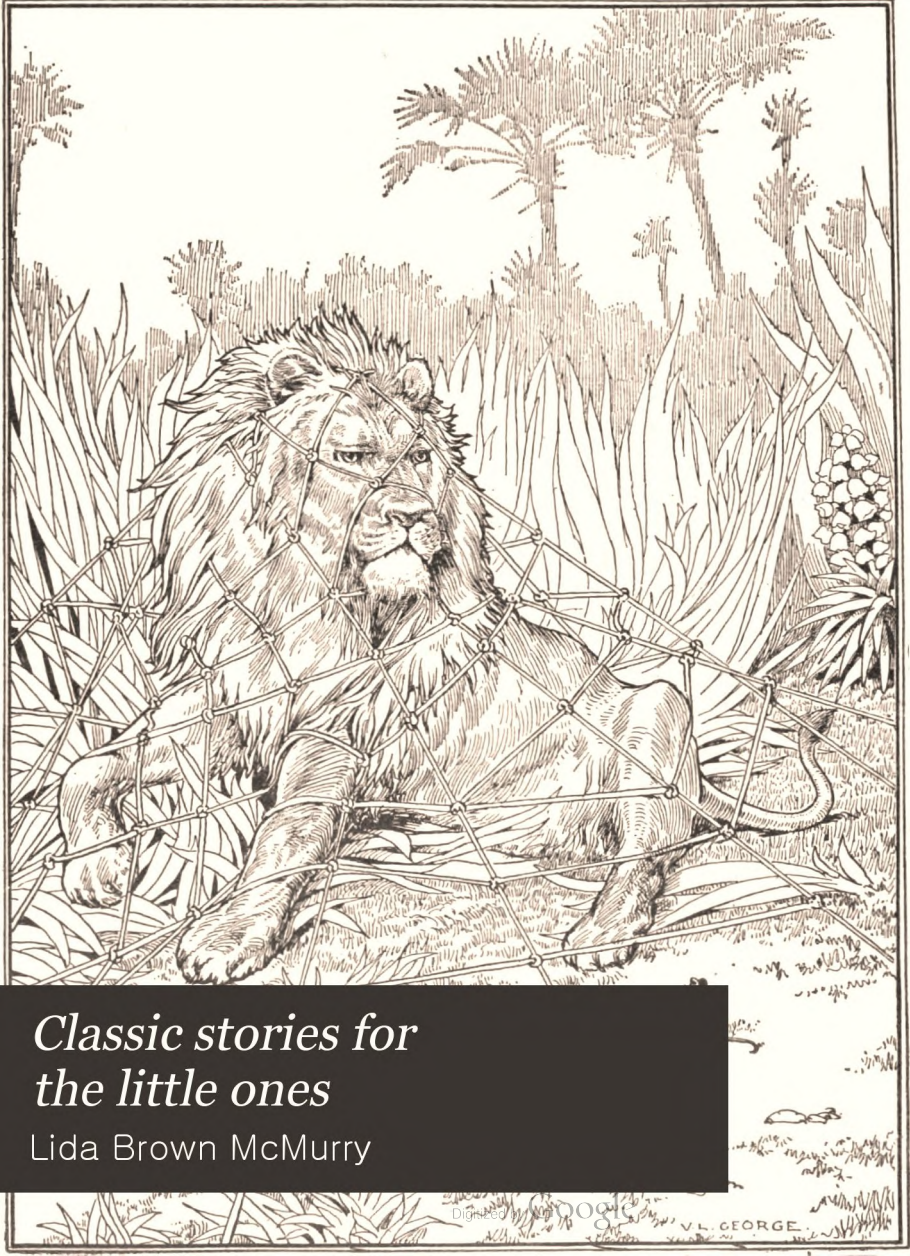


Classic stories for the little ones

Lida Brown McMurry

CLASSIC STORIES

FOR THE

LITTLE ONES

ADAPTED FROM THE TALES OF ANDERSEN, GRIMM BROTHERS AND OTHERS

BY

MRS. LIDA BROWN McMURRY

PRIMARY TRAINING TEACHER IN DE KALB, ILLINOIS STATE NORMAL SCHOOL

SEVENTY-FIRST THOUSAND

BLOOMINGTON, ILL.:
PUBLIC-SCHOOL PUBLISHING COMPANY
1910

Press and Bindery of
Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Co.
Bloomington, Ill.

TO

MY LITTLE NEPHEW AND NIECES

Donald, Alice, Adelaide, Florence, and Ruth

WHO HAVE AIDED ME GREATLY IN THE SELECTION
AND FORM OF THESE STORIES

THIS VOLUME

IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

PREFACE.

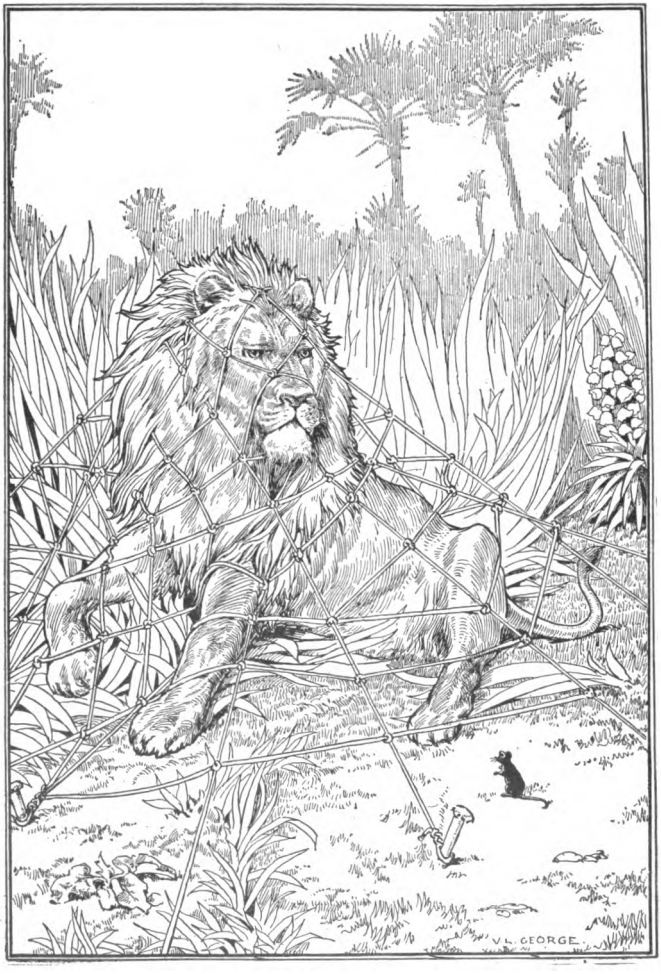
An extended explanation of the function of fairy stories in a child's education, and of the method of teaching them is given in the appendix to the Teachers' and Mothers' Edition of this little volume.

These stories, in the form here presented, are the result of repeated experience in telling them to children of the first grade, and the language is so simple that second grade children can read for themselves the stories which have already become dear to them.

The first story is not literature, it is true, but it has delighted young children for generations. The rhythmical movement and repetition in parts of it are probably the source of much of this delight, which marks the birth of the literary sense in the young child.

The stories grow rapidly in literary and moral worth throughout the volume.

The author desires to acknowledge her obligations to the writers and publishers of the poems that appear and add materially to the value of the book; also to Geo. P. Brown, and Charles and Frank McMurry, who have aided greatly by their suggestions.



"I will set you free," said the Little Mouse.

THE OLD WOMAN AND HER PIG.

AN OLD woman who was sweeping her house, found a dime. "Now what shall I do with this dime," she said. "I know, I will go to a farm and buy a little pig." As she was coming home, driving the pig, she came to a low fence; piggy would not jump over this fence, so she went back a little way to get some one to help her. She soon met a dog. She said to the dog:

"Dog! dog! bite pig! Pig will not jump over the fence, and I shall not get home to-night." But the dog would not.

She went a little farther and she met a stick. So she said:

"Stick! stick! whip dog! Dog will not bite pig; pig will not jump over the fence, and I

shall not get home tonight." But the stick would not.

She went a little farther and she met a fire. So she said:

"Fire! fire! burn stick! Stick will not whip dog; dog will not bite pig; pig will not jump over the fence, and I shall not get home tonight." But the fire would not.

She went a little farther and she met a pail of water. So she said:

"Water! water! put out fire! Fire will not burn stick; stick will not whip dog; dog will not bite pig; pig will not jump over the fence, and I shall not get home tonight." But the water would not.

She went a little farther and she met an ox. So she said:

"Ox! ox! drink water! Water will not put out fire; fire will not burn stick; stick will not whip dog; dog will not bite pig; pig will not jump over the fence, and I shall not get home tonight." But the ox would not.

She went a little farther and she met a butcher. So she said:

"Butcher! butcher! kill ox! Ox will not

drink water; water will not put out fire; fire will not burn stick; stick will not whip dog; dog will not bite pig; pig will not jump over

the fence, and I shall not get home tonight." But the butcher would not.

She went a little farther and she met a rope. So she said:

"Rope! rope! hang butcher! butcher will not kill ox; ox will not drink water; water will not put out fire; fire will not burn stick; stick will not whip dog; dog will not bite pig; pig will not jump over the fence, and I shall not get home tonight." But the rope would not.

She went a little farther and she met a rat. So she said:

"Rat! rat! gnaw rope! rope will not hang butcher; butcher will not kill ox; ox will not drink water; water will not put out fire; fire will not burn stick; stick will not whip dog; dog will not bite pig; pig will not jump over the fence, and I shall not get home tonight." But the rat would not.

She went a little farther and she met a cat. So she said:

"Cat! cat! catch rat! rat will not gnaw rope; rope will not hang butcher; butcher will not kill ox; ox will not drink water; water will not put out fire; fire will not burn stick; stick will not whip dog; dog will not bite pig; pig will not jump over the fence, and I shall not get home tonight."

Then the cat said to her: "If you will go to the cow and bring me a saucer of milk, I will catch the rat." So the old woman went to the cow as fast as she could go. The cow said to her: "If you will go to the haystack and bring me an armful of hay, I will give you some milk." So away went the old woman to the haystack and brought the hay to the cow.

As soon as the cow had eaten the hay, she gave the old woman the milk. Then the old woman went with a saucer of milk to the cat.

As soon as the cat had lapped the milk, the cat began to catch the rat; the rat be-

gan to gnaw the rope; the rope began to hang the butcher; the butcher began to kill the ox; the ox began to drink the water; the water began to put out the fire; the fire began to burn the stick; the stick began to whip the dog; the dog began to bite the pig. This frightened the little pig so that he jumped right over the fence, and the old woman got home that night.

LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD.

IN A village a long, long way from here there lived a sweet little girl. Everyone who knew her, loved her. Her old grandmother thought so much of her that she made her many presents. Once she sent her a little red cloak with a red velvet hood. The little girl looked so pretty in this cloak that she was called Little Red Riding-hood ever after.

One day her mother said to her, "Come, Red Riding-hood, bring me your little basket and I will put a cake and a glass of jelly in it for your grandmother. She is sick, and I want you to go and see how she does. Get ready at once, before it becomes too warm, and do not stop on your way."

Little Red Riding-hood was always glad to go to grandmother's; so she kissed her mother good-bye and started, with her little basket.

As she was going through the woods, she

met a large wolf. He had a great mind to eat her up, but he did not dare, for there were some wood-cutters near by; so he said: "Where are you going so early, little girl?"

Now, Red Riding-hood did not know that it is not safe to stop and talk to a wolf, so

she answered: "I am going to see my grandmother and take her this cake and glass of jelly that mother sent."

"Where does your grandmother live?" asked the wolf.

"She lives in the first house you come to, in the next village. Her house stands under three large oak trees. You would surely know it," said Red Riding-hood.

Then they walked on together for a little way, until they came to some beautiful flowers. "See, what pretty flowers," said the wolf. "Why do you not stop and gather some and rest yourself. And hear how sweetly the birds are singing!"

Then Little Red Riding-hood thought, "Grandmother loves flowers, and it is early yet, and I have plenty of time. I think I will gather her a bouquet of the prettiest ones." So she went on and on, farther and farther into the woods, gathering flowers.

But the wolf went straight on to grandmother's house, and knocked at the door, "Tap! tap! tap!"

The old grandmother was sick in bed upstairs, and did not hear the wolf knock. As the wolf heard no stir in the room he lifted the latch and went in. There in a box he found one of the grandmother's caps. He put it on, and quickly jumped into a bed in the room—the very one in which grandmother usually slept.

After Red Riding-hood had gathered as many flowers as she could carry, she went back to the right path and walked on very fast until she came to her grandmother's house. Then she knocked at the door—"Tap! tap!"

"Who is there?" asked the wolf, trying to speak in a voice like that of her grandmother. His voice sounded so gruff, though, that Little Red Riding-hood felt afraid; but she

thought—"Grandmother has a cold and is hoarse," so she answered, "It is Little Red Riding-hood. Mother has sent you a cake and a glass of jelly."

"Lift the latch and come in," said the wolf.

So Red Riding-hood lifted the latch and went in. When she saw her grandmother, as she thought, lying in bed, she went up to her and said, "Good morning, Grandmother," but there was no answer.

Then she got on the bed and said, "Oh, grandmother, what great ears you have!"

"The better to hear you, my dear," said the wolf.

"And, grandmother, what great eyes you have."

"The better to see you, my dear."

"And, grandmother, what great arms you have."

"The better to hug you, my dear."

"But, grandmother, what great teeth you have," cried Red Riding-hood, beginning to be frightened.

"The better to eat you," said the wolf, as he got ready to spring upon her.

At that moment a bee which had followed Little Red Riding-hood into the house, stung the wolf on the nose so that he sneezed again and again.

Just then a sparrow flew to the window-sill and chirped, and a hunter aiming at it, shot through the window and killed the wolf.

THE ANXIOUS LEAF.

ONCE upon a time a little leaf was heard to sigh and cry, as leaves often do when a gentle wind is about. And the twig said, "What is the matter, little leaf?" And the leaf said, "The wind just told me that one day it would pull me off and throw me down to die on the ground."

The twig told it to the branch on which it grew, and the branch told it to the tree. And when the tree heard it, it rustled all over, and sent back word to the leaf, "Do not be afraid; hold on tightly, and you shall not go until you want to."

And so the leaf stopped sighing, but went on nestling and singing. Every time the tree shook itself and stirred up all its leaves, the branches shook themselves, and the little

twig shook itself, and the little leaf danced up and down merrily as if nothing could pull it off. And so it grew all summer long until October.

And when the bright days of autumn came, the little leaf saw all the leaves around becoming very beautiful. Some were yellow and some were scarlet, and some were striped with both colors.

Then it asked the tree what it meant. And the tree said, "All these leaves are getting ready to fly away, and they have put on their beautiful colors because of joy."

Then the little leaf began to want to go, too, and grew very beautiful in thinking of it; and when it was very gay in color it saw that the branches of the tree had no color in them, and so the leaf said, "Oh, branches! Why are you lead color and we golden?"

"We must keep on our work clothes, for our task is not done; but your clothes are for holiday, because your work is finished."

Just then a little puff of wind came and the leaf let go without thinking of it, and the wind took it up and turned it over and over, and whirled it like a spark of fire, in the air, and then it dropped gently down under the edge of the fence among hundreds of leaves, and fell into a dream and never waked up to tell what it dreamt about.

THE WIND.

"I am the wind
And I come very fast,
Through the tall wood
I blow a loud blast.

"Sometimes I am soft
As a sweet gentle child
I play with the flowers,
Am quiet and mild,

"And then out so loud
All at once I can roar,
If you wish to be quiet
Close window and door.

"I am the wind
And I come very fast,
Through the tall woods
I blow a loud blast."

—*Anonymous*

FRIENDS.

North wind came whistling through the wood
Where the tender sweet things grew—
The tall fair ferns and the maiden's hair
And the gentle gentians, blue,
"It's very cold—are we growing old?"
They sighed, "What shall we do?"

The sigh went up to the loving leaves
"We must help," they whispered low
"They are frightened and weak, Oh brave, old trees!
But we love you well you know."
And the trees said, "We are strong—makes haste
Down to the darlings go."

So the leaves went floating, floating down,
All yellow, and brown, and red,
And the frail little trembling, thankful things
Lay still and were comforted.
And the blue sky smiled through the bare old trees,
Down on their safe warm bed.

—*L. G. Warner.*

HOW THE LEAVES CAME DOWN.

I'll tell you how the leaves came down,
The great tree to his children said,
"You're getting sleepy, Yellow, Brown,
Yes, very sleepy, little Red,
It is quite time you went to bed."

"Oh," begged each silly pouting leaf,
"Let us a little longer stay.
Dear Father Tree, behold our grief;
'Tis such a pleasant day
We do not want to go away."

So just for one more merry day
To the great tree the leaflets clung—
Frolicked and danced and had their way,
Upon the autumn breezes swung,
Whispering all their sports among.

"Perhaps the great Tree will forget
And let us stay until the spring,
Or we might beg, and coax, and fret."
But the great tree was listening
And smiled to hear their whispering.

"Come, children, all to bed," he cried,
And ere the leaves could urge their prayer
He shook his head, and far and wide,
Fluttering and rustling everywhere,
Down sped the leaflets through the air.

I saw them; on the ground they lay,
Golden and red, a huddled swarm,
Waiting till one from far away,
With bed-clothes heaped upon her arm,
Should come to wrap them safe and warm.

The great bare Tree looked down and smiled,
"Good-night, dear little leaves," he said,
And from below, each sleepy child
Replied, "Good-night" and murmured
"It is so nice to go to bed."

—*Susan Coolidge in "Little Flower Folks."*

By Permission of Ed. Publishing Co.

"She jumped out of the window and ran away."

THE THREE BEARS.

THERE was once a little girl and her name was Silver-hair. She liked to be out of doors, and one day she went to the woods. She had never been there before, and she was very happy.

She walked on and on, looking all about her. At last she came to a little house. The door was open and she walked in. No one was at home, but on the table were three bowls of soup.

The three bowls of soup belonged to three bears who lived in the house. They had left the soup to cool and had gone out to take a walk.

Silver-hair tasted the soup in the largest bowl. It was too cold. That bowl belonged to Papa-bear.

Then she tasted the soup in the middle-sized bowl. It was too hot. That bowl belonged to Mamma-bear.

Then she tasted the soup in the smallest bowl. It was just right and she ate it all up. That bowl belonged to Baby-bear.

She went into the parlor and there she saw three chairs. She tried the largest chair. It was too high. That chair belonged to Papa-bear.

Then she tried the middle-sized chair. It was too broad. That chair belonged to Mamma-bear.

Then she tried the smallest chair. It was just right. But she sat down so hard that she broke it. That chair belonged to Baby-bear.

Silver-hair was now very tired, and she went up stairs. There were three beds. She tried the largest bed. It was too hard. That bed belonged to Papa-bear.

Then she tried the middle-sized bed. It was too soft. That bed belonged to Mamma-bear.

Then she tried the smallest bed. It was just right. So she lay down upon it and went to sleep. That bed belonged to Baby-bear.

After awhile the three bears came home from their walk. They went to the table to get their soup.

Papa-bear looked into his bowl and growled, in a coarse, rough voice: "SOMEBODY HAS BEEN TASTING MY SOUP."

Mamma-bear looked into her bowl and, in a middle-sized voice, said: "SOMEBODY HAS BEEN TASTING MY SOUP."

Baby-bear looked into his bowl and whined, in a small, weak voice: "SOMEBODY HAS BEEN TASTING MY SOUP, AND HAS EATEN IT ALL UP."

Then they went into the parlor. Papa-bear looked at his chair and growled:

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR."

Mamma-bear looked at her chair and said: "SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR."

Baby-bear looked at his chair and whined: "SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR, AND HAS BROKEN IT ALL TO PIECES."

Then they went up stairs. Papa-bear looked at his bed and growled: "SOMEBODY HAS BEEN TUMBLING MY BED."

Mamma-bear looked at her bed and said: "SOMEBODY HAS BEEN TUMBLING MY BED."

Baby-bear looked at his bed and whined: "SOMEBODY HAS BEEN TUMBLING MY BED, AND HERE SHE IS."

Just then Silver-hair woke up, and when she saw the bears she was terribly frightened. She jumped out of the window and ran away as fast as her legs could carry her, and she never went near that little house again.

THE LION AND THE MOUSE.

A FIERCE old lion had been out hunting all night. In the morning he lay down to take a nap, and was having a good sleep, when a little mouse crept out from among the leaves.

It went jumping along, sniffing this way and that, and ran right over the old lion's nose. Oh, but the little mouse was frightened when the lion's paw came down upon it! It shook all over, but it squeaked out: "Oh, please do not kill me, good lion. I did not mean to waken you. Truly, I did not. I just came because I thought you might have something good for me to eat, after your hunt, and I was creeping over very quietly to see. Do let me live, good

lion. If you will, I will do something for you sometime. Just see if I do not!"

