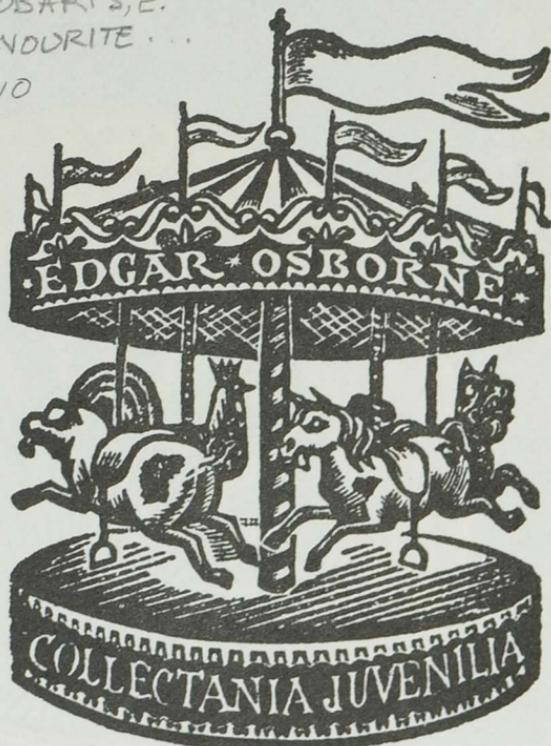


FAVOURITE NURSERY STORIES



STORIES FOR THE CHILDREN

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ROBARTS, E.
FAVOURITE ...
1910

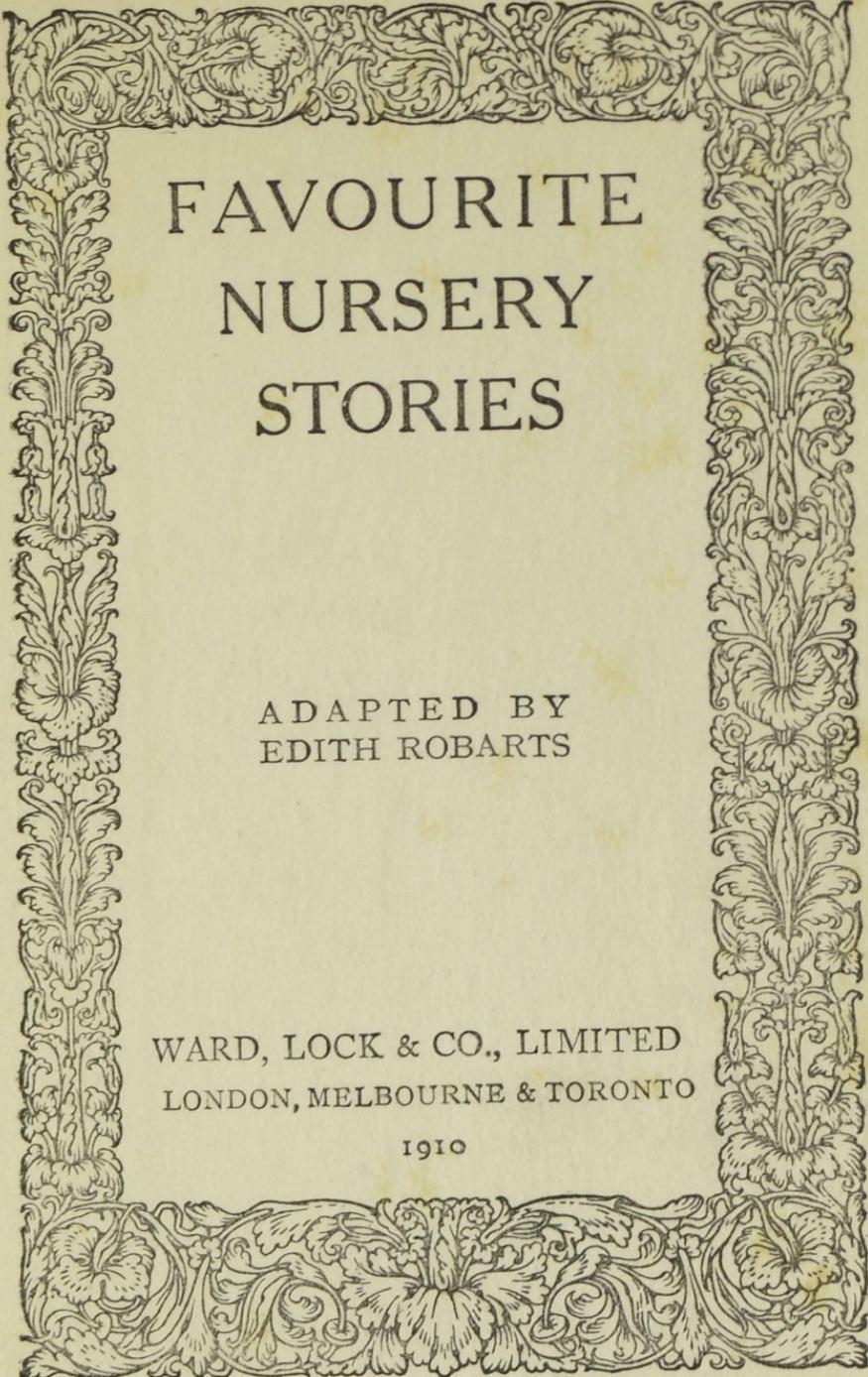


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FAVOURITE NURSERY
STORIES

A highly detailed, symmetrical Art Nouveau style border surrounds the text. It features intricate floral and foliate motifs, including large acanthus leaves, scrolling vines, and stylized flowers, all rendered in a fine-line, engraved style.

FAVOURITE
NURSERY
STORIES

ADAPTED BY
EDITH ROBARTS

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1910

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PUSS IN BOOTS

THE following is the story of the most wonderful cat that ever lived, as I am sure every boy and girl who reads it will agree.

There was once an old miller who had three sons. In course of time he died, leaving his property to be divided among his sons. But you will think the old miller's goods were not quite equally shared when I tell you how it was arranged. Indeed, at first sight, it appeared as if the father had treated the youngest of his sons in a very shabby manner. This is how it was :—

The eldest son had the mill. He was well off enough, for he soon set the sails going, while the corn ran merrily out of the hopper into the sacks. The farmers and neighbours gave him plenty of work to do ; so with industry and honesty he could hope to become a rich man.

The second son was not as lucky. He had only a useful, steady servant, in the shape of the ass which the old miller had used

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for carrying the sacks, so he went off rather depressed, leading his property by a halter. He had, however, some hopes of getting employment from his brother, who would require a beast of burden to carry corn-sacks to the mill and the sacks of flour back to his customers, so there was a fair chance of his being able to at least earn a living.

But the third son was in a sad plight, for his whole property consisted in—a cat! It was a fine cat, certainly, with thick fur and a handsome tail, but after all, only a cat! So the young man sat down and wondered what he should do to keep himself; and the more he thought, the less able did he seem to come to any decision. At last he began to talk over his troubles aloud. “My brothers,” said he, “may join as partners, and get on very well, if they are industrious and obliging; but what am I to do? When I have killed my cat, and made a fur cap or a pair of mittens of his skin, I shall have disposed of all my property, and may soon die of hunger.”

The cunning cat had been sitting behind his master's chair, listening to every word he said. When the young man paused for a short time in his complainings, the animal came forward, and in a clear treble voice said, “Dear master, don't be so down-hearted. If

you will only give me a pair of boots and a canvas bag, you shall see you have no cause for complaint."

The miller's son did not quite understand how this would better his condition; but as the cat had always been a very clever cat, and extremely quick in catching mice, he thought it best to let him have his way. So a bootmaker was sent for to measure Puss, and the directions he was given about the boots were very many. He was to be sure and let them have a good high heel, the best and strongest leather, and most superior workmanship. The bootmaker obeyed these orders to the letter, and when the boots came home great was the triumph of the cat. The canvas bag arrived at the same time, and this also met with Pussy's approval. Being thus ready for adventures, he sat down before the fire with a very grave face, and was evidently busily employed in thinking over some plan he had to carry out on the morrow.

The next morning he rose with the sun, licked himself carefully all over, pulled on his new boots, hung the bag round his neck—and very sporting he looked, I can assure you. He then carefully crept to a rabbit-warren, keeping well out of sight of the bunnies. There he opened his canvas bag, into which he had put a little

bran and parsley, and, with the long strings of the bag in his hand, he waited patiently for a visit from the rabbits.

Presently a couple of giddy young bunnies came jumping up, twitching their long ears. They sniffed at the entrance of the bag for a moment or so, then hopped gaily in and began munching and nibbling at the bran and parsley as hard as they could, little thinking, poor simple things, of the sad fate that awaited them. For master Puss had been watching them from behind a tree, with his paws well on the strings, ready to give them a pull at the right moment.

Suddenly, whisk!—tight went the string and the bag was shut, while the poor bunnies inside kicked frantically to be let out. Then Puss lost no time in killing them, and, slinging the bag over his shoulder, set off to the King's palace. He went up to the guard at the gate, twirling his whiskers with a very grand air, and desired to speak with the King.

He looked so determined that the sentinels let him pass without any fuss, when he walked straight into the King's private room, and gracefully waving his tail, said, "My master, the Lord Marquis of Carabas"—(this title was out of the cat's own head)—"presents his most dutiful respects to your Majesty, and

has commanded me to assure your Majesty that among your subjects none is more devoted to you than he is."

Here Puss made a very deep bow, while the King wondered what was coming next.

"My master," then continued the cat, "humbly sends the accompanying small present of game for the gracious acceptance of your Majesty, as a slight token of the deep and affectionate veneration with which your Majesty's kindness and consideration has inspired my master, the Lord Marquis of Carabas."

The King could not help being impressed by the beautiful long words the cat used, so he replied, with a pleasant smile, "Tell my Lord Marquis that I accept his present with great pleasure, and am much obliged to him." At the same time he very much wondered why he had never heard of the Marquis of Carabas before. But Puss wore such a look of simple and engaging frankness that he could not help believing every word he said; and certainly the aristocratic air, manner, and speech of the cat appeared sufficient proof that he belonged to a master of high rank.

The interview with his Majesty having proved most successful, Puss very politely waved his cap, flourished his tail, and retired

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with all the grace of a thoroughbred cour-tier.

A day or two afterwards he went out hunting again, with his boots and his canvas bag. This time a couple of young partridges poked their beaks into the trap, and were quickly bagged and killed. These the cat also presented to the King, as coming from the Lord Marquis of Carabas, and the speech he made upon this occasion was even more beautiful than the first. Thus for three or four weeks he continued to take a present of game to the King every day or two. Then, hearing one morning that his Majesty and his lovely daughter were going to take a drive by the river-side, he laid a very clever plot, which he carried out in the following manner:—

Rushing back to his master, he cried excitedly, "Go and bathe in the river, dear master, and I will make your fortune for you. Only bathe in the river, and leave the rest to me."

The Marquis of Carabas did not quite see how he was to make his fortune by bathing, but he consented to follow the cat's advice. Whilst he was in the water the King, with the Princess his daughter, were seen approaching in their carriage. As soon as the royal party came in sight Puss began to run to and fro, wringing his paws, and tossing them wildly

over his head, while he bawled at the top of his voice, "Help! help! help! my Lord Marquis of Carabas is in danger of being drowned! Come hither and h-e-l-p my Lord—
—Marquis—of—Ca-ra-ba-a-as!"

The King looked out of the carriage window when he heard this pitiful wail, and seeing the cat who brought the presents of game and made the beautiful speeches, he at once ordered several of his guards to go and assist the Lord Marquis.

But this was only the beginning of the cat's plot. The rogue knew his master's shabby clothes would never do for a marquis, so he hid them under a big stone, and ran to the carriage window to inform his Majesty "that my Lord Marquis's clothes had been stolen while that nobleman was bathing, and that the Marquis was in the water shivering very much, with nothing to put on." He proceeded to tell the King how he had chased the thief at the top of his speed across the country, shouting "Stop thief!" all the way, but had failed to catch him. Hearing this, the King at once ordered a suit from his own wardrobe to be brought for the Marquis of Carabas.

