ARE."

He seemed quite disturbed at not being able to give her anything. Finally an idea came into his head. He took out a great coil of frosted gold wire, and began to braid it into a belt. He worked quickly, and soon he had made a very quaint and curious band of an odd pattern.

"THERE!" he said, as he slipped it around her waist.

"Oh, thank you!" cried Mabel, who was no longer afraid of him. "Is n't that lovely! Good-bye."

"GOOD-BYE," said he. "DON'T FORGET TO COME AGAIN."

Mabel went out into the hall; and the man in red helped her down the big steps into the courtyard. As she passed through the door, the great bell of the castle clanged, and the spearmen stood in line and saluted her. One of them brought out Rex, who had had a fine dinner of giant-oats. The man in red lifted Mabel to the saddle; the outer gate flew open; she waved her hand to the men and spoke to Rex, and away she galloped out into the road, never stopping until she had passed the stone bridge, the Kitty-Cat's house, the Mooly Cow's, the Frogs' bridge, and the Cross Dog's, and come clattering into her own yard.

It was already four o'clock, and Grandma had begun to fear that Mabel was lost.

"Why, where have you been, Mabel?"

asked she. "You didn't come back to luncheon, and I was quite worried about you. Were you lost?"

"Oh, no," said Mabel; "but I've had such a good time that I forgot all about luncheon. You see I went down a new road, and there I met a little girl and played with her in her own nursery. She is a very good little girl, Grandma, and I'm going back to see her before long."

"What is her name?" said Grandma.

"Oh, Elsie," answered Mabel; "and she has lots of toys and candy and things."

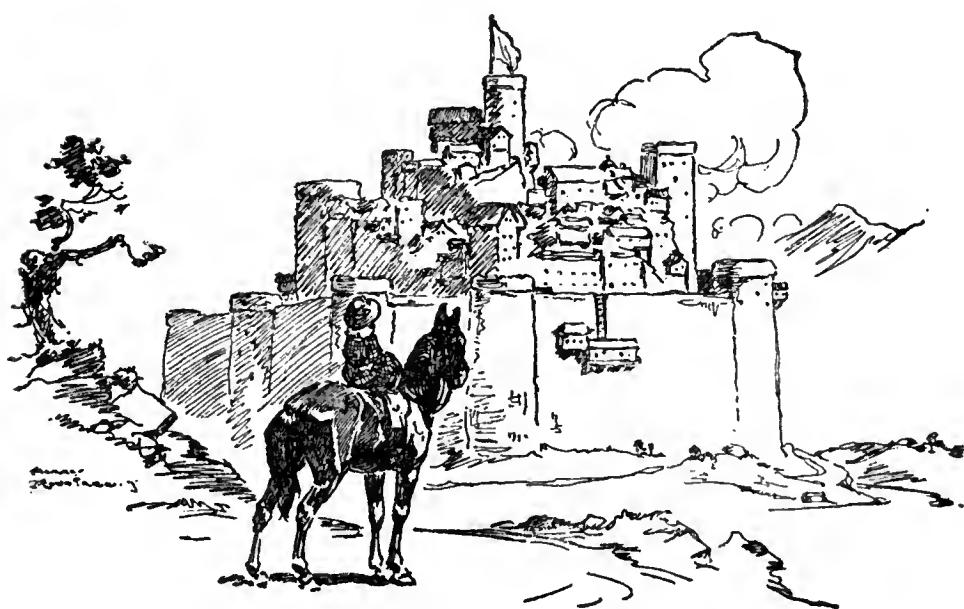
Just then Grandma noticed the golden belt that glittered in the sunlight around Mabel's waist.

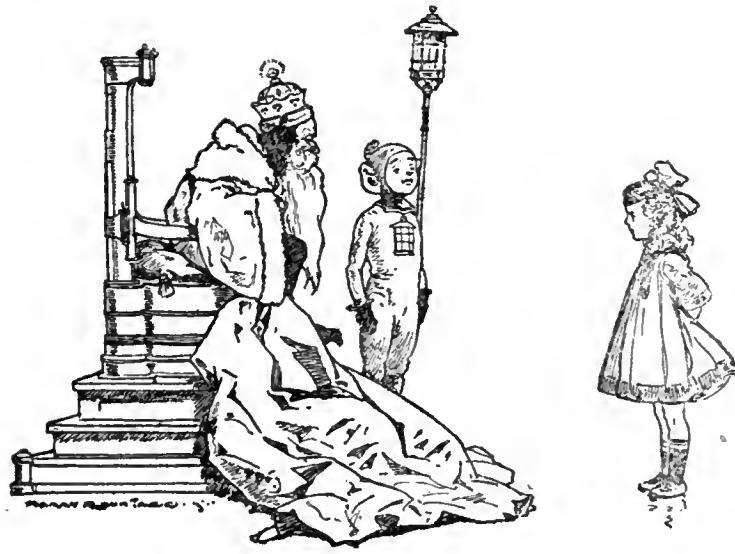
"Why, Mabel!" she cried. "Where did you get that belt? What a beautiful pattern! And it looks as bright and fine as real gold."

"Oh," said Mabel, "the little girl's Papa gave it to me. You see, the little girl has been sick and wanted some one to play with, so her Papa was very glad that I came."

"Dear me!" said Grandma. "I wonder who these people are."

But Mabel did not say anything about their being Giants, for she knew that Grandma would be dreadfully frightened if she heard that her little girl had been to visit a Giant's castle.





## XI. THE BROWNIE JELLY

ONE day, about two o'clock in the afternoon, Mabel put on her sunbonnet and took a little basket and went down into the woods to pick blackberries. It was getting to be rather late in the summer, and the berries were not very plenty, so that she had to go a long way into the woods before she found any bushes that were well filled. But at last she came upon a great thicket, full of briars, but with bushes on which the ripe berries were so thick that she cried out with joy when she saw them. Behind the thicket rose an enormous rock, half hidden by vines and creepers.

