



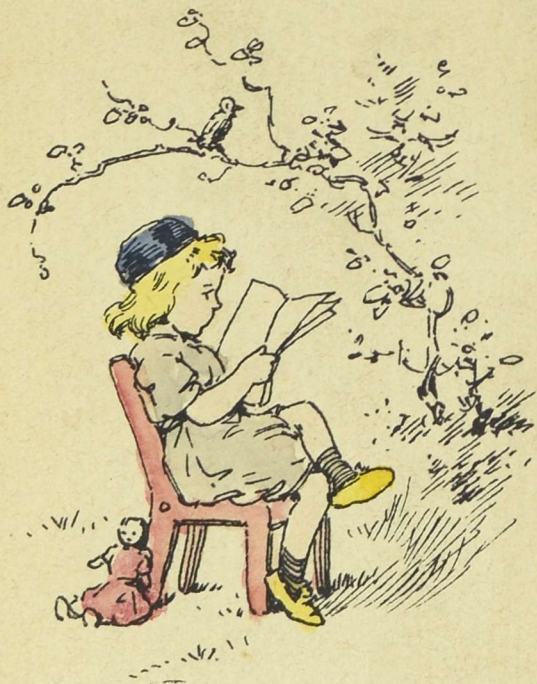
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(FT) WEEDON, L. L. NURSERY TALES
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LITTLE BOOKS
FOR LITTLE
PEOPLE

Nursery
Tales

by
L.L. WEEDON
Illustrated by
E. STUART HARDY.



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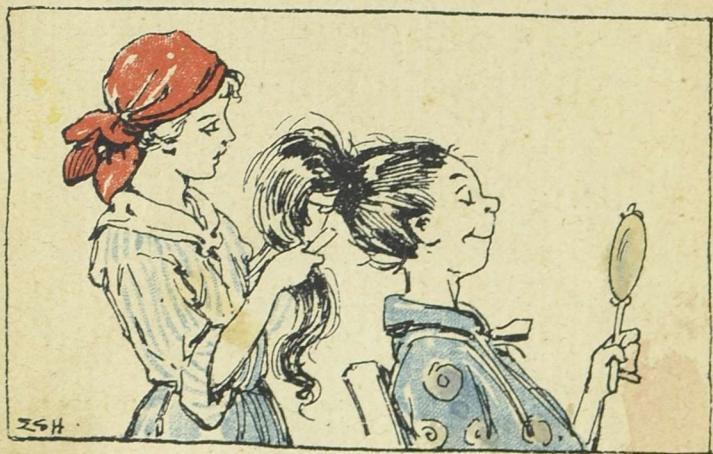




CINDERELLA.

ONCE upon a time there lived a gentleman who had one dear little daughter named Ella. Ella's mother was dead and her father had married a second wife, thinking she would be a kind mother to his little one. But, alas! the stepmother had two

daughters of her own, proud, ugly, and ill-tempered girls, who were jealous of Ella's pretty face, and who would



not let her be treated as a daughter, but sent her to live in the kitchen and work hard all day long.



Cinderella turned and saw a beautiful fairy.

At night she had no little cosy bed into which to creep, but she lay on the hard floor close to the hearth for warmth, and for this reason she came to be called Cinderella, instead of Ella, and by this name she was always known.

Poor little Cinderella, many a bitter tear she shed when her unkind stepsisters went out to balls and parties and left her at home!

One day there came an invitation to a grand ball at the King's palace. Oh, how

excited the two proud sisters were, to be sure! For days they could talk of nothing but the clothes they would wear and the people they would meet.

"It has been rumoured that the King's son is to choose his bride at the ball," said one.

"Maybe he will choose one of us," replied the other.

When the great day arrived Cinderella was kept running to and fro from morning until night. She had

to deck her stepsisters in their beautiful gowns and dress their scanty locks for them.

It was no wonder that, when at length they had driven away to the ball, she sank down on a stool by the kitchen fire and cried as though her heart would break, for she was tired out, and, oh! how she *longed* to go to the King's ball too.

Suddenly Cinderella gave a great start, for someone had touched her lightly on the

shoulder. She turned round, and, to her surprise, saw a beautiful fairy.

"What are you crying for, my child?" the fairy asked.

"I want to go to the King's ball," sobbed Cinderella.

"And so you shall," said the fairy. Cinderella stared



at the fairy, as though she could not believe her ears, but the fairy smiled at her kindly. "It is quite true, dear," said she. "I am your fairy godmother. I have watched you for a long time past and seen what a good, patient little maid you are, and now I mean to give you your reward. Run quickly to the garden and bring me the largest pumpkin you can find."

Away went Cinderella, and soon returned with a large yellow pumpkin. One wave



The Prince . . . would dance with no one else.

of the fairy's wand and this was transformed into a golden coach.

Six mice from the mouse-trap speedily became six prancing steeds, and a large grey rat made a fine fat coachman, dressed in a laced coat and powdered wig.

Six green lizards became six tall footmen in liveries of green and gold.

"Oh, godmother; how *lovely!*" said Cinderella; "but my frock—I cannot go to the King's ball in a ragged gown!"

“Shut your eyes,” cried the fairy, merrily, and a moment later added, “Now open them.”

And when Cinderella obeyed, she saw that her rags had fallen from her and she was dressed in a gleaming satin gown. On her feet were a pair of crystal glass slippers, and diamonds and pearls glittered in her pretty hair and on her neck and arms.

“Now jump into the coach and away you go,” said the fairy; “but, remember, before

the clock begins to strike the hour of midnight you must hasten home, for at that hour all your fine clothes, your



coach and horses, will vanish, and you will be the little cinder maid once more."

Cinderella kissed her god-

mother gratefully and promised to obey, then she stepped into her coach and was off like the wind.

It was a *splendid* ball, but of all the beautiful and gaily-dressed ladies there, Cinderella was the most beautiful and her satin gown the loveliest frock by far.

The Prince no sooner set eyes on her than he fell in love with her and would dance with no one else.

The hours flew so swiftly that Cinderella gave a start of

surprise when she saw the hands of the clock pointing to



five minutes to twelve.

She flew down the stairs in a trice, jumped into her coach, and was soon

back by her own fireside again, all her rich clothing having disappeared.

When the stepsisters came
home from the ball they told



her all about the beautiful
Princess with whom the Prince

had fallen in love and how she had mysteriously disappeared at midnight. "The Prince was so disappointed that the King has promised to give another ball to-morrow night," said one of the proud sisters, "and if the strange Princess goes to it the Prince will most certainly ask her to be his bride."

The next night the two sisters went off to the ball, and soon afterwards Cinderella followed them, for the kind fairy godmother appeared and

dressed her in even more beautiful clothes than she had worn the night before. Again she promised to leave the ball before the clock struck twelve.

