



THE

Vege-Men's

REVENGE

BY
FLORENCE

K.

UPTON.

Verses by

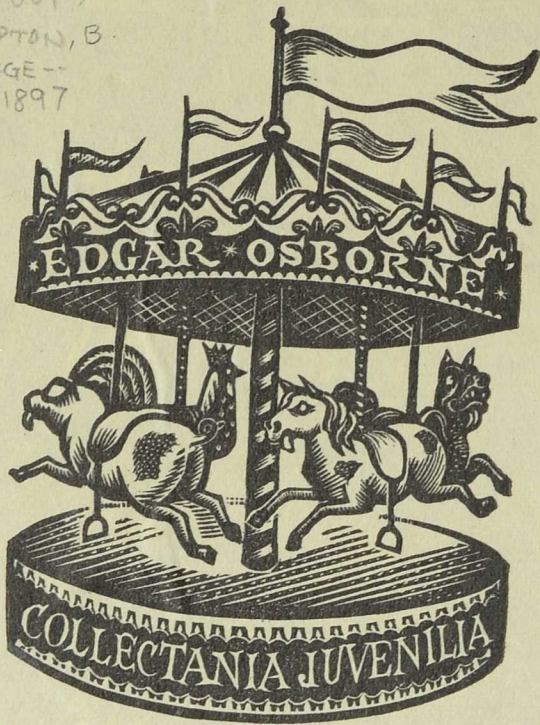
Bertha Upton -

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Two poems
(1854)





The Veggie-Men's Revenge.

Pictures by

Florence K. Upton

Verses by *Bertha Upton*

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THE VEGE-MEN'S REVENGE.

PART FIRST

"Good day, pretty Poppy! we've met you at last
After watching and waiting for quite a week past.

You're alone as we see,

Said Herr Carrot with glee,

As he winked at his friend Don Tomato.

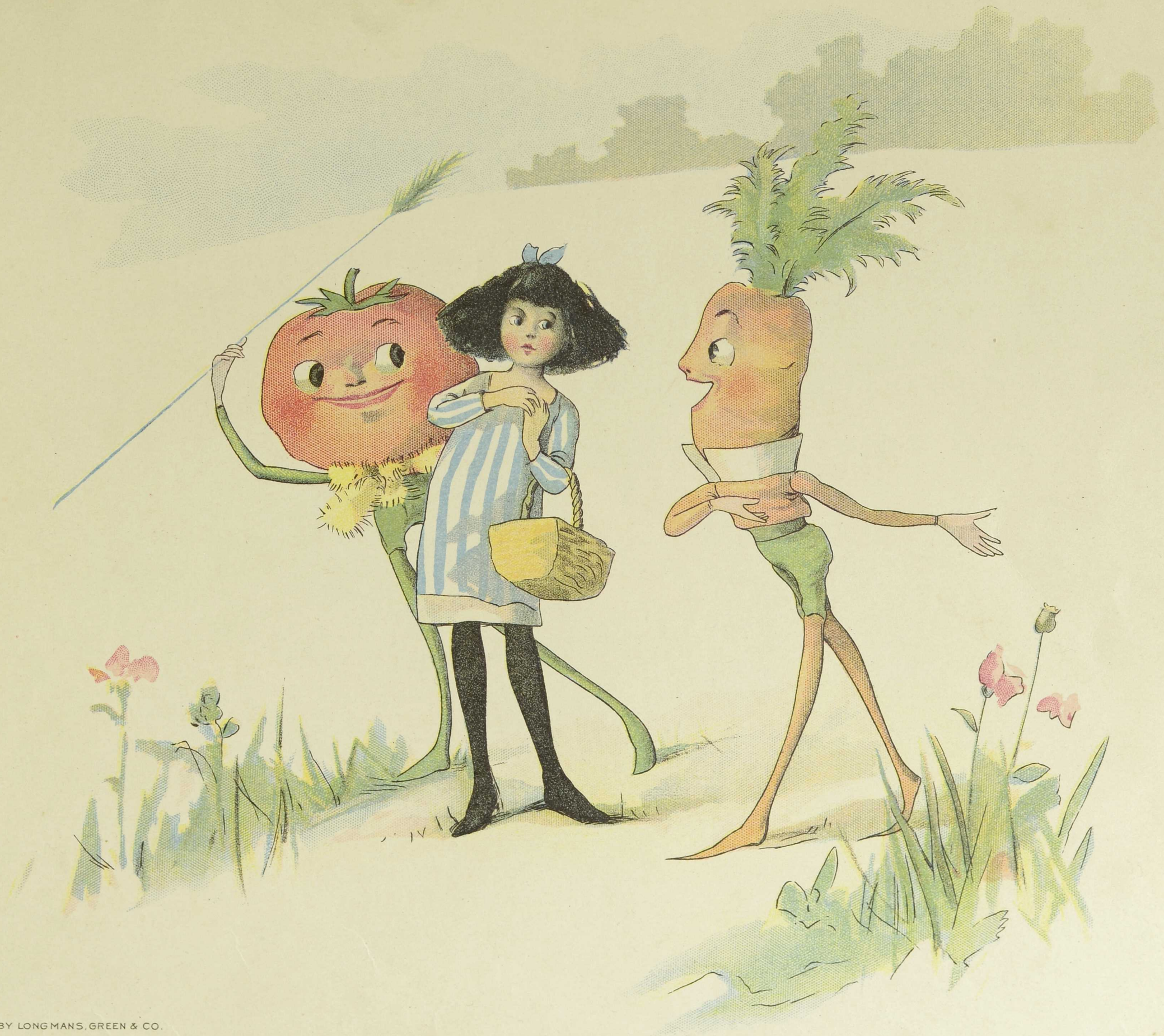
"If soup-greens you want in that basket so neat,
We can furnish the best you could e'er wish to eat,

And the secret you'll know

As to how we all grow

In our cool, pleasant underground world O!"





"Now how nice that will be!" replied Poppy with glee,
"And may I ride there in this coach which I see?"

"Yes, we brought it for you,

It would safely hold two,

And these onions though young are all *strong* O!"

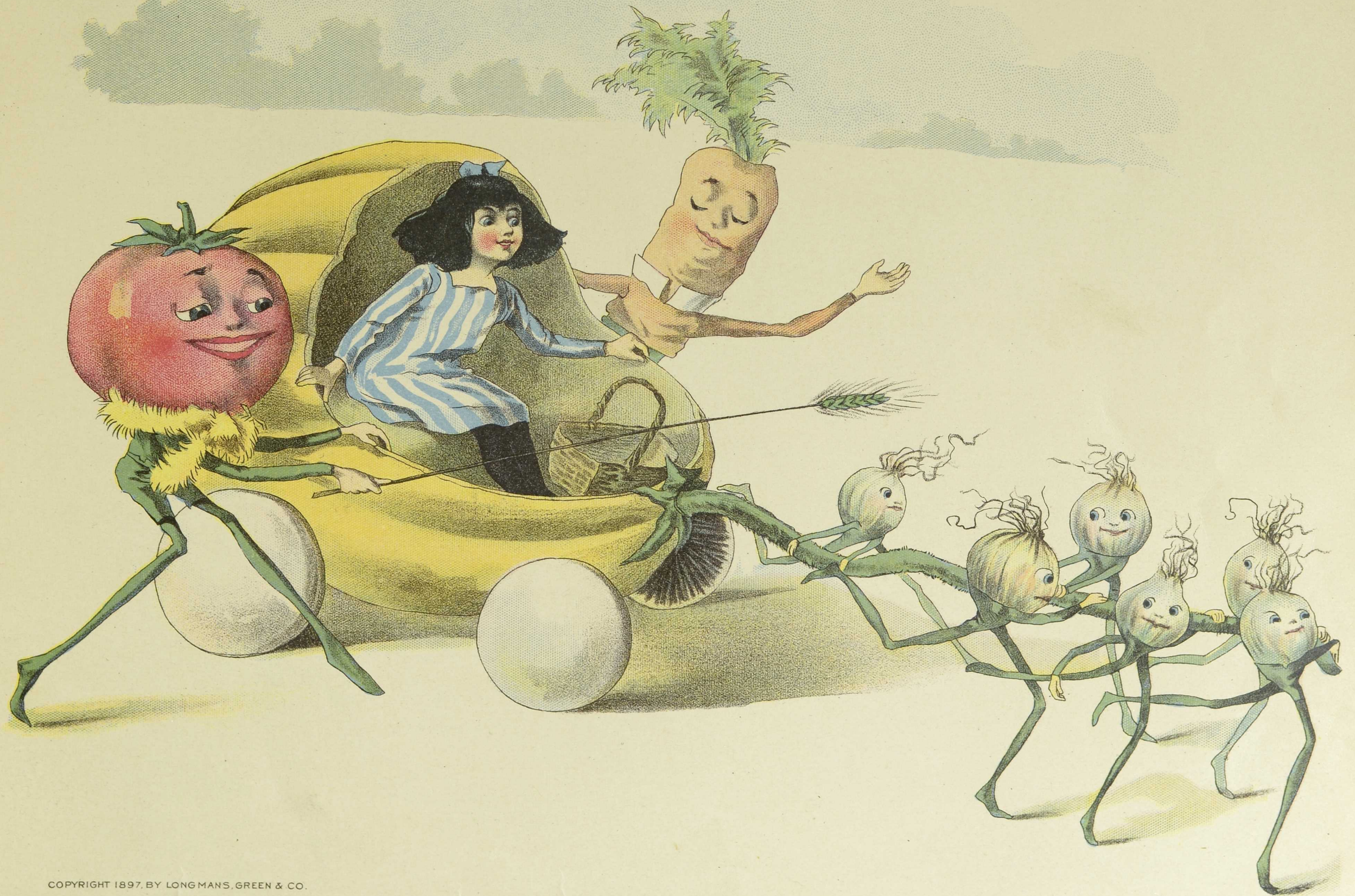


We don't care to ride, but will both run beside,
For Tom has the whip-hand, whatever betide;

The horses are frisky,

And driving is risky,

So step in sweet Poppy and onward we'll glide O!"



In the cornfield they found a large hole in the ground
Through which seemed to travel soft echoes of sound,
And to Poppy's surprise
As she stared with both eyes,
Into this rolled the playful Tomato.

Herr Carrot smiled sweetly, and said "Follow me!"
"Ah! but won't it be dark so that no one can see?"

If the sun doesn't shine
I shan't think it so fine,
And I really half fear I might fall O!"





"Just give me your hand and I'll help you to stand,
Now! One! two! three!—off we go! *isn't* it grand!"
Through the tunnel they flew,
The sensation was new,
But poor Poppy could not say 'twas nice O!

Perhaps she'd done wrong! would mama think her long?
And supposing down there she should not hear the gong!

It was seldom her fate

At the lunch to be late,

She began to feel quite in a fright O!



"Dear Carrot! turn back! for I dont want to go!

I'd rather return to the world that I know!

They'll be looking for me,

And you surely must see

That a girl cannot walk in the dark O!"

'Twas useless to plead, his long legs had the lead,
And our poor Poppy feared he had planned some dark deed!

The air grew much warmer;

They turned a sharp corner,

And now she saw daylight and such a strange sight O!