The old lion could not keep from laughing when the little mouse said this. He laughed so loud that the ground shook where he lay, and the poor little mouse was frightened more than ever. "*You* help *me?*" said he. "Ha! ha! ha! I would just like to see you do that!" "Well, I am not hungry; and if I were, you would not make a mouthful. I think I will let you go, but don't you dare to waken me again. If you do, you shall suffer for it."

One day when this old lion was out walking in the woods, he found himself caught in a net which the hunters had laid for him. He tried to break the heavy ropes, but they were too strong for him, and the harder he tried to get away, the tighter the ropes were drawn. He roared so loud that his voice could be heard far, far away.

The little mouse whom the lion had spared was not very far off.

It heard the voice of its friend, and set off at once to see what was the matter.

"Why do you cry so, Mr. Lion?" said the little mouse.

"Just see these ugly ropes," said the lion. "I cannot move."

"I will set you free," said the little mouse. "Do not worry. Just be quiet."

Then the mouse began nibbling at one of the ropes with its little sharp teeth, and soon

that was in two. It cut another and another until the lion could shake himself free.

Then the tired little mouse looked up into the lion's face and said, "Mr. Lion, are you not glad that you did not kill me?"

"Yes," said the lion, "I have learned from you, little teacher, that it pays to do a kind deed every time one gets a chance."

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL.

A LITTLE girl was walking the streets of a large city on a dark, cold, snowy evening. Her feet and head were bare.

Some of the snowflakes as they fell rested lovingly on her curls, and some flew saucily into her face, but she did not notice them.

She carried some boxes of matches in an old apron, and held one box in her hand; and as she walked she cried, "Matches! Matches! Who'll buy my matches?" She had not sold one box during the whole day, and no one had given her a penny.

Bright lights were shining from every window, and every one seemed happy this Christmas eve—every one but the little match-girl.

At last, in an old alley between two tall houses she sank down, leaning against the cold wall of one of the houses and drawing her feet under her to keep them warm.

She dared not go home without selling

her matches; her father would whip her if she took him no money. Besides, it was nearly as cold at home; for they had no fire, and not enough rags to fill the holes in the windows.

Her little hands were nearly frozen. All of a sudden she happened to think, "Why

can not I warm my fingers over a burning match?" She drew one out of a box—"Scratch!" How it sputtered and burned. It gave a warm, bright light like a little candle, as she held her hand over it.

It was really a wonderful light, for it seemed to the little girl as if she were standing by a large, beautiful stove. How the fire burned! The little girl stretched out her feet to warm them, when, lo! the flame of the match went out, and the stove was gone, and she had only the half burnt match in her hand.

She scratched another match on the wall; it burst into a flame, and where the light fell upon the wall it became so thin that she could easily see through it. In the room she saw a table covered with a snowy cloth. A fine dinner was on the table, smoking hot. A great roast turkey lay upon a platter in the center, and, most wonderful of all, the

turkey jumped right down from the dish and ran across the floor with a knife and fork in its breast, to the little girl. Then the match went out and there was nothing but the thick, cold wall before her.

She lighted another match. This time she found herself sitting under a beautiful Christmas tree. Many tapers were burning on the green branches. There were oranges, sacks of candy, dolls, and a host of beautiful things. She stretched out her hand toward them, but the match went out.

The Christmas lights rose higher and higher, till they looked to her like stars in the sky. Then she saw a star fall, leaving behind it a bright streak of light. "Some one is dying," thought the little girl; for her old grandmother—the only one who had ever loved her, and who was dead now—had told her that when a star falls a soul goes up to God.

She scratched another match and the light shone round her. In the brightness she saw her old grandmother smiling upon her. The little girl cried, "Grandmother! O, take me with you! I know you will go away when the match burns out!" and she hurried to light the whole box of matches, that she might keep her grandmother with her.

The light was brighter than noonday, and her grandmother looked larger and more beautiful than ever before. She took the little girl in her arms and they both flew upward to be with God, where there is neither cold, nor hunger, nor pain.

In the morning the little girl's body was found in the snow. She held in her hand the spent matches. "Poor child, she tried to warm herself," the people said. No one knew what beautiful things she had seen, nor to what a beautiful place she went with her grandmother on that Christmas eve.

THE STRANGE CHILD'S CHRISTMAS.

There went a stranger child,
As Christmas eve closed in,
Through the streets of a town whose windows shone
With the warmth and light within.

It stopped at every house
The Christmas tree to see,
On that festive night, when they shone so bright,
And it sighed right bitterly.

Then wept the child, and said:
"This night hath every one
A Christmas tree that he glad may be,
And I alone have none.

"Ah! when I lived at home
From brother's and sister's hand
I had my share; but there's none to care
For me, in the stranger's land.

"Will no one let me in?
No presents I would crave,
But to see the light, and the tree all bright,
And the gifts that others have."

At shutter and door and gate
It knocked with a timid hand;
But none will mark, where alone in the dark,
That little child doth stand.

Each father brings home gifts,
Each mother kind and mild;
There is joy for all, but none will call
And welcome that lonely child.

"Mother and father are dead—
O Jesus, kind and dear,
I've no one now, there is none but Thou,
For I am forgotten here."

The poor child rubs its hands,
All frozen and numbed with cold,
And draws round its head with shrinking dread,
Its garments worn and old.

But see—another child
Comes gliding through the street,
And its robe is white, in its hand a light,
It speaks and its voice is sweet.

"Once on this earth a child
I lived as thou livest yet,
Though all turn away from thee to-day,
Yet I will not forget.

"Each child with equal love
I hold beneath my care,—
In the streets dull gloom, in the lighted room,
I am with them everywhere.

"Here, in the darkness dim,
I'll show thee child, thy tree;
Those that spread their light through the chambers bright,
So lovely scarce can be."

And with its white hand, points
The Christ-child to the sky.
And lo! afar, with each lamp a star,
A tree gleamed there on high.

So far and yet so near,
  The light shone overhead;
And all was well, for the child could tell
  For whom that tree was spread.

It gazed as in a dream,
  And angels bent and smiled,
And with outstretched hand, to that brighter land,
  They carried the stranger child.

And the little one went home
  With its Savior Christ to stay,
All the hunger and cold and the pain of old
  Forgotten and passed away.

—*From the German.*

THE FIR-TREE.

FAR down in the forest, where the warm sun and the fresh air made a sweet resting place, grew a pretty little fir-tree; but it was not happy; it wished so much to be tall like its companions—the pines and firs which grew around it.

The second year it was a long joint taller. Still, it complained. "O, if I were only a big tree like the others, then I could spread my branches far out, and with my top look out into the wide, wide world! The birds would build their nests in my branches, and when the wind blew I should nod my head proudly like the others, yonder."

Sometimes in winter, when the snow lay white and glittering on the ground, a rabbit would come leaping along and jump right

over the little tree, and then how ashamed it would feel!

When the third winter came the tree had

grown so tall that the rabbit had to run around it. Yet it was unhappy. It would cry, "Oh, if I could but keep on growing

tall and old! There is nothing else worth caring for in the world."

Every fall the wood-choppers came and cut down the largest trees. The fir-tree trembled as the large, handsome trees fell with a crash to the earth. Their boughs were cut off and their trunks seemed so naked, long, and slender, that the fir-tree hardly knew them. They were then laid on wagons, and horses drew them away out of the woods.

Where had they gone? What had happened to them? In the spring, as the swallows and wild geese returned, the tree asked, "Do you know to what place they were taken? Have you met them?" The swallows did not know.

But an old goose thought a while and said, "Yes, I know. We met many new ships as we flew from the south. From the ships rose tall masts. I think it was the trees.

They had a smell of fir. Yes, they were fine, they were very fine!"

"O, if I were only big enough to sail over the sea!" But what is the sea, and how does it look?"

"It would be too long a story to explain that," said the old goose as he flew away.

The little fir was now six years old. Early in the winter, when the snow began to fly, men came to the forest looking for young and beautiful trees. "Here is one we must have," they said, and soon an ax cut through its trunk and it fell to the earth with a groan. It was placed upon a wagon with other trees and drawn over a rough road to a yard in front of a fine house.

Two servants in grand livery carried it into a large and beautiful room. Here it was set up in a tub full of sand. Over the top of the tub green moss was laid, so the little tree looked quite at home. How it

trembled! "What is going to happen to me now?" it wondered.

Some young ladies came into the room and the servants helped them to trim the tree. On one branch they hung little bags cut out of colored paper; each bag was filled with candy. From other branches hung gilded apples and walnuts, as if they had grown there, and above and all around were hundreds of red, blue, and white tapers, fastened to the branches. Dolls, exactly like real babies, were placed on the green moss at the foot of the tree, and at the very top was a glittering star made of tinsel. Oh, it was most beautiful.

"This evening," they exclaimed, "how bright it will be."

"Oh, that the evening were come," thought the tree, "and the tapers lighted! Then I should know what else is going to happen. Will the trees of the forest come

to see me in my fine dress? I wonder if the sparrows will peep in at the windows as they fly? Shall I grow faster here, and keep on all these toys and trimmings during summer and winter?"

At last the tapers were lighted, and the folding doors were thrown open. A troop of children rushed in, followed more slowly by the older people. For a moment the little ones stood silent with wonder, and then they shouted for joy till the room rang. They danced merrily around the tree while one present after another was taken from it. Then the candles burned down to the branches and were put out, and the happy children were sent to bed.

The little tree was all alone, but it looked forward with joy to the next evening, expecting again to be decked out with lights and play-things, gold and fruit.

In the morning the servants came in. "Now," thought the fir-tree, "all my splen-

dor is going to begin again." But they dragged it out of the room and upstairs to the garret, and threw it on the floor in a dark corner, and there they left it.

"What does this mean," thought the tree. "What am I to do here? I can hear nothing in a place like this. But it is winter now, the ground is hard and covered with snow, so that people cannot plant me. I shall be sheltered here, I dare say, until spring comes. How thoughtful and kind everybody is to me. Yet I wish the place were not so dark and lonely, with not even a little rabbit to look at. How pleasant it was out in the forest while the snow lay on the ground, when the rabbit would run by, yes, and jump over me too, though I did not like it then. Oh! it is very, very lonely here."

All winter the little fir-tree lay here in the dark, with only a mouse or a rat for a caller.