But, alas! just at that time the Prince was beginning to tell her how dearly he loved her, and Cinderella forgot her promise until the clock began to strike. Then with a cry of horror she rose and fled. In her haste she dropped one of her glass slippers, and this the Prince picked up. He followed her as quickly as he could, but



by the time the clock ceased striking, Cinderella had changed into the little kitchen maid once



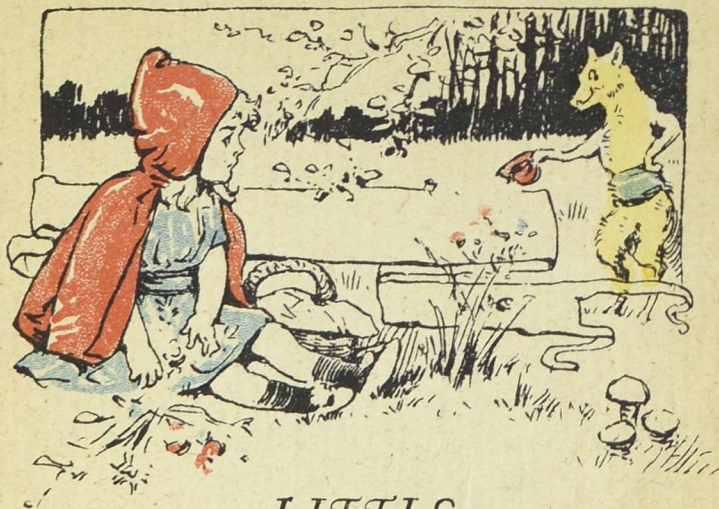
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*Searching for a maiden whose foot would
fit the slipper.*

more, and he did not recognise her.

However, he did not mean to lose his lovely bride, and so the next day he searched the land for a maiden whose foot would fit the little glass slipper he carried. At length he came to Cinderella, and the moment her foot was in the slipper all her fine clothes were restored to her.

Then the Prince asked her to be his bride, and so they were married that very day, and lived happily ever after.



LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.

THERE was once a wood-cutter and his wife who had a dear little daughter. This little girl had blue eyes and curly golden hair, and was

as sweet-tempered as she was pretty, so that all the neighbours loved her.

In the village next to the one in which the wood-cutter and his family lived the little girl's grandmother had her home. Granny made a great pet of the little one, you may be sure. She bought a piece of fine scarlet cloth and made her a pretty cloak with a hood to it, and when she was dressed in this the folks called her "Little Red Riding Hood," and by this name she soon

came to be known all round the countryside.

One day Red Riding Hood's mother said to her, "Granny is ill, my pet, so put on your hood and trot away to her cottage and ask how she is feeling now. Take this basket with you, and carry it carefully, for I have put into it a pat of butter, some eggs, a pot of honey, and a few cakes."

So Red Riding Hood put on her hood, kissed her mother, and set out upon her

way. Now, there were two paths leading to Granny's home; one lay along a sunny road and the other through



a shady wood, and as the day was warm, Red Riding Hood chose the path through the wood.



Red Riding Hood set out upon her way.

As the little girl had plenty of time to spare she stopped by the way to pick a posy of sweet-smelling flowers and a handful of wild strawberries, all to please her Granny. A wasp came buzzing by and stopped to sip the honey from Red Riding Hood's flowers, but she was not afraid. "Sip away, dear wispy waspy," said she; and the wasp took his fill of honey and then followed the little girl's path through the wood to see that no harm came to her.

Next she met a poor old woman, who looked so thin and hungry that kind Little Red Riding Hood gave her half the cake which her mother had given her to eat by the way.

"Thank you, my pretty dear," said the old woman. "If you should chance to meet the Green Huntsman by and by tell him I said 'There's game in the wind.'"

Red Riding Hood promised and went on.

And now what do you

t h i n k
happened
next?

Why,
Red Rid-
ing Hood
m e t a
great big
ugly wolf.
She was
not a bit



afraid, though, not she. She
said "Good morning, Mr. Wolf,"
as politely as could be, and
when he asked her where she
was going she told him all

about Granny being ill and how she was on her way to enquire after her health, and to take her a few dainties to tempt her appetite.

“Dear me,” said the crafty wolf, “I am sorry your Granny is ill; I should like to go and see her also. Suppose we have a race; you go through the wood and I will go by the road, and we will see who gets there first?”

Red Riding Hood agreed, and the wolf disappeared and ran as fast as ever he could



*Red Riding Hood said, "Good morning,
Mr. Wolf."*

to poor Granny's cottage, for he was a naughty, wicked wolf and meant to gobble Granny up first and Red Riding Hood after her.

He reached the cottage and tapped at the door.

"Who is there?" cried Granny.

"Little Red Riding Hood," replied the wolf.

"Pull the bobbin and the latch will lift," cried the poor old woman, and the wolf opened the door, made one spring at Granny, and before

you could count three he had eaten her up.

Then he dressed himself in her nightgown and nightcap and crept into bed, taking care to pull the bedclothes as far up as he could. Meanwhile Red Riding Hood was trotting along through the pleasant wood. She met a man dressed all in green and carrying a big bow and arrows, and, guessing him to be the Green Huntsman of whom the old woman had spoken, she gave her message.

The huntsman nodded and fitted a sharp arrow to his bow; but he never spoke. So Red Riding Hood bade him good-bye, and soon afterwards she was standing on tiptoe outside Granny's door, tapping to be let in.

"Who's there?" cried the wolf.

"Little Red Riding Hood, Granny, dear," said the child.

"Then pull the bobbin and the latch will lift, and come in," he said.

Red Riding Hood did as

the wolf bade her; but when she went up to the bed to kiss her Granny, she started back in alarm.

“Oh, Granny, dear, what long arms you have!” said she.

“All the better to hug you with,” answered the wolf.

“But, Granny, what great ears you have!”

“All the better to hear you with,” was the reply.

“And what great, fierce eyes you have, Granny!”

“All the better to see you with,” answered the wolf.



The huntsman fitted an arrow to his bow.

“And what sharp teeth you have, Granny!”

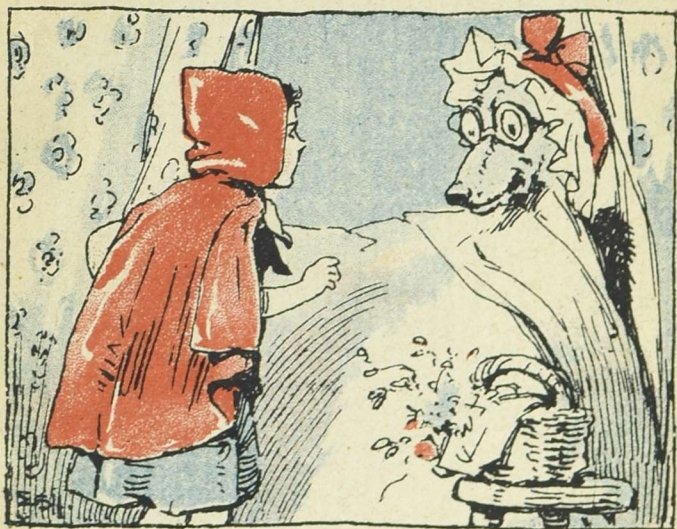
“All the better to eat you with,” growled the wolf, and out of bed he came with a bound.