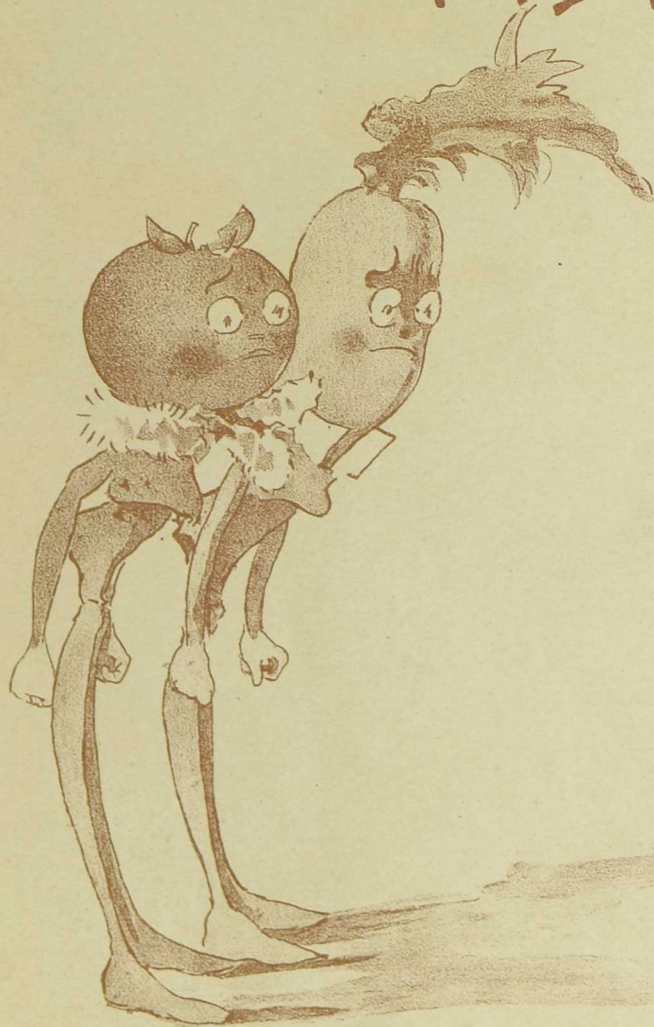


They paused for one moment before stepping out,
Tomato blushed scarlet, — (he was very stout,)

He had rolled down so fast

Poppykin stood aghast

When she saw both their eyes looked quite fierce O!

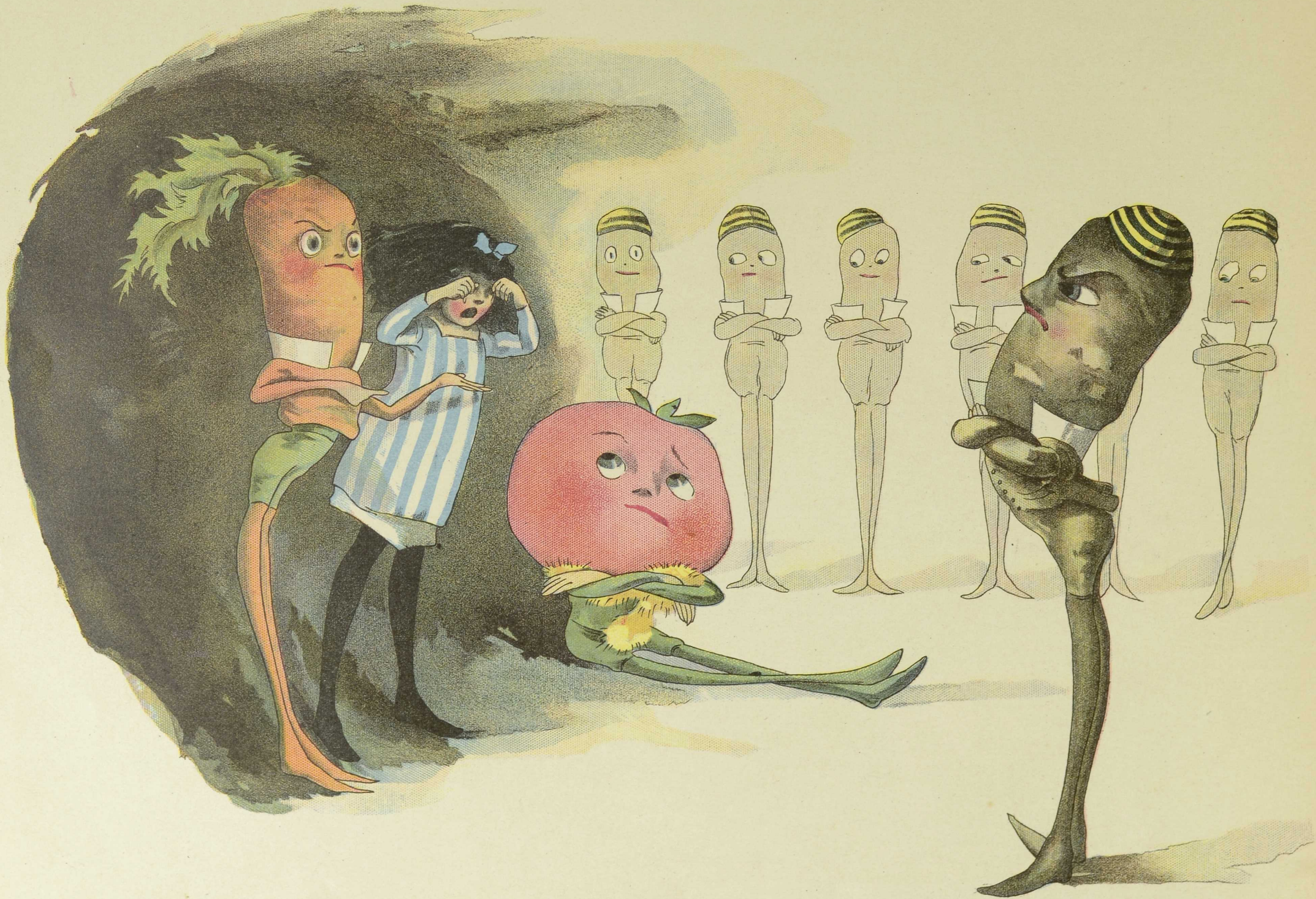


Herr Carrot spoke crossly — "Look here little one,
We mean you to suffer for all you have done!

To our King you must go,

He awaits you below,

We will soon take you into his Court O!"

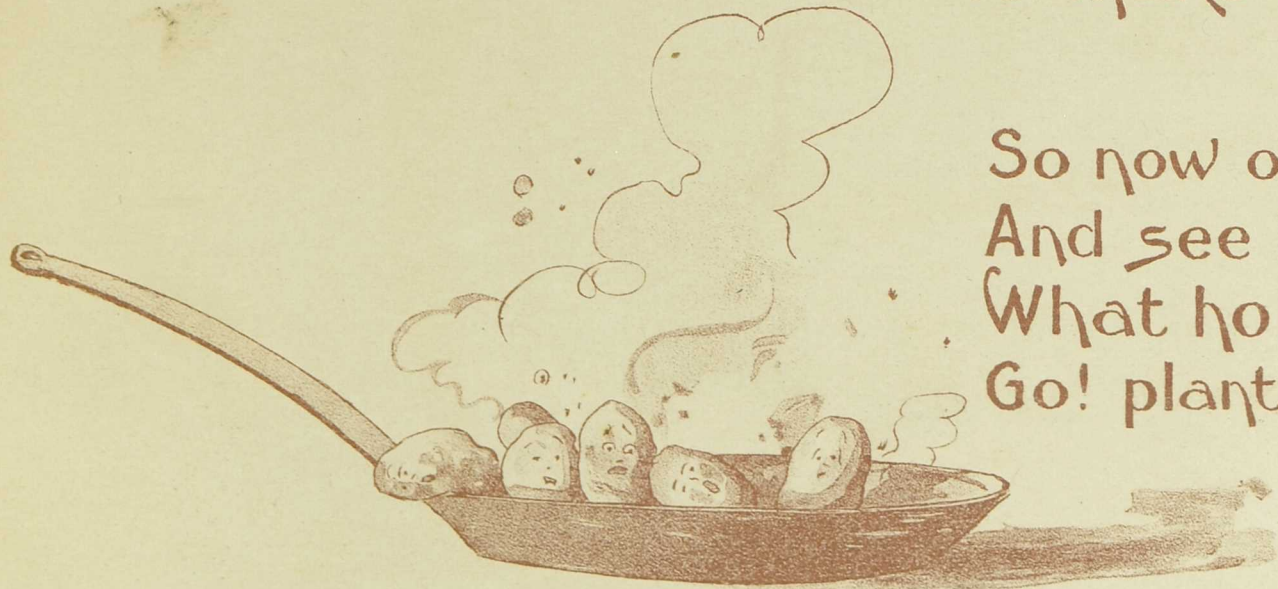


“PART SECOND”

“Behold me! King of the Vege-men’s Land!
The earth is peopled with my useful band,
Without us you would starve, and maybe die,
And yet you torture us without a sigh!

In boiling fat
We’ve often sat
That you might eat French Fry.

Oftimes in fiercest oven’s raging heat
Your cruel cooks our tender forms have thrust,
And through our Jacket’s unprotecting film
We’ve felt ourselves resolving into dust;
We’re chopped for hash
And fixed for mash
To make potato crust.

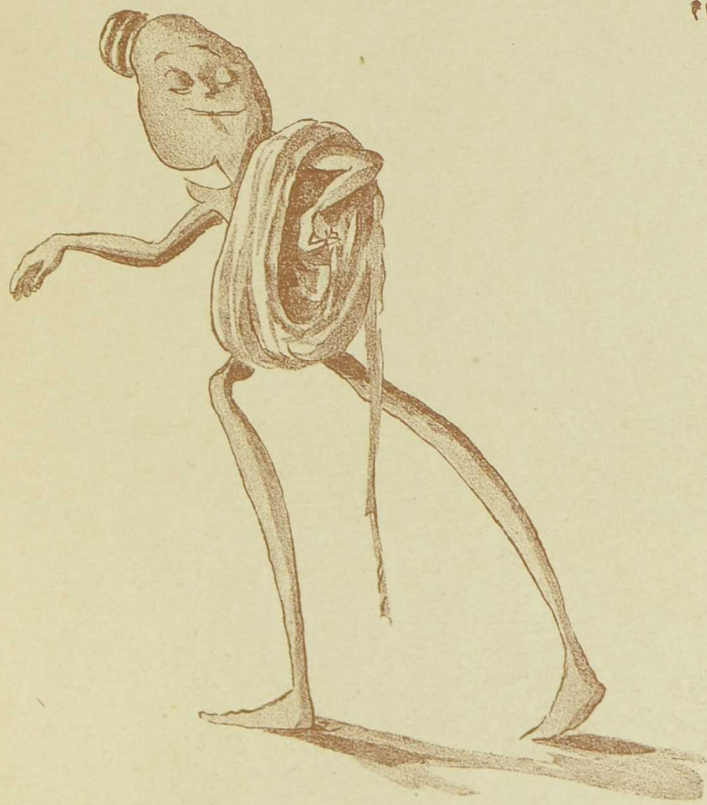


So now on you the tables we will turn
And see how you will like to boil or burn.
What ho! my guards in modest livery tight,
Go! plant this child and cultivate her right.

I want to know
How mortals grow
‘Twill be a novel sight.



