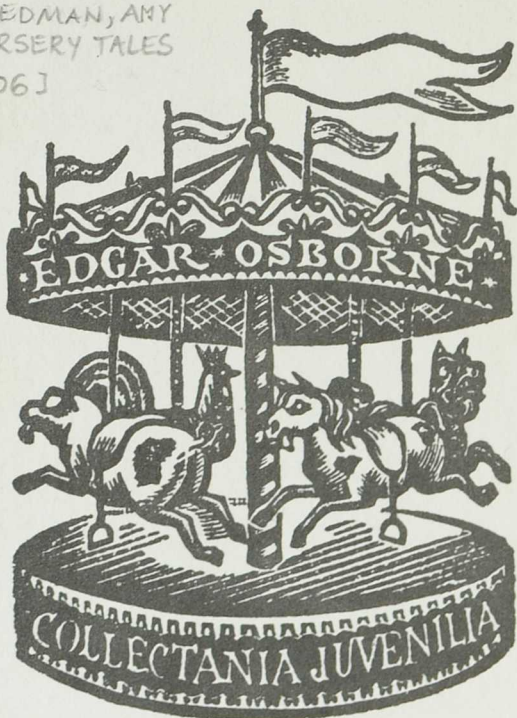


NURSERY TALES



TOLD TO THE CHILDREN

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STEEDMAN, AMY
NURSERY TALES
[1906]



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TOLD TO THE CHILDREN SERIES

EDITED BY LOUEY CHISHOLM

NURSERY TALES



'Who has been sleeping on my little bed, and lies here still'

NURSERY TALES

TOLD TO THE CHILDREN BY

AMY STEEDMAN

WITH PICTURES BY

PAUL WOODROFFE



LONDON: T. C. & E. C. JACK

NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.

THE SHOWMAN

A Showman I, from Fairyland,
Where fays and sprites and goblins play,
I've caught the fairies in my net
And brought them one by one away,
To lock them up within this book,
Where you may see them if you look.

Here sweet Red Riding-Hood escapes
The wicked Wolf whose conduct shocks ;
Here struts Tom Thumb in all his pride,
Here wanders dainty Goldilocks ;
And here the Prince, divinely tall,
Meets Cinderella at the ball.

The virtuous Pig you here may see
Who turns the tables on his foe,
And Jack, who though a tiny lad,
Can slay a Giant at a blow ;
With him whose beanstalk grows so high,
It strikes at last against the sky !

They all are safely prisoned fast,
And in your hands I place the key ;
The picture boards that keep them safe,
Will open if you care to see.
I beat my drum, my pipe I blow,
Walk up, walk up, and see the show.

AMY STEEDMAN.

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THE THREE BEARS

It really was the neatest little cottage that ever was seen, and the three bears who lived in it were the tidiest and best-behaved bears in all that forest. For, of course, the cottage was in the middle of a forest. Bears love quiet, shady places where there are plenty of trees to climb. The cottage had a porch covered with honeysuckle, while roses climbed up the walls and peeped into the lattice-windows.

Now the three bears were not a bit like one another, for one was a Great Big Bear, and one was a Middle-sized Bear, and one was a Tiny Wee Bear. They kept the cottage very tidy, and every morning they made the great big bed, and the middle-sized bed, and the tiny wee bed, and dusted the great big chair, and the middle-sized chair, and the tiny wee chair before they sat down to breakfast.

One morning when the porridge was made and had been poured out into the great big bowl, and the middle-sized bowl, and the tiny wee bowl, it was so hot that the three bears went out for a walk in the wood, to pass the time until it cooled. The Great Big Bear and the Middle-sized Bear walked along most properly, but the Tiny Wee Bear took his hoop and bowled it along in front.

Now that very morning it happened that Goldilocks lost her way in the forest. She was a very pretty little girl, with hair like threads of shining gold, and that is how she got her name. But she was very self-willed, and fancied she knew better than her mother. That is how she came to lose her way in the wood, for her mother had told her if she wandered from the path she would not be able to find her way home again, and Goldilocks had tossed her head and paid no attention. And so it happened that she wandered so far that she could not find her way back, and arrived at the bears' cottage that sunny morning just after they had left it.

It was a fresh, cool morning, just the sort

of morning that made Goldilocks want her breakfast more than usual, for she had run out before it was ready, and when she came to the pretty little cottage she skipped for joy.