The young man, who was a handsome fellow, looked very well indeed in his new garments as he came up to the carriage to thank the

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King for his kindness. His Majesty was so taken with him that he insisted he should come into the carriage and take a drive with them, at which the beautiful Princess looked very pleased.

My Lord Marquis felt rather bashful in his new position. However, this shyness was in his favour, for the King thought he was silent out of gratitude at the honour he had received in being asked to ride in the royal carriage, while the lovely daughter had no doubt he was speechless with admiration of her beauty. But the truth of the matter was, the young man was thinking of the scrape he had got into, and wondering what the King and his daughter would say if they knew he was no marquis but only a poor miller's son.

But Puss was not the cat to leave his master in the lurch. He was well aware that most people judge by appearances, so he determined his master should appear to be a wealthy man. As soon as he had seen the Marquis safely seated in the King's carriage, he struck across the fields by a short cut, which quickly got him a long way ahead of the royal party. In a wheat-field a number of reapers were gathering the harvest, and the cat went running up to them, doubling his paw and saying in a most determined manner, "Now, good people,

if you don't say, when the King asks, that this field belongs to the Lord Marquis of Carabas, you shall be chopped as small as minced meat ! ”

The reapers were so startled at the appearance of the fierce little booted creature that they promised to do as they were told. Whereupon Puss, having once more shaken his paw at them, took his departure.

When the royal carriage passed the field soon afterwards the King stopped, and beckoning one of the reapers to him, asked to whom all that fine wheat belonged.

“ To the Marquis of Carabas, your Majesty, ” answered all the reapers.

“ You have a fine crop of wheat, my Lord Marquis, ” said the King.

“ Yes, your Majesty, ” replied the Marquis ; and the King thought what a nice modest young man he was.

Thus, as the King passed through each field after the cat, he did not fail to ask to whom it belonged, and was very much surprised at being answered each time, “ To the Marquis of Carabas, your Majesty. ”

“ Really, my Lord Marquis, your possessions are very extensive ! ” said the King ; whereat the young man blushed and answered, “ Yes, your Majesty. ’

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Then the Princess thought he looked handsomer than ever; in fact, she was falling in love with him very fast.

But if the Marquis had no castle, there was some one dwelling in those parts who had—and a very fine castle too. This person was an ogre, a giant, and a magician, all in one. The cat happened to know him slightly, and running on to his castle, rang a loud peal at the bell, saying he had come to pay the ogre a friendly visit and inquire after his health, which he had heard was very weak. The ogre was much obliged to the cat for his politeness, and invited him to walk in. This was just what Puss wanted, so he at once accepted the invitation, and sitting down on a table, with his boots neatly tucked between his fore-paws, began a conversation with his host in a very civil and pleasant manner.

“Sir,” he commenced, “everyone says you are an extremely clever magician, and that you are able to turn yourself into the shape of various animals.”

“That is quite true, sir,” answered the ogre.

“But, sir,” continued the cunning cat, “I mean large animals, such, for example, as an elephant.”

“Perfectly true, sir,” replied the ogre. “You shall see and judge for yourself.”

Then having muttered some magical words, he immediately stood before the cat in the shape of an elephant. Puss was rather startled at this sudden change, but he gathered courage and went on, "Well, sir, that is indeed marvellous! But can you change your shape as often as you like and make yourself whatever animal you choose?"

The elephant waved his trunk three times in the air, and presently stood before the astonished cat in the shape of a huge African lion. Puss stood gazing at him with amazement and fear; but when the lion opened his mouth and gave a great roar he was so terrified that he climbed straight up the wall and escaped through a window on to the roof of the castle. There he stood, quaking with fright, yet spitting and snarling as it is a cat's nature to do, while every hair on his tail stood on end with horror.

He could hear the ogre laughing to himself in the room below, at the thought of having so alarmed his guest—which was very ill-bred and only what an ogre, who had never learnt to behave, would do. The cat knew by his laugh that he had returned to his natural shape, so came down again into the room with a very cool and calm air, muttering something about the heat of the room which had made him run out for a little fresh air. At this

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explanation the giant laughed louder than ever, which made Puss feel very indignant. However, he sat down again and continued the conversation with as much politeness as before.

“Sir,” he began, “You are the most marvellous magician I have ever seen, or heard of.”

“But I once read of a conjuror who could not only take the shape of a large animal like a lion or tiger, but also that of a very small one, such as a kitten or mouse. But of course an ogre as big as you are could not do a thing like that.”

“Could I not, indeed!” cried the ogre; “so you fancy the man you speak of was a cleverer magician than I am? Ha! ha! I’ll show you, in less than half a minute, that I can do the same thing.” And within the time he had mentioned, the ogre was capering about the room in the shape of a little mouse. It was a most unfortunate thing for him, as in a moment the cunning cat had sprung upon him, and a single nip with his sharp teeth was enough to put an end to the ogre. He was then gobbled up in less than no time, and his fate is an example of what vanity and a love of foolish display may bring one to.

But Puss, artful fellow! had gained his point. There was now a castle for the Marquis

of Carabas, in which no king need be ashamed to rest after a long ride ; and the cat thought, with immense glee, how surprised his master would be on his arrival. Then, just as he expected, a few minutes after the royal carriage came in sight. Puss had only enough time to run upstairs and dress himself in a little page's costume out of the ogre's wardrobe, and to give his face and paws a hasty wash, when the carriage drew up in front of the castle. There, to the great astonishment of the Marquis of Carabas, stood his cat, gallantly attired and looking as much at his ease as if he had done nothing else but manage the arrangements in the castle all his life long. Nothing could exceed the courtly air and grace with which he welcomed the King and Princess. With one paw he raised his hat from his head, while he laid the other upon his heart, as he stood on the steps of the door bowing low to the ground. When the carriage stopped he advanced and said, " Welcome ! welcome, your Majesty and your Royal Highness, to the poor castle of my master, the Lord Marquis of Carabas. As the great honour of your Majesty's visit is an unexpected one, your Majesty will be pleased to excuse the hasty arrangements made for your reception. The fact is, my Lord Marquis of Carabas has not

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been long in possession of the castle, so if there should be anything which does not meet with your Majesty's approval, we beg you will graciously pardon it. Now if your Majesty and the charming Princess will please to alight and take some refreshment, this will be the proudest day of my life, and of my master's, the Lord Marquis of Carabas."

"Upon our royal word, my Lord Marquis," exclaimed the King, "you have a splendid castle here, and we shall have great pleasure in alighting that we may view it more closely. We are always happy to visit the homes of our loving subjects; moreover, our drive has given us an appetite."

The King said this as a hint that some luncheon would be acceptable, and the sly cat took the hint at once.

"What say you, my daughter?" continued his Majesty, turning to the Princess. "Will you be of the party?"

The Princess, whose curiosity had been raised by the appearance of the castle, was quite willing, so the king graciously commanded the Marquis to give the Princess his hand and conduct her into his dwelling. The Marquis obeyed, feeling more bewildered than ever, and more than ever impressed with the genius and impudence of his wonderful cat,

who led the way into the castle, walking backwards and bowing with the grace of a perfect lord chamberlain.

The castle was splendidly furnished, for the ogre had been an ogre of taste. Every apartment was hung with costly tapestry, while in the wardrobes and cupboards there was a great store of fine clothes, which the Princess especially admired. While they were walking through the upper rooms, the cat slipped away for a moment or two; and when the party returned to the great hall—lo and behold!—that marvellous Puss had spread out a meal for them such as any King might have been glad to sit down to after a long drive.

The Marquis invited the King to be seated, while he himself handed the Princess to a chair. If his Majesty had been good-humoured before, he was radiant now, for he was rather fond of his meals, and the food was remarkably good. At first he treated the Marquis with kindness only, then his manner became more affectionate, and he began to talk to the young man in quite a fatherly way. At last he actually said to him: “My Lord of Carabas, it would give me great pleasure to have you for my son-in-law, provided, of course, my daughter has no objection.”

At this speech the Princess became scarlet

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with confusion and modesty, but she made no objection, and did not look at all displeased. Then the Marquis made a little speech, in which he thanked the King for the gracious honour he was pleased to do him, and expressed himself still more glad that the beautiful Princess had been graciously pleased to offer no objection, and as it was generally supposed that silence gave consent, he concluded her royal Highness was willing to accept him as a husband, which honour filled his heart with the deepest joy and gratitude. At this the cat was obliged to go out into the courtyard to hide his joy, which was so great that he stood on his head upon the flag-stones and kicked up his hind legs in the air.

The Marquis returned with the King and the Princess to the palace, and the marriage was soon celebrated with great magnificence. The King, of course, gave his daughter away, while the cat was present at the wedding in an elegant court suit. The Marquis made a good and kind husband, and he saw that Puss had a splendid time for the remainder of his life, for he never forgot that it was all owing to the cat's marvellous cleverness he had risen from the position of a penniless man to be Marquis of Carabas and the husband of a royal Princess.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

ONCE upon a time there stood a quiet village of neat little cottages, with gardens before them filled with flowers and vegetables, and beautiful corn fields all round. In this quiet village there lived a good woman, who had a very pretty little daughter. But there was something about this little girl that was far better than all her prettiness, and that was her kind and gentle heart and nice obliging manners. She would do anything to give pleasure to others, and you never heard a cross or ill-tempered word from her mouth, while as for teasing or ill-treating a dumb creature, Little Red Riding Hood never thought of such a thing. There, now I have told you her name—Little Red Riding Hood—so the next thing I must do is to tell you how she got that name. Her old grandmother, who loved her very dearly, gave her a beautiful little cloak of red cloth, with a hood to draw over her head, such as the ladies wore when they rode along the highway on their fine horses. The little girl looked

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very nice indeed when she wore this present, and as the neighbours watched her tripping along the village street with the scarlet covering drawn over her pretty little head, they would say, "Here comes Little Red Riding Hood."

One day the poor old grandmother fell sick, and could not come out to see them as usual, but had to lie all alone in bed. So the mother, who had been making some nice cheese-cakes, said to Little Red Riding Hood, "I hear your grandmother is ill; so go, my child, and see how she is, and carry her some of these cakes and a little pot of butter."

Little Red Riding Hood was, as I have said, a good-hearted child; nothing pleased her so well as to make herself useful to others, and above all to her kind grandmother. So she went at once to get a little basket for the cakes and butter, and was very soon ready to start.

Now, it was not very far from Little Red Riding Hood's home to the village in which her grandmother lived, so her mother thought she might venture to send the little girl there alone. Still, on parting with her, she told her to be very careful, and not to loiter by the way; she also gave her many kind messages for the poor grandmother, bidding her be sure to ask how the old lady's rheumatism was. Little Red Riding Hood promised not to forget

what her mother told her, while she tripped off as gay and light-hearted as any of the little birds that sang upon the branches of the forest through which she passed. There were many woodmen at work in the forest cutting down the great fir trees for firewood, and singing as they dealt their strokes with willing hands and heavy axes.

There was also something there that meant danger for the little girl—namely, a great, gaunt, hungry wolf. This animal was feeling very savage, as he had not been able to get any dinner for two days, so was all the more ready to attack anything that came in his way, if it looked at all like something good to eat. He was just in this mood when whom should he meet but pretty, chubby, little Red Riding Hood, and he would have liked to have made one spring at her and to have begun eating her up at once if he had not seen the woodmen near watching him. One of the men, suspecting that Master Grizzly was bent upon some mischief, resolved to keep a look-out in order to protect Little Red Riding Hood if necessary.

The wolf walked daintily up to the little girl, trying his best to look amiable and innocent, and on the whole he succeeded very well, only he could not keep his eyes from

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glaring in a hungry manner, and when he smiled he showed all his great set of long white teeth. But Little Red Riding Hood felt no fear, for, being thoroughly innocent herself, she did not suspect deceit in others.

“ Good-morning, my dear,” said the wolf in a soft, oily way.

“ Good-morning, Master Wolf,” answered Little Red Riding Hood, surprised at finding him so civil.

“ And pray where may you be going so early ? ” continued the Wolf.

“ I am going to my grandmother’s,” replied Red Riding Hood, who, though she thought him rather curious, never dreamed he had any reason for asking her these questions.

“ And pray what may you have in this basket, my darling little girl ? ” asked the wolf, while he sniffed and snuffed at the basket with his great nose.

“ Some cakes and a pot of butter,” answered the child.