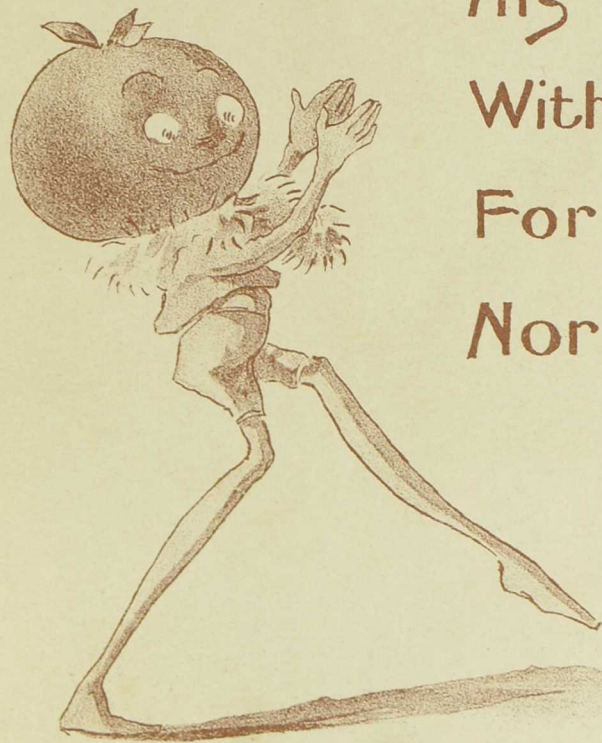
And then his royal arm he fiercely waved,
While Poppy wondered if she might be saved
From such a fate as never had she dreamed!
"No hearts have they!" the youthful victim screamed,
But in her ear
Came whisper clear
A kindly voice it seemed:



"Gay little flower from mortal world above,
I've got a heart, and you shall taste its love;
Pray have no fear, but quietly submit,
Just laugh and jump into the soft, warm pit,
'Tis not so deep—
And once asleep
You'll better think of it."



So, when her guards returned with yards of rope,
One tied her round the waist—(not tight I hope,)
To their surprise she never flinched a bit,
But stepped out jauntily towards the pit;
Her cabbage friend
Sweet smile did lend,
Approving human grit.



His back was turned, but on the other side
With spade and rake two guards looked on tongue-tied,
For Poppy never winced, she stood quite still,
Nor feared the doing of King Murphy's will.

"This curious bed
I'll try"—she said,

"This big round hole I'll fill."



"When you get underground," friend Cabbage said,
"You'll fall asleep and dream that you're in bed,
And by-and-by feel conscious of small thrills
Which every fibre of your being fills,

Then slowly rise
To where blue skies
And warming sunshine growing power distils.

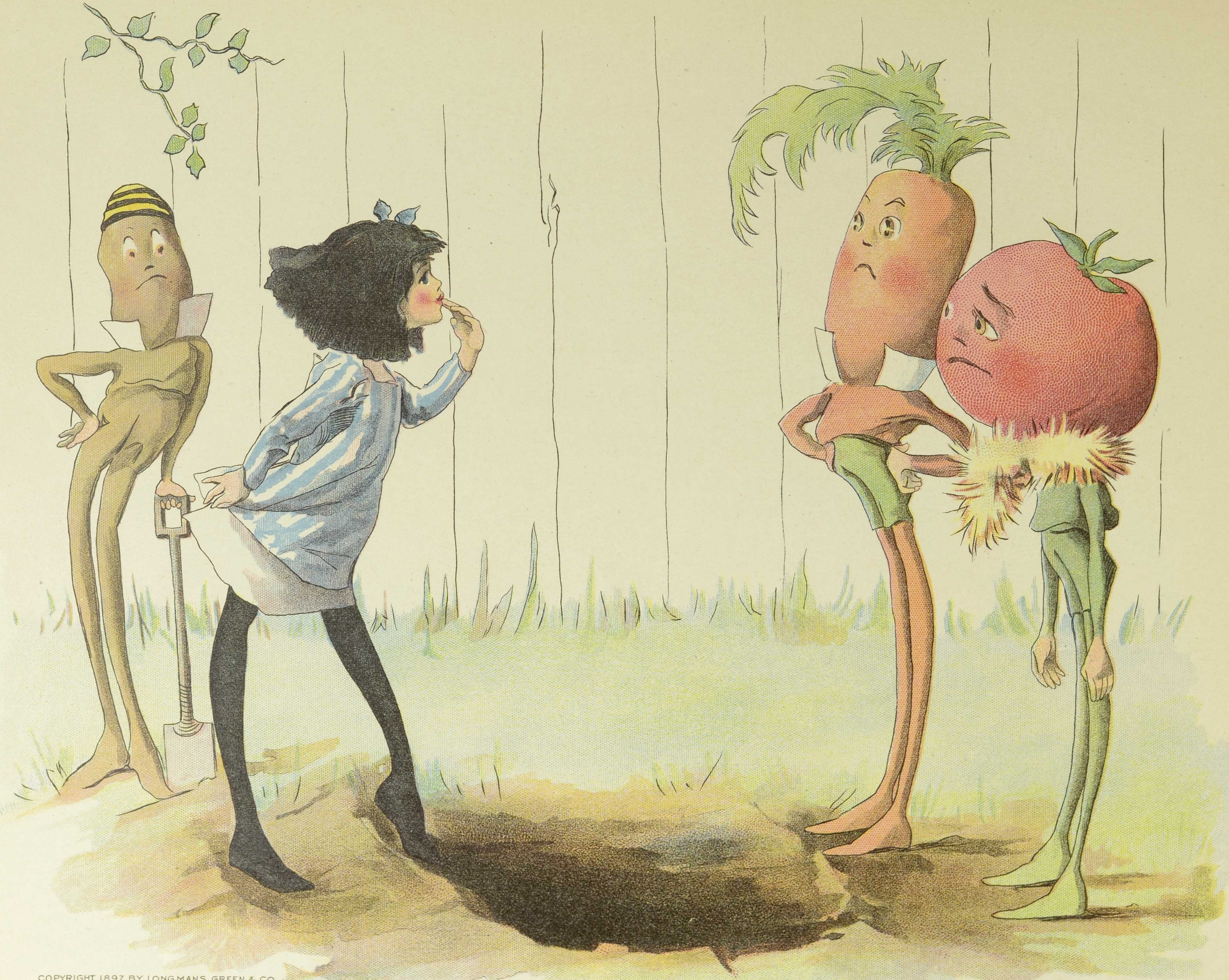
I cannot tell just what you'll grow to be,
But that is what our people want to see,
You've changed my species into varied form,
Yet we have kept a heart both large and warm.

If you prove fine
Our King will dine
On you in state;—and now shake hands with me."



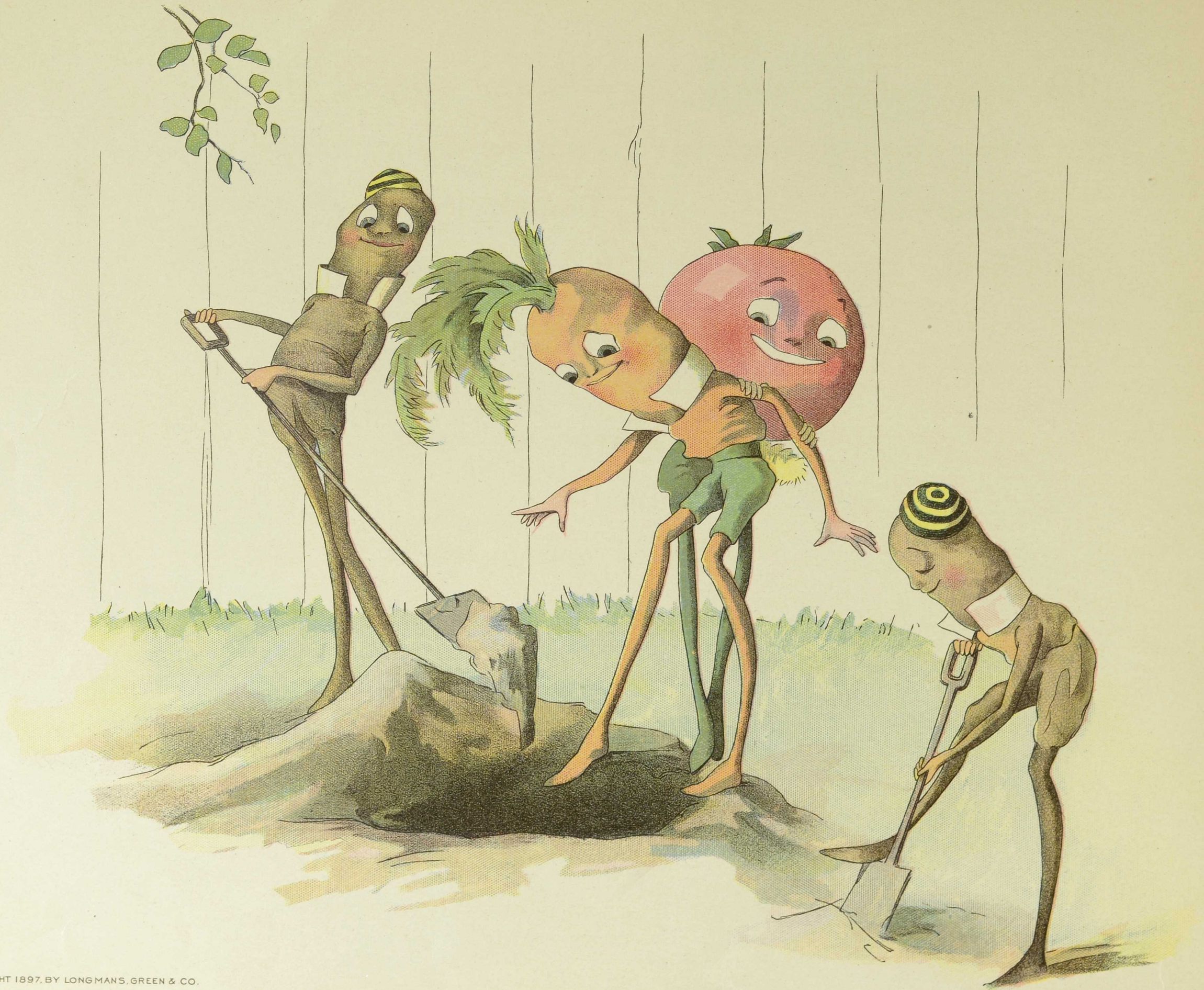
Then on they march with ever quickening pace,
A curious crew,—each one with smiling face,
The two potato men wore caps of lustrous sheen
While Carrot and Tomato dressed in green,

"My four in hand
Looks really grand!
Quoth Poppy—walking on with fearless mien.



The hole is reached, it lies at Poppy's feet,
She blows across to them some kisses sweet,
"Good bye, you stupid, blundering Carrot root,
And you! great red-faced old tomato fruit,
I'll laugh at you
In French ragout
When you are cooked *my* taste to suit!

I'm not afraid of you one single bit,
Though now you seem to have the best of it,
Whoever heard, I ask you both again,
Of vegetables harming mortal men!
O never fear
But you will hear
From me some time, though now I can't say when."