'I am sure some kind person lives here, and will give me some bread and milk,' she said to herself. And then she peeped through the open door.

'There does not seem to be any one at home,' she said anxiously. 'But oh, what a delicious smell of porridge!'

She could not wait another moment, but walked in and sat down in the great big chair and took a spoonful of porridge out of the great big bowl. 'Ugh!' she cried, making a face, 'this is far too salt, and this chair is much too hard!'

So she changed her seat and tried the middle-sized chair, and tasted the porridge out of the middle-sized bowl.

'Oh dear me! this has no salt at all,' she said, 'and this chair is far too soft.' And laying down the spoon, she jumped up in a great hurry. Then she tried the tiny wee

chair, and took a spoonful of the porridge out of the tiny wee bowl.

‘This is simply delicious!’ she cried, ‘and the little chair is just right too.’

And she ate and ate till she finished all the porridge out of the tiny wee bowl. And the tiny little chair was so comfortable that she curled herself up in it until suddenly the seat gave a crack and she fell right through on to the floor.

Goldilocks picked herself up and looked round to see if she could find a sofa to rest on, for she was now so sleepy she could scarcely keep her eyes open. Then she saw a staircase, and she climbed up at once to see if there was a bed in the room above. And sure enough in the room upstairs she found three beds, standing side by side under the open lattice-window where the roses peeped in.

She threw herself at once on to the great big bed, but it was so hard that she rolled off as quickly as she could. Then she tried the middle-sized bed, but it was so soft that she sank right in and felt quite smothered. So

then she tried the tiny wee bed, and it was just soft enough, and so deliciously comfortable that she curled herself up on it with a big sigh of content, and went fast asleep in the twinkling of an eye.

Presently home came the three bears from their walk, and they went to the table to begin their breakfast.

'Who has been sitting in my chair?' growled the Great Big Bear in his great big voice. For the cushion had been pulled all to one side.

'Who has been sitting in my chair?' said the Middle-sized Bear in her middle-sized voice. For there was a large dent in the cushion where Goldilocks had sat.

'Who has been sitting in my chair, and broken it right through?' said the Tiny Wee Bear in his tiny wee voice.

Meanwhile the Great Big Bear had been staring at his great big bowl of porridge which had a spoon sticking in it.

'Who has been eating my porridge?' he growled in his great big voice.

'Who has been eating my porridge?' said

the Middle-sized Bear in her middle-sized voice.

‘Who has been eating my porridge and has eaten it all up?’ cried the Tiny Wee Bear in his tiny wee voice.

Then the three bears searched all round the room to see if they could find out who had been there. Next they climbed up the stairs to look in the bedroom.

But the moment the Great Big Bear saw his bed all rumpled and tossed about, he growled in his great big voice, ‘Who has been lying on my bed?’

‘And who has been lying on my bed?’ said the Middle-sized Bear in her middle-sized voice.

‘Who has been sleeping on my little bed, and lies here still?’ cried the Tiny Wee Bear in his tiny wee voice.

Now when the Great Big Bear spoke, Goldilocks dreamed of a thunderstorm; and when the Middle-sized Bear spoke, she dreamed that the wind was making the roses nod. But when the Tiny Wee Bear cried out, she opened her eyes and was wide awake

in a moment. She jumped up and ran to the window, and, before the three bears could catch her, she jumped out into the garden below. Then she ran through the wood as fast as she could, and never stopped till she reached home. And you may be sure she never went wandering **into** the wood again, so the Great Big Bear and the Middle-sized Bear and the Tiny Wee Bear ate their porridge in peace all the rest of their days.

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

Once upon a time, in the days of long ago, there lived a poor widow who had an only son called Jack. She was a kind mother, but Jack was an idle boy who hated work and never did any if he could help it. So they grew poorer and poorer until at last all they had left was their old cow, Sukey, and she no longer gave them any milk.

‘O Jack!’ cried the widow, ‘how I wish you would find some work to do. We have no money left, and now I fear we must sell Sukey. This is market-day, so take her to town and see how much you can get for her.’

Jack was very proud to be trusted, so he set off at once, leading the cow by the halter. But he had not gone far before he met a queer-looking old man with a sack on his back.

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'Good-morning, my lad,' said the old fellow.
'Where are you going to this fine day?'