Mabel got down on her hands and knees, picking away as hard as she could; and

when she had gathered all the berries on the outside of the thicket, she began to creep along the ground into the midst of the bushes, avoiding the sharp briars, and reaching up for the berries that hung above her head. Further and further she crept, like a little mouse in a haystack, and by the time she had crawled through to the rock, her basket was nearly full. At this moment, however, she saw to her surprise that the base of the rock, which had been hidden by the bushes, was not solid, but that there was a large hole in it which seemed to have been hollowed out of the stone. It was an opening about half as high as Mabel herself, and appeared as though it led into a sort of dark tunnel in the rock.

"Well!" said Mabel, "that looks like a kind of cave. I wonder if it is."

She peered into the hole; but it was too dark for her to see what was inside of it, so she thought that she would crawl in just a little way to find out how far into the rock it went. In she crept on her hands and knees, and as soon as she had got inside, she discovered that the hole, instead of grow-

ing smaller or coming to an end, was even larger than it had looked. She felt of the sides and of the top with her hands, and found that by crawling a little further she could stand on her feet without touching the rock overhead.

"Dear me!" said she, greatly excited, "it's like a hall in a house. I wonder where it leads to."

She thought at first that it might be the den of some wild animal; so she whistled the Call two or three times, but got no answer.

"I'll go on," thought she. "I can easily find my way out;" for when she turned around she could still see the mouth of the cave, and the sunlight shining beyond it.

So on she walked, putting her feet down very carefully at every step, for fear she should fall into some hole; and pretty soon she came to a sharp turn in the passageway, where she had to go around a corner. As soon as she had turned the corner, she found a very broad, high passage; and at the end of it a long ray of light, like a bright pencil, shone far out into the dark-

ness. It seemed to come through a little hole in the rock at the end of the tunnel.

"What's that?" thought Mabel. "I'll walk very softly up to it and see."

A dozen more steps brought her to the chink through which the light was streaming. She groped about the wall with her little hands, and found that it felt like a great stone door, while the chink was exactly the shape of a key-hole. As she stood there, she could hear voices on the other side of the door, and now and then the sound of laughter and the strains of gay music. She was ever so curious, and was just putting up her head to peek through the key-hole, when all of a sudden she sneezed,—a loud, long sneeze. Instantly, even before she had stopped sneezing, the door in front of her flew wide open, a flood of brilliant light poured out into the dark tunnel, and in the doorway Mabel saw a funny little figure standing before her. He had a queer peaked cap on his head, and a comical, merry look on his face; and Mabel knew at once that he was a Brownie.

When the Brownie saw her he looked

very much surprised, and then began to laugh.

"Gracious goodness!" cried he. "A little girl! How in the world did you get here?"

"I crept through the bushes after berries," said Mabel, who was very much amused by the Brownie's looks; "and I found a big hole in the rock, and followed along until I reached this door."

"Well, well, well!" said the Brownie. "Come in."

He stepped aside; Mabel walked through the doorway; and he shut the door after her.

She found herself in a noble hall whose walls were panelled with silver, and whose ceiling was carved out of solid gold. Here and there, clusters of what looked like great pearls were embedded in the golden ceiling, and from them shone the soft, clear light that filled the hall with its radiance, and gleamed on the silver panels and the yellow gold. All about were easy-chairs of some rich white stuff; and huge cushions of velvet were placed along the sides of the hall. On them were seated half a dozen Brownies, chattering away to each other, while in the

middle of the hall a number of them were playing tag and leap-frog. Now and then, lively music could be heard, played by a band of musicians whom Mabel could not see.

When they saw Mabel, all the Brownies stopped talking and playing, and crowded about her with their bright little faces full of curiosity.

"A little girl!" they all shouted. "How did you come here?"

Mabel told them all about it; and as she told them, they laughed and chuckled. She looked at them very carefully all the while; and she could remember having seen pictures of most of them in one of her books. There was the Soldier Brownie, and the Sailor Brownie, the Policeman Brownie, the Dude Brownie, the Chinese Brownie, the Indian Brownie, and the Irish Brownie; but there were many new Brownies that she had never heard anything about.

When she had finished telling them how she had found her way into the cave, they all laughed again; and every one of them shook hands with her, and told her to make herself at home.

"Sit down on the big cushion near the wall," said the Brownie who had opened the door for her. "I've got to go and tell the King about your being here, and see what he has to say; but I'll be back soon. So have a good time with my brothers while I'm gone."

Mabel sat down and watched them as they romped about, playing all sorts of tricks on each other, and laughing at every kind of joke, while the music played the gayest tunes. Pretty soon a Waiter Brownie came up to Mabel with a gold tray on which stood a silver jar. It was open, and was full of something amber-coloured, in which there was a small gold spoon.

"What's this?" asked Mabel, as she looked at it.

"Jelly," said the Waiter Brownie. "Taste it; it's awfully good."

Mabel took the golden spoon, and put a little of the jelly in her mouth.

"Ah-h-h!" she said, rolling up her eyes.

It was the most delicious morsel that she had ever tasted in her life. It was like all

the loveliest kinds of ice-cream blended together, with pounded almonds and chocolate and strawberries; and it melted away on her tongue like honey.

"Ah-h-h!" said Mabel again; and she took the jar into her lap and began eating the jelly slowly to make it last as long as she could. When she had finished, she scraped the bottom and then gave a great sigh of satisfaction.

Just at this moment, the Brownie whom she had first seen came back into the hall, and beckoned to her.

"The King wants to see you," he said. "Come with me, and I'll show you the way."

He led her out through a short passage, and into a room that was the most splendid room that she could ever have imagined. It was not very large; but the walls were encrusted with thousands of great uncut rubies of the richest red, the ceiling was starred with diamonds, and the floor was of beaten gold. At one end of the room the Brownie King was sitting on a low throne. He was a jolly-looking old Brownie, dressed

all in scarlet, with a crown on the back of his head. Beside him was a pipe with a long stem encrusted with diamonds, and on a table near him stood a large gold mug with a lid. His brown eyes twinkled when he saw Mabel.