Her eyes close tight as Poppy makes the jump;
And for one moment feels her heart go thump!
Then reassured by what friend Cabbage said,
She settles calmly just as though in bed;

The hole they fill

With dextrous skill

And to King Murphy's throne the way is led



By a new comer we've not met before,

—Sweet Sugar Corn—and yellow hair she wore,

Her dress of green set off each pearly charm,

While lightly as the maiden took each arm

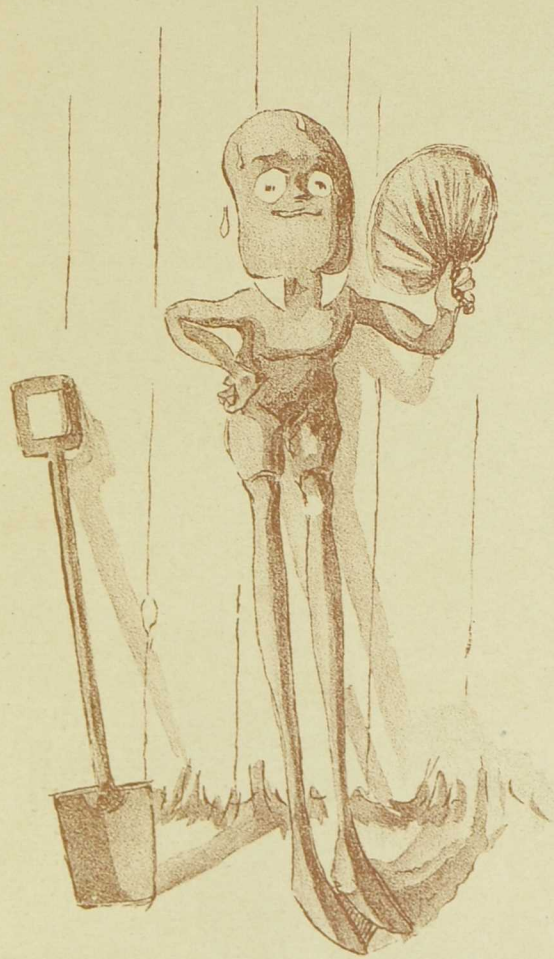
She touched the ground

With rustling sound

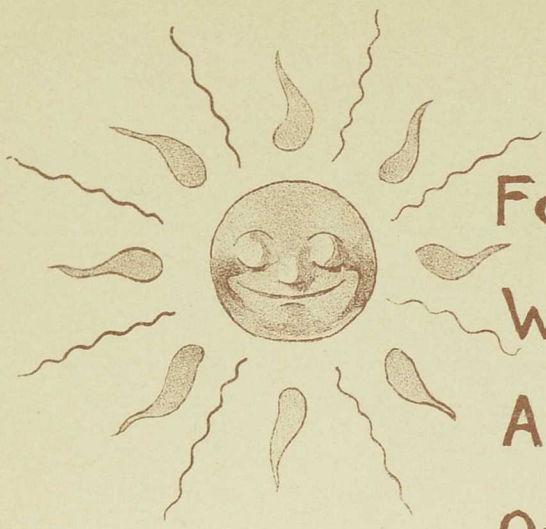
Like zephyrs whispering through a hillside farm.



She said—"I wish that Poppy could have stayed
To play with me—she was so fair a maid,
But if she grows to something very sweet,
No doubt but I shall find her good to eat;
So rake the ground
And water round
And very carefully this seedling treat."



Herr Carrot smacked his lips and smiled anew
While Don Tomato's eyes much larger grew,
They both looked forward to the royal feast
The coming Fall,—when Poppy would at least
Have taken root
And borne some fruit,
—But here their greedy speculations ceased,



For they were ordered off to other work,
Which in King Murphy's realm they dared not shirk;
And young Miss Corn went in to curl her locks
Of finest hair that fell in silken shocks,
While laughing light
At Poppy's plight
This dainty maiden in her green bower rocks.

What Poppy dreamed I've not had leave to tell,
And Mother Earth can keep a secret well.
It takes some time for little bulbs to sprout
And leaf and blossom till the secret's out,
So let her lie
'Neath summer sky
We'll see her soon again I have no doubt.



Now Mike and Dan had special orders got
To regularly take a watering - pot
And sprinkle carefully the rich earth bed,
That this new vegetable might be fed,
While little Jake
With hoe and rake
Would smooth the ground at pretty Poppy's head.



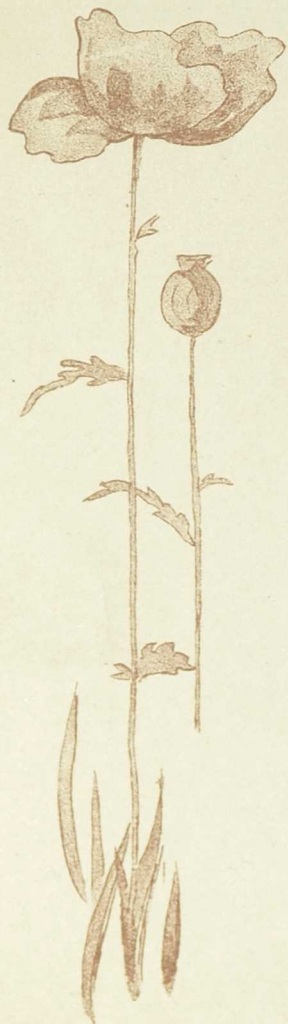
And reaching there betimes one early morn,
Was first to see that two green leaves were born;
His large, bright eyes were fixed upon the spot,
When from Dan's water-can a charge he got;
Though Mike looked grave
He could not save
His little friend from Daniel's harmless plot.



He scampered off his little coat to dry,
Shouting the news to every passer-by,
The baby onions gathered, full of glee,
And tall Asparagus bent down to see
The pretty sight:

All felt delight,

Though Cabbage friend looks sad-faced you'll agree.



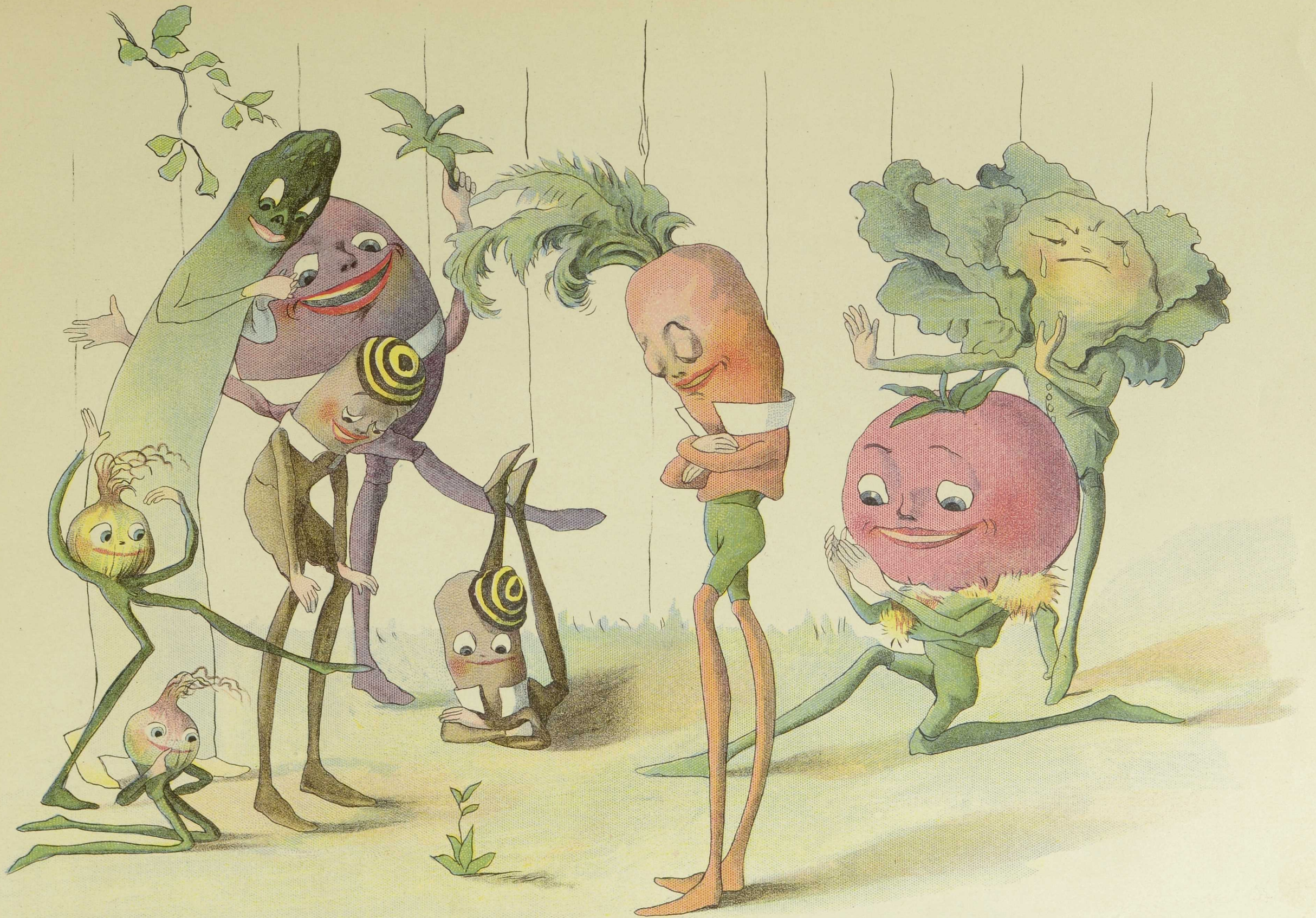
Then big-faced, purple Egg-plant joined the throng
And with Herr Carrot and Tomato gazed full long
For Jaky told each vegetable he met,