'I am going to market to sell my cow,'
said Jack very grandly.

'If you are a smart lad and know how
to drive a bargain, you need go no further,'
said the old man.

Then he put down his sack and felt in
his pockets and brought out five strange-
looking beans.

'Do you see these beans?' he said, holding
them out in his hand; 'you shall have them
in exchange for the cow.'

'Do you think I would sell my cow for
a handful of common beans?' asked Jack
scornfully.

'Ah! but they are not common beans,'
answered the old man, 'they are magic
ones, and if you plant them to-night they
will grow as high as the sky by to-morrow
morning.'

'You don't say so,' said Jack, his eyes
growing round with wonder. 'Why, then,
I will certainly give you the cow for the
magic beans.'

So the old man took the cow, and Jack ran home as fast as he could, rattling the beans merrily in his pocket.

‘Mother, mother!’ he cried when she came to the door to meet him, ‘see I have sold Sukey for these wonderful beans.’ And he showed her his handful with great pride.

‘What!’ said the widow. ‘You stupid, useless boy! Why did I ever trust you?’

And she snatched the beans out of Jack’s hand and threw them out into the garden.

‘Off to bed,’ she cried, ‘and no supper shall you have this night.’

Then she sat down by the fireside, and throwing her apron over her head, she sobbed with grief and vexation.

Jack lay in bed upstairs, and he sobbed too. He was sorry he had vexed his mother, and he felt very hungry as well. But by-and-by he fell asleep, and slept till it was quite late next morning.

When he awoke, his little room looked so strange and shady, he could not think where

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he was or what was the matter. Only one or two dancing sunbeams had struggled through the casement, and the window was blocked by a screen of cool, green leaves and pale, sweet-scented blossoms. He jumped up and tried to look out, but could see nothing, so he dressed quickly and ran downstairs and into the garden.

‘Oh, oh, oh!’ he cried in great surprise. For there, just outside the window where his mother had thrown the magic beans, there grew a mighty beanstalk, reaching towards the sky, so high that its top was hidden in the clouds.

Without waiting one moment Jack began to climb. Up and up and up he went, past tree-tops and clouds, higher and higher, until at last he reached the blue sky and stepped from the top of the beanstalk on to a long, straight, white road.

Now Jack began to feel very hungry, for he had had no supper the night before, so he ran along the road, hoping to come to a place where he might beg for some breakfast. He had not run far when, to

his joy, he came to a large castle, where a very large woman was standing at the door.

‘Good-morning,’ said Jack, politely taking off his cap. ‘Will you be so kind as to give me some breakfast?’

‘You had better run away as fast as you can, unless you want to be turned into a breakfast yourself,’ said the woman. ‘My husband is an Ogre, and his favourite breakfast is little boys fried on toast.’

‘Oh, please Mrs. Ogre, give me something to eat, and hide me, when your husband comes home,’ said Jack, for he felt too tired and hungry to go further.

The Ogre’s wife was a very good-natured woman, so she took Jack in and gave him some bread and milk. But he had scarcely taken two mouthfuls when, thump, thump, thump, he heard the Ogre walking down the road.

The woman snatched Jack up and hid him in the oven, and at that very moment the Giant came in, roaring at the top of his voice:

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'Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman.

Be he living, or be he dead,
I'll grind his bones to make my bread.'

'Nonsense,' said his wife; 'you are always smelling Englishmen and upsetting the whole house. Do sit down quietly and have your breakfast. You see there is no one here.'

So the Ogre sat down, grumbling still, and he was so cross that he had no appetite, and could only eat two boiled sheep and six yards of French roll. Then he ordered his wife to clear the table and bring out his bags of gold, and there he sat counting and counting his gold until he grew sleepy, and presently he began to snore so loudly that the people in the world below said to one another, 'Dear me! what a dreadful thunderstorm!'

Then Jack softly opened the oven door and slipped quietly out. But as he passed the Ogre's chair he snatched up one of the bags of gold, and ran off with it along the

straight white road, as fast as his legs could carry him. As soon as he reached the top of the beanstalk he climbed down through the green leaves, down, down, down through the white fleecy clouds, swinging from leaf to leaf, till he reached his own little garden again.

‘See what I have brought you from the top of the beanstalk!’ he cried to his mother. And then he poured out all the gold on to the kitchen floor.