“ For your grandmother ?—The dear old lady ! And pray where does she live ? ” the wolf went on, speaking as if he quite loved Red Riding Hood’s grandmother.

“ She lives down beyond the hill you see yonder,” replied the little girl, “ at the first house in the village.”

“Well,” said the wolf, “I think I’ll go and see her too—I know she will be pleased to see me, the dear old soul, for she is very fond of me, as I am of her. So you take this path to the right, while I take that one to the left, and we’ll see which of us gets there first.”

Now, the cunning wolf knew very well that he was certain to get first to the old woman’s house. He had chosen the shorter way, but not only that, as soon as the child was out of sight, he set off galloping as hard as ever he could. The reason why he made such haste was because he had a cunning and wicked plan in his head, and in order to carry it out he must get to the cottage before Little Red Riding Hood.

The little girl, thinking there was no cause for hurry, stopped to pick her grandmother a nosegay of wild flowers, and to gather her a few wood strawberries. Meanwhile the wolf soon arrived at the old lady’s cottage, at the door of which he paused a moment to get breath after his run. Then he gave two gentle taps, such as Little Red Riding Hood herself might have done.

“Who’s there?” cried the feeble voice of the poor old dame from within the house.

“Your granddaughter, Little Red Riding Hood,” replied the wolf, taking great pains to

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imitate the child's high voice as best he was able. "I have come to bring you some cakes and a little pot of fresh butter from my mother."

The old grandmother, as she lay ill in bed, thought her dear little grandchild must have a very bad cold to make her speak in that strange cracked voice, but as she did not for an instant imagine it was any one else, she cried out, "Pull the bobbin and the latch will go up." (You see it was an old-fashioned door, with the latch on the inside, and a piece of bobbin that went through a hole to open it by.)

The wolf did as he was told without one moment's delay: he took the bobbin in his teeth and gave it a great jerk, then set his shoulder against the door, pushing it open in a minute. In he rushed into the poor old woman's room, and I should be sorry, and you would be horrified, if I were to describe the greedy manner in which he ate her up, skin and bone, arms, legs, head and feet!

Five minutes afterwards there was not a bit of the old grandmother left, except a wig of false curls which she wore under her nightcap. And yet the wolf was not half satisfied, but began to long for the arrival of Little Red Riding Hood! The next thing he did was to dress himself in the old lady's clothes, and

take his place in her bed. And you may be sure he pulled the nightcap well down and drew the bed-clothes well up, so as to show as little as possible of his great hairy face. And there he lay, waiting for the child's arrival, with his eyes glaring and his mouth watering as before. At last he heard her light footstep outside the door, while presently the tap of her little fingers sounded upon it.

“Who is there?” cried the wolf eagerly—so eagerly indeed that he forgot to soften his voice, which set Little Red Riding Hood thinking what a bad cold grandmamma must have to make her so hoarse. But she never suspected the truth, so replied at once, “I am your grandchild, Little Red Riding Hood. Mother has sent me to you with a basket of cakes and a pot of butter.”

By this time the wolf had become calm enough to remember to disguise his harsh voice, so softening it as much as he could, he cried, “Pull the bobbin, my dear, and the latch will go up.”

Little Red Riding Hood did as she was told, when up flew the latch and she tripped lightly into the room, looking very fresh and rosy after her walk. Now, she had never seen her grandmother except when up and dressed in her day clothes. She was, therefore, not a

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little surprised when she saw how funny the old lady looked as she lay tucked up in bed. Although her face was more than half hidden under the bed-clothes, the part that peeped forth looked so brown and strange that Little Red Riding Hood thought her poor old grandmother must surely have felt too ill and feeble to wash herself for the last two or three days. She then went forward, somewhat timidly, and offered the "old lady" a cake, which the cunning wolf accepted with thanks, and commenced to slowly eat with the air of an invalid whose appetite was very delicate.

Meanwhile the little girl busied herself in arranging the flowers she had brought with her, and as she was a tasty little thing, she soon made the whole room look quite fresh and pleasant. When she had done this, her grandmother said, in a feeble voice, "Oh, my dear child, will you not lie down beside your poor old grannie. I am too ill to sit up and talk to you."

Little Red Riding Hood obeyed, and so tired was she with her long walk that in a moment she had fallen asleep. Now, the wolf might have eaten up the poor child at once, but thinking himself quite sure of his prey, he thought he would amuse himself with it a little while longer before he made an end of the

matter. However, he was a great deal too sure, for, like many wicked people, he deceived himself, and his punishment came when he least expected it. And this is how it happened.

You remember that some woodcutters had been working in the forest at the time Little Red Riding Hood met the wolf. They had watched for the return of the child, and when she did not come they got so uneasy as to set out in search of her. They went straight to the old grandmother's house, and what was their surprise on looking through the window to see the little girl lying on the bed by the side of *the wolf*! They were horrified at the sight, and creeping quietly into the room, they hid themselves near the bed, so as to see what would happen next.

Little Red Riding Hood woke after a short nap, and being refreshed by her sleep, began to take notice of the things around her. She again thought how very strange her grannie looked, and concluded the poor old lady must have been very ill indeed to be so sadly changed. She felt so sorry for her that she tried to cheer her up by telling her all about her journey that morning.

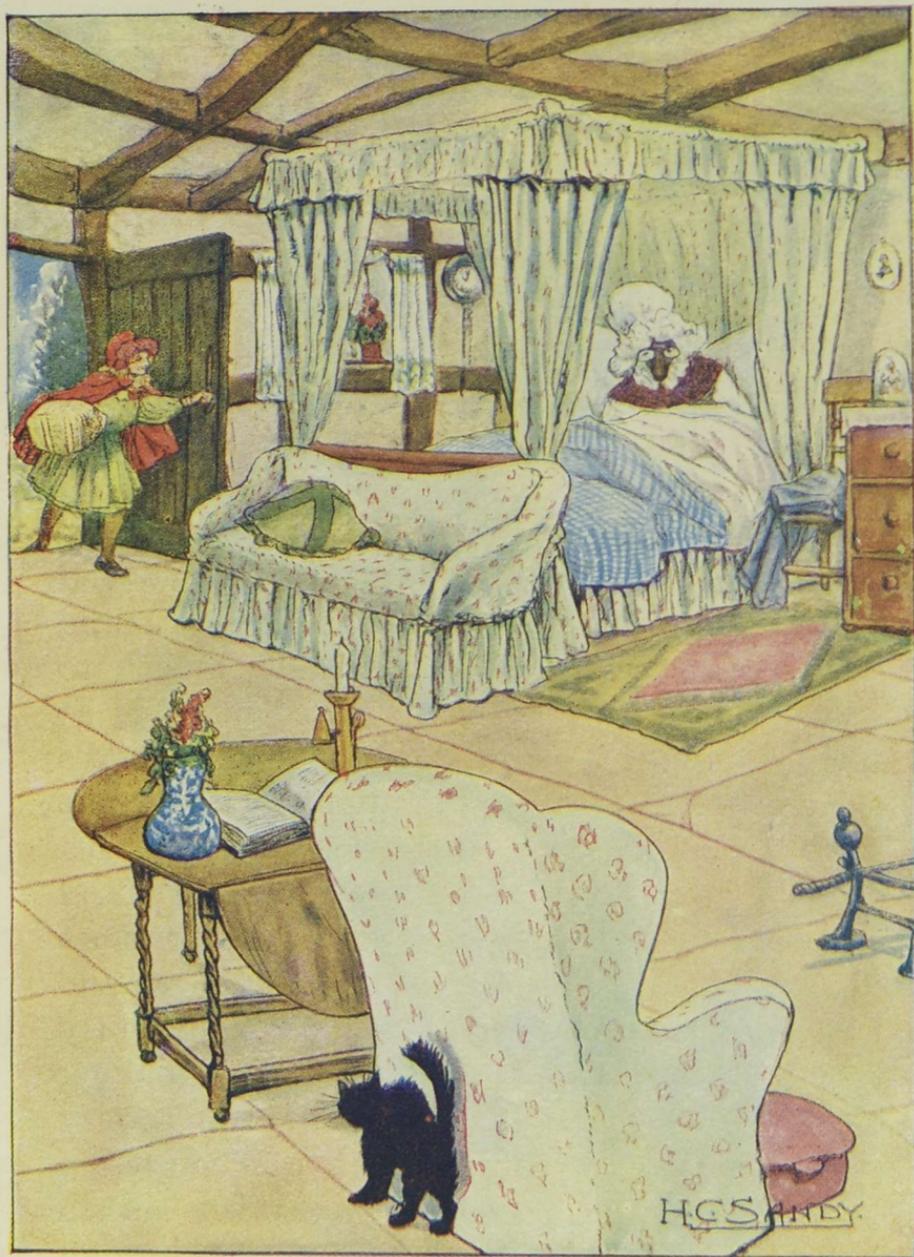
"As I came through the forest I met a wolf, grandmamma," said she.

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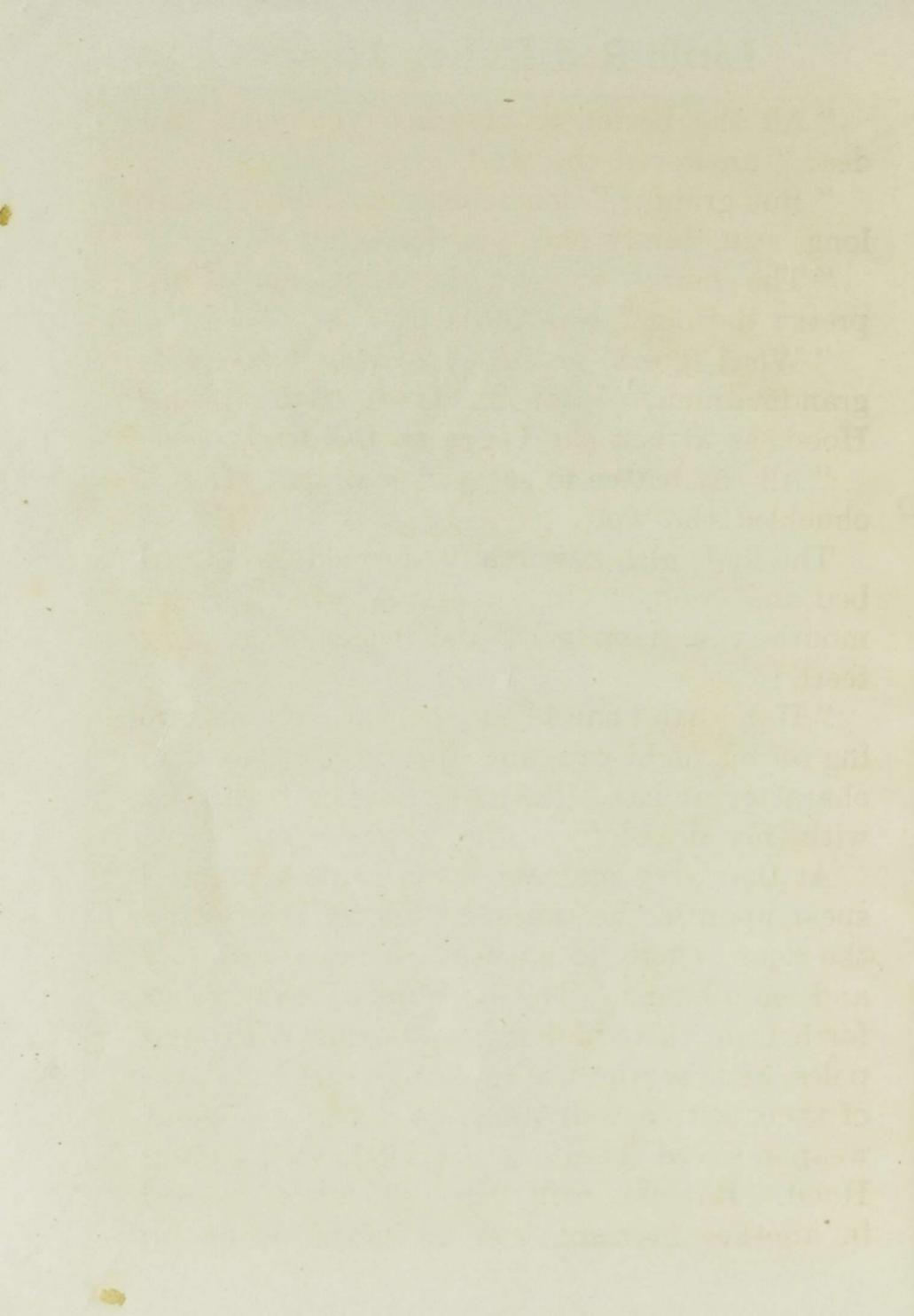
“ Did you indeed, my dear ? ” replied the false grandmother, hiding his face under the bed-clothes, while he chuckled to himself.