About the wonderful new plant they'd set

Whose leaves of green

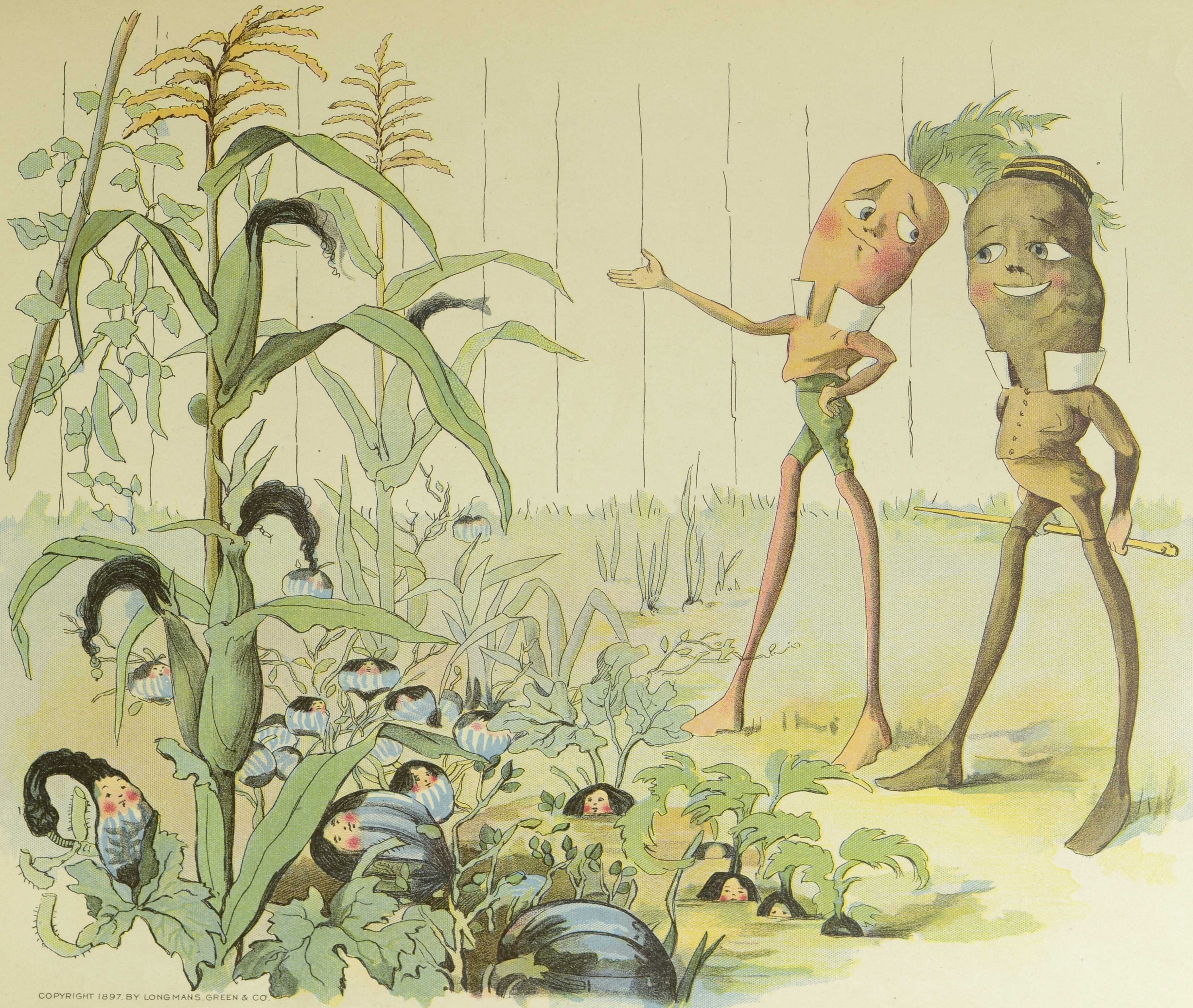
His eyes had seen

Whilst raking gently in the ground so wet.



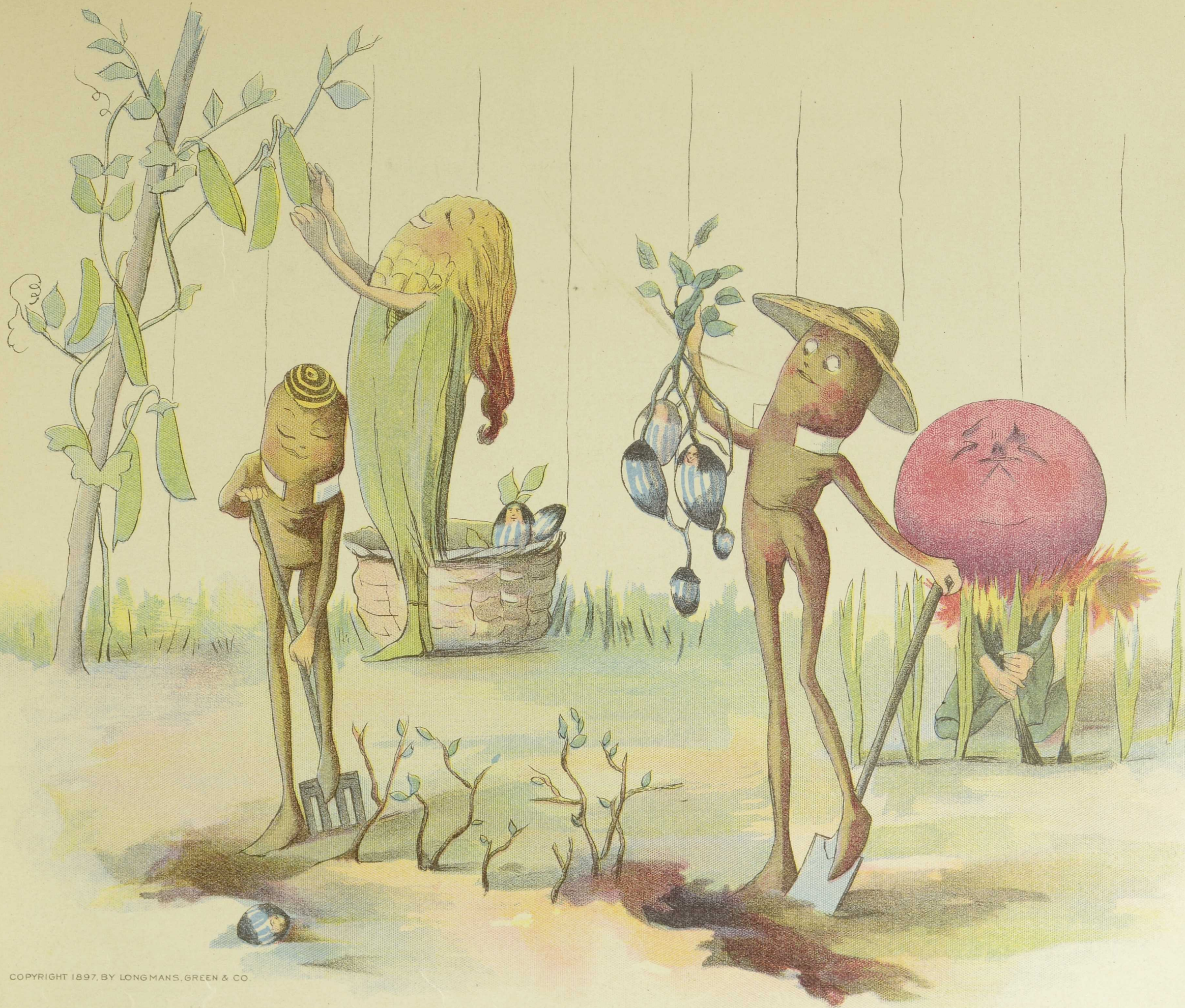
But now we'll hurry on to that bright day
When through all vegetable land so gay
The news had travelled from King Murphy's court
That Poppy-growths of every shape and sort
Were to be found
The garden round,
Herr Carrot to the spot His Highness brought.

Well pleased His Royal Majesty appeared,
For in his secret heart he'd sometimes feared
His scheme would not succeed quite to his mind,
But never had he dreamed that he should find
Results like this—
'Twas rapture! bliss!
A problem solved to benefit his kind.



His palate watered for each dainty dish,
To hurry on the feast was now his wish;
Into the field with spades his minions file,
Each wearing on his face a cheerful smile;
Miss Corn culls peas
From vines like trees,
The ripened crops display a tempting pile.

Tomato rolls with joy upon the ground,
Kicking aloft the treasure he has found,
Dan digs potatoes from the dry, loose earth,
The uprooted bulbs fill Mike with endless mirth
Cabbage and Corn
Are quickly torn
From stalk and sheath to which they owe their birth.



Miss Corn, with merry laughter trips along
Occasionally bursting into song;
With pardonable pride Mike lifts a sack
You'd think was big enough to break his back.

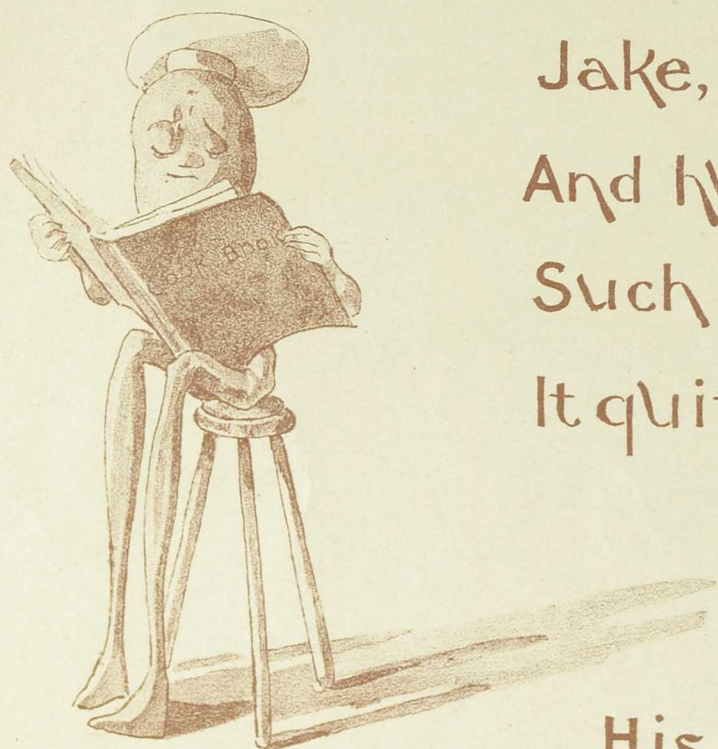
Upon the road
A barrow load
Of turnips spill along the sandy track;

For Jake and Mike were in a playful mood,
And wrestling without meaning to be rude
Their well packed barrow got a mighty jerk
Which made for both the youngsters double work,
But I've heard say,
All work - no play
Will cause dark shadows in the mind to lurk.





Straight to the royal kitchen they repair,
The Chef, amazed, receives them with a stare
Such fine variety must tax his skill,
His cook-book recipes scarce meet the bill;
With thoughtful frown
He sits him down
Intent with honor his great post to fill.

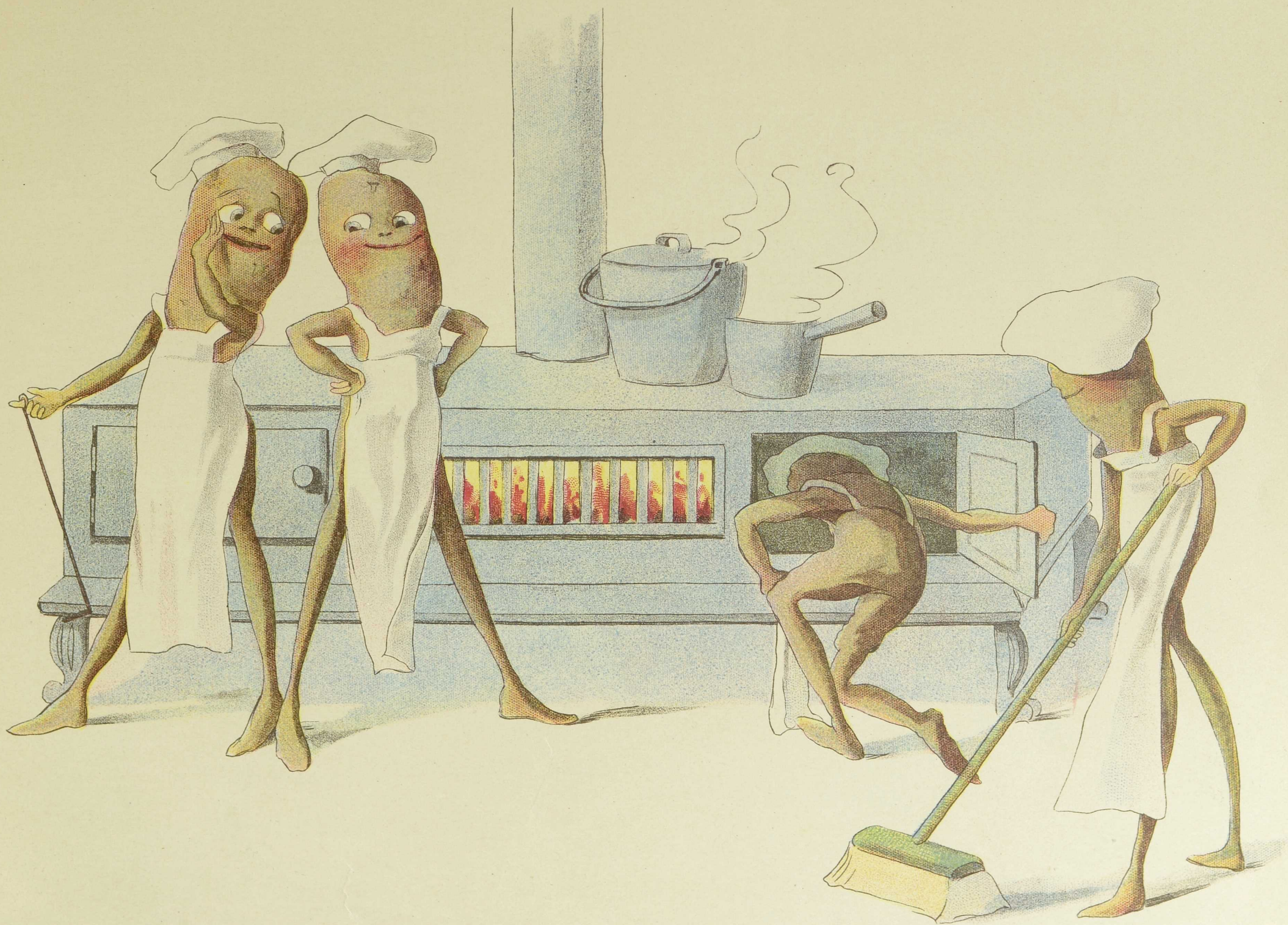


Jake, Mike and Dan are set the peas to shell
And husk the corn, because they work so well;
Such lovely color does the lettuce take,
It quite attracts the admiring little Jake,
With tints of blue
All bathed in dew,
His eyes with wondering pleasure fairly ache.