Red Riding Hood was much too frightened to call for help, but the good little wasp, which had followed her all the way and flown into the cottage after her, stung the wicked wolf on the nose, so that he howled with pain and rage. Then the Green Huntsman, who had his ar-

row all ready, let it fly, and it pierced the wicked wolf's heart, so that he fell down dead, and there was an end of him.

Then Red Riding Hood burst out crying, not because the wicked wolf was dead, but because she was so frightened and wanted her mother to comfort her. So the Green Huntsman lifted her on to his shoulder and carried her straight home, and her tears were very soon dried when she felt her mother's arms

around her, for she knew no wicked wolf could harm her there.





THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

LONG, long ago, in the days of the fairies, there lived a King and Queen who had everything in the world they could wish for except one thing. This one thing was

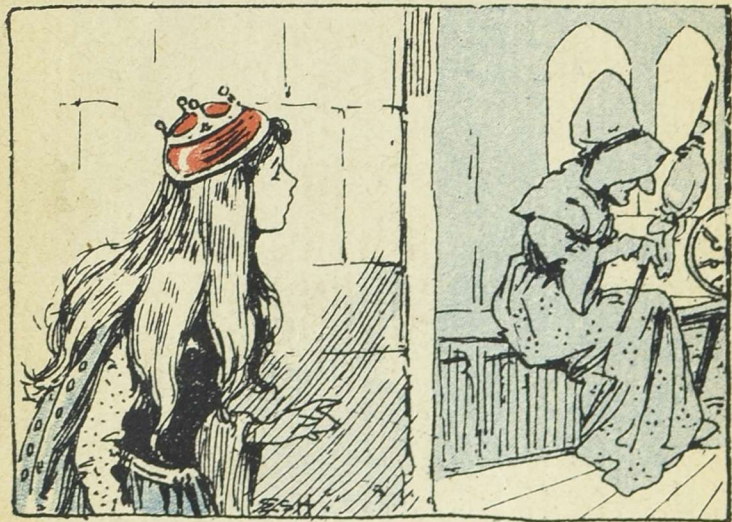
a little baby, and the poor King and Queen longed very much for a little one, so when at length it pleased God to give them a tiny daughter their delight knew no bounds.

The King determined the baby should have the grandest christening feast that had ever been known. Seven fairies were invited to be the Princess's godmothers, and when they wrote to accept they promised that each of them would bestow a good gift

upon their godchild. The day of the christening arrived, and after the ceremony the guests went into the great hall where the feast was spread. Before each of the seven fairies a beautiful cover of pure gold was placed. Just as the first course was being served, in walked an ugly old fairy, whom no one had heard of for the last fifty years, and whom everyone supposed to be dead.

The King ordered a cover to be laid for her, but as

only seven gold covers had been made for the seven fairies, she was given a silver one,



and this made her very angry. When the feast was over the good fairies came forward



In walked an ugly old fairy.

and bestowed their beautiful gifts upon the baby. The first gave her beauty, the second sweet temper, the third grace, the fourth a lovely voice, the fifth willed her to dance as lightly as the thistle-down, and the sixth gave her every accomplishment under the sun. Then the cross old fairy could contain her anger no longer. "I will," she shrieked, "that when she grows to be a maiden she shall prick her hand with a spindle and die of the wound."

Oh, what an outcry there was! I don't know what would have happened if the seventh good fairy had not stepped forward then. "I have yet my gift to bestow," she said. "I cannot prevent part of the ill wish being fulfilled; but my gift to the Princess shall be that instead of dying of the spindle prick, she shall fall into a deep sleep that will last a hundred years. At the end of that time a King's son shall awaken her with a kiss. As she ceased speaking the



fairies vanished, and for several years were heard of no more. The King, hoping to prevent his daughter's

doom, at once ordered every spinning-wheel in the kingdom to be destroyed. But it was all in vain. When the Princess grew up to be a

beautiful maiden of fifteen years, she was one day wandering about the castle and came upon a narrow staircase leading to a tower. She had never been up this tower, and so up she went at once to see who lived there. She found a very old woman spinning. This old woman was so deaf that she had never heard the King's command about the spinning-wheels, and so she was busy at hers when the Princess came in.

Of course, the little maiden

was interested in watching the strange whirring of the wheel, and at length nothing would content her but that she should try her skill at it. Alas! no sooner did she take the spindle in her hand than she pricked her rosy palm and fell swooning to the floor. The poor old woman called loudly for assistance, and soon the King and Queen and all the ladies-in-waiting and courtiers came running to see what had happened.

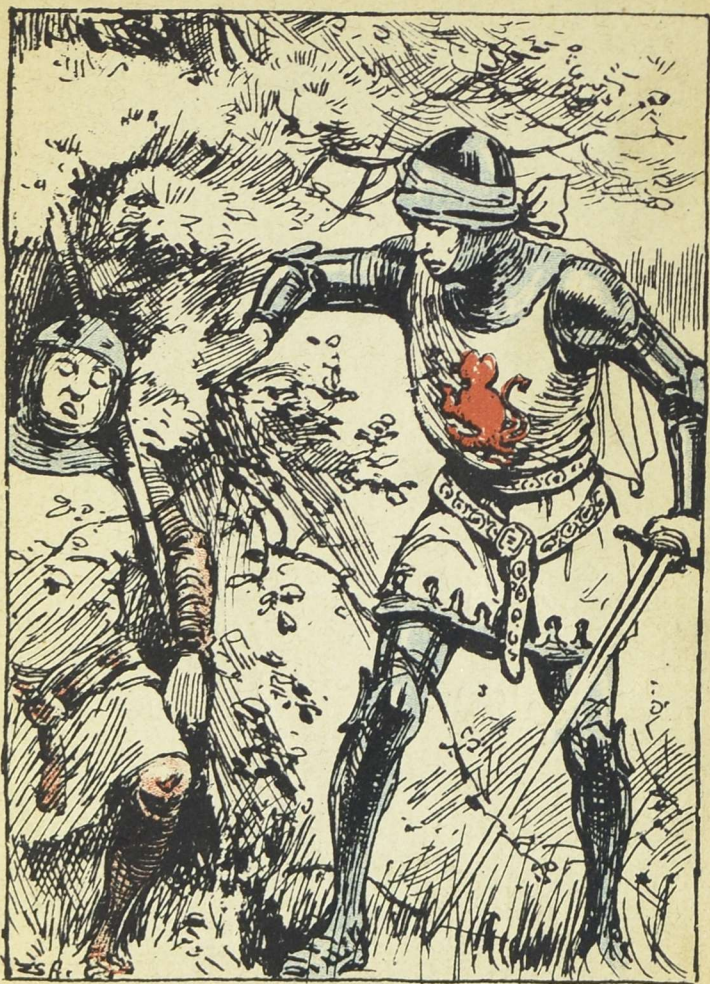
They knew at once that

the doom had fallen upon their darling, and so they carried her down from the tower and laid her upon a golden bed in a bower of roses. No sooner had this been done than the King began to yawn, then the Queen followed suit, and it was evident that the courtiers and ladies-in-waiting could scarcely keep awake.