"Aha, little girl," said he; "come in! I want to see you, for you're the only little girl who ever found her way to our house, and no little girl will ever be able to do it again; so I want you to have a good time while you're here, and carry away many pleasant thoughts of the Brownies. Did you enjoy yourself in the Great Hall?"

"Oh, yes, King," said Mabel. "I had a splendid time there, and some jelly."

"What's your name, my dear?" asked the King.

"Mabel."

"Well, Mabel," said he, patting her on the head, "you must let me give you something to remember the Brownies by." Then he turned to Mabel's guide and continued, "Show Mabel into the Treasure Room, and let her choose any one thing that she likes for a present to take home with her."

Then he took a golden key from his belt, and gave it to the Brownie, saying:

"Go with him, Mabel, and select your present; and when you have done so, come back and say good-bye to me."

The Brownie took the key from the King, and bowed; and then Mabel followed him out of a second door. They went through several long, narrow halls and a dark passage-way that twisted and turned in different directions, till they came to a thick stone door with a big lock, and having an iron ring on the outside.

"Here is the Treasure Room," said the Brownie, as he thrust the key into the lock and turned it. Then he pulled the iron ring; the door slowly opened; and he and Mabel went in.

Mabel gave a cry of wonder and delight. The Treasure Room was an immensely long hall, filled with thousands of beautiful things piled up to the very ceiling. Great cases stood about crammed with everything that any one could ever want; and there were also tables covered with all sorts of treasures. Toys, picture-books, lovely

dresses, silk, satins, velvets, mountains of candy of every kind and colour, knick-knacks, paintings, curious carvings, bric-a-brac, jewels and precious stones, ornaments,— everything beautiful that any one could imagine,— all were in that wonderful room.

“Oh, oh!” cried Mabel again, her eyes sparkling with delight. “What delicious things!”

“Yes, they *are* pretty,” said the Brownie, smiling at her excitement; “and you must choose something for yourself as a present from the King.”

“May I really choose anything I want?” asked Mabel.

“Yes, any *one* thing,” said the Brownie. “What shall it be?”

“Oh, I must look all around first,” said Mabel; and she began to move about slowly among the heaps of treasure.

Piled up against the sides of the room were great bags of gold. The Brownie told her what was in them.

“Oh, I don’t want any gold,” said Mabel, carelessly; and the Brownie laughed a little to himself.

The first thing that she stopped to look at was a case filled with clusters of the most exquisite pearls strung into necklaces upon silver thread. Each pearl was as large as a pea, and had a soft lustrous gleam that made the whole necklace look like a string of globed lamps turned low.

"Oh, how pretty!" cried Mabel. "They'd be just lovely to wear with my party dress. I'll try one on."

So she tried one of the necklaces on.

"I—I—think I'll take this," said she.

"All right," said the Brownie; but just at that moment Mabel's eyes caught sight of a dress hanging on a silver nail near by. It was made of pale rose-coloured silk, covered with lace so fine that it looked as though it had been made by the fairies; and tiny knots of rose-coloured ribbon were fastened at the shoulders and the waist.

"Oh, isn't it lovely!" cried Mabel. "And it's just the right size for me. May I take this instead of the necklace?"

"Of course," said the Brownie.

Mabel took the dress down from its

nail and held it on her arm, passing her fingers over the lace and smoothing out the bows.

"I think I'll take this," said she, slowly; but just then she heard the sound of the most beautiful music by her side; and when she turned to look, she found that it came from an ivory box.

"It's a magic music-box," said the Brownie. "It plays all the tunes in the world. All you have to do is to pat the lid three times, and say what you want it to play, and it will play it till you pat it again."

It was a very small box, but it played like a whole orchestra, now softly and sweetly like a fairy lullaby, and then full and strong like a great military band with drums and trumpets and cymbals; and then again its music was like that of flutes and harps and violins.

"Oh, that's what I want!" said Mabel. "Never mind the dress." She raised the box from the table and patted it to make it stop, and then she patted it again and told it to play the Lizard's Call. At once it began playing it,—first simply, and then

with all sorts of changes, to the sound of little silver bells and tinkling triangles.

"Yes, I'll take that," said Mabel; and she was turning around to go, when just behind her she saw what at first she took to be a little girl of about three years old sitting on a small velvet sofa.

"Why — who's that?" gasped Mabel, greatly surprised.

"That's a doll," said the Brownie; "and I think you never saw one like it before. It can talk and laugh and cry and walk."

"Can you talk?" asked Mabel of the Doll.

"Oh, yes," said the Doll, smiling. "I can say a hundred words."

"Dear me!" said Mabel. "How strange!"

She put the music-box down, and lifted the Doll off the sofa, and set it upon the floor. It walked up and down two or three times and then said —

"Put me back, please."

"Well, I never!" said Mabel.

"There's a whole trunk of clothes that go with the Doll," said the Brownie.

"Oh, that's what I want," said Mabel.

"Would you like to go with me, Dollie?"



"That's a doll," said the Brownie; "and I think you never saw one like it before—It can talk and laugh and cry and walk."



"Yes, indeed," said the Doll. "It's stupid sitting here all alone."

"Well," said Mabel; "I think I'll take you."

And she was looking about for the trunk of clothes, when down at the end of the hall she noticed, for the first time, a sort of house standing among a perfect forest of swings, see-saws, and run-arounds.

"Why, what's that?" she asked.

"Oh, that's a doll-house," said the Brownie. "Want to see it?"

"Yes," said Mabel; and she hurried down to where it stood, leaving the Doll, who called after her once or twice, and then laughed.

Mabel reached the doll-house. It was a real house with twelve rooms, each one almost large enough for Mabel herself to sit in. The front of the house had real glass windows with lace curtains, two front-doors and a door-step, besides a little door-bell; and the whole front swung open on hinges and showed the inside of the house when you rang the bell. Each of the twelve rooms was fully carpeted and furnished, even to the pictures on the walls, and the clocks

on the mantels, and the soap-dish in the bath-room. A bird-cage with a canary that really sang hung in the sewing-room; there was a piano in the parlour; and in the kitchen was a stove with a fire in it that blazed up when you touched a knob. A pump in the sink pumped real water; and when the fire in the stove was going, real smoke came out of the chimneys at the top of the house. The bed-rooms had lovely little beds with pillows and pillow-shams; the dining-room had a full set of dishes on the sideboard; the garret was stored with trunks and curious things; and the cellar had a coal-bin and a wood-pile, just as in a real house.