“ At first I was afraid he would hurt me, but he was very kind and polite,” continued the innocent child. “ He asked me where I was going and where you lived, and when I said I was coming to see you he said he would come too, and I rather expected to see him here. Do you think I shall see him before I leave, grandmamma ? ”

“ I shouldn't wonder at all if you did, my pet ! ” replied the wolf ; and he was obliged to hide his head under the bed-clothes again, while he stuffed the sheet into his mouth to prevent himself screaming with laughter, so much amused was he at the poor child's simplicity. As it was he remained under the clothes till he was half-strangled, shaking with merriment to such a degree that Little Red Riding Hood thought her grandmother must have a bad fit of the spasms. At length the treacherous wolf recovered himself sufficiently to put up his head above the clothes, looking at the child with what he meant to be a very sweet smile. He then gave her a hug in a very loving way, at which she cried out in surprise, “ Grandmother, what great rough arms you have got ! ”



Little Red Riding Hood.



"All the better to embrace you with, my dear," answered the wolf.

"But grannie," continued the child, "what long, stiff, funny ears you have got!"

"The better to hear what you say, my pretty darling," was the reply.

"What great green eyes you have got, grandmamma," went on Little Red Riding Hood, as at last she began to feel frightened.

"All the better to see you with, my child," chuckled the wolf.

The little girl, now really alarmed, sat up in bed and cried, "Grandmamma, what a great mouth you have got! and what large ugly teeth!"

"Hah! hah! hah!" snarled the wolf, throwing off his night-cap, and appearing in his true character at last. "All the better to *eat you* with, my dear!"

At that very moment down came a pointed spear upon his head and he fell off the bed to the floor, where he lay for a moment stunned and motionless. The woodmen had burst forth from their hiding place, armed with long poles with scythe-blades at the end, and one of them with a well-aimed blow of his pointed weapon saved the life of our Little Red Riding Hood. But the wolf was only stunned and in another moment was up again, when he

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gave one tremendous leap forward and would no doubt have gone clean over the heads of the woodmen but that the night-gown he had put on clung about his heels and brought him down with a great thump upon the floor. The woodmen were upon him in an instant with their spears, and then, the only good thing I know about the wolf was that he fought for his life—and bravely too. However, the sharp spears were too much for him, and he soon fell dead at the woodmen's feet, which was, of course, a right and proper ending for such a very wicked animal.

Then the friendly men, who had thus saved Little Red Riding Hood's life, took her by the hand and led her home to her mother. That good woman was terribly grieved to hear of the poor grandmother's dreadful death, but at the same time she was deeply thankful her little daughter had escaped, and both she and Little Red Riding Hood did all in their power to show their everlasting gratitude to the brave woodmen.

JACK THE GIANT-KILLER

I EXPECT you have all heard of King Arthur and his Queen Genevra, who reigned in Britain many hundred years ago—long before the time of good King Alfred. If you have not, you should get your friends to tell you something about them, and also about the Knights of the Round Table. What I am now going to relate is a wonderful and remarkable story, not about King Arthur, but about a marvellous youth who lived in his time, and whose name was Jack. This Jack was the son of a poor farmer who dwelt in Cornwall, near the Land's End, where the tin-mines are. He was a bold fearless boy, and he delighted to hear his father's stories about the brave Knights of the Round Table, and of all their valiant deeds. The more he heard the more anxious did he feel to find some enemy against whom he could fight ; for he never doubted that his skill and courage would give him the victory in every battle. And I really think that this confidence in himself and his own powers had a great deal

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to do with the success that Jack afterwards met with in the wonderful adventures I shall tell you about, for if any one firmly makes up his mind to do a certain thing, he generally succeeds in the end.

Now, there were several great giants in England and Wales at the time of which I write, and against these giants Jack resolved to try his strength and skill. He could not have chosen more fitting enemies, as the giants were hated and feared by everybody, with good reason. They were big bullying fellows, with a great habit of taking what did not belong to them, especially in the way of cattle and sheep.

If there was one giant whom the people dreaded more than all the others it was one named Cormoran, also called Cormorant, because of his immense and voracious appetite. This cruel monster lived on St. Michael's Mount, a high hill that rises out of the sea near the coast of Cornwall, and is in shape not unlike a gigantic pound cake. Cormoran was eighteen feet high and nine feet round, so you can imagine the quantity of stuff it would take to make him a pair of trousers. He had a very ugly face, and a huge mouth with pointed teeth like those of a saw, and he used to pick up the people he met, pop them in his mouth, and

saw them up with his saw-like teeth. Therefore there was always a panic when he came out of the cave in which he dwelt on the very top of the mountain, to walk through the sea when the tide was low, right into Cornwall. You may be sure the people who lived in Cornwall shut themselves up in their houses when they saw him coming. However, he did not have his walk for nothing, as he carried off their cattle a dozen at a time, slinging them on a pole across his shoulder as a man might sling a dozen rabbits. How short a time this dozen lasted him, and how soon he came for more, was really wonderful. When he got tired of eating beef, he would steal three or four dozen sheep and hogs, that he might have a dish of pork and mutton. These small animals he would string round his waist and carry them off, to the great annoyance of the owners, who watched him at a distance, not daring to interfere. For the giant had a big club which he used as a walking-stick, with sharp spikes at one end; and he had been heard to say that all those whom he did not knock down dead with the thick end of his club, he would stick on the spikes at the other end, so the people were naturally very shy of coming within reach of either end of his club.

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But there was one youngster who declared he would serve out Master Cormoran in some way or another, and this youngster was our friend Jack. This is how he set to work about it :—

One winter's evening he swam from the Cornish coast to St. Michael's Mount, pushing before him a kind of raft, on which were a pick-axe, a shovel, and a lantern. It was quite dark by the time he got to the mount, but in the giant's cave there was a light, by which Jack could see Cormoran, who had just finished his supper, picking his teeth with a hedge-stake. All night long Jack worked busily and silently by the light of his lantern, digging a deep pit before the giant's dwelling. By the time morning dawned he had made a great hole twenty feet deep and twenty feet broad. He covered this pit-hole with sticks and straw, then strewed earth and sand lightly over the top, so that it looked just like solid ground. Then he stepped back a few paces, took a trumpet that hung at the gate, and blew a loud blast as a challenge to the giant to come out and fight him. Cormoran woke up from his sleep with a start, and flew in a great rage when he saw what a little fellow was standing outside defying him.

“You saucy villain!” he roared out ;



Jack the Giant-killer.

“ wait a moment and I’ll broil you for my breakfast ! ”

With this agreeable speech he turned back into the cave to get the club I have told you of ; and having armed himself with this weapon, he came rushing out, intending to give Jack a taste—first of the thick end, and then of the spikes at the other end. But the pit was in his way. The giant came tramping over it with his great heavy feet, when—“ crack !—crunch—cre-e-e-e-ch ! ”—in he went, right up to his neck, and stood there, roaring with rage, with only his ugly head above the surface of the ground.

“ Aha, Master Cormoran ! ” cried Jack. “ What say you now ? will nothing serve you for your breakfast this morning but broiling poor me ? ”

The giant was more enraged than ever ; and he made such a mighty effort to get out of the pit that the whole mountain shook, while the stones and rubbish came rolling down its sides into the hole. Jack saw there was no time to be lost. Raising his pick-axe he struck Cormoran one blow on the head with it, when the cruel giant dropped down dead in a moment. The hero then returned in triumph to Cornwall, and when the people heard of their enemy’s death, and of Jack’s brave deed, they

declared that from henceforth the valiant youth should be called "Jack the Giant-Killer." As a reward they presented him with a handsome sword, and a belt, on which stood in letters of gold the words :—

This is the valiant Cornishman
Who slew the giant Cormoran !

Jack soon discovered that his title of "Giant-Killer" brought some danger along with it, as well as a good deal of praise and honour, for only a few weeks after Cormoran's death he found he would have other battles to fight.

There was a great hulking giant who lived among the mountains of Wales. This giant had been a friend of Cormoran's, and when he heard of that gentleman's death he was very angry, and vowed vengeance against Jack.

Now, it happened that Jack took a journey into Wales, where one day, as he was travelling through a wood, he sat down beside a fountain to rest. The day being hot and Jack overcome by fatigue, he quickly fell asleep. While he was there, who should come by but old Blunderbore (this was the giant's name—given him because he often made blunders and all the neighbours found him a great bore).

The giant saw by the words upon Jack's belt that he was the slayer of Cormoran.

"Aha!" he chuckled, "have I caught you, my valiant Cornishman? Now you shall pay for your tricks." So saying he hoisted Jack upon his shoulder and began to stride off towards his castle as fast as he could. The jolting walk of the giant awakening Jack from his sleep, he was very much alarmed to find himself in Blunderbore's clutches, as I am sure most people would have been in his place, however brave and valiant they might be. Blunderbore soon arrived at his castle, and Jack was dreadfully horrified when he looked around, for the ground was strewn with the bones of men and children whom this cruel monster had devoured. The giant seemed to enjoy Jack's fright very much, and told him with a hideous grin that his favourite food was a man's heart eaten with salt and pepper. He also showed pretty plainly that he intended to heartily enjoy Jack's heart within a very short time.

As Blunderbore did not care to eat such a nice meal as the Giant-Killer would be all by himself, he went to invite a friend to supper. Meanwhile, Jack paced to and fro for some time in a great fright, till at last he ran to the window to see if he could leap out. But alas!

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it was too high for him to think of such a thing ; and—oh, horror !—there were ~~the two~~ giants coming along arm-in-arm. In utter despair Jack cast a glance ~~around~~ the room, in a far-off corner of which he espied two stout cords. To seize them, make a running noose in the end of each, then twist them firmly together, was the work of a moment. Just as the two giants were entering the gate of the castle, Jack cleverly dropped a noose over the head of each. The other end was passed over a beam in the ceiling, and Jack pulled and hauled with all his might ; in fact, he pulled with such a will that the giants were very soon black in the face. When he saw they were half strangled by the cords he got out of the window, and sliding down the rope, drew his sword and killed them both. He then lost no time in getting the giant's key and setting all the captives in the castle free. After which he gave them the building and all it contained as a reward for their sufferings, and bidding them a polite good-bye, continued his journey through Wales. He walked on sturdily till night came, by which time he had reached a large and handsome house, which looked very inviting to a weary traveller who had walked many miles after killing two giants. So he knocked at the door to ask shelter for the night,

and was somewhat startled when it was opened by another huge giant. This monster was indeed a terrifying fellow. He was as tall as Cormoran and a foot or two broader round the waist. He had two heads, so of course he had double the usual number of mouths, which may have been the reason why he was so fat. He was quite civil, however, and invited our hero into his house, gave him a good supper, and sent him to bed. But Jack did not entirely trust him, for he thought he had seen him shaking his fist at him slyly once or twice during supper time. So, instead of going to sleep, he stayed awake to listen. Presently he heard the giant marching about in his room, singing a duet for two voices all by himself—the treble with one mouth and the bass with the other. This was the song he sang—

Though you lodge with me this night,
You shall not see the morning light ;
My club shall dash your brains out—quite !

“Indeed !” thought Jack, when he heard this amiable ditty. “Are these the tricks you play upon travellers, Mr. Giant ? But I hope I shall prove a match for you yet.”

So he began groping about the room to find something to lie in the bed instead of himself,

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to be in readiness for the giant when he came with his club. He found a great log of wood in the fireplace, which he put into the bed and covered well up, while he himself lay concealed in a corner of the room. In the middle of the night he heard a sort of heavy-go-light step, like an elephant walking over egg-shells. It was the two-headed giant, who came creeping into the room, nodding his heads one at the other with a knowing wink. He sidled up to the bed, and—"Whack!—whack!—whack!"—down came his cruel club upon the log of wood, just where Jack's head would have been but for his clever trick. Then the giant, thinking he had killed his guest, retired in very good humour, and lay down on his own bed to sleep. We may fancy how surprised he was when Jack came down next morning to thank him for his night's lodging. He rubbed his eyes and pulled his hair to make sure he was not dreaming, but Jack stood looking on as cool as a cucumber.