The secret of this was that the good little fairy, when she willed the Princess to fall asleep for a hundred

years, willed the entire household at the palace to fall asleep also, in order that when the Princess was at length awakened she might find all her friends around her.

And so half an hour after the Princess had pricked her hand with the spindle there was no one, from the King to the scullion's boy, awake in the castle. As the years passed by people began to forget the story of the poor Sleeping Beauty. The roses which formed the bower in



*The courtyard seemed peopled with figures
of stone.*

which she slept grew so thick and fast that they formed quite a forest around the castle, and the thorns were so sharp that no one cared to try to penetrate the forest.

But when the hundred years had passed away a King's son was out riding one day when he came to the forest of roses.

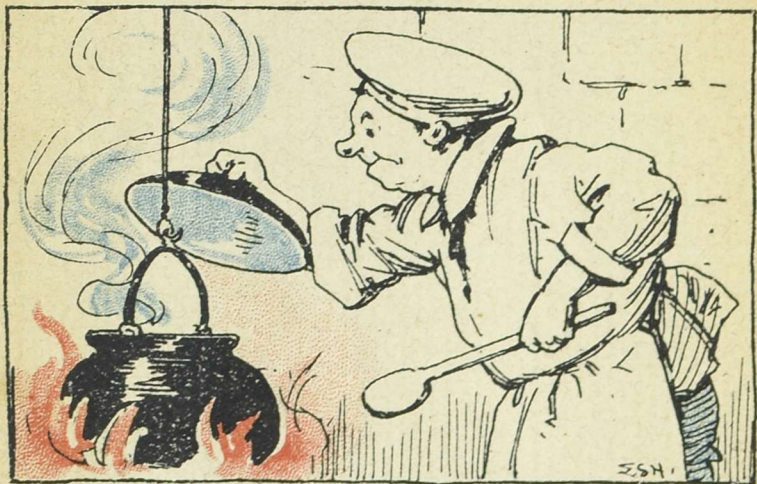
His squire begged him to turn back, assuring him that the rose thorns would tear him to pieces. But on rode the gallant Prince, and to

his surprise the branches gave way of their own accord before him, and he passed through to the castle without a scratch.

Then what a curious sight met his gaze! The courtyard and the castle seemed peopled with figures of stone. On and on he went until he came to a bower, where, lying on a golden couch, he saw a maiden, fairer than the day.

A smile parted her rosy lips, and she looked so sweet and lovely that the Prince was unable to resist the temp-

tation and stooped and kissed her. In a moment the spell was broken. The Princess



sat up and held out her hand to the Prince, for she had been dreaming of him all the long, long years she had been



*Lying on a couch he saw a maiden, fairer
than the day.*

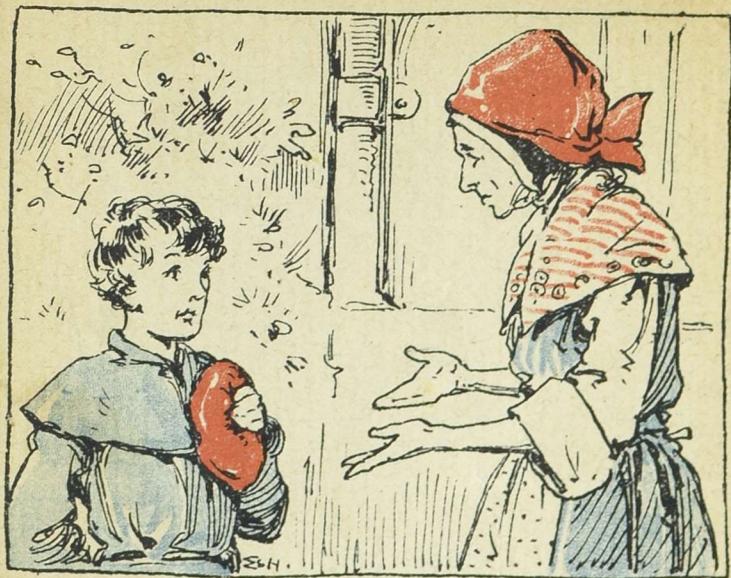
asleep, so he was no stranger to her.

With the Princess all the other inhabitants of the castle had awakened, and, oh, what a commotion there was, to be sure! Everyone talked at once, the King and Queen embraced their daughter, and all the ladies-in-waiting and the courtiers begged to be allowed to kiss her hand.

It was a fortunate thing the cook announced that the meal he had begun to cook a hundred years previously

was just served up, for all the folks remembered then they were very hungry, and trooped away to the dining-hall, so that the Prince was left alone with the Princess, and was able to tell her how dearly he loved her and to ask her to be his bride.

As the Princess consented, and the King and Queen were willing, the two were married immediately, and I have always heard that they lived happily ever after.



JACK AND THE BEANSTALK.

THERE was once a poor widow who had chanced upon such hard times that

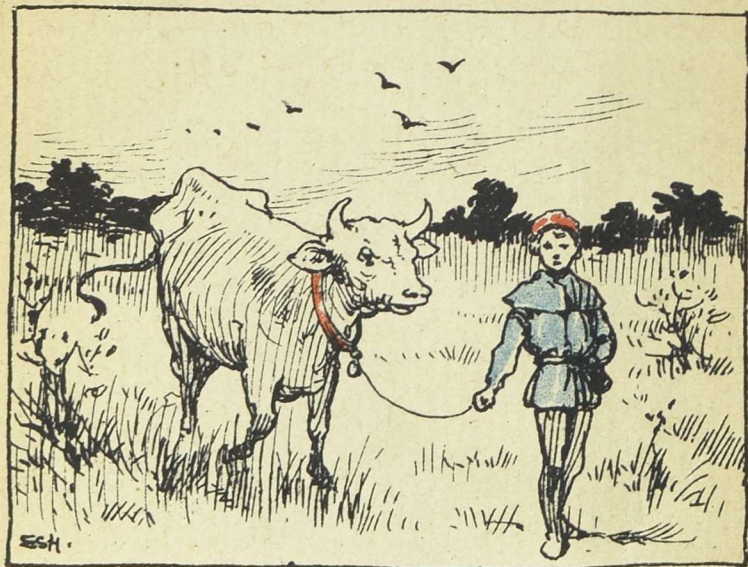


*The butcher showed him a handful of
coloured beans.*

she found one day there was not so much as a crust of bread left in the house for her and her son Jack.