"Oh, that's the best yet!" cried Mabel, clapping her hands. "But it's so big that I could n't carry it home."

"Oh, yes, you could," said the Brownie. "You press the little knob in the roof and the house shuts up by magic and makes a little package that you can carry in one hand; and when you press the other knob on the door-step, it all opens out again just as you see it now."

"Well, then, this is what I will really take," said Mabel; and she walked around the house looking at it from all sides. As she went behind it to see if there was a back-door, she saw against the end of the Treasure Room a great pyramid of little silver jars, each one having a gold spoon tied to it by a silver wire.

"Ah-h-h!" said Mabel, as she looked at the jars. "*I* know what's in them. It's Brownie jelly!"

"Yes," said the Brownie, "just like what you had in the Great Hall."

"Ye-e-s," said Mabel slowly, and her eyes wandered away from the doll-house to the jars of jelly. She remembered how delicious the jelly was, how it tasted like all the loveliest kinds of ice-cream blended together with pounded almonds and chocolate and strawberries; and as she thought of it, her little mouth watered and she smacked her lips.

"It was awfully good," said she.

"Yes," said the Brownie.

"It was the best thing I ever tasted in my life," said she.

"Yes," said the Brownie.

"I can only have one thing, can I?"

"Yes," said the Brownie.

Mabel stood first on one foot, and then on the other foot, and put her finger in her mouth, and looked hard at the doll-house, and then at the jars of Brownie jelly.

"Well," she said at last, "do you know—I—think—I'll—take—a—jar—of—Brownie jelly."

And she snatched one of the silver jars from the top of the pile. The Brownie laughed so that he could hardly speak. Mabel blushed, but she kept a tight hold on the jar.

"Are you really going to keep it?" asked the Brownie.

"Yes," said Mabel, firmly; "and I think I'll go now. Please, Brownie, will you take my hand and lead me out of the room? I want to shut my eyes so that I won't see any of the other things, for fear I should change my mind."

The Brownie laughed again; and finally he took some silver paper and wrapped up the jar and its spoon into a neat little pack-

age. Then he led Mabel out of the Treasure Room into the passage, and locked the door. They went back through the winding passage and the halls till they came to the room where the Brownie King was sitting on his throne.

"Aha!" said he when he saw Mabel. "So you're back again. Did you choose a present?"

"Yes, King," said she; "and I thank you very, very much."

"And what did you choose?" asked he, smiling. "I think I can guess. Was it the Talking Doll?"

"No, King," said Mabel; "it was n't the Doll."

"What? Not the Doll? Well, well! Then it must have been a beautiful necklace."

"No, King," said Mabel; "it was n't a necklace."

"Then it was the music-box."

"No, King," said Mabel; "it was n't the music-box, either."

"What? Why, I don't understand. Perhaps it was a lace dress."

"No," said Mabel.

"Oh, yes," said the King; "I remember. Of course, of course. It was the doll-house."

"No," said Mabel; "it was n't the doll-house."

The King nearly fell off his throne, he was so surprised.

"Then, for goodness' sake," he said, "tell me what it was."

"Well," said Mabel, looking down, "it was a—a jar of Brownie jelly!"

The King lay back on his throne and shook with laughter till Mabel thought he would fall to pieces.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" he roared, "a jar of jelly! A jar of jelly!"

"Yes," said Mabel; "it's the best thing I ever tasted."

"Ha, ha, ha! A jar of jelly!" cried he again. "Well, well, you're a real human little girl, are n't you! A jar of jelly!"

Then he stooped down and patted her head and said:—

"Well, good-bye, now, Mabel. I'm sorry to have you go, for you've given me such

a good laugh; but no little girls ever come here, nor any other human beings; so I suppose I shall not see you again. Good-bye."

And then he began laughing once more; and the last thing that Mabel heard him say was, "A jar of jelly!"

She went back into the Great Hall to say good-bye to the other Brownies, who all shook hands with her and patted her on the head; and then the Soldier Brownie brought a torch, and said that he would light the way for her out of the cave. So the great door was opened again, and Mabel went out into the dark tunnel, the Soldier Brownie going ahead of her with the torch. When they had turned the corner and could see the daylight glimmering at the entrance of the cave, the Soldier Brownie in his turn shook hands with Mabel, said good-bye, put out the torch, and quickly disappeared around the corner. Mabel heard him going back to the stone door, and soon she heard it open and shut again; and then she crept out of the dark hole, through the thicket and the blackberry bushes, and ran home as fast as she could, leaving her sunbonnet

and her basket of berries on the ground, but hugging the jar of jelly tight in her arms.

Grandma was sitting on the verandah when Mabel ran up all out of breath.

"Oh, Grandma, Grandma," she cried, "where do you think I've been?"

"Why, down in the woods, I suppose," said Grandma.

"Yes; but where else?"

"I'm sure I can't guess," answered Grandma.

"Well, Grandma," said Mabel, "I've been in the Brownie's home, visiting the Brownies!"

Then she told the whole story just as it has been told here; and when she had finished, she cried out:—

"There now! What do you think of that?"

Grandma smiled and patted her little girl's head.

"I think," she said, "that somebody fell asleep in the woods, and had a beautiful long midsummer dream."

"Oh, no!" cried Mabel, "I didn't dream a word of it. It really, really happened to

me, and I was just as wide awake as you are, Grandma. *Truly, truly!*"

"Well, well, Mabel," said Grandma; "of course you think you saw all these strange things; but there are really no Brownies nowadays outside of picture-books; so, you see, you must have dreamed it."

"Did I dream *this*, Grandma?" asked Mabel, suddenly holding up the package wrapped in silver paper.