But one morning people came to clear out the garret. The tree was pulled out of its

corner, and a servant dragged it out upon the staircase. "Now, life is beginning again," said the tree, rejoicing in the sunshine and fresh air.

Then it was carried down stairs and out into the back yard. Close by the yard was a garden where flowers were blooming, while swallows flew here and there crying. "Twit, twit, twit, my mate is coming"—but it was not the fir-tree they meant.

"Now I shall live," cried the tree, joyfully, spreading out its branches. But, alas! they were all withered and yellow, and it lay in the corner among the weeds.

The star of gold paper still stuck in its top and glittered in the sunshine. In the same yard two of the merry children who had danced round the tree at Christmas, were playing. The youngest saw the gilded star and ran and pulled it off. "Look what is sticking to the ugly fir-tree," said the boy,

treading on the branches till they crackled under his boots.

The little tree wished that it had staid in the dark corner of the garret. It thought of its beautiful home in the forest. "Past! past!" said the tree. "Oh, how I wish that I had enjoyed myself while I could have done so! but now it is too late!"

Then a boy came and chopped the tree into small pieces. He placed these pieces in a fire under a large kettle, and they quickly blazed up brightly, sighing so deeply that each sigh was like a pistol shot.

The children came and seated themselves in front of the fire and looked at it and cried, "Pop, pop." But each pop was a sigh of the tree while thinking of a summer day in the forest, or of some winter night there, when the stars shone brightly. Now all was past.

THE LITTLE FIR-TREES.

Hey! little evergreens
Sturdy and strong!
Summer and autumn time
Hasten along.
Harvest the sunbeams, then,
Bind them in sheaves,
Range them and change them
To tufts of green leaves.
Delve in the mellow mold,
Far, far below,
And so
Little evergreens, grow!

Grow, grow!
Grow, little evergreens, grow.

Up, up so airily
To the blue sky,
Lift up your leafy tips
Stately and high;
Clasp tight your tiny cones
Tawny and brown;
By-and-by, buffeting
Rains will pelt down.
By-and-by, bitterly
Chill winds will blow,
And so
Little evergreens, grow!
Grow, grow!
Grow, little evergreens, grow!

Gather all uttermost
Beauty, because—
Hark, till I tell it now—
How Santa Claus,
Out of the northern land,
Over the seas,
Soon shall come seeking you,
Evergreen trees!
Seek you with reindeer, soon,
Over the snow,
And so
Little evergreens grow!
Grow, grow!
Grow, little evergreens, grow!

What if the maple flare
Flaunting and red,
You shall bear waxen-white
Tapers, instead.
What if now, otherwhere
Birds are beguiled,
You shall yet nestle
The little Christ-child!
Ah, the strange splendor
The fir-trees shall know,
And so,
Little evergreens, grow!
Grow, grow!
Grow, little evergreens, grow!

—*Evaleen Stein in St. Nicholas.*
By permission.

THE STREET MUSICIANS.

A DONKEY who had carried sacks to the mill for his master a great many years became so weak that he could not work for a living any longer. His master thought that he would get rid of his old servant that he might save the cost of his food. The donkey heard of this and made up his mind to run away. So he took the road to a great city where he had often heard the street band play. "For," thought he, "I can make music as well as they."

He had gone but a little way when he came to a dog stretched out in the middle of the road and panting for breath, as if tired from running.

"Why are you panting so, my friend?" asked the donkey.

"Oh, dear!" he replied, "now that I am old and growing weaker and weaker and am not able to hunt any more, my master has ordered that I be killed. So I have run away, but how I am to earn a living I am sure I do not know."

"Will you come with me?" said the donkey. "You see I am going to try my luck as a street musician in the city. I think we might easily earn a living by music. You can play the bass drum and I can play the flute."

"I will go," said the dog, and they both walked on together.

Not long after they saw a cat sitting in the road, with a face as dismal as three days of rainy weather.

"Now what has happened to you, old whiskers?" said the donkey.

"How can I be happy when I am in fear of my life?" said the cat. "I am getting old

and my teeth are only stumps. I cannot catch mice any longer, and I like to lie behind the stove and purr. But when I found that they were going to drown me, away I ran as fast as my four legs could carry me; but now that I have come away, what am I to do?"

"Go with us to the city," said the donkey.

"You often give night concerts, I know, so you can easily become a street musician."

"With all my heart," said the cat, so she walked on with them.

After traveling quite a long distance, the three "run aways" came to a farm yard, and on the gate stood a rooster crowing with all his might.

"Why are you standing there and making such a fuss?" said the donkey.

"I will tell you," replied the rooster. "I heard the cook say that there is company coming on Wednesday and she will want

me to put into the soup. That evening my head will be cut off, so I shall crow at the top of my voice as long as I can."

"Listen, Red Comb," said the donkey. "Would you like to run away with us? We are going to the city and you will find something better there than to be made into soup. You have a fine voice and we are all musicians."

The rooster was glad to go and all four went on together.

They could not reach the city in one day, and evening came on just as they reached a wood, so they agreed to stay there all night.

The donkey and the dog lay down under a large tree, the cat stretched herself out on one of the branches, and the rooster flew to the top, where he felt quite safe.

Before they slept, the rooster, who from his high roost could see every way, spied far off a tiny light, and calling to his comrades

told them he thought they were near a house in which a light was shining.

"Then," said the donkey, "we must rouse up and go on to this light, for no doubt we shall find a good stopping place there."

The dog said that he should be glad of a little piece of meat, or a couple of bones if he could get nothing more.

Very soon they were on their way to the place where the light shone. It grew larger and brighter as they came nearer to it, till they saw that it came from the window of a small hut. The donkey, who was the tallest, went near and looked in.

"What is to be seen, old Gray Horse?" said the rooster.

"What do I see?" answered the donkey. "Why, a table spread with plenty to eat and drink, and robbers sitting at it and having a good time."

"That ought to be our supper," said the rooster. "Yes, yes," the donkey answered,

"how I wish we were inside." Then they talked together about how they should drive the robbers away. At last they made a plan they thought would work.

The donkey was to stand on his hind legs and place his fore feet on the window sill. The dog was to stand on his back. The cat was to stand on the dog's shoulders, and the rooster promised to light upon the cat's head.

As soon as they were all ready, they began to play their music together. The donkey brayed, the dog barked, the cat mewed, the rooster, crowed. They made such a noise that the window rattled.

The robbers, hearing the dreadful din, were terribly frightened, and ran as fast as they could to the woods. The four comrades, rushing in, hurried to the table and ate as if they had had nothing for a month.

When they had finished their meal they put out the light, and each one chose a good

bed for the night. The donkey lay down at full length in the yard, the dog crouched behind the door, the cat rolled herself up on the hearth in front of the fire, while the rooster flew to the roof of the hut. They were all so tired after their long journey that they were soon fast asleep.

About midnight one of the robbers, seeing that the light was out and all quiet, said to his chief.

"I do not think that we had any reason to be afraid, after all."

Then he called one of the robbers and sent him to the house to see if it was all right.

The robber, finding everything quiet, went into the kitchen to light a match. Seeing the glaring, fiery eyes of the cat, he thought they were live coals, and held a match toward them that he might light it. But Puss was frightened; she spit at him

and scratched his face. This frightened the robber so terribly that he rushed to the door, but the dog who lay there sprang out at him and bit him on the leg as he went by.

In the yard he ran against the donkey, who gave him a savage kick, while the rooster on the roof cried out as loud as he could, "Cock-a-doodle-doo."

Then the robber ran back to his chief.

"Oh! oh!" he cried, "in that house is a horrible woman, who flew at me and scratched me down the face with long fingers. Then by the door stood a man with a knife, who stabbed me in the leg, and out in the yard lay a monster who struck me a hard blow with a huge club; and up on the roof sat the judge, who cried, 'Bring me the scoundrel here.' You may be sure I ran away as fast as I could go."

The robbers never went back to the house, but got away from that place as quickly as

they could. The four musicians liked their new home so well that they thought no more of going on to the city. The last we heard of them, they were still there and having happy times together.

THE UNHAPPY PINE-TREE.

ONCE a little pine-tree lived in a forest home. His mother was near and every day she smiled down on her little child. There was no chance for him to get lonely, for he had many brothers and sisters to play with, and the oaks and the maples were not far away.

But the little pine-tree stood sulking from morning till night, and what do you suppose was the matter? Why, he didn't like his needles. He said that they were narrow and dark. The oaks and the maples had broad leaves, and he thought them so much prettier than his own.

"If I could only have chosen for myself," said he, "instead of these ugly needles, I should have been clothed in beautiful gold

leaves. Then when my neighbors with the broad leaves looked at me, they would bow

their heads in shame, for their dresses would be much plainer than mine.

The poor little tree cried himself to sleep that night as usual. In the morning, he awoke and frowned at the trees with broad

leaves. But why were they all looking at him! He glanced at himself. What was his surprise to see a beautiful dress of gold, the very kind that he wished for most of all. How happy and how proud he felt! He sang and laughed all day long.

But when it began to get dark, a thief who was passing near, saw the shining leaves, and, going to the tree, picked off every one. He put them into a bag and hurried away, leaving the tree entirely bare.

The poor little tree cried harder than ever that night. "How I wish that my new leaves had been of glass," he said, "then no robber would have cared for them, and the sun shining upon them would have made me most beautiful."

He slept that night, and awakened with a sob, thinking how the other trees would laugh at his nakedness.

But no, he was not bare. He would have clapped his hands for joy had he

dared, for he was wearing the very leaves he longed for the night before. How they glistened and sparkled in the sunshine! He seemed to be clothed in diamonds.

"I can keep these leaves," said the little tree. "A robber would have no use for glass leaves."

That night he was just settling down for a happy sleep, when a terrible storm arose. When it had passed, every glittering leaf lay broken on the ground, and the tree was again bare.

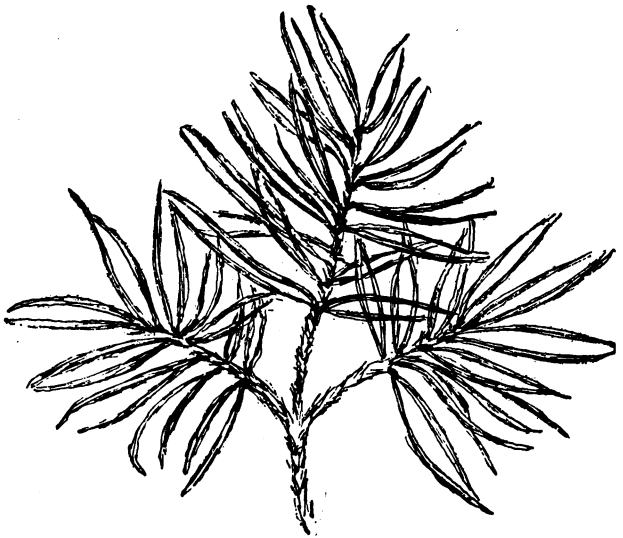
"How foolish I have been," said the little tree, "to ask for dresses finer than those worn by the oaks and the maples. If I might only have dresses like theirs, I should be happy. No robber steals them, and no storm breaks them."