"Why!—ho-ow-w-w did you sle-e-e-p?" stammered the giant at last. "Was there nothing to disturb you in the night?"

"Oh, I slept exceedingly well," replied Jack. "I believe a rat came and flapped me with his tail three or four times, but he soon went away again."

The giant was so surprised that he sank down on a bench and scratched his heads for three minutes, trying to make it out. Then he slowly rose and went away to prepare breakfast. While he was gone Jack thought he would play the giant another trick, which he managed as follows—

He got a great leathern bag and fastened it to his body just under a loose kind of blouse he wore, for he thought he would make the giant believe he had an immense appetite. Presently the great fellow came in with two immense bowls of hasty pudding, from one of which he began feeding each of his mouths in turn. Jack took the other bowl and pretended to eat the pudding it contained, but instead of swallowing it he kept stowing it in the leathern bag. The giant stared harder than ever, while he appeared to seriously doubt the evidence of his own eyes. He was wondering to behold such a little fellow as Jack eat such a large breakfast.

“Now,” said Jack, when the meal was over, “I will show you a trick. I can cut off my head, arms, or legs, and put them on again, just as I choose, as well as do a number of other strange and wonderful things. Look here, and I will show you one of them.”

So saying, he took up a knife and ripped up

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the leathern bag, when all the hasty pudding came tumbling out on the floor, to the great surprise of the giant.

“Oh, that’s nothing!” cried the monster, determined not to be outdone by such a small chap as Jack. “I can do that myself.”

Whereupon, seizing the knife, he plunged it into the place where *his* hasty pudding was, and the very next moment *he dropped dead on the floor!*

After this great victory Jack had a better right than ever to the name of “Giant-Killer.” He continued his journey, and a few days afterwards we find him travelling in very grand company indeed. The only son of good King Arthur had journeyed into Wales, on an errand very much the same as Master Jack’s. He wanted to deliver a beautiful lady from the hands of a wicked magician, who was keeping her imprisoned. One day the Prince met Jack, whose fame had reached King Arthur’s court, so that the royal youth gladly joined company with him, only too pleased to obtain the services of so clever and courageous a hero. Now, the Prince was a very daring and handsome young Prince, who had a habit of giving away and squandering his money, without waiting till he got any more, which some people said was all because he had not to work for

what he got, so therefore did not know its real value. One day the Prince had spent so much money that when night came he had not a single penny left wherewith to pay his lodging, so he told Jack of this sad state of affairs with a very long face, at the same time inquiring what they should do.

Jack replied "that his Highness might make his mind quite easy, for he would soon arrange matters for them"; at which the Prince felt greatly cheered and comforted. A mile or two farther on they came to a large castle inhabited by an even more wonderful giant than those Jack had already killed. For this fellow had three heads, and could fight five hundred men (at least he said he could). The Prince felt rather awkward about asking such a terrible personage to give him a night's lodging, but Jack undertook to manage all that. He went on alone and knocked loudly at the castle gate.

"Who's there?" roared the giant.

"Only your poor Cousin Jack," answered the little fellow.

The giant happened to have a great many poor relations, and Jack knew this very well.

"What news, Cousin Jack?" asked the giant.

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“Bad news ! bad news ! dear uncle,” replied Jack.

“Pooh !—bah !—nonsense !” cried the giant ; “what can be bad news for a person like I am, who has three heads and can fight five hundred men ?”

“Oh, my poor dear uncle !” replied the cunning Jack, “the King’s son is coming with two thousand men to kill you and destroy your castle !”

At this all the giant’s three faces turned pale at once, while he said in a trembling voice, “This is bad news, indeed, Cousin Jack ; but I’ll hide in the cellar, and you shall lock me in and keep the key till the Prince and his army have gone.”

This speech sounded as if the giant was a great coward, and not at all as if he could fight five hundred men !

Jack laughed in his sleeve as he turned the key of the cellar upon the monster ; then he fetched the Prince, and they feasted and enjoyed themselves, eating the best of the giant’s food and drinking his very oldest wine, while the master of the house sat in the cellar shivering and shaking with fear. Next morning Jack helped the Prince to a good quantity of the giant’s treasure, and sent him three miles forward on his journey. He then let out his



Jack the Giant-killer.

“uncle,” who looked about him in rather a bewildered way, and seemed to think that the two thousand men had not done much damage to his castle after all, also that they had very small appetites.

Jack was asked what reward he would have, and answered, “Good uncle, all I want is the old coat and cap, and the rusty sword and the worn slippers, which are at your bed’s head.”

“You shall have them,” agreed the giant ; “they will be very useful to you. The coat will make you invisible ; the cap will reveal to you many hidden things ; the sword will cut through anything and everything ; while the slippers will give you swiftness. Take them and welcome, my valiant cousin Jack.”

You can fancy that, with all these wonderful things to help them, Jack and the Prince soon found out the wicked magician, and in due course killed him and set free the beautiful lady. The Prince married her the next day, and the happy pair then returned to King Arthur’s court. That monarch was so pleased with what they had done that he made Jack one of the Knights of the Round Table, which was as good as receiving the Victoria Cross for valour.

But Jack could not be idle, so he begged the King to send him forth against all the

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remaining Welsh giants. This his Majesty consented to do, and on the third day of his journey, as he was passing through a thick wood, he heard the most doleful groans and shrieks. Presently he saw a great giant dragging along a handsome knight and a beautiful lady by the hair of their heads in a very uncomfortable and brutal manner.

Jack at once put on his invisible coat, and taking his sword of sharpness, stuck the giant right through the leg, so that the great monster came tumbling down with a mighty crash. A second blow of the sword cut off the giant's head. The knight and his lady thanked their deliverer with deepest gratitude, but Jack would not accept an invitation they gave him to go to their castle and stay with them, for he wanted to see the giant's den. They told him the huge creature had a brother fiercer than himself, who dwelt there; but Jack was not to be daunted.

Sure enough at the mouth of the cavern sat the giant, on a block of timber, with a club by his side.

"Here is the other," cried Jack, hitting the monster a blow with his sword.

The giant could see no one, but began to lay about him with his club. Jack, however, slipped behind him, jumped on the log of

timber, cut off the huge creature's head and sent it to King Arthur with that of the giant's brother, the two heads making just one good waggon-load.

Now, at length, Jack felt entitled to go and see the knight and his lady; and I can tell you there were fine doings at the castle on his arrival. The knight and all his guests drank to the health of the Giant-Killer; and he gave Jack a handsome ring with a picture on it of the giant dragging along the once unhappy couple.

They were in the height of their mirth when a messenger arrived to tell them that Thundel, a fierce giant and a near relation of the two dead giants, was coming, burning with rage, to avenge his kinsman's death. All was then hurry and fright, but Jack bade them be quiet, for he would soon settle Master Thundel. So he sent some men to cut through the draw-bridge, only leaving a slight piece uncut on each side. The giant soon came running up, swinging his club, and though the knight and those who were with him trusted entirely in Jack's courage and skill, they could not help feeling very anxious about the result of the meeting. It is true the giant could not see Jack, for our hero had taken care to put on his coat of darkness, yet his keenness for human

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flesh had made his sense of smelling so sharp that he knew some one was at hand, and thus declared his intentions—

Fee !—fie !—foh !—fum !
I smell the blood of an Englishman !
Be he alive, or be he dead,
I'll grind his bones to make my bread !

“First catch me,” cried Jack, flinging off his coat of darkness and putting on his shoes of swiftness. He then began to run, with the giant howling after him like a fire-escape after a hand-barrow. Jack led him round the moat, then suddenly ran across the drawbridge. The giant, who followed very closely, no sooner came to the middle where the bridge had been cut, than it snapped with his weight at once, when down he went—splash !—into the moat, which was full of water and very deep. The giant struggled fiercely to release himself from the unexpected and uncomfortable position in which he was placed, but Jack, who had looked forward to this moment with the greatest anxiety, was quite prepared to defeat all his efforts. A strong rope, with a running noose at the end, had been kept in readiness, and was cleverly thrown over the giant's head by Master Jack. By this means the monster was drawn

to the castle side of the moat, where, half-drowned and half-strangled, he lay at the mercy of the Giant-Killer, who completed his task by cutting off his head, to the great delight of all the inhabitants of the castle and surrounding country. As Jack was naturally anxious that the King should know of the good service he was doing the state, the giant's head was taken to his Majesty, who sent our hero a letter of thanks written by his own hand.

After spending a short time very pleasantly with the knight and his lady, Jack again set out in search of adventures. At the foot of a high mountain he lodged one night, with a good old man who was a hermit. This hermit was very glad to see Jack, when he heard that his visitor was the famous Giant-Killer.

“I am rejoiced to see you,” said he, “for you can do good service here. Know that at the top of this mountain stands an enchanted castle, the dwelling of the Giant Golligantus. This wicked monster, by the aid of a magician as bad as himself, is now holding a number of knights and ladies as prisoners, and in order to keep them more securely, the magician has changed them all into animals. Among the rest there is a duke's daughter, who was carried off as she was walking in her father's garden, and borne away to this castle in a chariot

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drawn by two fiery dragons. They have changed her into a deer. Now, with your coat of darkness you might manage to pass the fiery griffens which keep watch at the gate, and your sword of sharpness would do the rest."

Jack wanted to hear no more. He promised to do his very best, so the next morning he set off to climb the mountain, dressed in his invisible coat. And it was well he had put this garment on, for long before he reached the castle he could see the old magician looking out of the second-floor window. He had an owl on his shoulder, and a long wand in his hand, while he poked his red nose out of the window in a most inquisitive manner.

At the castle gate stood the two griffens, likewise on the look-out; but thanks to his coat, Jack passed between them unharmed. At the gate hung a large trumpet, below which was written these words:—

Whoever can this trumpet blow
Shall cause the giant's overthrow.

You may fancy the blast Jack blew; but you can hardly fancy the crash with which the gates flew open, or the bewildered look of the giant and magician, as they stood trembling with amazement and fear. The prisoners were then all set free, and changed back into

their natural shapes, while the giant and magician were killed in a most satisfactory manner. After which Jack set out for King Arthur's court with the duke's fair daughter, whom he soon made his wife, and I am told they lived long and happily.

JACK AND THE BEAN-STALK

THIS is another fairy tale about another wonderful youth named Jack, who was also an English boy.

There was once a widow who lived in a little wayside village. She was a poor lonely woman, with only one comfort to take away the dreariness from her life, and this one comfort was her son Jack.

Now Jack was not at all a bad-hearted fellow, for he was generous, helpful and brave. Like all brave men he was ever ready to protect the weak, and when he saw a big boy ill-treating a small one, or any cowardly fellow being cruel to some dumb creature, he never failed to go forward to defend the weak and helpless, while the coward was pretty certain to receive a sound thrashing at his hands. But he had one fault, for he was very thoughtless and heedless. He did not know the value of money, and wasted it, as an extravagant boy will do. He never stopped to consider how he grieved his poor mother by this carelessness ; he never thought

before he acted, and therefore he acted so foolishly that his mother became poorer and poorer. At last, one night, on going to her money-box, the widow found there was not a shilling left. The box was empty except for one little fourpenny-piece, which had been clipped all round the rim and had a large hole punched out of the middle.

“ Oh, you heedless, cruel, wasteful boy ! ” she cried, “ see what you have brought me to with your sinful extravagance ! All I have is gone, except the fourpenny-piece which no one will take, and our one cow which must be sold to-morrow. And what shall we do when the money we get for her is gone ? Oh, dear ! dear ! ”

Now, Jack was very sorry when he saw what he had done, so he promised to mend his ways and do all he could to help his mother in the future. Early the next morning he sallied forth to sell their only cow, and he had not gone very far along the road when he met a farmer. This man knew something of Jack, so asked him what he was going to do with “ that thin old cow.”

“ She is neither old nor thin,” answered Jack, while the cow tossed her head and flourished her tail in an indignant manner. “ But if you want to know, I’m going to sell her.”