So she called Jack and told him to take Milky White, the cow, to market and sell her for as good a price as he could. Jack set off to market, leading the cow by a string, and on the way he met a butcher. He stopped Jack and offered to buy the cow there and then. "What will you give me for her?" asked the boy. The butcher showed him

a handful of coloured beans.
“I will give you these, my



lad,” said he; “they are the
most wonderful beans that
ever were known, and will

make the fortune of whoever possesses them."

"Done," cried Jack, and shortly afterwards he was running towards home as fast as ever he could to tell his mother the wonderful bargain he had made.

Oh, how angry the poor woman was! She boxed Jack's ears and sent him supperless to bed; and as for the beans, she took them and flung them out of the window. When Jack awoke the next morning the room was so dark

that he thought it must be the middle of the night, until he went to the window. Then he found that during the night one of the beans had taken root, and grown so tall and thick that no light could penetrate the foliage. Jack ran downstairs and out into the garden, and as he could not see the end of the beanstalk, he climbed up it to see where it led to. After climbing for fully an hour or more he found himself in a beautiful new country. A



little way off stood a handsome castle, and as Jack felt hungry, he walked up to the door, and asked the woman who stood beside it to give him

some breakfast. She looked doubtfully at the boy, and shook her head. "My hus-



"My husband is a giant," said she.

band is a giant," said she, "and if he should return and find you here he would most certainly eat you."

"I'm very hungry," said Jack, ruefully, so the giant's wife set a substantial meal before him, but told him to make haste and eat it before the giant came home.

But before the boy was half through with his breakfast the giant arrived, and in fear and trembling the giant's wife popped Jack into the copper.

"Wife, wife, I smell fresh meat," said the monster.

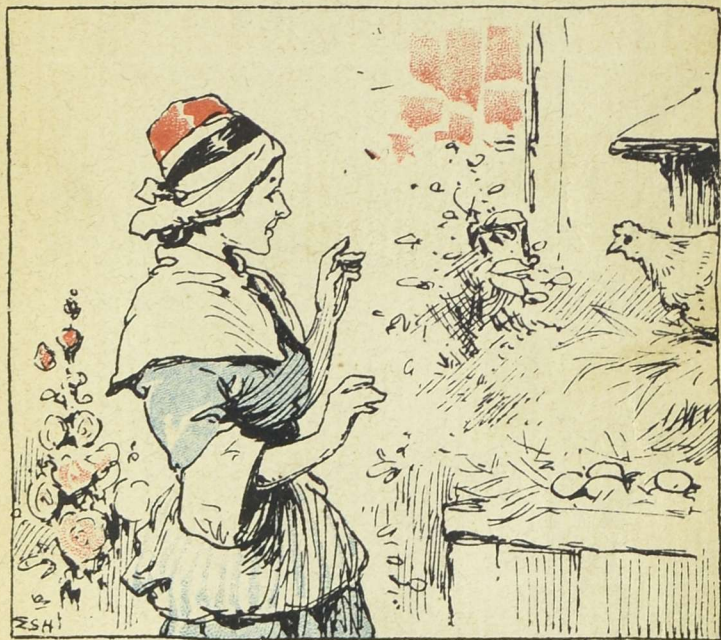
"Nonsense," replied the good woman; "it is but a piece of flesh the crows left upon the roof." She hastened to set an ox, roasted whole, upon the table, which the giant gobbled up in no time. Then he cried out, "Bring me my money bags," and the poor woman placed two heavy bags of gold upon the table.

The giant began to count his money, but the hearty meal he had taken made him



drowsy, and he fell fast asleep. Jack crept out of the copper, and, seizing the money bags,

ran towards the beanstalk,
which he reached in safety and



down which he clambered.
He dashed into the cottage,

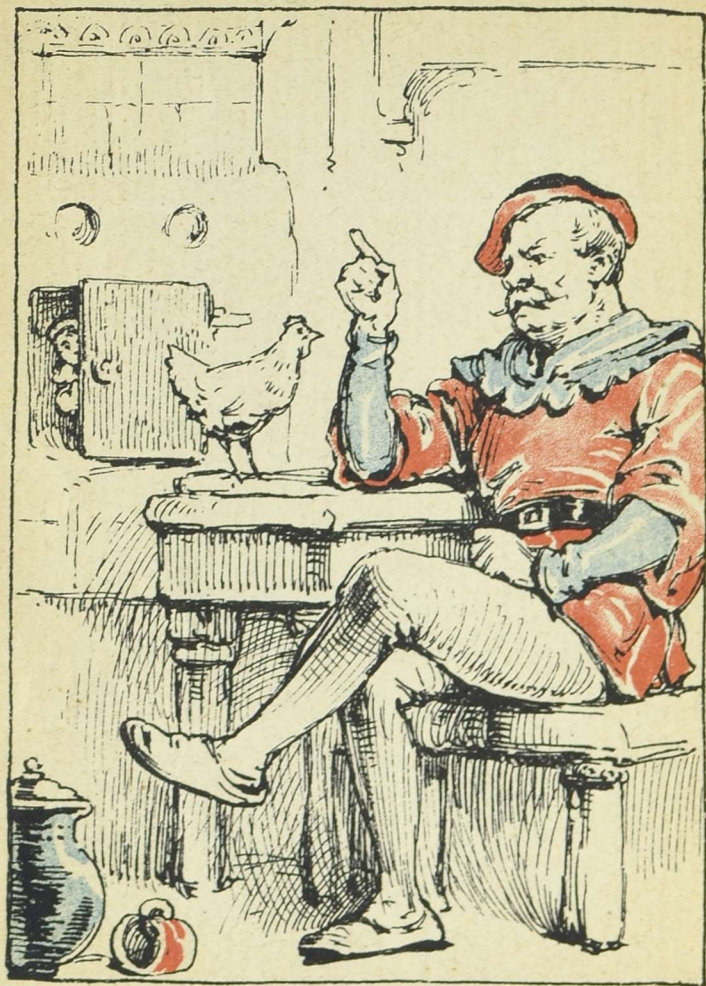
and plumped the money bags down on his mother's lap. For a while Jack and his mother were rich, but at length the money was all spent, and then Jack once more climbed the beanstalk.

He went straight to the giant's castle, and saw the giant's wife standing beside the door. She was very shortsighted, so she did not recognise Jack when he asked her to give him some food. "No, no," said she; "the last boy who came here stole my

husband's money bags." However, Jack persuaded the giant's wife to let him come in, and was soon sitting down to a substantial meal.

Scarcely had he begun to eat than there was a great noise like an earthquake, and the woman had only just time to hide Jack in the oven when the giant appeared.

Again he declared he smelt fresh meat, and again his wife told him he was mistaken. She hurriedly dished up his dinner of a couple of roast



The giant said "Lay!"



sheep, and when the giant
had disposed of them he cried,

"Wife, wife, bring me my little brown hen."