Grandma looked surprised, and took the package and unrolled it. Out came a beautiful little silver jar with a silver lid, and a gold spoon fastened to it by a bit of fine silver wire. On the top of the lid was carved a picture of the Brownie King with his crown upon his head, and the same picture was cut on the handle of the spoon.

Grandma's eyes opened very wide. She did not speak for a long time, and then she said:—

"It is all very curious, Mabel, and I will not speak about it just now. It is time for you to have your supper and be put to bed. But to-morrow morning after breakfast, I

will go with you to the woods, and you can show me the place where you found the entrance to the cave."

So the next morning, Grandma and Mabel went together down into the woods; and Mabel led her to the thicket of blackberry bushes. Sure enough, there lay Mabel's sunbonnet just where she had left it the day before. In the bushes they also found the basket nearly full of berries. Mabel showed Grandma how she had crawled through the bushes to the great rock.

"I'm pretty old to creep on the ground," said Grandma, after peering into the thicket; "but I think I'll try it, just for once."

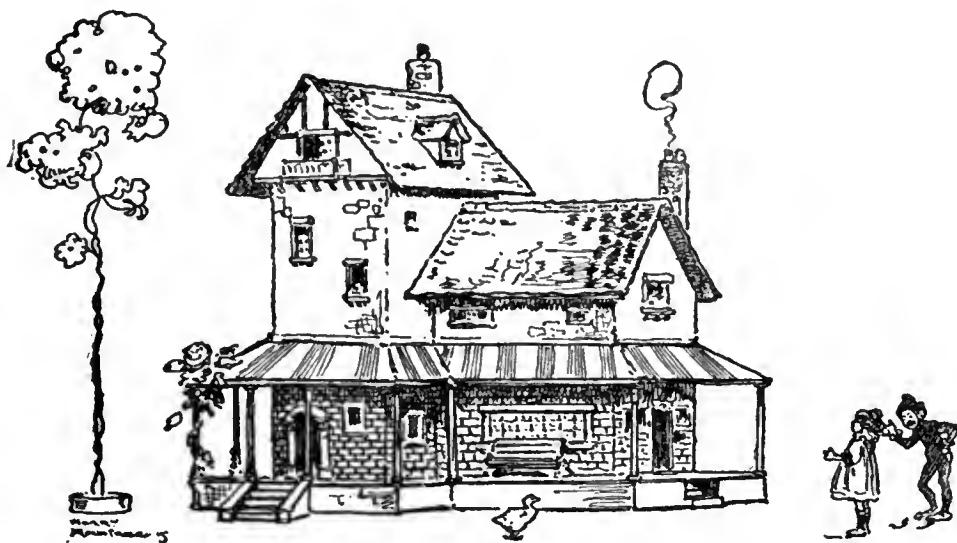
So she actually got down on her hands and knees, and crept in among the bushes just as Mabel had done. But when she reached the rock on the other side, she found no opening; for an enormous stone had been wedged into the hole, so that hardly a crack was left. Grandma took both hands and tried to move it; but it was too heavy and was wedged in too tight; and when she gave it up, she heard a little laugh on the other side of the stone.

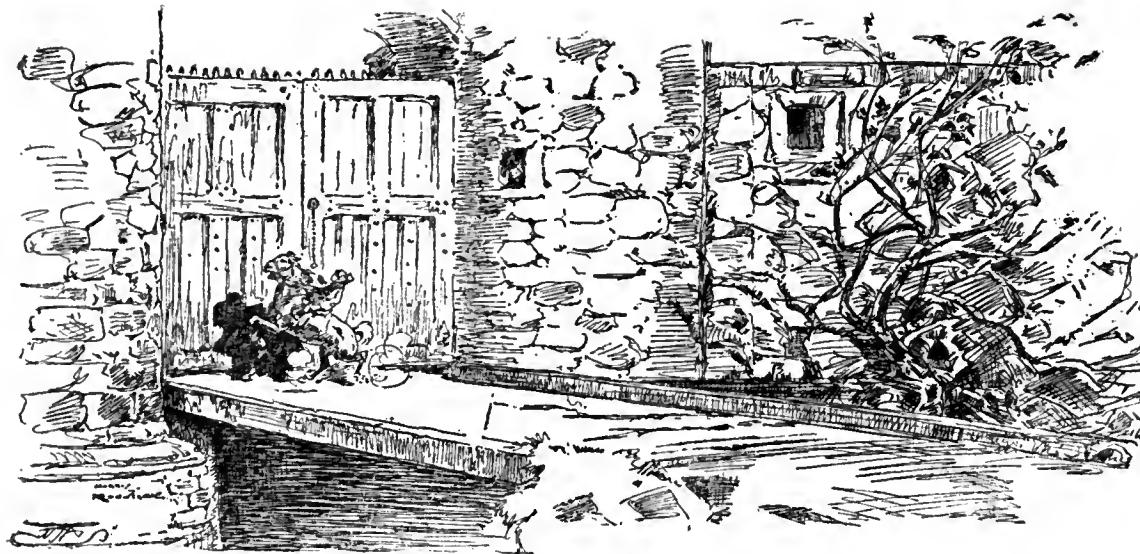
She crawled back to where Mabel was waiting.

"There's no hole now," she said. "It's been stopped up."

"Yes," replied Mabel, nodding her little head wisely. "The King Brownie said that no one would ever get in again."

They walked home together and Grandma, kept very silent about it all. That day Mabel gave her a taste of the Brownie jelly, and every day she herself ate just one spoonful of it till it was all gone; and then she put the empty silver jar and the spoon on the shelf in her own room, to remind her of the time when she had visited the Brownies.





## XII. THE RESCUE OF JACK

AFTER her first visit to the Giant's castle, Mabel went there regularly twice a week. She and Elsie became great friends; and as Elsie grew stronger they began to plan for the time when she and Mabel could go out into the fields and have a picnic; but as yet she was not able to get any further than the courtyard. It was just at this time that something happened which I am now going to tell.