Into the second kitchen let us peep,
One man is set the dusty floor to sweep,
Two others talk beside the roaring grate
Where boiling saucepans hiss in steaming state;
For joints of meat
The oven's heat
Is fast preparing at a sizzling rate.

"Let things in order, perfectly be done;"
So said the Chef, as, rising with the sun
He set his boys to polish every pot
And every tray and saucepan he had got,
The bill of fare
Was very rare,
Success *must* be assured to him, — if not



The King had vowed his office he'd bestow
On some one else who *did* his business know,
The "*Cordon Bleu*" of course he'd give to him
If he could gratify his latest whim,

 "But otherwise,
 By all my eyes,
I'll banish you to deepest dungeon dim!"



Thus swore His Highness as he left the field
Rejoicing greatly at the monster yield,
And swift repairing to his castle grand,
He summoned to his call a minstrel band
 That sweetest sound
 Might float around
And work a charm in Vegetable Land.

An orchestra of wheat the prelude played,
Conductor Wind it's every movement swayed,
From tenderest whisper into rush of sound
The rhythm breathed and trembled o'er the ground.

The King's eyes close,
He finds repose,

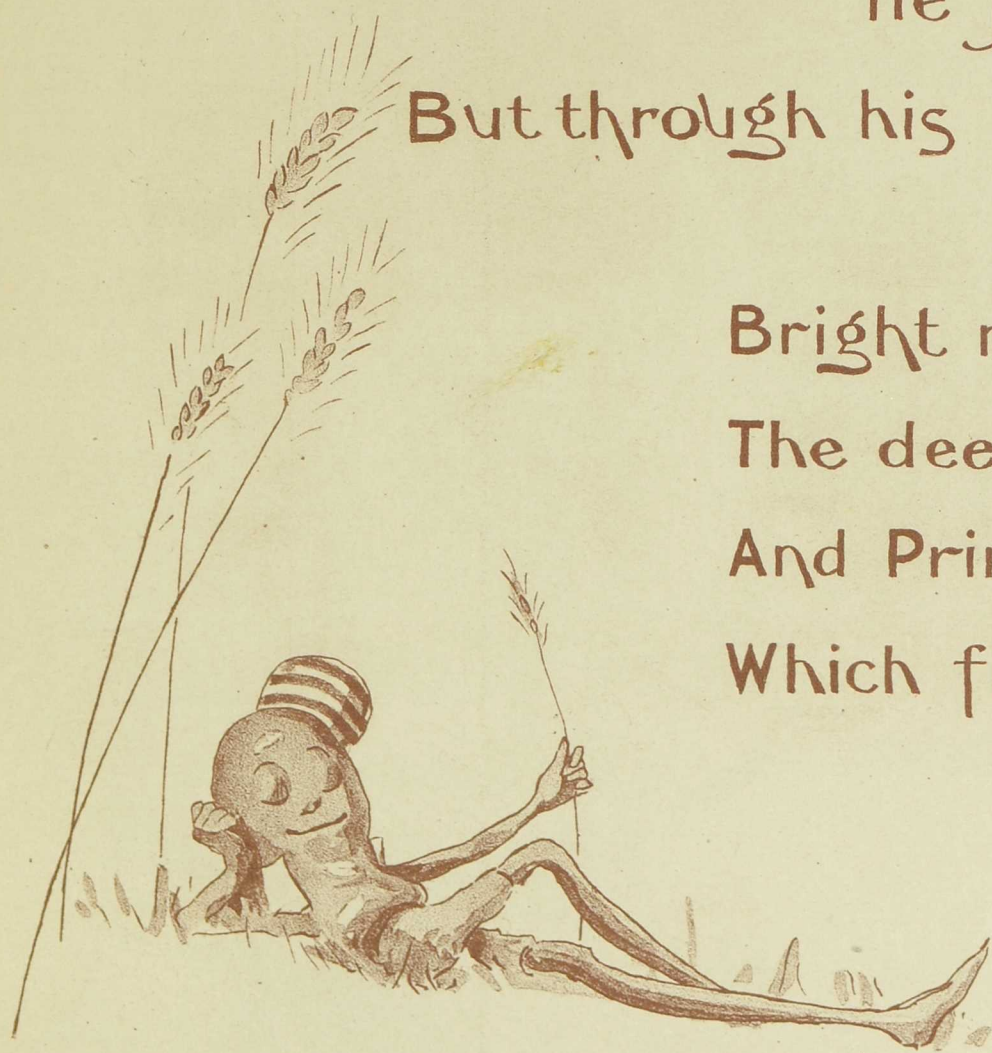
But through his dreams the fairy strains are wound.

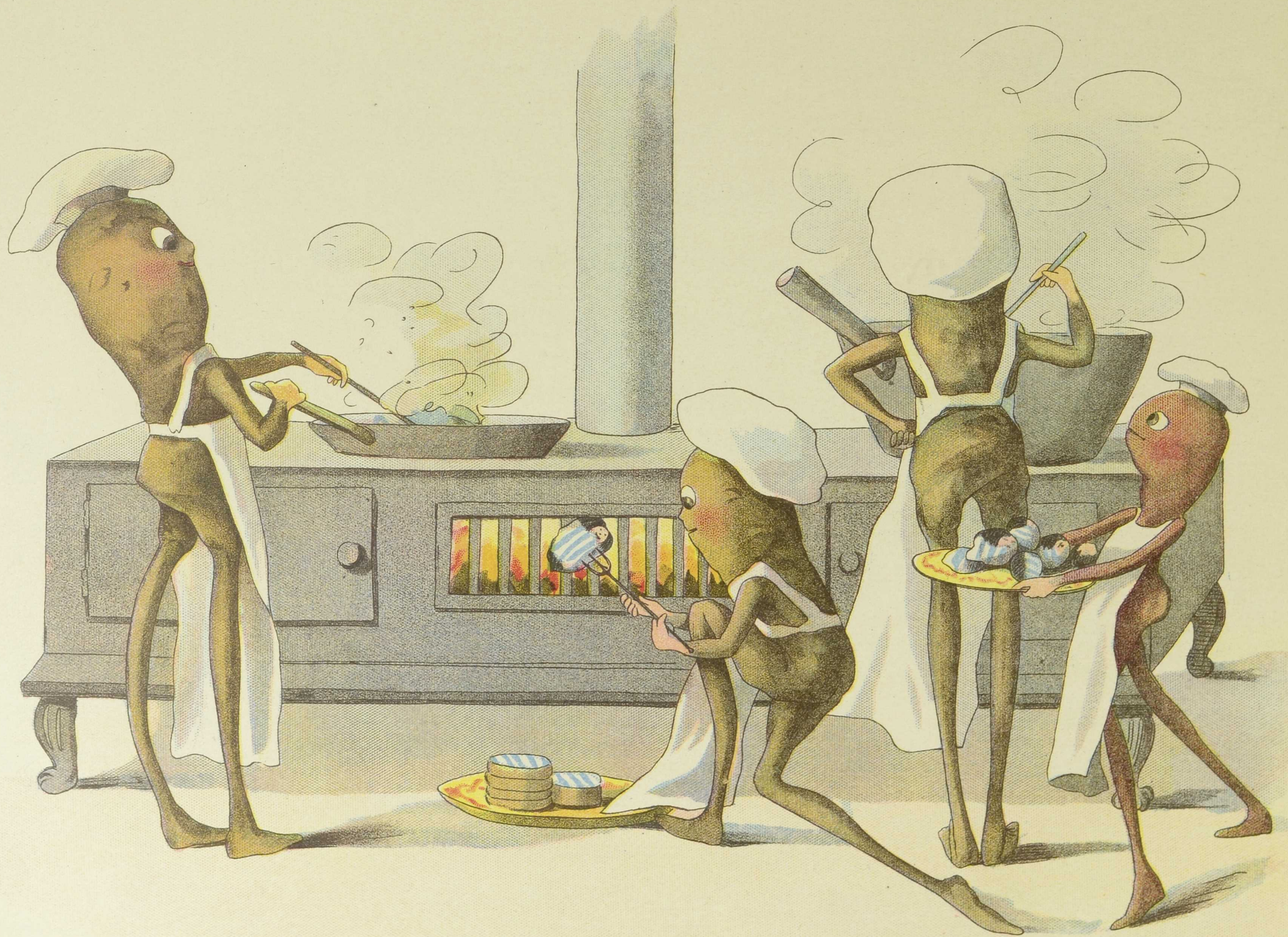
Bright nodding Harebells soon in chorus tinkle,
The deeper note is held by Periwinkle
And Prima Donna Nature leads the air
Which finer ears may drink in everywhere.

So leave the King

While still they sing,

And to the kitchen once again repair.





In fierce array drawn up behold the cooks,
Concocting dishes never found in books,
With tints of so remarkable a hue
The salad is a symphony in blue
The soup pale pink,
—But only think!

Whoever saw a black and crimson stew?