The woman brought the hen and set it upon the table, and the giant said, "Lay!" At once the little hen laid a golden egg. Over and over again the giant told the little hen to "lay," and each time a beautiful golden egg rolled upon the table.

At length he grew tired of this amusement and fell asleep, and Jack slipped out of the oven and seized the little hen. She cackled so

loudly that at length the giant awakened. But by the time he had pulled on his seven-leagued boots Jack was half way down the beanstalk.

The little brown hen laid so many golden eggs that Jack and his mother had now more money than they could spend, and yet Master Jack could not resist climbing up the beanstalk a third time, for the spirit of mischief prompted him to try and find out how the giant had taken the loss of the little brown hen.



*Jack clutched the harp tightly and ran for
the beanstalk.*

So up he went, once more persuaded the giant's wife to let him into the castle, and again was surprised at his meal by the giant. This time the giant's wife hid him in an empty barrel, and he watched the giant through the bung-hole.

After a dainty meal of a couple of roast porkers, the giant called his wife to bring him his golden harp. She brought it and placed it on the table, and when the giant commanded it to sing it sang the most beautiful songs that



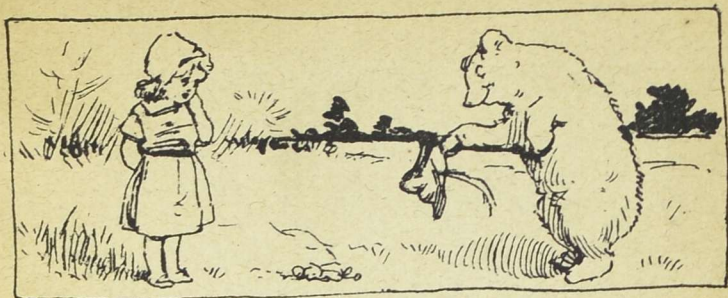
ever were heard. At length
it sang its master to sleep,
and then Jack crept quietly

from under the barrel, and seizing the harp, made off with it. But the harp cried out, "Master, master!" and the giant awoke just in time to see Jack running out of the kitchen door.

With a fearful roar he pursued him, but Jack clutched the harp tightly and ran for the beanstalk. Down he went, hand over hand, and down went the giant after him. Jack reached the bottom first, and, grasping an axe, he chopped and chopped at the

beanstalk until he chopped it in two, when down came the giant with a terrible crash. He fell on his head and broke it, so that there was an end of *him*.

As for Jack and his mother, they lived happily all their days; and as for the giant's kind-hearted wife, now that her cruel husband was no more, she lived happily too, and fed all the hungry little boys and girls in the neighbourhood, so that when she died she was beloved and regretted by all.

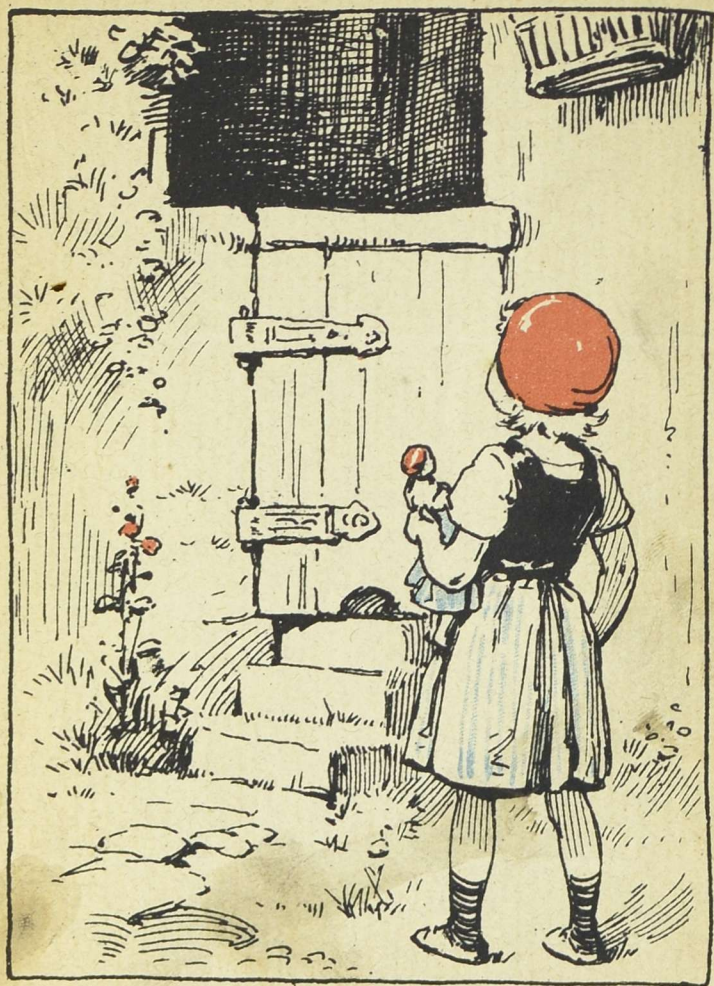


THE THREE BEARS.

ONCE upon a time a pretty little girl, called Goldilocks, was walking in a wood when she came to a house she had never seen before. Now it chanced that this house belonged to three Bears, a Great Big Papa Bear, a Middling-sized Mamma Bear,

and a Little Teeny Tiny Boy Bear. Goldilocks went into the house, but found it empty, for the three Bears had gone for a walk, leaving the broth they were going to have for dinner to cool upon the table.

The little girl was feeling rather hungry, so she just helped herself. The broth was in three bowls, and beside each bowl lay a spoon. Goldilocks took up a spoon, and first took a sup of broth from the Great Big Bowl, which belonged to the Great



Goldilocks came to a house.

Big Bear; but it was so hot with pepper that she passed on to the Middling-sized Bowl, which belonged to the Middling-sized Bear, and that was too salt. Next she tasted the broth that was intended for the Teeny Tiny Bear, and it was just as she liked it, so she ate it all up without thinking twice about it.

When she had finished her dinner she noticed three chairs standing by the wall. One was a Great Big Chair, and she climbed upon that

and sat down. Oh, dear!
how hard it was! She jumped



down quickly and sat on
the Middling-sized Chair, but
that was too soft, so she

went on to the Teeny Tiny Chair, and that suited her exactly. It was so comfortable that she sat on and on until, if you'll believe it, she actually sat the bottom out.