Over the hill beyond the brook where the Frogs were, stood a small white house, and in it lived a little boy about seven years old, named Jack. He had not lived there long, so that Mabel did not know him very well; but he had come to her house once or twice to see her and Walter, and they were get-

ting to be pretty well acquainted. One day Mabel was sitting on the lawn playing with Towser, when Jack's Father came by, walking very fast and looking anxiously in all directions as he walked. When he saw Mabel, he stopped and asked:—

“Have you seen anything of my little boy to-day?”

“No,” said Mabel. “He hasn't been here.”

Jack's Father did n't wait to say anything more, but hurried on up the road. He had been gone about an hour, when back he came, still walking very fast and looking all about him.

“Did you find him?” asked Mabel, as he passed by the gate.

“No, and no one has seen him anywhere. I can't think what has become of him, for he's been away since ten o'clock this morning, and it's now two. He didn't come home at noon for dinner, and I fear that something has happened to him.”

“Well,” said Mabel, “if I see him I'll tell him that you are worried about him.”

“Thank you,” said Jack's Father; “and

please ask everybody who passes if they have seen a little boy in velvet knickerbockers and a Scotch cap."

And he hurried away in the direction of his own home. Mabel thought it over for quite a while; and then she felt that it would be a good thing for her to have Rex saddled and to ride along the roads asking whether any one had seen or heard of Jack. So presently she was galloping past the Cross Dog's house and the Frogs' brook; and just as she was near Jack's house, she saw the Butcher riding along in his cart.

"Have you seen anything of a little boy in velvet knickerbockers and a Scotch cap?" she asked him.

"Yes," he said. "I saw him this morning going down the road that turns to the left after you go some distance past the hill. I've just told his father so; and he's got a horse and has gone to look for him down that way."

Mabel let Rex walk as she went along in the same direction. She thought that if Jack's Father had gone down the road to the left, there was no need for her to

go that way too; yet she decided that she would ride slowly along to meet the two when they came back. So she went on through the woods, and past the Kitty-Cat's, and then reached the road that turned to the left. Just at that moment she heard the sounds of a horse's hoofs galloping in the distance; and she stopped Rex and waited. Nearer and nearer came the rider, and presently Mabel saw Jack's Father riding a bay horse and galloping up the hill like mad. His head was bare; his face was as white as a sheet of paper; and he was lashing the horse, whose sides and legs were covered with dust and foam.

"What's the matter?" called out Mabel, as he plunged into the main road where she was sitting on Rex's back.

He pulled up his horse for a moment.

"Oh," he cried, "it's terrible! I heard that Jack had gone down this way, and I rode after him till I crossed a big stone bridge, and found a lot of men all dressed in red and working in the fields. When I asked them if they had seen my little boy, they told me that they had; that he had

strolled down that road, and that a great Giant had found him and carried him off to his castle. I did n't know there was a Giant in this country; but there is; and they say that my little boy is to be eaten for his breakfast to-morrow morning!"

"What are you going to do?" asked Mabel, who was greatly excited by this news.

"Do?" cried he. "Why, I'm going to get all the men in the town to come, with guns and axes and hammers, and break into the Giant's castle and get my boy out."

"I'm afraid a Giant is too big for you to fight," said Mabel. "He could step on you and kill you with one foot."

"So the men in the road told me," said Jack's Father; "but I don't care. I'll do what I can,—I'll burn and chop and slash; and if he kills me—why, I'd rather die than live without my little boy."

Mabel looked very serious.

"Stop a minute," she said. "I want to tell you something. Don't try to break into the castle, but just wait and let me see what *I* can do. If you will, I promise you that Jack shall not be hurt."

Jack's Father stared at her in astonishment.

"What *you*? A little girl?"

"Yes," said Mabel. "I know what I can do; and I promise you to bring Jack safely home by sunset. Wait at your house and see."

"But, Mabel," said he, earnestly, "you must n't go near the Giant's castle. You are too little to know what a Giant is. He is a fearful monster, and if he sees you he will catch you and eat you at the same time as he eats my poor little Jack."

Mabel smiled.

"No," she said; "don't be afraid. I promise not to get into any danger; but I promise also to save Jack before sunset. Don't do anything till then."

"Well," said Jack's Father, "I could n't get any men together before that time, so I'll promise you. But be sure you don't run into any danger. I don't want *you* to be eaten, too."

With these words, he whipped his horse and galloped away again toward the town to see if any men would help him to attack the

Giant's castle. When he had disappeared down the road in a cloud of dust, Mabel patted Rex on the neck, and spoke to him.

"Rex," she said, "we've got a long, hard ride before us; but I want you to do your best, so that I can keep my promise and save poor little Jack."

She shook the reins, and Rex bounded forward down the road to the left. He flew along like an arrow; his hoofs seemed scarcely to touch the ground, as he strained his head forward and dashed over the road; his mane streamed in the air, his neck quivered, and he galloped faster than he had ever done in all his life.

"Good Rex!" cried Mabel, as he sped along with a flight like a bird's.

On they went over hill and dale, on, on, on, clattering through the grass and woods, thundering over the great stone bridge, on between the fields where the men in red were working, on, on, on, never stopping till they dashed down the last hill and found themselves before Cormoran's huge castle with its mighty towers, its gilded roof, and its massive gateway.

Mabel tugged at the chain, and the great bell clanged. The gate flew open, and she clattered into the courtyard where the red spearmen saluted her.

"Here, take my horse, some one!" cried Mabel, as she slid to the ground.

"Do you want to see the little Lady Elsie?" asked one of the men.

"No," said Mabel; "I want to see the Giant."

The man hesitated a little.

"You can't see him to-day," said he. "He's very much out of sorts. He's shut himself up in his den, and has given orders that no one is to disturb him."

"I can't help it," said Mabel; "I *must* see him. Please help me up the stairs, some one."

The man who had spoken bowed and led her through the doorway into the castle, and lifted her up the great steps, one by one, till she had reached the top; and then he turned and ran away as fast as he could.

Mabel walked straight to the door of the den. Her heart beat very fast; yet she did not hesitate a moment, but beat on the door with the handle of her riding-whip.

"WHO'S THAT?" roared a terrific voice within.

"It's me," called Mabel, as loud as she could; but her voice was too weak and small to be heard through the thick door.