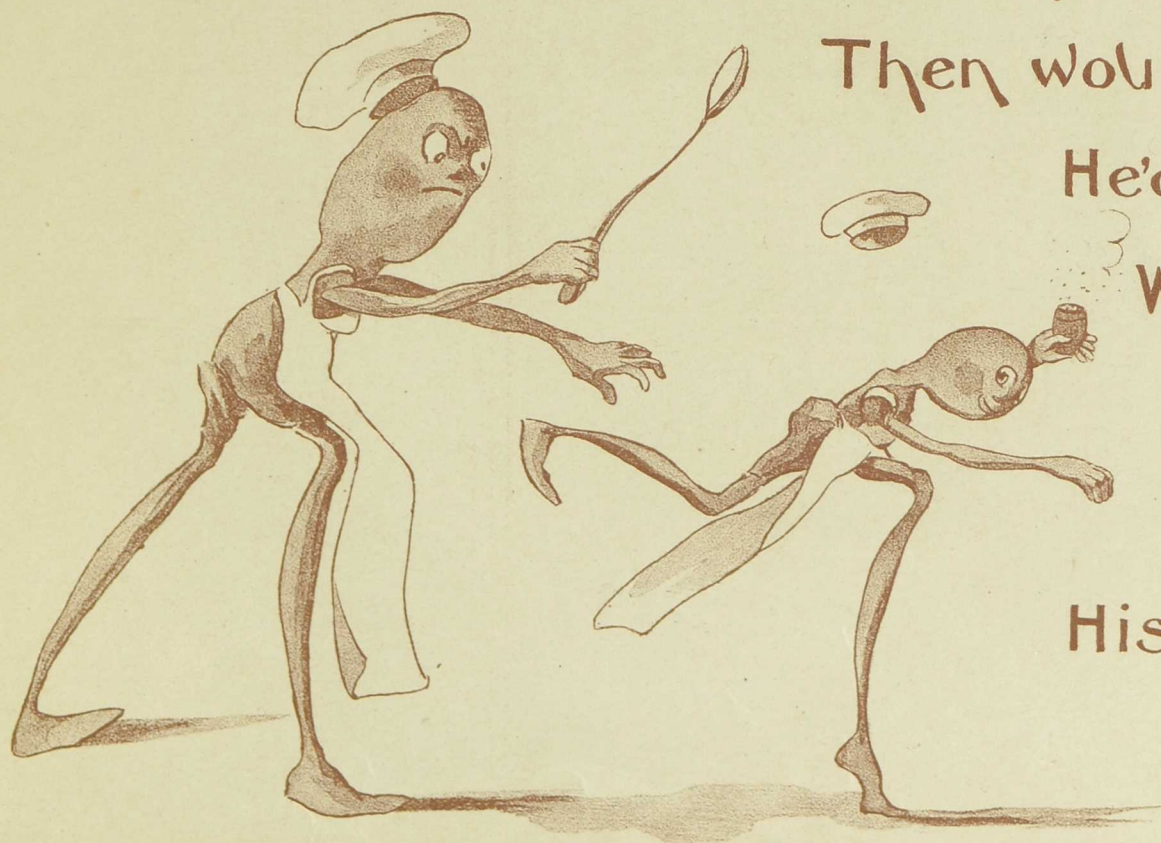


Of business in that kitchen there's no lack,
The spluttering frying-pan makes Tam hold back,
A tiny scullion with an anxious face
Hurries with fresh supplies at rapid pace,
"Peachblow" his name,
And no mean fame
Has been achieved by little Peachblow's race.



His skin, — I hardly need to give the hint,
— Baptizes him, it has a peachy tint,
He's much admired in Western lands you know,
And quite sought after by both high and low.

With grown up folk
He loves a joke,
And just a bit of teasing "makes things go."



He'd been despatched for pepper from the shelf,
Then wouldn't give it up — the merry elf,
He'd withdraw it every time cook held his hand
Which would try the finest temper in the land.
Till with a scowl
And angry growl
His spoon commenced some execution grand!



“O sing a song of choppers,” sang the Chef,
“You’ll enjoy my hatchet duo (if you’re deaf!)
My minces are so perfect, you’ll allow
The King himself might treat me to a bow;
A pepper breeze
Won’t make me sneeze,
And onion never brings a tear, I vow!

For I take life as easy as I can,
No fear have I of any mortal man,
If they fail to like the hashes that I mix,
I can upon a new position fix;

My axes drop
Chip-chop, chip-chop,

So sharp are they they’d cut up stones and sticks.





Ding-dong! Ding-dong! Was that the dinner-bell?
The servants from the kitchen fly pell-mell!
With soup and fish and entree, out they go,
For Kings won't wait a minute as you know.

Alas for greed!

"More haste, less speed;"

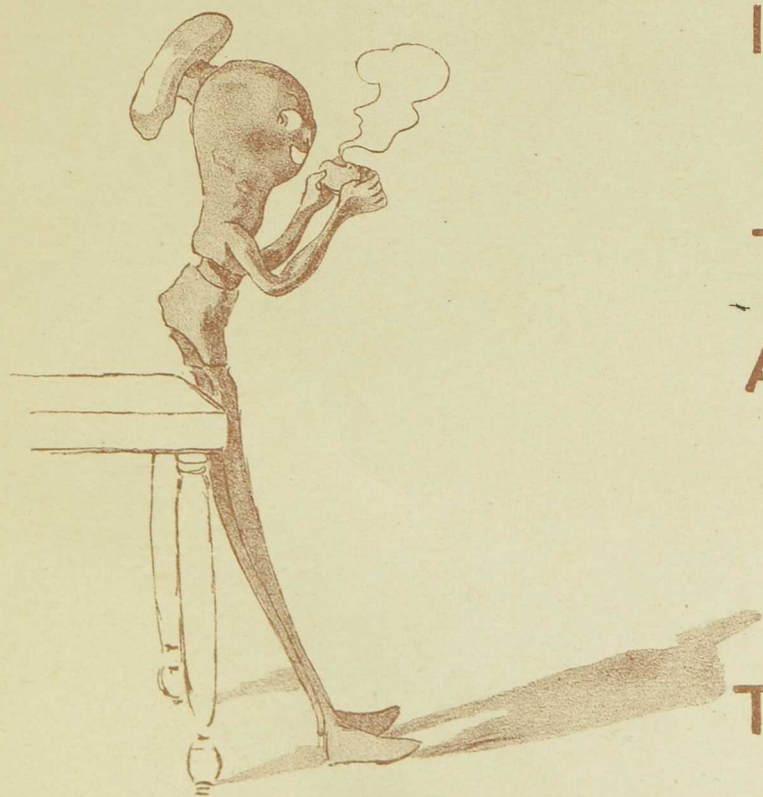
Mike proves this to his everlasting woe!

In his apron he had failed to mend the rent,
His long foot caught and down of course he went,
Tripped Dan, who was the nearest of the group,
And nearly got them all into the soup;

No use to cry,

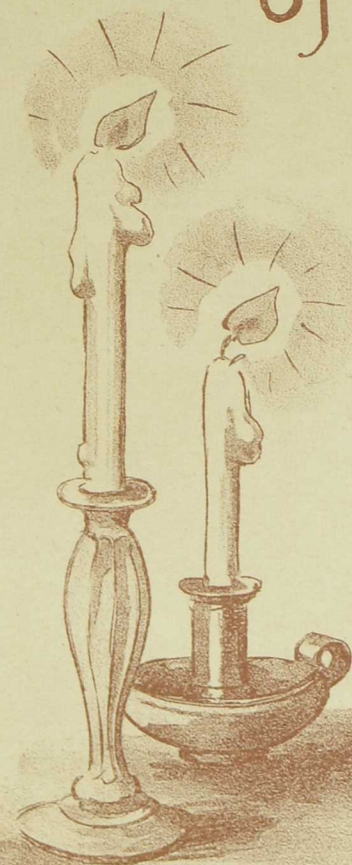
He'd lost the fry,

The wisest he, yet saddest of the troupe.

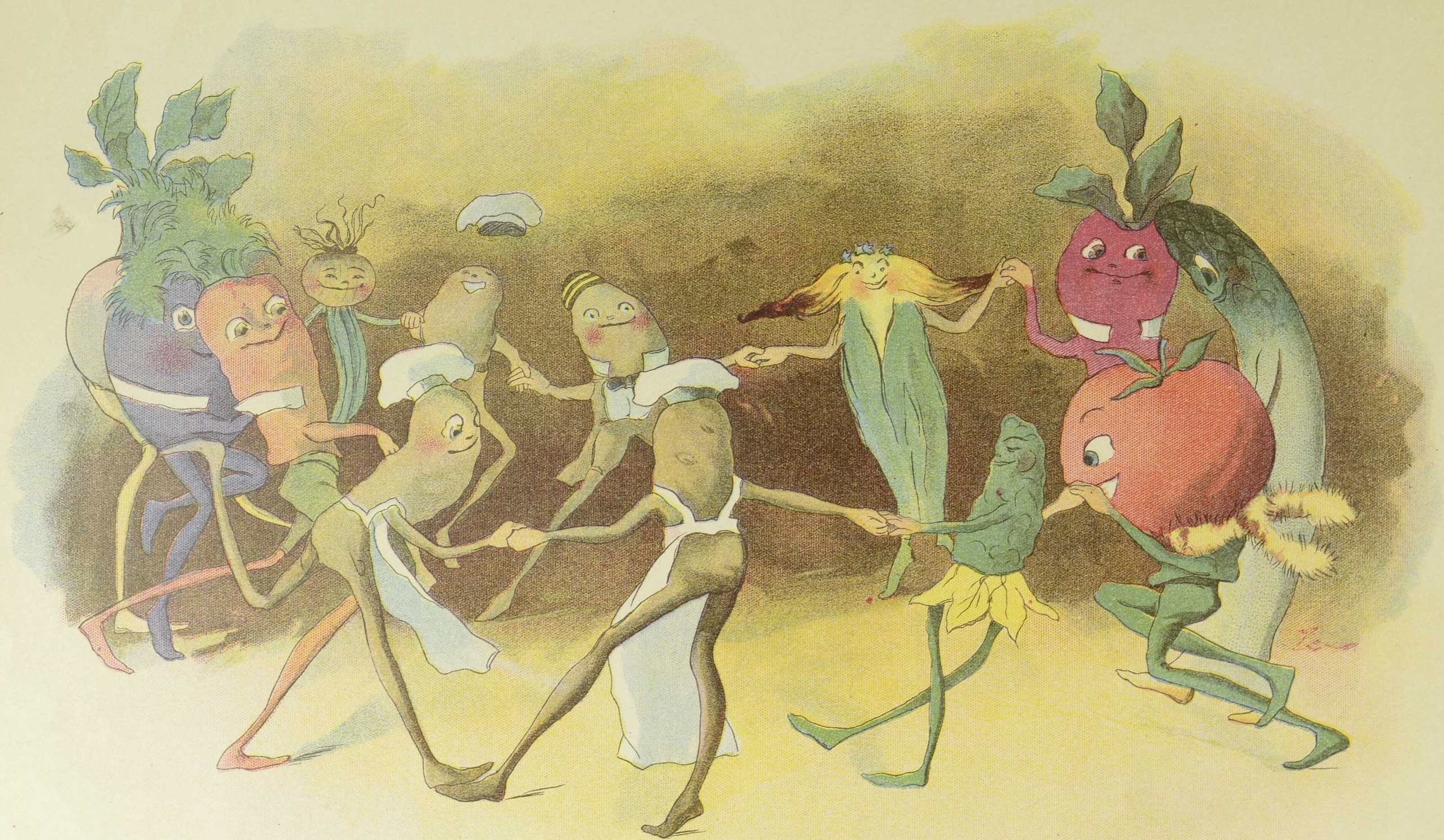




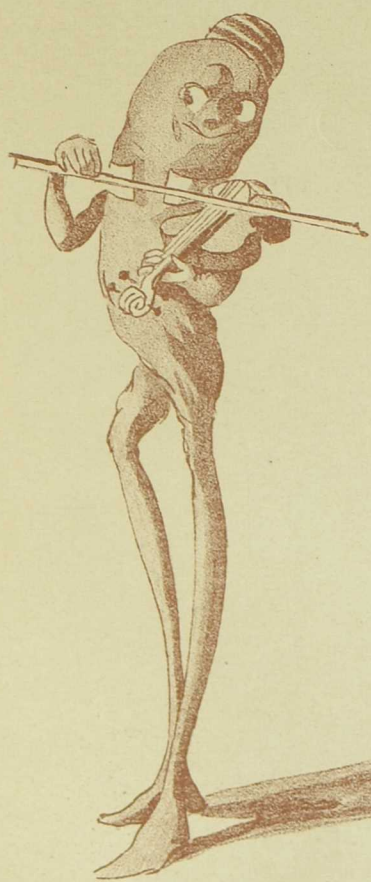
The Banquet Hall is bathed in amber light
From hollowed pumpkins filled with candles bright,
While round the board in Autumn tints arrayed
Are placed the guests,—a man and then a maid.
In the grand stand
A lively band
Of well-trained fiddlers merry music played.