“Well,” answered the farmer, “see here what I’ll give you for her, all these beautiful beans—red, blue, and purple. I shouldn’t offer another man so much; but you, Jack, are a clever fellow and deserve a fair bargain.” So saying the man held out a handful of coloured beans.

Jack was much flattered at being called a clever fellow, and moreover he liked the look of the pretty beans. So he accepted the farmer’s offer, after which, the cunning man drove off the cow, laughing to himself at the lad’s simplicity. Jack then returned home, fancying he had done rather a sharp stroke of business, and calling to his mother from afar to come and admire his skill as a cattle-dealer.

When the good woman heard and saw how stupidly master Jack had acted, she quite lost patience, and threw the beans out of the window into the garden. As for Jack, it was noticed that one of his cheeks looked very red for two or three hours afterwards, while some of the neighbours declared his mother had been heard to give him a box on the ear, for which I think you will allow she had only too much reason.

The next morning master Jack found himself awake two full hours before his usual time for rising, so he got up, and having dressed

himself, went to look out of his bedroom window. There he saw something that made him start back with wonder, then run as fast as he could down into the garden. This is what he saw. In the corner of the garden where his mother had flung away the beans in her anger there arose a great thick, gigantic bean-stalk. It was not a single stalk by any means, but a number, twined and twisted together in such a way that they formed a sort of ladder. It was a very lofty ladder, so high that the top seemed quite lost in the clouds, yet it was so immensely thick that when Jack attempted to shake it, it remained quite steady.

Now, Jack was just the kind of boy who never saw a ladder without wishing to climb up it, so when he saw this giant bean-stalk he at once wanted to ascend to the top and see, as he said, "Where it led to." He therefore ran to tell his mother he intended to go up. She tried her best to dissuade him from doing so, but, having once made up his mind, Jack was not to be moved. Up the bean-stalk he had determined to go, and up the bean-stalk he went, with his mother standing underneath, calling up after him, "that he would break her heart with his tiresome ways; that he would never do any good; that he had never been of any use to her; that he never minded what she

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said ; and that he was a lazy, idle, careless——”

By this time Jack had mounted so high that he could not hear the rest of his mother's speech, but I dare say he was not sorry for that. Hour after hour he climbed on, and the higher he went the more hungry he seemed to grow. At last he reached the top, when he found himself in a very strange country, with not a tree, nor a shrub, nor a living creature to be seen. He felt very faint and tired, but he walked on in the hope of seeing a house where he might beg for some food. There was no sign, however, far or near, of anything of the kind. Just as Jack was beginning to be afraid he must die of hunger he saw a kind of cloud rolling towards him. As it drew near the cloud parted, and there, to his great surprise, stood a beautiful young lady. She was dressed in shining garments of gauze while she held in her hand a slender white wand, with a peacock of pure gold at the end. Jack stood still, gazing at this sudden apparition with the utmost astonishment.

“Listen to me,” said the wondrous lady, “and I will reveal to you a story of which your mother has never dared to speak. But before I begin you must give me your solemn promise that you will do exactly as I command, for I am a fairy, and unless you act just as I tell you, I

shall not be able to assist you in the attempt I wish you to undertake. And there is little doubt that, without my aid, you will not only fail, but perish."

Jack looked very grave indeed at the idea of perishing, and promised to do whatever the fairy directed. She then continued: "Your father was a rich man, and, what is more, had a kind heart. No deserving poor man who went to him for help was ever turned away, while he would even seek out deserving people who were in distress, without waiting for them to come to him. Not many miles from your father's house there lived a giant, who was the dread of the whole country for his cruelty and malice. When this cruel monster heard your father praised for his goodness and charity, he hated him in his heart, and vowed to be revenged on him. Like most good men, your father was brave, but the wicked giant soon found a way of fulfilling his threats. He laid a deep plot to destroy your father. He and his wife came into the neighbourhood where your parents lived, and pretended they had lost all their property in a great earthquake. Your father received them kindly, for he was good to all. One day, when the wind was blowing very loudly over the sea, near which your parents dwelt at that time, the giant went to your

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father with a telescope in his hand. 'Look through this glass,' said he; 'there is something which will grieve your kind heart.' When your father looked he saw several ships which seemed in danger of going down, or being driven on shore. The giant, with an appearance of the greatest earnestness, begged him to send his servants to the assistance of these poor sailors, and well he knew your father would never refuse such a request. All the servants, with the exception of your nurse and the porter, were at once sent in boats to the supposed sinking ships, and hardly had they disappeared from sight when the cruel giant fell upon your father and slew him. Your mother and yourself nearly shared the same fate, but your poor mother begged so piteously for mercy that the cruel monster agreed to spare you both on condition that your mother solemnly promised never to reveal your father's story. Then he set about plundering your father's house, which he afterwards set fire to. While he was thus employed your mother took you in her arms and fled away as fast as she could. For miles and miles she wandered on, till at last she settled in the village in which you have lived so long. Now you know why she has never spoken of these things to you, but it is for you to regain the fortune your parents

thus lost, for all this wicked giant has belongs of right to your mother and yourself. I have taken you under my protection, and, in spite of your heedlessness, I will watch over and help you so long as you are brave and earnest and do not fear hardship and labour. Go boldly forward at once. Your enemy's house—or rather your own—lies straight before you; and remember that my friendship only remains with you while you work boldly and faithfully.”

The fairy then vanished, leaving Jack in a state of utter amazement at the marvellous things he had heard.

“Poor mother!” he thought, “how much she must have suffered! And how often I must have plagued her with my careless, idle ways! Well, I will now do my best to right her, and punish this wicked giant.” With this resolve he got up and continued his journey. Farther and farther yet he wandered on, while the shadows of evening began to fall just as he came to the door of the first house he had seen all that day. It was a fine lofty mansion, and poor Jack, who by this time was dreadfully hungry, went straight up to the door and asked a woman who was standing there for a night's lodging and a crust of bread. The woman was big and coarse, but did not seem ill-natured. She looked sorrowfully at Jack as

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she answered, "Alas! my poor boy, I dare not take you in. My husband is a mighty and cruel giant. He goes out hunting every day and brings home men to eat for his supper, for he feeds almost entirely on human flesh, and is out of temper when he cannot get it. He has gone out to-day to try and catch a fat alderman, and if he has been unsuccessful he will make you do instead."

Jack was not at all pleased when he heard this account of the owner of the house, and the less so when the woman told him this agreeable gentleman was expected home directly. But, remembering the fairy had told him he must be brave and bold, he begged the woman to take him in, just for this one night, and she, being a good-natured sort of person, especially for an ogre's wife, consented to do so. She then led him through a fine hall, and many large gloomy rooms, upon a table in one of which Jack saw a bayonet, that his hostess told him was her husband's toothpick. Jack's heart sank as he followed, but he kept up his courage as well as he could till at last they reached the kitchen. Here was a roaring fire, and everything looked as warm and comfortable as could be desired. The giant's wife placed a plentiful supper on the table before her guest, which, having eaten nothing all day, Jack thoroughly enjoyed. Just



Jack and the Bean-stalk.

as he had finished they heard a sound like fifteen trumpets, and the hostess started up in a fright, exclaiming, "My husband is coming home, for I can hear him blowing his nose." Then there came a footstep like fifty cart-horses all walking together, followed by a knock at the door like five thousand crackers all let off at once. The woman went to open it in a great hurry, and the next minute the giant came stalking into the kitchen.

"I smell fresh meat!" were the first words he uttered.

Now, Mrs. Giant had hidden her guest in a cupboard when she heard her amiable husband coming, and what he smelt was nothing more nor less than Jack himself! So she hastened to bring out the giant's supper in order to engage his attention in another direction. As the monster had not captured any men that day, his meal only consisted of three legs of mutton, seven quartern loaves, and a few other trifles of that kind. Having soon finished this slight repast, he called to his wife to bring him his "hen." Jack looked through a chink in the cupboard door to see what the giant was at, when he saw a fine-looking fowl placed on the table, and each time the giant said "lay!" this hen laid an egg of solid gold. Meanwhile the wife went to bed, leaving her husband to amuse

himself with the wonderful hen. In a little while the giant began to nod, then his head sank lower and lower, till at last he went fairly off to sleep before the fire, and snored like the blowing of the wind on a stormy day. Directly Jack saw that the monster really slept soundly, he crept out of his hiding place, snatched up the hen, jumped out of the window, and ran off. Away he went like the wind, till he found himself at the spot where the bean-stalk reared its head through an opening like a well. Down the bean-stalk went Jack, and words cannot describe how pleased his poor mother was to see him again. But when she saw what a prize he had brought her joy was unbounded, for now they would be rich, and never have to suffer hunger again.

For some time they lived contentedly enough, while the golden hen supplied all their wants, and had it not been for the remembrance of what the fairy had said, Jack would not have thought any more about the bean-stalk. It seemed to him, however, that he had only half finished the task the fairy had set him, so one day he told his mother he must needs mount the bean-stalk a second time. Again the good woman did all she could to prevent him, declaring that, from Jack's description, she knew the giant to be the very one who mur-

dered her poor husband, and he would most certainly kill Jack for stealing his hen. But Jack would not be persuaded to give up the adventure, so at last his mother, with a heavy heart, had to let him go.

Now once more we find him begging for rest and shelter at the giant's mansion. This time it was not such an easy matter to get it, for old Dame Giant, who did not recognize Jack, said that once before a poor boy had begged for a meal, and afterwards had stolen her husband's favourite hen. Then the giant, having forced her to confess that she had let some one in that night, had beaten her three times a week ever since, whereas before that he had only been in the habit of beating her twice. However, Jack was so polite and so earnest, that at length he got his way and was given a good supper and stowed away in the cupboard as before.

That night the giant came home in a very good humour, for he had robbed three travellers of a lot of money. The travellers themselves he had bound hand and foot, and left them in a cave by the wayside till he should call for them. His good luck made him quite light-hearted and cheerful, so that he ate his supper with an immense relish. Then, as his thoughts kept running on the money he had stolen, he roared out to his wife to bring him down all his

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money bags, that he might count how much he had altogether. The obedient wife went out, returning soon after dragging two heavy bags, one filled with golden guineas, the other with bright new shillings. The giant snatched them out of her hands, then gave her a box on the ear, telling her that was for her trouble, and she was to get to bed at once, which the poor creature was glad enough to do, you may be sure. As soon as she had gone the giant began to count out his money, but by the time he got to "five hundred and eighty-two guineas," his head began to nod, and in five minutes more he was fast asleep.

Then Jack came out of his hiding-place on tip-toe, clutched both the bags, flung them over his shoulder, and made off with all speed to the bean-stalk. When he reached home he found his poor mother very ill, from fretting and worrying about him while he had been gone. However, as soon as she saw him safe and well she began to recover, and in a few days was quite herself again. With the bags of money the cottage was rebuilt, and for three years they lived happily together. But at the end of that time Jack could rest quietly no longer. He felt compelled to try once more to force his way into the giant's abode. So one morning he started very early on his third adventure.

This time it cost him unheard of trouble to get in the mansion, for the giant's wife had at last grown suspicious, having had her beatings increased to five a week since his last visit. However, at length he got in, and was fed and hidden in the cupboard as usual. That night the giant had a salted hog and three large salted cod-fishes for supper. This salt fare made him rather thirsty, so he drank three great casks of strong beer, which got into his head and made him in high spirits. He then began to sing in a tremendous voice, and roared out to his wife to get him his harp. This harp was a most wonderful instrument. Directly it was put on the table it began to play, of itself, the most beautiful music. After a while it played softly and yet more softly, until the giant, growing sleepy, lay down at full length on the ground and began to snore. "Now," thought Jack, "is my time"; and slipping from his hiding place he seized the harp. But the instrument was enchanted, and when Jack took hold of it it cried "Master! Master!" Then up started the giant with a loud roar, and away ran Jack, carrying the harp, with the giant thundering after him as fast as he could.