"WHO'S THAT?" bellowed the Giant.  
"GO AWAY!"

Mabel beat the door again,

"HA!" shouted Cormoran; and Mabel could hear him jumping up from his oaken chair. "KNOCK AGAIN AND I'LL EAT YOU UP!!"

Mabel was dreadfully frightened; but she raised her whip and beat the door again. In half a second it flew wide open with a crash, and Cormoran rushed to the entrance. He was a fearful sight. His tangled red hair stood out all over his head like a blaze of fire; his lips were curled up so as to show his great tusks; and his eyes rolled and glared furiously like those of some monstrous beast.

"YOU SHALL DIE!" he howled—and then he saw that it was Mabel.

"Please, Cormoran, I want to see you about something *very* much," said Mabel,

in her soft little voice, which trembled with fear as she spoke.

Cormoran looked at her a moment, and he seemed less angry. But his face still wore a scowl.

"WELL," he said shortly, "COME IN."

Mabel went into the den, and climbed up on a footstool.

"WHAT IS IT?" growled Cormoran.  
"COME, MAKE A SHORT STORY  
OF IT."

"Please," said Mabel, folding her hands in her lap, "have you caught a little boy to-day?"

"YES," grunted Cormoran; "HE'S ORDERED FOR BREAKFAST. WHAT OF IT?"

"Oh, Cormoran," pleaded Mabel, "please don't eat him. His father is wild about it. He says he doesn't want to live if you eat his little boy."

"WHAT DO I CARE WHETHER HE LIVES OR NOT?" growled the Giant.

"But Jack's such a good little boy," said

Mabel; "and he never did you any harm. You won't be so cruel as to eat him, will you?"

"WHY NOT? LITTLE BOYS ARE GOOD EATING. WHY SHOULDN'T I EAT HIM JUST AS YOU EAT PIGEONS? PIGEONS NEVER DID YOU ANY HARM."

Mabel was in despair. She felt that she could say nothing to persuade the great hungry Giant. But she resolved to try once more.

"Cormoran," she said, "you know I've been here often and often, because you asked me to; and I've played with Elsie, and you said yourself the other day that I did more for her than any one else. When I first came she was pale, and so weak that she couldn't walk; and now she's so strong and well that next week she's going out of doors again, just as well as ever. You love her ever so much, don't you? Well, Jack's papa loves him just as much as you do Elsie; and how will he feel when he knows that his little boy is dead? Now, Cormoran,



"We won't hurry home as fast as we can - Come!"

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20  
21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

if you think I've done anything for your Elsie, let Jack go for my sake, because he is my playmate, too. If you will, I will love it better than the gold belt or than anything else; and I'll never forget it. You will, won't you? Please do."

The great Giant looked down on the little figure sitting on the footstool, pleading so earnestly with two big tears in her eyes. For a long while he kept silent; but a great gleam of good-nature came into his eyes. His face softened, and at last he said —

"WELL, MABEL, I'D DO ALMOST ANYTHING FOR YOU. COME!"

He took a great bunch of keys from his belt, and strode out of the room to the staircase. Mabel ran after him as fast as her little legs could carry her; and he picked her up in one hand, and bore her gently down the stairs. Then he unlocked a great iron door behind which was a dark, narrow stairway with short winding steps.

"HE'S DOWN HERE IN THE CELLAR," said Cormoran.

They went down the narrow stairs to-

gether, into the dimly-lighted cellar. It was an enormous place about half a mile long, with huge stacks of wine-barrels and casks of ale piled about. As soon as Mabel's eyes became used to the darkness, she saw a row of cells, each with a great iron door and a heavy lock. All of them were open but one.

"HE'S IN THERE," said the Giant, pointing to the cell whose door was shut.

Then he took a big key and put it into the lock and turned it. Mabel laid her head against the door, and then she heard a little voice inside the cell sobbing and crying.

"Oh, don't eat me, please don't eat me!" said the voice.

It was Jack.

"Will you let me open the door?" asked Mabel of the Giant. "And please don't let him see you when he comes out. He'll be so frightened. As soon as I pull the door open, please hide behind the big piles of barrels."

"ALL RIGHT," said Cormoran, smiling.

Mabel knocked on the door with her little fist.

"Jack!" she called.

"Who's that?" said the voice inside the cell.

"It's Mabel," answered she.

"Oh! Mabel?" called the voice. "What are you doing here? Has the Giant caught you too?"

"No," said Mabel, cheerily; "and don't be afraid, Jack. I'm going to open the door, and let you out and take you home."

Jack gave a shout of joy. Then Mabel took hold of the door with both her hands, and pulled with all her might. The door swung slowly open, and, as Cormoran hid himself behind the barrels, out came Jack.

"Oh, Mabel, Mabel!" cried he. "How did you get here, and how did you open the door?"

"Never mind now, Jack," she said; "we must hurry home as fast as we can. Come!"

She led the way through the cellar, and Jack followed her, wondering. They went up the cellar-stairs and out into the courtyard, where the men in red stood up and saluted Mabel with their spears.

"Bring my horse out, please," said Mabel, "and be as quick as you can."

They led out Rex, and helped Mabel into the saddle.

"Lift this little boy up behind me," said Mabel; and they did so.

"Now, Jack," said she, "put your arms around my waist, and hold on tight, and be careful not to fall off. Are you ready?"

"Yes," said Jack; and Mabel spoke to Rex, and he started out of the courtyard, trotting till he reached the open road, and then breaking into a long gallop as he set his head toward home.

. . . . .

Meanwhile Jack's Father had ridden about the country, and had collected all the men he could, to lead them against the Giant's castle in case Mabel did not return by sunset. About forty men had promised to help him, and he had gathered them all together into a company on the top of the hill near his own house. They now stood there, looking down upon the long stretch of road that wound around the other hills.

Some of the men had guns, others had pistols, and some were armed with clubs and axes and pitchforks and crowbars and scythes. Behind the highest hill the great red sun was already beginning to set.