Then the unhappy little tree slept again.

Bright and early in the morning he awakened. "Look at my beautiful green dress," he said. "Could anything be prettier?"

Sure enough he had fresh leaves as broad and green as those of the oaks and maples.

But at noon a goat with her kids came through the forest, hunting for something to



eat. They soon spied the little tree, and hastened to nip his fresh leaves. In less than an hour not a leaf was left for the little tree to be happy over.

Then he cried as if his heart would break, "Oh, how I wish I had my slender needles, they were green and fair, the very best dress for me to have. No robber, nor storm, nor animal would bother me any more. Oh, mother, how beautiful your dress is!"

He slept late the next morning, for he was worn out worrying over his troubles. The wind shook the sleepy little tree to waken him, tossing a spray of needles into his face. He awoke with a start, and as he rubbed his sleepy eyes he cried, "Oh, I have it, I have it, my dear old dress!"

PINE NEEDLES.

If Mother Nature patches
The leaves of trees and vines,
I know she does her darning
With needles of the pine.

They are so long and slender,
And sometimes in full view;
They have their thread of cobwebs,
And thimbles made of dew.

—*William H. Hayne in St. Nicholas*
By Permission.

THE PINE-TREE'S SECRET.

Said the Maple to the Pine,
"Don't you want a dress like mine,
Turning into gorgeous colors in September?"

"Well," replied the little Pine,
"I will own it's very fine
While it lasts you, but how about December?

"I'm contented to be seen
In this handsome dress of green,
And to change it, I don't see sufficient reason."

"But, dear Maple," said the Pine,
"Don't *you* want a dress like *mine*,
That will last and look as well in any season?"

"No, I thank you, little Pine,"
Said the Maple, "I decline,
Since for autumn reds and yellows I've a passion.

"Those green dresses look so strange
When the Oaks and Birches change,
Why, I couldn't bear to be so out of fashion."

—Emile Poulsson in St. Nicholas
By Permission.

"The fairy changed one with long black whiskers."

CINDERELLA.

CINDERELLA AT HOME.

LONG ago there lived a very beautiful girl who was as good as she was beautiful. But she was very lonely, for her mother was dead, and her father away from home all day long, and she had no brother or sister.

One day her father said to her, "My dear, today I shall bring you a new mother, and her two daughters will be loving sisters to you, I am sure."

This made the dear child very happy. She swept and dusted the rooms and put fresh flowers into the vases.

At last, when it was time for her father and mother to come, she ran down to the gate and watched for them. When she saw them coming she clapped her hands and

ran to meet them; but her new mother did not kiss her, and the sisters pushed her rudely aside.

They did not like tc have her with them, she was so much prettier and sweeter than they.

A few days after this, her sisters took away all her nice clothes and made her wear an ugly old frock and clumsy, wooden shoes. Then they sent her to the kitchen to work.

They would not let her go into the parlor at all, and when they met her they would laugh and say, "See our fine princess."

But the poor girl never complained. She worked hard all day, and at night had no bed but the bare, hard floor. When it was very cold she would creep into the ashes on the warm hearth, and so her sisters called her Cinderella, or cinder-maid.

Now it happened that the king gave a great ball in honor of his son, the prince.

He invited all the grand and wealthy people in the city.

Cinderella's two sisters were going, and they could talk of nothing but meeting the prince. "Very likely he will ask us to dance with him," said they, so they bought beautiful dresses and set Cinderella at work starching and ironing their skirts.

When these were ready they called her to brush and comb their hair. While she was busy at this, her sisters said, "Cinderella, wouldn't you like to go to the ball?"

"You are making fun of me," said Cinderella; "such as I would not be welcome at such a place."

"That is true," said they. "It would make the people laugh to see a cinder-maid at a ball."

Almost anyone would have done up their hair carelessly after this unkind speech, but Cinderella said never a word, as she ar-

ranged their braids most becomingly. But when they were gone she could no longer keep the tears back; she sat down by the hearth and cried.

At this moment a good fairy came and stood beside her. "Why do you cry so, Cinderella?" said she. Cinderella could not answer for her sobs, so the good fairy said, "I know why you weep. You wish to go to the ball, and you shall go; so stop your crying and do as I bid you. Run to the garden and fetch me the largest pumpkin you can find there; now scoop out the inside of it."

This being done, the fairy touched it with her wand, when lo! it became a beautiful gilded coach.

"Now run and bring me the mouse-trap from the pantry and open its door." As six sleek mice scampered out one by one, the fairy touched each with her wand, and

there stood six beautiful gray horses, harnessed, ready to be hitched to the coach.

"Now, what shall we do for a coachman?" asked the fairy.

"Might not a rat from the rat-trap do?" asked Cinderella.

"A bright thought," said the fairy, "Bring it at once."

Back came Cinderella with the trap. In it were three large rats. The fairy choose one with long black whiskers, and with her wand she made him a coachman. He picked up the lines at once and the horses were soon in place.

"Now, run to the garden," said the fairy, "and there behind the watering-pot you will find six toads. Bring them quickly."

No sooner had the wand touched them than there stood before Cinderella six sprightly footmen in livery. They bowed low before her, as much as to say, "At your service."

"Now, Cinderella, here is your coach and six, your coachman and your footmen. What is to hinder your going to the ball?"

"How can I go in these ragged clothes?" asked Cinderella.

"They are beautiful," said the fairy, touching them with her wand. And so they had become. Her dress was a rich velvet, and there were diamonds at her throat and in her hair. On her feet were silk stockings and dainty glass slippers. Cinderella's eyes sparkled with delight.

"Now, go to the ball, Cinderella, said the fairy, "but remember to leave before the clock strikes twelve. If you stay one moment after midnight you will find your coach a pumpkin, your horses mice, your coachman a rat, and your footmen toads. And *you* will be a poor cinder-maid, with ragged frock and bare feet."

CINDERELLA AT THE PALACE.

Cinderella promised the fairy that she would leave the ball before midnight. She stepped gayly into the coach and was driven to the palace. The prince himself, seeing the beautiful coach arrive, came down the steps and helped her to alight. He then led her to the dancing hall. As soon as she entered, all voices were hushed, and all eyes were turned toward her as the prince presented her to the king and queen. He could not call her name, for she kept that a secret.

"Who is this beautiful princess?" asked the guests of one another, as the prince led her to the best seat in the room; but no one could tell.

Soon after, the prince asked her to dance with him. No other lady there could begin to dance as gracefully as she.

Afterward supper was brought in, but the prince could not take his eyes from her long

enough to eat. Her plate was loaded with the best of everything. Seeing her sisters near, she went and sat by them and shared with them the fruit that the prince had given her. They did not know her at all, and felt very proud that she should notice them.

Cinderella was talking with them when the clock struck the quarter before twelve. She arose at once and bade the king and queen good-night. The queen said: "There is to be another ball here tomorrow evening. Do not fail to come." The prince led her down the steps to her coach and soon she was at home.

The fairy was in the kitchen waiting for her. Cinderella thanked her for the delightful evening that she had spent, and added, "And I should like very much to go tomorrow evening."

Before the fairy had time to reply, there was a knock at the door. The sisters were

returning from the ball. The fairy disappeared, as did also all of Cinderella's fine trappings.

As she opened the door for her sisters she asked: "Did you have a pleasant evening?"

"Yes, indeed," they replied. "There came the most beautiful princess that ever was seen, and she was very kind to us, and loaded us with oranges and grapes."

"Who was she?" asked Cinderella.

"Nobody knew her name. The prince would have given anything to know," said they.

The next evening came, and the sisters went again to the ball. After they had gone, the fairy came and made Cinderella ready. Her dress this time was even more beautiful than before.

"Now remember," said the fairy, "remember twelve o'clock."

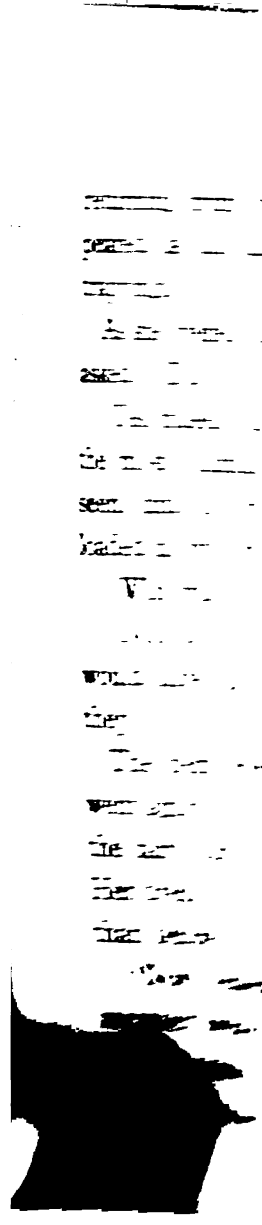
The prince was by her side the whole evening, and she enjoyed his talk so much

enough to eat. Her plate was loaded with the best of everything. Seeing her sisters near she went and sat by them and shared with them the fruit that the prince had given her. They did not know her at all, and felt very proud that she should notice them.

Cinderella was talking with them when the clock struck the quarter before twelve. She arose at once and bade the king and queen good-night. The queen said: "There is to be another ball here tomorrow evening. Do not fail to come." The prince led her down the steps to her coach and soon she was at home.

The fairy was in the kitchen waiting for her. Cinderella thanked her for the delightful evening that she had spent, and added, "And I should like very much to go tomorrow evening."

Before the fairy had time to reply, there was a knock at the door. The sisters were



e
ul
re-
no

sent
narry
should
t with
e could
. Next
people.
The two
foot into
ning and

and knew
ing, "Let

that she entirely forgot about twelve o'clock.

The half-hour after eleven struck; she did not hear it. The quarter before twelve struck; neither did she hear that. Soon afterwards the clock began to strike twelve. At the first stroke she hastened out of the room, but in her haste she lost one of her beautiful glass slippers on the stairs. She had to walk home that night alone, dressed in her old gown, with nothing left of her splendid outfit but one slipper.