Jack seemed to fly like the wind, and as the giant had drunk so much beer that he could not run very fast, our hero reached the top of

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the bean-stalk some time before his pursuer. Down the bean-stalk Jack slid, so fast as ever he could, and just as he set his foot on the ground the heavy feet of the giant appeared at the top of the ladder. Jack cried out lustily for a hatchet, and his mother came running out with a big one in her hand. This he eagerly seized and commenced chopping the bean-stalk with all his might. The first time he struck it the giant gave a roar of rage, and redoubled his efforts to get down in time. The second blow from the hatchet made the bean-stalk crack and shake, while at the third it snapped like an elder twig. Then the giant tottered, lost his hold, and fell crashing to the ground with a fall that shook the earth, upon which he lay with a shattered skull—dead!

Jack's mother bent over the great body to look at the countenance, and saw that it was the face of the cruel monster who had murdered her husband. So now, at last, their enemy being dead, mother and son could live in peace and plenty. They recovered their wealth which the giant had stolen, but I am sure you will be glad to hear they took care that the good-natured Mrs. Giant had enough to live upon in comfort for the rest of her life, also that Jack set free all the poor travellers which the giant had made prisoners. As well as this, it is

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pleasant to know that Jack was quite cured of his thoughtlessness, and remained ever after a most obedient and loving son to his mother.

TOM THUMB

IN the time of King Arthur there lived a great enchanter called Merlin, who was a mighty magician or conjurer. One day this Merlin was on a journey in search of a certain herb he wanted for use as a charm, and he walked for two hundred and ninety-five miles before he found what he wanted. By that time he was feeling decidedly hungry and tired, so he looked around for some place wherein he could rest and refresh himself. Happening to catch sight of a labourer's cottage, he opened the door and walked straight in. Whether it was that his long white beard inspired respect, or whether the good people of the house were nice hospitable folks, it is certain that the enchanter could not have been better received had he been King Arthur himself. The best bread and the freshest bowl of milk were placed before him, while the good woman, in particular, seemed most anxious to do honour to her guest.

Merlin, however, saw that something was



Tom Thumb.

troubling the honest labourer and his wife, so he asked them to tell him the cause of their grief. Then the husband replied "that they were sorry because they had no children."

"If we'd only a son, your honour," said he, "we'd love him so, even if he were only as big as my thumb." And the honest fellow held up his thumb, which was certainly a rather large one.

"You shall have your wish, my friend," answered Merlin, with a smile, as he bade them farewell, and departed.

Now the famous magician was a great friend of the Queen of the Fairies, and when he told her what the man had said, they agreed it would be a fine jest to let the worthy people have just exactly what they asked for, neither more nor less. The Queen of the Fairies took the matter in hand, and in due time the labourer's wife had a son. To the great surprise of the parents the infant was no bigger than his father's thumb—though it was the prettiest little doll-baby you could wish to see. But what made them wonder still more was that the child never grew any bigger, so that the worthy countryman often wished he had asked for a son without saying anything at all about the young gentleman's size, or that Merlin had not granted his request so exactly to the letter.

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For he feared that such a tiny fellow as his son would never be able to defend himself against the attacks of the rude boys in the village. However, he need have had no fear about this, for what Tommy (as the small boy was named) lacked in size he made up for in cunning.

Master Tom used to play at cherry-stones with the village lads, and when he had lost all his own stones he would creep into the bags of the winners and steal his losings back again. But at last he was caught in the act, and the owner of the bag from which he was stealing cried out : “ Ah, Master Tom Thumb ! I’ve caught you at last ! and now you shall have it for thieving ! ” And he pulled the strings of the bag so tightly round Tom’s neck as almost to strangle that unlucky young gentleman. However, the boy let him go after giving the bag a shake, which knocked all the cherry stones against Tom’s legs, bruising him sadly. Then Tom ran home, rubbing his shins, and promising to “ play fair ” next time.

The next scrape Tom got into was rather a serious one. His mother was one day making a batter pudding, and Tom climbed to the edge of the bowl in order to watch if she put plenty of sugar in it. All at once his foot slipped, and he went into the batter head foremost. Now his mother, who happened to be looking round

at the time, did not see her son's fall, so stirred him up in the batter, which was put on the fire to boil. When the water began to grow hot Tom kicked and plunged with all his might, till his mother could not think what made her pudding go "bump—bump!" against the top and sides of the pot in such a strange way. So she popped off the lid to see, and was greatly surprised when she beheld the pudding jumping up and down in the pot, dancing a sort of hornpipe all by itself. She could scarcely believe her eyes and fancied it must be bewitched, so determined to give it away to the first person who cared to take it off her hands. She had not long to wait before a suitable person came along, in the form of a travelling tinker, who gladly accepted the pudding for his dinner, and having thanked the good woman, put it in his bag and trudged merrily away. He had not gone far when he felt a queer kind of "bump—bump—bump!" going on in his bag. At first he thought a rat must have got in there, so opened it to see, but to his horror he heard a voice from inside the pudding crying out most distinctly, "Hullo! I say!—you let me ou-u-ut!—you let me ou-u-ut!" after which the pudding began to kick and dance in a most alarming manner. The tinker was horribly frightened, and he not only let the

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pudding "out," but flung it from him over the hedge, then took to his heels and ran as hard as he could for more than a mile, without once stopping to look behind him. As for the pudding, it fell into a dry ditch and was broken into five or six pieces, when Tom crept out in rather a battered, if not a battered, condition. He managed to creep home, where he found his mother very glad indeed to see him, for she had wondered where he could have got to. She washed the batter off him and put him to bed, to recover from his unpleasant adventure.

A short time after this Tom went with his mother to milk the cow, and as it was a very windy day the good woman carefully tied her little son to a thistle with a bit of thread, for fear he should be blown over and over. The cow in eating up the thistles, happened to choose the very one to which our tiny friend was tied, so all at once he found himself in a great red cavern, with two rows of white pillars going "champ—champ!" all round him in a very alarming manner. He began to cry out with fright when he saw where he was, and screamed at the top of his voice for his mother.

"Where are you, my little son, my own Tommy?" asked his mother, in terrible alarm.

“ Here, mother ! ” screamed Tom in reply ;
“ here, in the cow’s mouth ! ”

The poor woman began weeping and wringing her hands, for she thought her dear child would be crushed into a shapeless mass, but the cow being very much surprised at having met with such a noisy thistle, opened her mouth wide, and dropped out Master Tom upon the grass. His mother then joyfully picked him up and ran home with him.

Tommy was a forward boy for his size, and he had a great wish to make himself useful. So, to indulge him, his father told him he should be a driver, and he made him a whip of a barley straw to drive along the plough-horse. Master Tom thought this very grand, and used to halloo at the horses and crack his whip in a most valiant manner ; but as he could never strike higher than the horse’s hoof, it is doubtful whether he was really of much use. One day, however as he stood upon a clod of earth, his foot slipped, when he rolled over and over into a furrow. A raven hovering near picked up the barley straw whip and little Tommy together. Up through the air the poor little man was whisked, so swiftly that it took his breath away ; but luckily the raven stopped to rest on the terrace of a castle belonging to Giant Grumbo, where he dropped Tom and

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flew off without him. Presently old Grumbo came upon the terrace for a walk ; and when he spied Tom perched upon a stone he thought he looked such a tempting morsel that he snapped him up and swallowed him, clothes and all. But the horrible monster would have done better to have left Tom alone, for that young gentleman, finding himself very uncomfortable in the giant's inside, began to jump and dance in such a way that the greedy giant was almost beside himself with pain. He kicked and roared, while he rubbed himself below his chest, but the more he rubbed the more Tom danced, until at last he became dreadfully unwell. He then opened his mouth very wide, when suddenly Tom came flying out of it, and flew right over the terrace into the sea. A great fish that happened to be swimming by just at the time, took the little fellow for a kind of fly or beetle, so opened his mouth and swallowed him down. Thus was poor Tom in a worse plight than ever, for if he had made the fish set him free, as the giant had done, he would only have been shot out into the sea and must have been drowned, so his only chance was to wait patiently in hope that the fish might be caught. Fortunately it was not long before this happened, and the fisherman, seeing what a fine fish was upon

the end of his line, thought he would send it as a present to King Arthur, so set off with it at once to the Court. The fish was much admired in the royal kitchen, and the cook took a knife and proceeded to cut it open before preparing to cook it. No sooner had she done so when Master Tom popped up his head and politely hoped she was "quite well!"

You may fancy what amazement this unexpected arrival caused in King Arthur's Court. His Majesty was at once informed that a real live wee man had been found in the fish, and he immediately ordered Tom to be brought before him. He was so pleased with the funny, merry, little fellow that he made him his dwarf, and very soon Master Tom was a great favourite at Court. The King would often make him dance upon the table, and perform many tricks and antics for the amusement of the lords and ladies. But dancing was not the only accomplishment little Tom possessed, for he had as much cleverness in his head as in his heels. The Queen was very fond of him, while as for the King, he scarcely ever went out hunting without having Tom Thumb riding astride on his saddle-bow. If it rained the little man would creep into his Majesty's pocket, and lie there snug and warm

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until the shower was over, and sometimes the King would set him to ride upon his thumb, with a piece of silk cord passed through a ring for a bridle and a whip made of a stalk of grass. His Majesty often asked Tom about his parents, when Tom replied that they were poor people, and added he should be very glad to see them again. This the good King freely permitted him to do, giving him some money to take with him.

The worthy labourer and his wife were greatly rejoiced to see their little son again, for they had feared he was lost to them for ever. They were also surprised and delighted to receive the sum of money he had brought with him, while they treated him with great honour, hearing he was such a favourite of the King's. A walnut-shell was placed for him by the fireside, in which the tiny fellow sat as merry as the day was long. But, alas! one day he ate too much hazel-nut, with the result that he fell ill and had to lie three days in bed in the walnut-shell. When he got well he thought it time to return to his duties at the palace as King Arthur's dwarf. So his mother, though sorry to part with him, took him in her hand, while with one puff she blew him right away into his Majesty's Court.

Here sad trouble was in store for poor Tom

—greater than he had ever yet met with, for instead of alighting in the courtyard he came down into a bowl of soup which the head cook was carrying for the King's lunch. When Tom went splash into the bowl the hot soup flew up into the cook's face, which so annoyed him that he told the King that Tom had purposely upset his soup, and had thus shown gross disrespect for his Majesty. So the poor little fellow was placed upon his trial for high treason, found guilty, and sentenced to lose his head. Terribly alarmed at this cruel sentence, Tom looked round for a way to escape, and seeing a miller listening to the trial with his mouth wide open, with a sudden bound he sprang down the man's throat, unnoticed by all. The prisoner having thus disappeared, the Court broke up, and the miller, who had got a touch of the hiccups, hastened home. Now Tom, having escaped from his stern judges at the Court, was just as anxious to do so from the miller's stomach, so he danced so many jigs and cut so many capers that the man, in a state of great alarm, sent messengers in every direction for doctors to come to him at once. He was soon surrounded by five learned men, who knew as little about what was the matter with him as the poor miller did himself. A fierce dispute arose among the doctors as to the

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nature of their patient's extraordinary complaint, which quarrel lasted so long that the miller, getting tired of it, gave a great yawn. Tom saw he had a chance to escape, so sprang out of the man's mouth, right through the open window, where he fell into the jaws of a large fish which was snapping at flies in the river below. It again happened that the very salmon which had swallowed up Tom was sent as a present to King Arthur. The cross old head cook had the fish given him to prepare for dinner, and when he cut it open out jumped his old acquaintance, Tom Thumb. The spiteful man seized our tiny hero and carried him at once to the King, expecting that Arthur would order his head to be cut off as before. But His Majesty did no such thing, but being at that time much engaged with state affairs he told the cook to take Tommy away and bring him another day. The cook was obliged to obey, but he determined to serve Tom out while he could, so he shut him up under a wire dish-cover, where he kept him prisoner for a whole week, much to poor Tommy's disgust. By the end of the week the King's anger against Tom was entirely gone, and he ordered his small favourite a new suit of clothes, and a good-sized mouse to ride on by way of a horse. As well as this, he even made Tom a knight, so

that he was afterwards known as Sir Thomas Thumb.