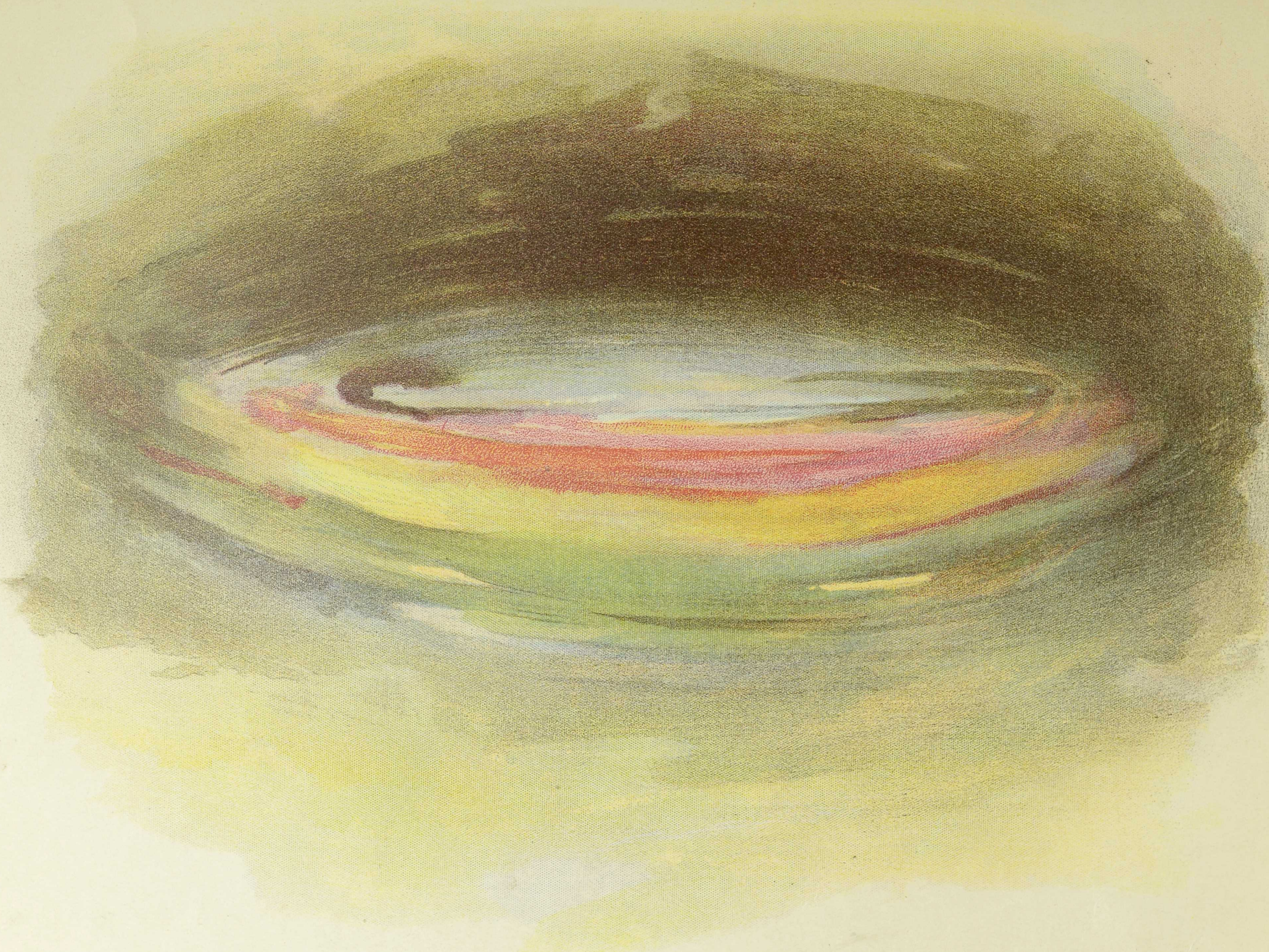
Bermuda Onion, like a mother mild,
Ties a clean bib upon her sprightly child;
On one side Egg-Plant and the other Beet—
These pompous gentlemen praise baby Pete
Who makes no noise
Like some small boys,
But smiles with an expression really sweet.



Swift as a flash the music takes a turn,
With weirder light the colored candles burn,
The table seems to disappear from view
As into mystic dance these strange folk flew,
While round and round
With whirring sound,
Each moment wilder the excitement grew.



Miss Corn is the embodiment of mirth,
The heavier vegetables dip toward earth,
Tomato and Miss Cucumber laugh loud,
The infection spreads through all the merry crowd.
"Faster!" they cry
As round they fly,
"This dance is to Miss Poppy Cornflower vowed!"

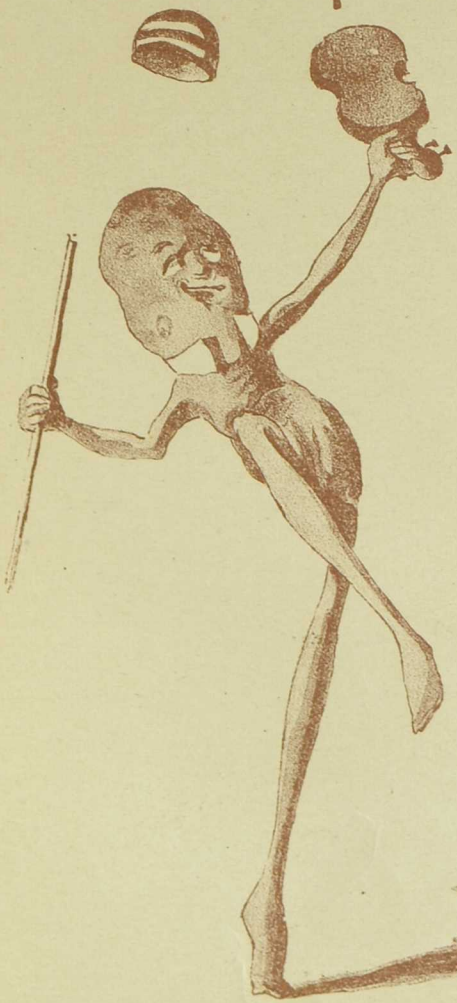


Through her we've punished all her cruel race
Hoping 'twill teach them how to keep their place;
For centuries they've had us in their power,
But now the slave has his triumphant hour.

So dance away

This happy day,

Tomorrow we will meet in Poppy's bower."



Swifter and swifter twine their clinging feet,
A Dervish dance by color made complete,
Only a tinted whirlpool now they seem,
The whirring sound becomes the storm-wind's scream.

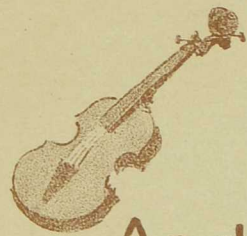
The yellow light

Is blurred to sight,

'Tis like the nightmare of a troubled dream.



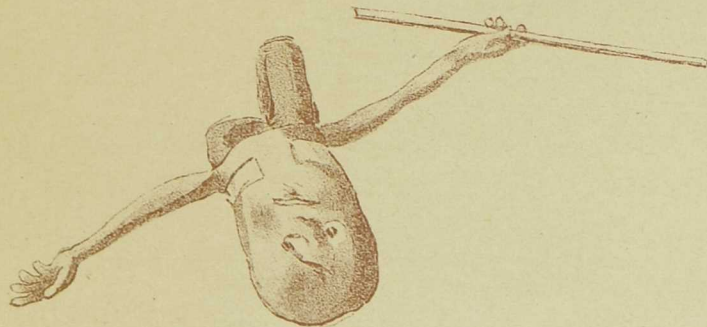
A shudder seems to wring the vibrant air,
It fills the ears like wails of wild despair.
A splitting crack! a crash! a deafening call—
The flooring crumbles and through space they fall!



Wild arms they throw—

Down! down they go!

And total darkness quickly covers all.



And then there comes a burst of dazzling light,
It fills all nature with its splendor bright,
It shines upon the grass, the flowers, the gate,
And on a little maid who sits up straight

With staring eyes

Of dazed surprise

And very much alive I'm bound to state.



~ PART THIRD ~

"Was that really a dream from which I've awoke?

Well! I'm sure I don't call it a *bit* of a joke!

I was planted you know

And of course had to grow

Through that cruel old red-faced Tomato!



Why of course 'twas that wicked Herr Carrot, /see!

Who behaved just as horrid as horrid could be!

For he took me away

In the midst of my play,

-At least so I thought in my dream O!



Yes - the more I think over that terrible dream
The madder I get! and so real does it seem
I'll just have to know
How the frightful things grow,
And whether they're really alive O!

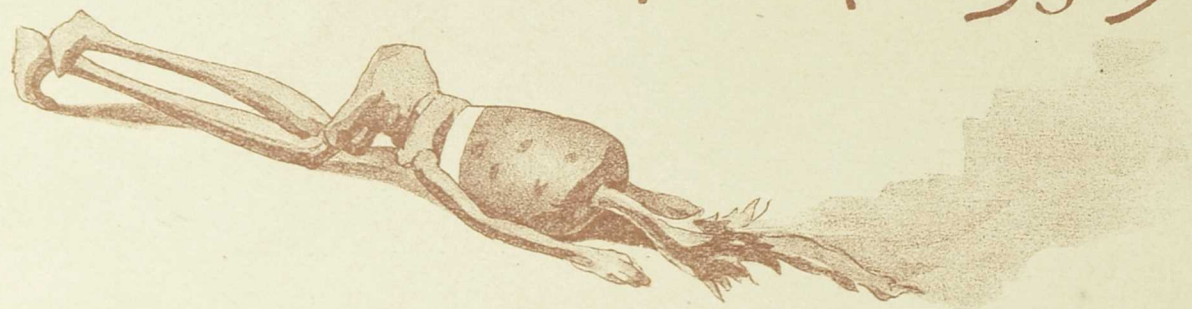
Ah! there you all are! safe enough I declare!
Such innocent things to give me such a scare;
I was sent out to pull
A big basket full,
And I s'pose now you think I won't dare!





But though I know truly you can't walk or speak,
I mean you shall all have a pretty hard tweak,
So come out of your bed
By the hair of your head!
You shall soon be put into the soup sir!

Then Mr. Tomato - I'm going for you,
And old King Potato - you'll get in the stew!
You'll boil and you'll fry
And be mashed by and by,
Since that is just what you were made for!





There! now I feel better! it was a queer dream,
I must run and tell mother! - how true it did seem!

'Twas a real fairy tale
That would most turn you pale,
Perhaps she'll write it down in a book O!

For I'm wide awake now and had best run along,
But to make myself sure I'll just sing a loud song,
A regular shout

All the fairies to rout,

For they're well enough in their own land O!

Bertha Lupton