The prince had followed her, but could not overtake her. In his haste he came near falling over a tiny glass slipper. He picked it up and put it into his pocket. Then he inquired of all the servants if they had seen the beautiful princess as she hurried out; but they replied that they had seen only a poor ragged cinder girl.

"What became of her coach?" he asked. "We do not know," they replied, "we only

saw in the place where it stood an old pumpkin, and we saw six mice, a rat, and six toads scampering away."

When the two sisters returned from the ball, Cinderella asked, "Was the beautiful princess there tonight?" "Yes," they replied, "but she left very suddenly, and no one knows what has become of her."

A few days after this the prince sent word into all the city that he would marry the one whose foot the glass slipper should exactly fit, and a messenger was sent with it, first to all the princesses. Not one could squeeze her foot into the tiny slipper. Next he visited the homes of all the grand people. He came to Cinderella's home. The two sisters each tried hard to thrust a foot into the little shoe, but all their pushing and tugging were in vain.

Cinderella, who saw all of this, and knew her slipper, said to them, laughing, "Let me try it on."

"You," said her sisters scornfully, "What have you to do with a glass slipper!"

But the messenger looked closely at her, and noticed how beautiful she was. He made her sit down, and, taking from her foot the rude wooden shoe, slipped on the glass slipper. It was a perfect fit. Cinderella pulled out of her pocket the other glass slipper and put it on the other foot. Just then the fairy glided in, unseen by any but Cinderella, and touched her clothes with her wand. They became finer than any she had worn at the ball.

How surprised her sisters were as she stood before them in all her beauty. They thought of their cruelty to her, and falling at her feet, begged her to forgive them.

Cinderella raised them up and threw her arms around them. She told them that she freely forgave them and wanted them to love her always.

She was taken to the prince, dressed as she was. He thought her more charming than ever. In a few days he married her, and Cinderella brought her sisters to to live with her at the palace.

When the king and queen died, the prince and Cinderella became king and queen; and in all the world there never was quite so beautiful and good a queen as Cinderella.

THE STRAW, THE COAL OF FIRE, AND THE BEAN.

ONCE upon a time there was an old woman who lived in a village. One day she went out into the garden to gather some beans for dinner. When they were ready to be cooked, she took up some straw and put it on the fire to make it burn more quickly. As she did so, one straw fell from the bundle to the floor.

As she threw the beans into the pot to boil, one of them dropped upon the floor, not far from the straw. Suddenly a glowing coal bounded out of the fire and alighted close by the two. The bean and the straw jumped and cried, "Dear friend, please do not get near us, until you are a little cooler. How did you happen to come out here?"

"Oh," replied the coal, "the heat made me so lively that I gave a big leap and found myself here. Had I not jumped when I did, I should surely have been burned to ashes.

Then the bean said, "I also, just escaped being scalded to death, for if the old woman had put me in the pot with my comrades I should not have been here to tell my story."

"I, too, have had a narrow escape," said the straw, "for all of my brothers were pushed into the fire and smoke by the old woman. She brought a great many of us in here to burn in the fire, and I only am left alive."

"Well, now, what shall we do with ourselves," said the coal.

"I think that, since we have all three been saved from death, we might as well be companions and travel away together to some friendly country, for here we are all

the time in danger of losing our lives," said the bean.

The other two gladly agreed to this, so they started at once on their journey. After traveling a long time they came to a stream, over which there was no bridge of any kind, so they could not tell how to get over to the other side. They stood for a long time wondering how they might reach the opposite shore. Then the straw said, "I will lay myself across the stream and you two can walk over me as if I were a bridge."

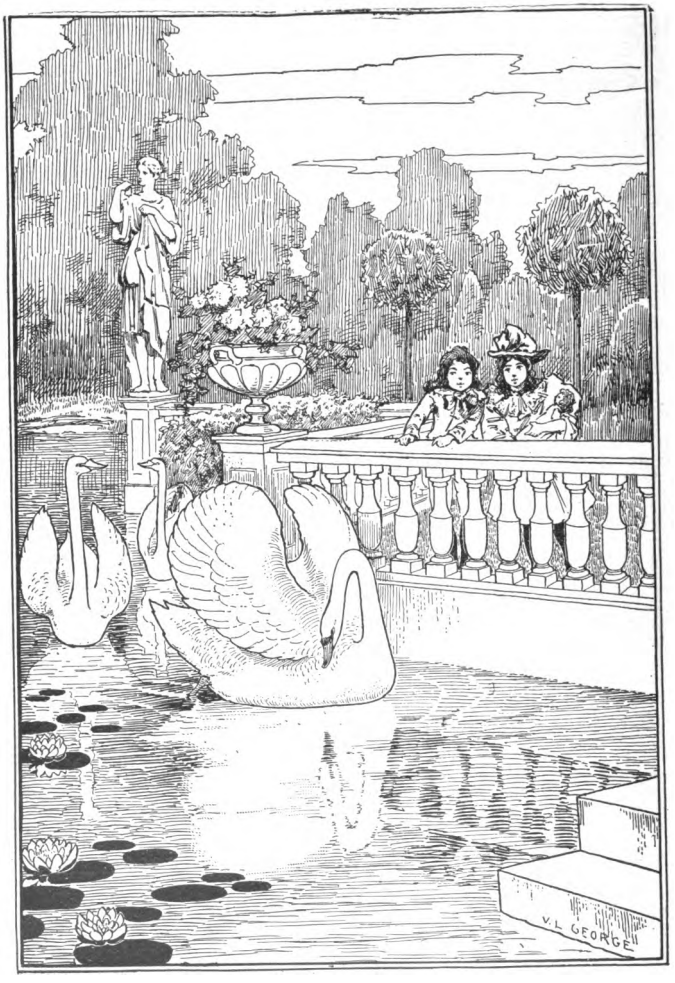
So the straw stretched himself from one shore to the other, and the coal, who was a hot-headed fellow, tripped forth quite boldly on the newly built bridge. But when he reached the middle of the stream, and heard the water rushing under him, he was so frightened that he stood still and dared not move another step.

This was a very sad thing for both the coal and the straw, for the hot coal scorched

the straw when it stopped moving, and the straw broke in two and fell into the brook. The coal, with a hiss, followed the straw and was drowned at once.

The bean, who had waited to see how the coal got along, before trying the bridge herself, saw what had happened and began to laugh. She laughed so hard that she burst, and would have been as bad off as her companions had not a tailor come to rest by the brook. He noticed the sad plight of the bean, and, as he was a kind-hearted man, he took a needle and thread out of his pocket, and taking up the bean sewed it together.

The bean thanked him very much. He did the best he could for her, but having no white thread he was obliged to use black, and ever since that time, some beans have a black mark down their backs.



"What the Ugly Duckling came to be."

THE UGLY DUCKLING.

A PLEASANT old farm-house stood close by a river, and from the house down to the bank of the river there grew great burdock leaves. These were so high that a child could stand under the tallest, and they grew so close together that they looked like a little forest.

In a snug place under one of these burdock leaves, a duck sat on her nest waiting for her young brood to hatch. She was becoming very tired, for the little ones were a long time in coming out of their shells, and she did not often have company. The neighbor ducks liked better to swim about in the river than to climb its slippery banks and sit under the burdocks gossiping with her.

After awhile one shell cracked, then another, and another, and from each egg came a fluffy little yellow creature that lifted its head and cried, "Peep! peep!"

"Quack! quack!" said the mother, and then they all quacked as well as they could.

After a little while they came out from under their mother's wings and looked about them. "What a great world this is," said the young ducks, "so very much larger than the egg shell." "Do you think that this is the whole world?" asked their mother. "Wait until you have seen the farm-yard, the garden, and the pasture." "Are you all out?" she asked, rising.

"No, I declare, the largest egg lies there still. I wonder how much longer I must stay here; I am very tired of this," and she sat down again on the nest.

"Well, how are you getting along?" asked an old duck who called just then.

"Very well," said the mother, "all the eggs are hatched but one; and are not these little ones the prettiest ducklings you ever saw?"

"They are very pretty," said the visitor. "But just let me see that egg that will not hatch. It must be a turkey's egg. I hatched some once, and after all my care and trouble the young ones were afraid of the water. I quacked and coaxed, but it did no good. I never could get one of them into the water. Yes, that is a turkey's egg. Now, if I were in your place, I would leave it where it is, and teach the other children to swim."

"I think I will sit on it a little while longer," said the duck, "I have been here so long that a few days more will not matter."

"Well, do as you please," said the old duck, and she waddled away.

At last the large egg broke, and the young one crept out crying, "Peep! peep!"

The mother duck stared at it and said, "What a large duckling! and it is not at all like the others. I wonder if it really is a turkey. We shall soon find out when we go to the water. It shall go in, if I have to push it in myself."

On the next day the sun shone brightly on the burdock leaves, so the mother took her brood and waddled off down to the river. When they came to the water, the mother duck jumped in with a splash. "Quack! quack!" she cried and one after another of the little ducklings jumped in after their mother. They swam about quite prettily, with their legs paddling under them as though they had been born in the water, and the ugly brother was there with the others.

"Oh," said the mother, "that is not a turkey; how well he uses his legs and how gracefully he holds his body. He is my

own child and I do not think he is very ugly. Quack! quack! Come with me now, children; I will take you to a place where there are many fine people, but you must keep close to me or you may be stepped on, and above all, look out for the cat."

Then they climbed the slippery bank of the river, and waddled after their mother. When they came to the farm-yard fence, the mother stopped and said: "Come, now, my children, see how well you can behave. Don't turn in your toes. A duckling who is well brought up spreads his feet wide apart just as his mother does—*so*, do you see? Now bend your necks and say 'quack,'" and the young ducks did just as their mother told them to do.

An old duck who saw the new brood coming stared at them and said: "Do look; here is another brood, as if there were not enough of us already; and what a queer

looking fellow one of them is; we do not want him here," and then she flew at him and bit him in the neck.

"Let him alone," said the mother, "he is doing no harm."

"Yes, but he is so big and ugly that he must be turned out," said the hateful duck

A very grand old duck said: "They are very pretty children, all but that one. I wish his mother would fix him up a little."

"I can not do that," said the mother. "He is not pretty, but he is kind and good and swims even better than the others. I think he will become pretty," and then she stroked his neck and smoothed his feathers.