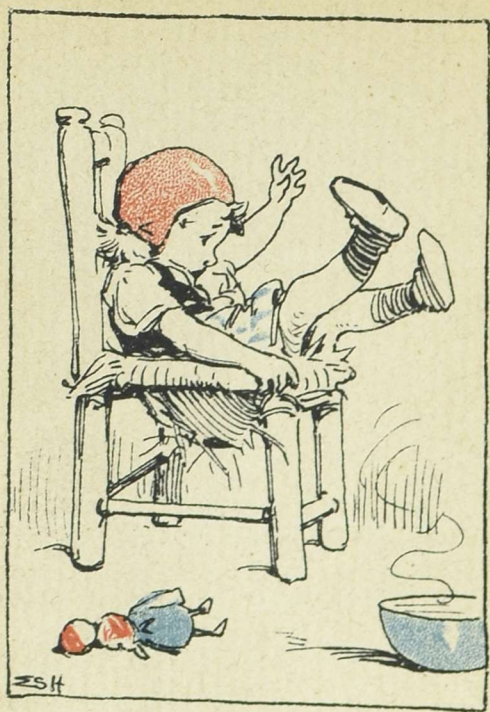
Then, of course, it was comfortable no longer, and so she got up and went upstairs to the bedroom. In the middle of the room was a Great Big Bed; on one side of it was a Middling-sized Bed and on the other side there was a Teeny Tiny Bed.

Goldilocks was sleepy by

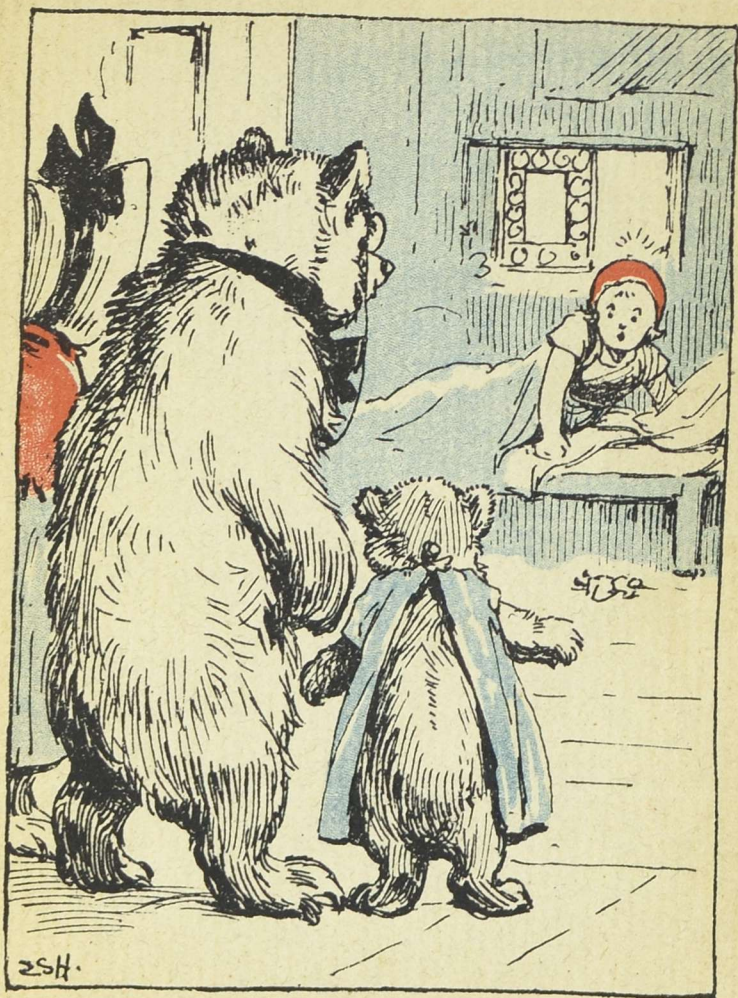
this time, so she lay down upon the Great Big Bed, but it was just as hard as the Great Big Chair had been. She jumped off and tried the Middling-sized Bed, but it was so soft she sank right down into the feather cushions and was nearly smothered.

“I will try the Teeny Tiny Bed,” she said, and so she did, and it was so comfortable that she soon fell fast asleep.

Whilst she lay there, dreaming all sorts of pleasant things, the three Bears came home



from their walk, very hungry and quite ready for their dinners. But, oh, dear me!



Goldilocks hopped out of bed.

how cross the Big Bear looked when he saw his spoon had been used and thrown under the table!

“Who has been tasting my broth?” he cried, in a Great Big Voice.

“And who has been tasting my broth?” cried the Middling-sized Bear, in a Middling-sized Voice.

“But who has been tasting mine and tasted it all up?” cried the poor little Teeny Tiny Bear, in a Teeny Tiny Voice, with the

tears running down his Teeny Tiny Face.

When the Great Big Bear went to sit down in his Great Big Chair, he cried out, in his Great Big Voice: "Who has been sitting on my chair?"

And the Middling-sized Bear cried, in a Middling-sized Voice:

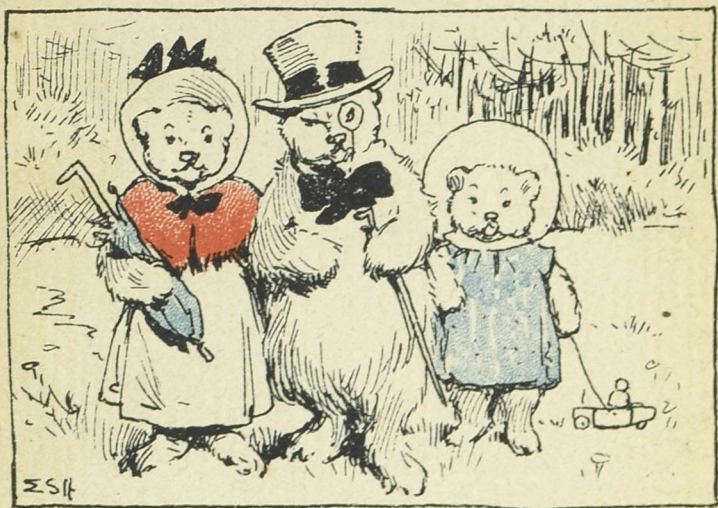
"Who has been sitting on my chair?"

But the Teeny Tiny Bear went to his Teeny Tiny bed and lies there so.

Now, when the Great Big

on my chair and sat the
bottom out?"

There was certainly no one



downstairs, so they were poor
to let Teeny Tiny Bear, in a
Teeny Tiny Voice, with the

Bear looked at his bed, he cried out, in his Great Big Voice:

“Who has been lying on my bed?”

And the Middling-sized Bear, seeing that the coverlet was all rumpled, cried out, in a Middling-sized Voice:

“Who has been lying on my bed?”

But the Teeny Tiny Bear cried out in a Teeny Tiny Voice of astonishment:

“Who has been lying on my bed and lies there still?”

