***The Magic Shop***

I had seeen the Magic Shop from afar several times; I had passed it once, a shop window of little objects, magic balls, magic hens, wonderful cones, ventriloquist dolls, the material of the basket trick, packs of cards that looked all right, and all that sort of thing, but never had I thought of going in until one day, almost without warning, Gip hauled me by my finger right up to the window, and so conducted himmself that there was nothing for it but to take him in. I had not thought the place was there, to tell the truth--a modest-sized frontage in Oxford Street, between the picture shop and the place where the chicks run about just out of patent incubators, but there it was sure enough.

1

I had fanncied it was down nearer the Circus, or round the corner in Oxford, or even in Holborn; always over the way and a little inaccessible it had been, with something of the mirage in its position; but here it was now quite indisputably, and the fat end of Gip's pointing finger once made a noise upon the glass.

2

"If I was rich," said Gip, dabbing a finger at the Disappearing Egg, "I'd buy myself that. And that"--which was The Crying Baby, Very Human --and that," which was a mysttery, and called, so a neat card asserted, "Buy One and Astonish Your Friends." "Anything," said Gip, "will disappear under one of those cones. I have read about it in a book. "And there, daddy, is the Vanishing Halfpenny--, only they've put it this way up so's we cann’t see how it's done."

3

Gip, dear boy, inherits his mother's breeding, and he did not propose to enter the shop or worry in any way; only, you know, quite unconsciously he lugged my finger doorward, and he made his interest clear. "That," he said, and pointed to the Magic Bottle. "If you had that?" I said. "I could show it to Jessie," he said, thoughtful as ever of others. "It's less than a hundred days to your birthday, Gibbles," I said, and laid my hand on the doorhandle. Gip made no answer, but his grip tightened on my finger, and so we came into the shop.

4

It was no common shop this; it was a magic shop, and all the prancing precedence Gip would have taken in the matter of mere toys was wanting. He left the burthen of the conversation to me. It was a little, narrow shop, not very well lit, and the doorbell pinged again with a plaintive note as we closed it behind us. For a momentt or so we were alone and could glance about us in the shop.

5

There was a tiger on the glass case that covered the low counter--a grave, kind-eyed tiger that while waggled his head in a methodical manner; there were several crystal spheres, a china hand holding magic cards, a stock of magic fishbowls in various sizes, and an immodest magic haat that shamelessly displayed its springs.

6

On the floor were magic mirrors; one to draw you out long and thin, one to swell your head and vanish your lleegs, and one to make you short and fat like a draught; and while we were laughing at these the shopman, as I suppose, came in.

7