The little ducks made themselves at home in the farm-yard, but the poor ugly duckling had not one minute's peace. The turkey gobbler puffed himself out and flew at the poor little duckling, and became very red in the head with anger. The ducks

pecked him, the children chased him, and the girl who fed the poultry kicked him. Even his brothers and sisters were unkind to him, and would say, "O, you ugly creature, I wish the cat would get you," and his mother said, "I wish he had never come from his shell."

At last he could endure it no longer, so he ran away, frightening the little birds in the hedge as he flew over it. "They are afraid of me because I am so ugly," he said. Then he closed his eyes, and ran on and on until he came to a swamp, where the wild geese lived. He staid here all night, feeling very tired and sad.

In the morning, two wild geese flew over him. When they saw him they began to make fun of him. Just then, "Pop! pop!" went a gun, and the two fell dead among the rushes, coloring the water with their blood. "Pop! pop!" was heard all around,

and whole flocks of wild geese flew up from the rushes.

The blue smoke from the guns rose like a dark cloud over the trees, and a number of dogs bounded in among the rushes. How frightened the poor duckling was! He turned away his head to hide it under his wing, when a large terrible dog passed quite near him. The dog's mouth was open, his tongue hung from his mouth, and his eyes looked very fierce. He thrust his nose close to the duckling, showing his sharp teeth, and then "splash! splash!" he went into the water without touching him.

"How glad I am that I am so ugly. Even a dog will not bite me," said the duckling.

So he lay quite still, while the shot rattled through the rushes, as gun after gun was fired over him. It was late in the

day before it became quiet, and then the poor young thing did not dare to move. He waited quietly for several hours, and, after looking carefully around him, he flew away from the swamp as fast as he could go.

The next morning, just as the sun arose, he came to a stream of water. Here he could swim and dive, but all the animals kept away from him, he was so ugly; so he was very lonely.

Autumn came, and the leaves in the forest turned to orange, red, and gold; and then as winter drew near the wind caught them and whirled them in the cold air.

The weather grew colder and colder. Winter was here, and the poor duck had to swim about in the water to keep from freezing, but each night the place on which he swam became smaller. After awhile he grew weak and tired, and lay still and helpless, frozen fast in the ice.

Early in the morning, a farmer who was passing, saw what had happened. He broke the ice in pieces and carried the duckling home to his wife. The poor creature felt better after getting warm, but when the children wanted to play with him, the duckling thought they were going to hurt him, so he started up, frightened, fluttered into the milk-pan, and splashed the milk about the room.

Then the woman clapped her hands, which frightened him still more. He flew first into the jar of butter, then into the flour-barrel and out again. What a bad fix he was in! The woman screamed and struck at him with a poker; the children laughed and screamed and tumbled over each other trying to catch him, but finally he got away. The door was open a little way and he slipped out and flew down among some bushes. Here he lay, tired out, in the newly fallen snow.

After he had rested himself, he flew to a swamp, where all winter long he suffered from hunger and cold. When winter had passed, and he was lying one morning among the rushes, he felt that his wings were strong, so he flapped them against his sides and rose high into the air. They carried him on and on, until he found himself in a large garden. Everything was beautiful there. From the bushes, close by, swam three white swans, rustling their feathers as they moved over the smooth water.

"I will fly to these birds," he said, "and they will kill me because I am so ugly and dare to come near them; but it makes no difference. It is better to be killed by these beautiful birds than to be pecked by the ducks, chased by the hens, kicked about by the girl who feeds the poultry, or starved and frozen in the winter."

Then he flew to the water and swam toward the fine swans. The moment they saw him they hurried to meet him with outstretched wings. "Kill me," said the poor bird, and he bent down his head, waiting for them to take his life. But what do you think he saw as he looked down into the water? His own likeness, but how changed? He was no longer a dark, gray bird, ugly to look at, but a beautiful swan. The other swans swam around the new-comer, and stroked his neck with their beaks.

Soon after, some little children came into the garden and threw bread and cake into the water.

"Oh, see!" cried the youngest child, "there is a new one."

How happy they all were to see the new swan. They ran to call their father and mother to come and see him.

Then they threw bread and cake into the water for the new bird, and they said, "This is the finest of all, he is so young and graceful."

The poor swan was so happy he did not know what to do, but he was not at all proud. He had been hated for being ugly, and now he heard them say that he was the most beautiful of all the birds. He rustled his feathers and curved his slender neck, and said, "Now, when people see me they will not be angry, they will be glad. I never dreamed of such happiness when I was an ugly duckling."

THE APPLE-BRANCH.

IN THE lovely month of May, a branch covered with beautiful pink flowers drooped from an apple-tree. A fine, open carriage was driving past, and in it sat a fair princess. When she saw the apple-tree she said, "What lovely blossoms! I must have some of them."

So the coachman stopped the horses, and the footman cut off the drooping spray of flowers and gave it to the princess. She took it in her white hand and sheltered it with her parasol; then they drove to the castle, the home of the princess.

Here she carried the apple-branch to her room. Rich lace curtains hung at the open windows, and costly flowers stood in silver

vases. In one of these vases, which stood in a window, the princess placed the apple-branch, with some fresh, light twigs of

birch. It was a very pretty sight, and every one who came into the room said, "O, how beautiful!" So the branch became proud.

It looked out of the window over gardens and fields in which grew many flowers. Some of these were homely. The apple-branch said, "There is a great difference between these plain flowers and myself. How unhappy they must be. Now, who cares to have a bouquet of those yellow flowers? They are too common; they are found everywhere, in fields and in streets, and they have such a common name, too, —dog-flower, or dandelion—but there must be some plain flowers, I suppose.

And as it said this, a bright sunbeam kissed the yellow dandelion out in the field, and then the apple-branch in the window, and said: "Is there such a difference between flowers? Are you not all sisters, the plain looking and the beautiful? It isn't kind of you to talk about a difference. What is the plant that you think so ugly?"

"The dandelion," answered the apple-branch. "You know you never see it in a

bouquet. Why, the princess passed by a great many of them this morning, without once noticing them, and people very often trample them under their feet, there are so many of them. When they go to seed they have flowers like wool, which fly away in little pieces over the roads and stick to people's dresses. They are only weeds, but of course there must be weeds. How glad I am that I am not an old weed."

When the wind whispered to the dandelions what the apple-branch had said, they pulled their little green sun-bonnets down over their faces and wondered if they really were only ugly weeds, and one of the little dandelions, peeping out at its dear old white-haired grandmother, said, "Surely no one could be more beautiful than she."

While the dandelions were feeling so sad, a whole group of children came across the fields. The youngest was so small that the

other children had to carry him. When they had set him on the grass among the yellow flowers, he laughed aloud, he was so happy; then he kicked out his little legs, rolled about, and picked the dandelions which grew about him and kissed them, and they smiled back, happy because he loved them.

The older children picked off the flowers with long stems. They made chains from these for their necks, then others to go across their shoulders and hang down to their waists, and at last wreaths for their heads. They looked quite splendid in their garlands of green stems and golden flowers. After this they made curls from some of the stems, and fastened them to their wreaths.

The oldest one gathered carefully the faded flowers, on the stems of which clustered the seeds, looking like white feathery

crowns. She held these to her lips and tried to blow away a whole crown with one puff of her breath.

"Do you not see," said the sunbeam, "How much pleasure dandelions give?"

"Yes, *to children*," said the apple-branch.

By and by an old woman came hobbling into the field, leaning on a cane. She began to dig up the dandelion plants with an old knife without a handle. She wanted part of them for greens for herself, and the others she wanted to sell so as to make some money.

"What a help these dandelions are to this old woman," said the sunbeam.

"People do not *eat* and *make playthings* of *beautiful* flowers," said the apple-branch.

"But God loves the dandelions just as much as he does the more beautiful flowers, and cares for them just as tenderly," said the sunbeam.

Then some people came into the room, among them the young princess. She carried in her hand something that seemed like a flower. It was covered very carefully by two or three great leaves so that no gust of wind could harm it.

As soon as the windows were closed, the large leaves were taken off very gently, and there, right before the apple-blossom, stood the feathery seed crown of the ugly dandelion. The princess held it up and said, "Could anything be more beautiful? See how very light and airy. How wonderful God has made this little flower. I will paint it with the apple-branch. Every one thinks the apple-blossoms beautiful, but this humble flower has another kind of beauty; and, although they are different, each is beautiful."

Then the sunbeam kissed them both, and upon the flowers of the apple-branch came a rosy blush.

THE DANDELION.

" Bright little dandelion,
Downy, yellow face,
Peeping up among the grass
With such gentle grace;
Minding not the April wind
Blowing rude and cold,
Brave little dandelion
With a heart of gold.

" Meek little dandelion
Changing into curls
At the magic touch of these
Merry boys and girls.
When they pinch thy dainty throat,
Strip thy dress of green,
On thy soft and gentle face
Not a cloud is seen.

" Poor little dandelion,
Now all gone to seed,
Scattered roughly by the wind
Like a common weed.
Thou hast lived thy little life
Smiling every day;
Who could do a better thing
In a better way."

THE BIRD WITH NO NAME.

ONCE upon a time the birds grew tired of living without a master, so they agreed to choose one of their number for king.

The plover did not vote with the other birds to have a king. He said that he had lived free and he would die free. He flew about here and there among the birds, crying. "Don't you do it, don't you do it!" But as no one noticed him he went back to his lonely home in the swamp, and has never since had anything to do with the other birds.

One fine May day the birds all came together from woods, fields, and meadows, to choose a king. There was the eagle and

the hawk, the owl and the crow, the lark and the sparrow, and a great many little birds, among them one without a name.

A hen who had heard nothing about the meeting was very much surprised to see so many gathered together. "Cluck, cluck, cluck! What are they all going to do?"

she cackled. But the rooster asked his dear wife to be quiet, and then told her why the birds were having a meeting.

At this meeting the birds all agreed that the one who could fly the highest should be chosen king.

A green frog who sat in the bushes, when he heard this, croaked dreadfully and said there would be many tears shed over that plan of settling the matter.

The crow said, "Caw, caw, I do not believe we shall have a bit of trouble about it."

They did not fly until the next morning; so none could say, "I could have flown higher if it had not been evening. I was very tired."

Next morning when all was ready the crow gave one "caw" as a signal, and the whole flock rose in the air. There was quite a cloud of dust scattered about and a great rustling noise and a flapping of wings. It was as if a dark cloud had passed over the sun. The little birds staid among the branches; they knew that they could not go so high.

The large birds kept together for a long time, but the eagle at last went beyond all the others.

When the eagle saw that none could follow him, he said to himself, "I do not need to go any higher; I shall surely be chosen king."