Tom was so proud of his mouse-steed that he rode upon it morning, noon and night, until at last it was the means of bringing him into very great danger. One day, as he was riding by a farmhouse, a large cat, seeing the mouse, rushed upon it. Tom drew his sword and bravely kept the cat at bay until King Arthur and his followers came up. But alas, the little fellow had received some deep wounds from the cat's claws, and although he was tended with great care and kindness, he grew so ill that his life was despaired of. But the Queen of the Fairies bore him away to fairy land, where she soon cured him, after which she kept him with her several years, so that by the time he returned to King Arthur's Court that good monarch had died and a king named Thunstone sat on the throne in his place. The people flocked from far and near to see the wonderful little hero, while King Thunstone asked who he was, where he lived, and where he came from. Tommy answered him in the following words :—

My name is Tom Thumb,
From the fairies I come,
When King Arthur shone,
This Court was my home.

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In me he delighted,
By him I was knighted,
Did you never hear of
Sir Thomas Thumb ?

King Thunstone welcomed the little man heartily, but the Queen became very jealous of him, and told her husband so many spiteful falsehoods about him that at last she succeeded in making his Majesty believe Tom to be a traitor and deserving of severe punishment. Then our hero had to fly from the Court to hide from the danger he was in, while for some time a friendly snail-shell served as a secure hiding place. At last Tom saw a butterfly approaching his shell refuge, so suddenly sprang upon its back, when it carried him, in fine style, straight into King Thunstone's Court again. There he found, to his joy, that the King was ready and eager to receive him back into his royal favour, so he passed many happy years in the palace.

After a long and marvellous life poor little Tom met with a sad death. One day, as he was walking through the royal gardens, not thinking of any danger, he felt himself seized from behind by two skinny arms, while a puff of poisonous breath came in his face. Turning round, he saw that he was in the embrace of an immense spider, so he immediately drew his

sword and attacked the enemy. The fight was a long one, but at length Tom killed the spider. His victory, however, was dearly bought, for the creature's poisonous breath had been too much for our brave little hero, who shortly after died. He was deeply mourned by all who knew him, and a neat marble tombstone was raised to his memory by King Thunstone.

THE THREE BEARS

ONCE upon a time there lived, in a thick forest, three bears. The first was a great, big bear, with a deep, gruff voice. Next came a bear of middle size, with a voice that was neither very loud nor very low. The third was a funny little wee bear with an odd little voice between a whine and a squeak.

Now, there lived near the home of these three bears a child whose name was Silverhair. She was a pretty child, with long curls of the lightest flaxen colour, that shone and glittered in the sunshine like silver. This was why she was called Silverhair. One day this little maid ran off into the wood to gather flowers, and when she had gone a good way all at once she came to such a funny house made of rough wood. There was a hole in the wall, which Silverhair looked through to see if any one might be at home. She strained her eyes and stood on tip-toe till her toes ached, to get a better view, but no one was there—the house seemed quite empty. The hole was too small to allow her to

see the inside of the house properly, and the longer she peeped the greater became her wish to know more about this queer little wooden dwelling. At last the desire became so strong that she could resist no longer, so softly opening the door, she rather timidly, yet with a smile on her face, walked right into the house of the three bears. But where were the bears all this time? I will tell you. Every morning the three of them used to get up early and dress as quickly as they could, after which they would all go out for a walk together. This is how they came to be absent when little Silverhair called upon them.

When the little girl went into the bear's room she was surprised to see a large porridge-pot, a middle-sized porridge-pot, and a little porridge-pot, all standing by the fire.

"Dear me," thought she, "some of the people who live here must eat a great deal more than the others. I wonder who breakfasts out of that big pot in the middle! And I wonder how the porridge tastes!"

Then, without stopping to think, she put the great spoon into the large pot and ladled out a spoonful of the big bear's breakfast. But when she put it to her mouth she drew back with a scream, for the big bear liked his porridge fearfully hot, so that it burnt little Silverhair's

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mouth. She stuck the spoon back into the pot, while she clapped her hand to her mouth and danced about with the pain. As soon as she felt better she thought she would try the middle-sized pot, which she found quite cold and sticky, for so the middle-sized bear, who had queer fancies of her own, loved to have it. So Silverhair stuck the second spoon back, and wondered what strange person ate such cold, clammy stuff. There now remained only the small porridge-pot, so the little girl, who was still hungry, tasted some of that. The porridge there was just right, neither too hot nor too cold, and the dainty little bear had added plenty of sugar, which gave it just the flavour Silverhair liked. So after she had eaten one spoonful, she took a second, then a third, till at last she had finished all the porridge, and the small pot was quite empty. While she was eating she looked about for a nice seat, as she began to feel rather tired. First she scrambled up into the big bear's chair, but it was cold and hard—much too cold and hard for her. So next she tried the middle-sized bear's chair. This was so soft and bulging that she did not like it any better. Then, after gazing all round the room, she espied a pretty little chair, looking as if it had been made purposely for her. This was really the favourite seat of the small bear.

In this tempting chair Silverhair sat, and liked it so much that she would have remained there some time if the chair had not suddenly given a crack, a groan, and a crash, when down went the bottom on to the floor, while all four legs were completely broken off. The fact was, the chair had not been made to hold a heavier weight than that of the tiny bear, so chubby little Silverhair was too much for it.

Seeing what she had done, Silverhair felt a little frightened, but she very soon recovered her good spirits, and scrambling up from the floor, she began to laugh at the mishap, while she danced a jig upon the chair-bottom as it lay on the ground.

Dancing soon made her so tired that she felt she would love to lie down and have a nice rest. Now, a ladder stood in the middle of the room, the top of which went through a hole in the ceiling. Thinking this must lead to a bedroom, Silverhair climbed up and went through the hole. She found she was right, for in this upper room stood three beds side by side. In one respect they were like the porridge-pots, for there was a large one, a middle-sized one, and a small one. The little girl looked at each, wondering which she should choose to rest upon. Then, first she tried the great bed, but found the pillow much too high and too hard.

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So she tried the middle one, which she thought quite as uncomfortable, because it had hardly any pillow at all. But when she lay down on the third bed it was exactly what she wanted ! The dainty little bear had a dainty little bed, very white and soft, with snowy sheets and a pillow just the right height.

The child lay quite still for a time, enjoying the cosy rest, when presently a large bee came buzzing round, singing his drowsy song—hum—hum—hum !—and in ten minutes she was fast asleep. Very soon after footsteps sounded in the room below. A great heavy foot went bump—bump ! A second foot went tramp—tramp !—while a light little foot went pit-pat—pit-pat ! It was the three bears coming home to breakfast.

Now, when the great bear came to his porridge-pot, and found the spoon sticking upright in it, he growled out in his deep hoarse voice—

“SOMEBODY HAS BEEN AT MY PORRIDGE !”

And he cocked up his hat over one ear, and swung his umbrella three times round his head, then brought the end of it down on the floor with a great thump, while he looked very fierce indeed. When the middle-sized bear heard this she ran across the room to look at her own

porridge, and finding the spoon sticking up in her pot too, she cried out, though not so loudly as the first had done—

“SOMEBODY HAS BEEN AT MY PORRIDGE!”

And she stood there looking extremely vexed and much puzzled, twiddling the strings of her bonnet.

When the little bear heard this, he ran to his breakfast in a great fluster, and finding all his porridge gone, he squeaked out in a most piteous little voice—

“Somebody has been at my porridge, and eaten it all up!”

After which the poor little fellow tilted up his porridge-pot, to show the others it was quite empty, then stuffed his paws into his eyes and commenced to cry. The big bear, who felt very angry that any one should take such liberties in his house, began to make a speech, all about what he would do to the person when he caught him, or her, or whoever it was who had eaten the porridge. He spoke very loudly and for a very long time, giving a thump on the ground with his umbrella at the end of every sentence. But everything must come to an end, and even the great bear's speech did not last for ever. He finished his last sentence, gave a last whack with his umbrella on the floor, then went to sit down in his chair. Now, when Silverhair

tried the seat, she had pushed the hard cushion on one side, and had not put it straight again. As soon as the bear saw it lying all awry, he growled out—

“SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR!”

And sat down himself in a worse temper than ever.

The middle-sized bear also wanted to sit down, but in the middle of the soft cushion in her chair was a great hollow where Silverhair had sat. So she also exclaimed—

“SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR!”

However, she did not lose her temper like the big bear, but sat down quite quietly, for she was a good-natured, contented old person who did not make a fuss about trifles.

At this moment up started the little bear, who had just discovered what had been done to his dainty little chair.

“*Somebody has been sitting in my chair and has sat the bottom out of it!*” he cried, dolefully, as he sank down upon the floor, for want of something better to sit on.

Then the big bear grew much more angry, and said they must at once make a search to find who had come into the house without leave. With which remark he went stumping up the

ladder, the middle-sized bear at his heels, and the little bear trotting after them.

Silverhair had tumbled the great bear's pillow when trying to make it low enough for her head, so immediately he looked at his bed he growled in a fearful voice—

“SOMEBODY HAS BEEN LYING IN MY BED !”

They went on at once to the middle-sized bed which was also disarranged. At the sight of it the middle-sized bear cried—

“SOMEBODY HAS BEEN LYING IN MY BED !”

Then they passed on to the third bed, and the little bear saw something that made all the hair on his head stand upon end with wonder. There was the bed, all smooth and white. The coverlet was in its place, and the pillow was there too ; but beneath the coverlet was a slender form, while upon the pillow rested the fair head of little Silverhair, who lay there fast asleep.

“*Somebody has been lying in my bed !*” shrieked the little bear ; “*and here she's lying still !*”

Then all three bears stood with their mouths wide open, staring in astonishment at the pretty child. But suddenly the little bear thought of his empty porridge-pot and his broken chair, which caused him to give another doleful

whine. Up started the fair sleeper, alarmed at the shrill cry, and when she saw the big bear, the middle-sized bear and the little bear all peering at her in a strange and puzzled manner, she sprang off the bed, almost frightened out of her wits. Without pausing to think, she ran towards the open window, and with one bound jumped through it, out into the forest below, leaving the bears all staring after her. She soon came to the ground, where she rolled over and over until she scarcely knew whether she stood on her head or her heels. But she was not a bit hurt really, so directly she stopped rolling she sat on the ground to think what she had better do next. At that moment the little bear poked his queer little head out of the window, while behind him appeared the faces of the middle-sized bear and the great huge bear. When Silverhair saw these three hairy faces looking down at her, and thought of all the mischief she had done in the bears' house, she made up her mind it was best not to wait till they came down to her, but to get away as fast as ever she could. So off she went, not even looking behind her until she got clear out of the forest. And never again in all her life did she enter a house unless she was invited to do so by the owner.

As for the poor little bear, his breakfast that

morning was spoilt, for though the big bear and the middle-sized bear each gave him some of their porridge, he did not like that at all; besides, he had no chair to sit upon. So he sat on the ground, rubbing his eyes with his paws and crying to himself. But after a while he got over his grief, and when he thought how pretty the child looked as she lay asleep in his bed, and how he and the other bears had frightened her, he felt sorry that she had not stayed longer.

When the big bear had finished his breakfast he began to talk over the morning's adventure.

“She was a very pretty little girl, that little girl,” he began, “and she had beautiful hair that shone like silver as she lay upon the bed. I'm sure I should be very glad if such a pretty child rested herself on *my* bed, or sat in *my* chair.”

“And so should I,” chimed in the middle-sized bear, with a nod. The little bear's face began to brighten, while he thought that after all he could not have given his breakfast to a nicer little visitor. At the same time he could not help smiling to hear the big bear talk so, when he remembered how angry he had been at first, and all he had declared he would do to the person who had entered their house, when that individual was found. But the big bear,

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seeing the little one looking more cheerful, continued his remarks, with a very sly expression on his cunning old face.

“ I cannot help thinking,” he went on, “ that little girl with the silver hair and the blue eyes must have heard what a nice little bear lived here, so she came to see him, and would have stayed longer if she had not been scared away by our great ugly faces.”

Now, when the little bear heard this he was vain enough to believe that Silverhair had come on purpose to see him, and the idea so pleased him that all his anger and sulkiness vanished away.

If little Silverhair should ever go to see the bears again, I think she will enjoy her visit, for the very last words the great bear said at the end of his speech, were—

“ Well, if she comes again, we will treat her to the best we have ; and as for the chair she has broken, will mend it as well as we can ; and for the future, like sensible bears, we will always remember how much wiser it is to learn how

“ TO BEAR AND FORBEAR.”

With this speech the little bear and the middle-sized bear quite agreed, and all three felt so contented and happy that they joined paws and had a good dance.

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