Now, when the Great Big

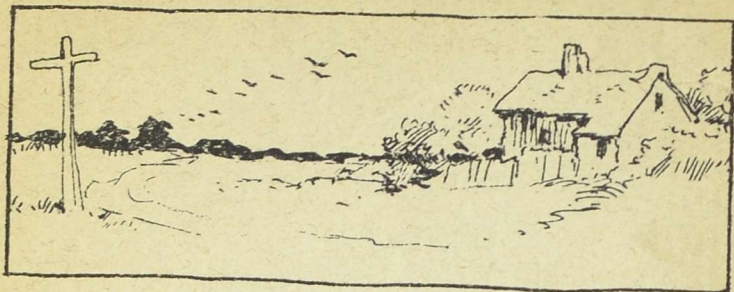


Bear began to speak, Goldi-locks dreamt that there was a bee buzzing in the room,

and when the Middling-sized Bear began to speak she dreamt it was flying out of the window; but when the Teeny Tiny Bear began to speak she dreamt that the bee had come back and stung her on the ear, and up she jumped.

Oh, how frightened she was when she saw the three Bears standing beside her! She hopped out of bed, and in a second was through the open window. Never stopping to wonder if the fall had hurt

her, she got up and ran and ran and ran until she could go no further, always thinking that the Bears were close behind her. And when at length she fell down in a heap on the ground, because she was too tired to run any more, it was her own mother who picked her up, for in her fright she had run straight home without knowing it.

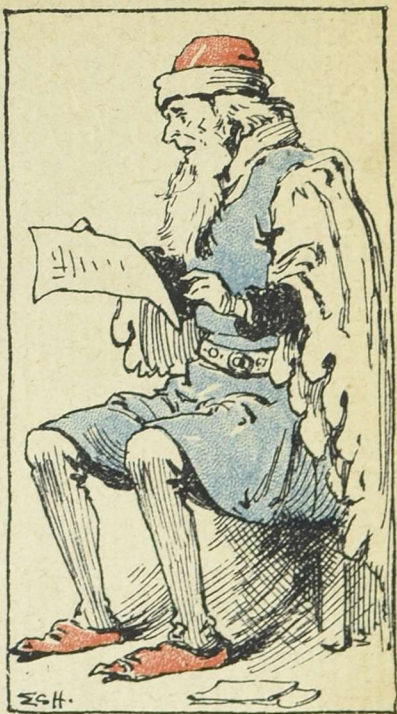


BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.

ONCE upon a time there lived a merchant who had three daughters. The two eldest were very vain and fond of pleasure; but the youngest, who was called Beauty, was as good as she was beautiful.

Now, it happened that mis-

fortunes
overtook
the mer-
chant. All
his ships
were lost,
and in one
day, instead
of being the
richest
merchant
in the city,
he found



himself a poor man. He was
obliged to sell his fine house
for a little cottage in the



The merchant begged for mercy.

country. This was a great grief to the two vain sisters, but Beauty's only thought was to cheer her father. She busied herself in the house, and soon had the poor cottage as neat and cosy as could be. At the end of a year the merchant received the news that one of his ships had come safely into port. So he set off at once. Before starting he asked his daughters what he should bring them back as presents, provided the news about his

ships proved to be true. The two vain sisters chose gay silken gowns; but Beauty only asked for a rose.

The father found he had been deceived, and it was with a sad heart he set off home again. He had had no food all day and was tired and hungry. When night came he found himself before the gates of a lofty castle. The door was open and so he entered, but not a soul did he see. He opened the door of the first room

and saw a delicious supper spread. The hungry merchant could not resist it, and so



he sat down and made a hearty meal. Afterwards he went upstairs, and, entering

a comfortable sleeping apartment, flung himself upon the bed and was soon fast asleep.

In the morning he was passing through the castle garden when he saw some fine roses, and remembering Beauty's request, stopped and plucked one. What was his dismay to hear a loud growling and to see before him a most terrible-looking Beast.

"Is this the way you repay my hospitality?" he growled. "I have fed and housed you and now you

steal my beautiful roses. But you shall pay for the theft with your life. Prepare to die!"

The poor merchant fell upon his knees and told the Beast about his three daughters waiting for him at home, and how he had plucked the rose to take to the youngest, Beauty.

"Well," said the Beast, "go back to your children, and if one of them loves you well enough to suffer instead of you, she may. But you must give me your pro-

mise that either you or one of your daughters shall be at my palace gate in three days' time."

The poor old man promised and went his way. He did not intend to allow one of his children to suffer in his stead—he only wished to bid them a last good-bye. However, when Beauty heard of all that had happened she insisted upon offering her life to save her father's. So the following day the two set out together. They reached the

castle and found a cosy little supper laid for two.

“Surely,” said she, “if the Beast meant to kill me he would not begin by treating me so well.” But soon afterwards the Beast entered, and Beauty nearly screamed with terror. However, he spoke quite gently to her, told her that he did not mean to take her life, gave the merchant permission to remain one night at the castle, and then withdrew.

The next morning the



Beauty saw that her father lay very ill.

merchant kissed his daughter and bade her farewell. After his departure Beauty wandered all through the castle, admiring the costly treasures which decked it. "I believe I could be quite happy here," she said aloud, "if only I could know what my dear ones at home are doing."

As she spoke she raised her eyes to a mirror, and saw her father riding up to their cottage door. It was a magic mirror, and she soon found out that everything



that happened at home was reflected in it.

Beauty did not see the

Beast until supper time, when he came in and supped and talked with her, and before leaving he asked her gently if she would marry him.

Beauty refused as kindly as she could—he was so good and kind to her, but still she could not make up her mind to marry a Beast.

One day Beauty looked into the magic mirror and saw that her father lay very ill. She begged the Beast to allow her to go home to nurse him, and he consented very sorrowfully.

He gave her a ring, and told her to place it on her finger when she went to bed and she would awake in her father's house. "Do the same in three days' time," he said, "and you will be transported back to me. Do not stay away any longer or I shall die of grief."

Beauty promised, and the next morning found herself in her father's house. Her father kissed her over and over again, and her sisters were so pleased to have her back to do the housework again that they

determined she should not leave them any more. So when they heard the story of the magic ring they made a plot to detain her, hoping that if she overstayed her time the Beast would be so angry that he would not let her return.

On the second night they mixed a sleeping draught in a cup of coffee and gave it to her, and she did not awaken for two whole days and nights. She was then in great distress, and, placing the ring on her finger, found herself once more



A handsome Prince knelt before her.

at the Beast's castle. She did not find the Beast for some time, but at length, hearing a deep groan, she looked down and found him lying, apparently dying, beside the fountain in the rose-garden. Beauty fell on her knees beside him, and forgetting his ugly shape, remembered only all his goodness, and sobbed aloud: "Oh, Beast, dear Beast, I love you; come back to me, I will be your little wife, oh, so gladly!"

Then the Beast arose, but

how changed was he! The ugly skin fell from him and a handsome Prince knelt before her. He took Beauty in his arms and told her that he had been enchanted by a wicked fairy, who had declared that he should never regain his natural form until a fair maiden should love him well enough to marry him.

Beauty, who had been willing to marry the good Beast, was only too delighted to be his wife now that he turned out to be a Prince,

and so the wedding was arranged for that very day, and they lived together for a hundred years, as happy as the days were long.