"It's nearly time," said Jack's Father to the men. "The little girl said that she would be back by sunset; and if she does n't come, you may be sure that the Giant has caught her and is going to eat her too."

The men clashed their weapons, and looked very fierce.

"We'll save them both!" cried they.

Jack's Father kept his eye on the sun. Lower and lower it sank behind the hill, until only the upper part of it could be seen.

"It's almost gone," said he, with a groan.  
"She's not coming back."

"Listen!" cried one of the men. "I hear something."

They all leaned forward to listen. A far-off sound like the beat of a horse's hoofs came faintly to their ears.

"It's a horse!" cried one. "Look!"

Far away in the distance a tiny cloud of dust could be seen. On and on, nearer and nearer it came, until they saw a black speck moving swiftly down the road, while the sound of galloping grew louder and louder. The men all strained their eyes.

"It *is* a horse!" cried Jack's Father, eagerly. "Yes, and I see a little white figure on his back. It must be Mabel. Thank Heaven, *she*'s not lost at any rate!"

Nearer and nearer came the horse, plunging along through the dust of the road.

"Yes!" called out one of the men; "and there's something else on his back too, behind the little girl. What! — is it? — yes — why — it's JACK!"

A tremendous shout went up from forty throats. Every man flung his hat into the air, and next his weapon, all cheering and cheering and shouting like mad; and then right into the midst of them, up the side of the hill, dashed Mabel, with Jack behind her, carried along by noble old Rex, who was covered with foam from head to foot. Mabel pulled him up, and he stopped, his flanks quivering and his nostrils panting.

Jack's Father rushed at his little boy, and snatched him from the horse's back, hugging him tight to his heart. The men swarmed around Mabel, and lifted her out of the saddle; and then two of them held her up high in the air, while the whole band formed a procession, and began marching toward her home. They sang and cheered and shouted till the hillsides rang.

Grandma heard the noise, and came out to the gate. She saw forty men all marching toward her, and, on the shoulders of two of them, she saw a little girl sitting with an arm about each of their necks.

Behind them another man was leading Rex by the bridle-rein.

"Why, what does all this mean?" cried Grandma.

And for answer the forty men gave one great shout —

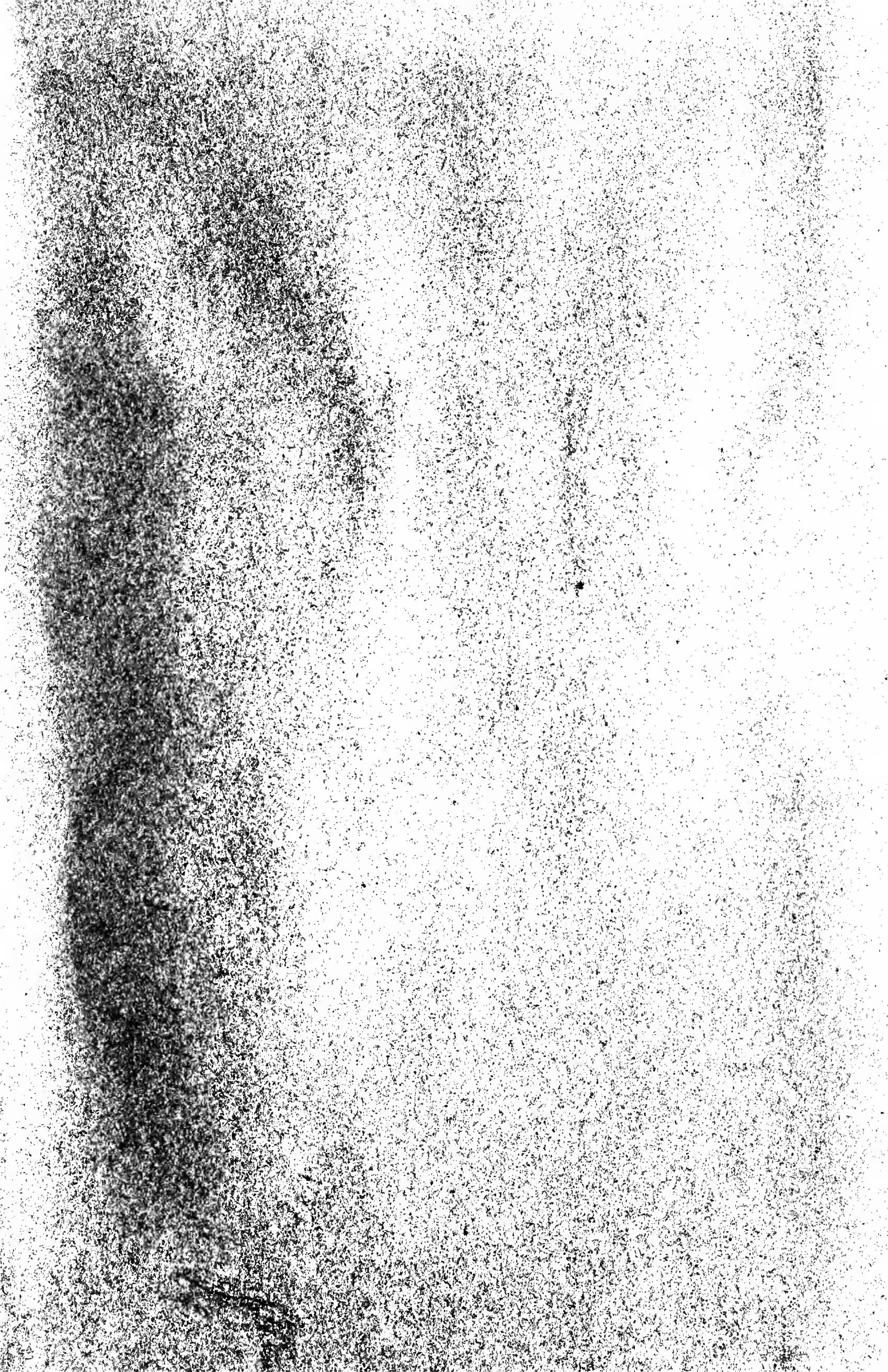
"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! MABEL!"



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