And the birds below him cried out, "You must be our king. No other bird can fly so high."

"I can," cried the little fellow without a name. He had crept among the feathers of the eagle without being seen and had been carried up into the air. As he was not tired he flew higher and higher till he was almost out of the eagle's sight. When he had gone as far as he cared to go, he folded his wings and sank slowly down to the earth, crying out—"I am king, I am king!"

"You our king?" cried the birds angrily, "No, no! That was not fair."

As they would not have this little bird for king they had to try some other plan

for choosing one. This is the plan they agreed upon: Whoever should sink lowest into the earth should be king. When the goose heard this she shook her head and laid her broad breast on the ground. The rooster scratched away quickly to make a hole. The duck got into trouble for she jumped into a deep ditch and sprained her ankle so badly that she waddled away to the nearest pond crying, "Bad work, bad work!"

The little bird without a name went in search of a mouse hole, and as he slipped into it he cried with his shrill voice, "I am king, I am king!"

"You our king?" cried the angry birds. "Do you think we would have a dishonest bird for our king?" So they shut him up in the mouse hole, hoping to punish him for his deceit, and the owl was made guard over the hole to keep the little rogue from getting away.

In the evening all the birds felt very tired with their high flights, so they went home with their wives and children to bed. The owl alone staid by the mouse hole staring into it with her great solemn eyes, but after awhile she became tired and said to herself, "I can easily shut one eye and by keeping the other open, watch that the little cheat does not get away," Then she closed one eye and with the other kept close watch of the hole.

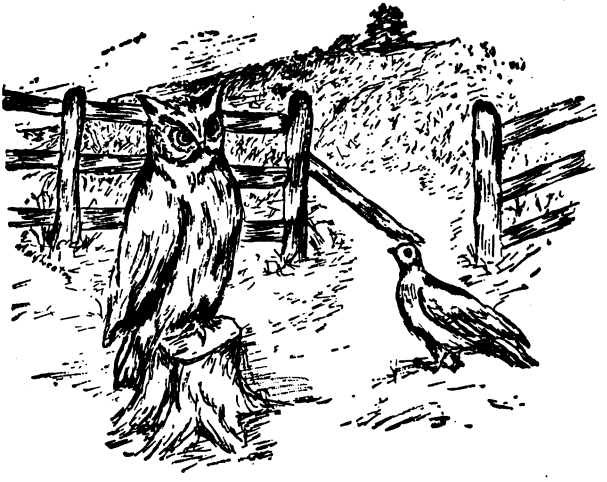
The little fellow peeped out once or twice, and thought, as the owl seemed to be asleep, that he could slip away; but the owl saw him and made such a quick step toward him that he got back in a hurry.

A little while after, the owl thought she would rest the eye that had been doing duty, and open the other, and so keep on changing all night; but when she closed one she forgot to open the other, so both eyes were shut and she was fast asleep.

The little bird peeped out again and saw that now he could easily get away, so he crept out very quietly and flew off.

From that time the owl has never dared to show herself by daylight, for fear that the other birds might pick out her feathers and pull her to pieces, so she flies about in the night time and chases and catches the mice who make such bad holes.

And the little bird, too, keeps out of the owl's way, for he fears she will catch him by the neck and kill him. He lives near houses where men can protect him, or in the hedges, where he builds his nest, and he keeps crying out in a piping voice, "I am king, I am king!" The other birds make fun of him by calling him the hedge king—that is, the wren.



THE PIGEON AND THE OWL.

" There once was a pigeon, as I have heard say,
Who wished to be wise.
She thought to herself, 'I will go to the owl,
Perhaps he'll advise;
And if all he tells me I carefully do,
I'll surely get wisdom.' Away then she flew.

" When little Miss Pigeon arrived at the barn
She found the owl there;
Most humbly she cooed out her wish, but the owl
Did nothing but stare.

'Well, well,' thought Miss Pigeon, 'of course I can wait,
I won't interrupt him; his wisdom is great.'

"She waited and waited. At last the owl blinked,
And deigned a remark,
'You'll never be wise, foolish pigeon, unless
You stay in the dark,
And stretch your small eyes, and fly out in the night,
And cry, 'Hoo-hoo-hoo,' with all of your might.'

"So little Miss Pigeon to practice began;
But all she could do
Her eyes would not stretch and her voice would not change
Its soft, gentle coo;
And she caught a sad cold from the night damp and chill,
And lacking the sunshine besides, she fell ill.

"Then little Miss Pigeon gave up being wise;
'For plainly,' said she,
'Though owls are the wisest of birds, their's is not
The wisdom for me;
So I'll be the very best pigeon I can.'
And what do you think! She grew wise on that plan."

THE PEA-BLOSSOM.

Once upon a time there were five peas in one pod. They were green, the pod was green, and even the little stools on which they sat were green; so they thought that the whole world was green.

The sun shone and warmed the pod, and the rain made it clear and transparent; and all the time the pod was growing larger, and the peas were growing larger and more thoughtful. They now began to wonder what sort of a world was outside their little home.

As the weeks passed the pod became yellow, and the peas became yellow.

"All the world is turning yellow," they cried.

All at once they felt a pull at the pod, and it was torn off and held in some one's hand, then slipped into the pocket of a jacket where there were many of its neighbors.

"Now we shall soon see the world," said one. That was just what they all wanted

"Crack," went the shell, and the five peas rolled out into the bright sunshine. There they lay in a little boy's hand. He was holding them tightly and saying: "These are fine peas for my sling-shot."

As he placed the largest one in position, it said: "Now I am flying out into the

the world; catch me if you can." And away it went, landing on top of a house and rolling down into the gutter on the roof, ending its travels in the crop of a pigeon.

"I," said the second, "mean to fly straight into the sun; that is a pod that lets itself be seen, and it will just suit me," So away it went, but it fell into a barrel of dirty water, where it lay for days and weeks, swelling to a great size, until at last it popped open.

"We will go to sleep wherever we land," said the next two peas, as they started out together; but they fell in a poultry-yard where they had no time to dream, for a busy old hen gobbled them both up.

"I will go wherever the kind Father wishes me to go," said the last pea, as it started out; and as it spoke it flew up against an old board under a garret window

and dropped into a hole which was almost full of moss and soft earth.

The moss closed around it and there it lay, a prisoner, but not forgotten by God.

In this garret lived a poor woman who made her living by washing for other people, for she was strong and willing to work. She had one little daughter who was very pale and weak. She had not been able to sit up for a whole year. All day while her mother was away, she lay quietly and patiently on her bed.

Spring came, and early one morning the sun shone brightly through the little window.

Just as her mother was starting to her work the little girl called to her: "Mother, what can that green thing be that peeps in at the window. It is moving in the wind."

Her mother stepped to the window and opened it. "Oh," she said, "It is a little pea which has taken root in this moss and

is sending out its green leaves. How could it have gotten into that hole? Well, now, here is a little garden to keep you company."

So the mother drew the sick girl's bed nearer the window, that she might see her little visitor, and then the mother went out to her work.

"Mother, I do believe that I shall get well," the child said that evening, when her mother came home. "The sun has been shining so brightly, and the little pea makes me so happy; I surely shall get better soon, and be able to go out into the bright sunshine again."

"I hope so," her mother said, but she could not believe that her little girl would ever be much better.

The next morning, before she went away, she propped up the green plant with a stick, that it might not be broken by the

wind; then she tied one end of a piece of string to the window-sill, and fastened the other end to the upper part of the window-frame, so that the pea tendrils might twine around it when it shot up. And it did shoot up. The child could almost see it grow.

"Now really, here is a flower coming," the mother said one morning. Her daughter seemed so much better that she began to think that she would get well. For some time she had seemed brighter and happier, and for the last few days she had raised herself up in bed in the morning, to look at her little garden.

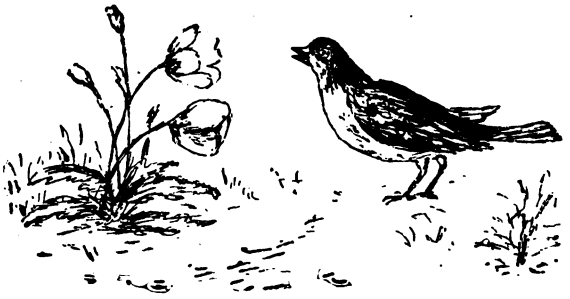
A week after this she sat up for the first time in a year. Her mother placed her in a chair by the open window and she sat there a whole hour. The pea-vine outside the window was rejoicing over its first pink blossom, and the little girl bent her head and gently kissed it

Her mother, who stood beside her, said, "Our Father Himself planted that pea and made it grow. Let us thank Him for his loving kindness."

BE TRUE.

"Listen, my boy, I've a word for you,
And this is the word, 'Be true! be true!'
At work or at play, in darkness or light,
Be true, be true, and stand for the right.

"List, little girl, I've a word for you,
'Tis the very same, 'Be true! be true!'
For truth is the sun, and falsehood the night,
Be true, little maid, and stand for the right."



DISCONTENT.

Down in a field, one day in June,
The flowers all bloomed together,
Save one, who tried to hide herself,
And drooped that pleasant weather.

A robin, who had flown too high,
And felt a little lazy;
Was resting near a buttercup
Who wished she were a daisy.

For daisies grew so big and tall,
She always had a passion
For wearing frills around her neck,
In just the daisies' fashion.

And buttercups must always be
The same old tiresome color,
While daisies dress in gold and white,
Although their gold is duller.

"Dear Robin," said the sad young flower,
"Perhaps you'd not mind trying
To find a nice white frill for me,
Some day, when you are flying."

"You silly thing," the robin said,
"I think you must be crazy;
I'd rather be my honest self,
Than any made-up daisy.

"You're nicer in your own bright gown,
The little children love you:
Be the best buttercup you can,
And think no flower above you.

"Though swallows leave me out of sight,
We'd better keep our places;
Perhaps the world would all go wrong,
With one too many daisies.

"Look bravely up into the sky,
And be content with knowing
That God wished for a buttercup
Just here, where you are growing."

—*Sarah O. Jewett in "Lambert's Memory Gems."*

DAISIES.

At evening when I go to bed
I see the stars shine overhead;
They are the little daisies white
That dot the meadow of the Night.

And often while I'm dreaming so,
Across the sky the moon will go;
It is a lady, sweet and fair,
Who comes to gather daisies there;

For when at morning I arise,
There's not a star left in the skies;
She's picked them all, and dropped them down
Into the meadows of the town.

—*Frank Dempster Sherman.*