The poor widow was very glad to see her son again, and now there was money enough to buy all they needed. So as long as the gold lasted all went well.

But when the bag was nearly empty, Jack made up his mind to climb the beanstalk once more to see what he could find in the Ogre’s castle. He did not tell his mother what he meant to do, but slipped out of the house very early one morning and climbed up the same way which he had gone before. Up and up and up he went till the clouds lay far below, and he reached the top of the beanstalk and stepped on to the straight white

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road. Then he ran along until he came to the Ogre's castle.

Now as soon as the Ogre's wife saw him, she shouted to him to go away at once.

'My husband will eat you up, for he is still in a dreadful temper,' she said. 'That very day you were here a bag of gold was lost, and it cannot be found anywhere.'

'Oh, please let me in and give me some breakfast,' begged Jack.

And again the Ogre's wife allowed him to come in, and gave him some bread and honey.

But just as he was eating the last crust, thump, thump came the sound of the Ogre's feet tramping along the road. And the Ogre's wife had only time to hide Jack in the cupboard before the Ogre stalked in. He sniffed and he listened, and he sniffed again. Then in an awful voice he roared:

'Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman.

Be he living, or be he dead,

I'll grind his bones to make my bread.'

'Oh, come, come,' said his wife, 'do not be so silly. You only smell the three oxen that I have roasted for your breakfast.'

So the Ogre sat down and began to eat, but every few minutes he paused with a mouthful of roast ox, and sniffed suspiciously round. But his wife only laughed at him, so he finished his breakfast in sulky silence.

'Wife, wife!' he shouted, when he was done, 'bring me my golden hen.'

Then his wife brought a beautiful little speckled hen and placed it on the table.

'Lay!' roared the Ogre.

And the hen laid an egg of pure gold. And each time the Ogre said 'Lay,' she laid another.

Then the Ogre began to grow sleepy, and he yawned so loudly that the people in the world below said, 'There is an earthquake going on somewhere.'

But when he was asleep, out stole Jack, and creeping nimbly round the table, he seized the golden hen, tucked her under his arm, and ran out of the door.

'Squaak, squaak,' screamed the hen.

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And up jumped the Ogre in a great hurry. But he was only in time to see Jack disappear at the end of the straight white road.

You may be sure that Jack did not waste much time climbing down the beanstalk. Down, down, down he swung until he reached the bottom, when he burst into the kitchen hot and panting and placed the hen on the table.

'Mother,' he cried, 'see what I have brought you from the magic beanstalk!'

Then he said softly, 'Lay, little hen,' and the hen at once laid a shining golden egg.

Jack's mother was so surprised and delighted that she could scarcely believe her eyes.

'I shall never call you idle and stupid again,' she said, looking at Jack with great pride.

Now there was no longer any need to climb the magic beanstalk, but each day Jack longed for fresh adventures. The moment he woke in the morning, when the scent of the blossoms was wafted into his

room, he could think of nothing else but the magic beanstalk and the Ogre's castle at the end of the straight white road.

So at last, early one morning, he slipped away and began to climb up once more. The higher he climbed the happier he felt, and when the white clouds swept past him, he shouted for joy. But when he reached the top and ran along the road to the Ogre's castle, he did not dare show himself, but waited near the kitchen door until he saw the Ogre's wife go out to fetch water. Then he crept into the kitchen and hid himself in the boiler.

Very soon the floor began to shake under the tramp, tramp of the Ogre's tread, and in he came with his wife. This time they both sniffed the air and said together :

'Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an
Englishman.

Be he living, or be he dead,
I'll grind his bones to make my bread.'

And then they ran to the oven and the

cupboard to see if Jack was hiding there. But luckily he was safe in the boiler, and though they looked under the dish covers and behind the clock and everywhere they could think of, they could not find him.

‘It cannot be a fresh little boy, after all,’ said the Ogre’s wife. ‘It must just be the bones of those little boys you had on toast last night for dessert.’

So the Ogre sat down and began his breakfast, and when he was done he stretched himself out before the fire for his morning doze.

‘Wife,’ he cried, ‘fetch me my magic harp, for I think it would soothe me to sleep.’

Then the Ogre’s wife brought out a little golden harp and placed it on the table.

It was the most wonderful harp that ever was made, for it was really an exquisite little fairy, stretched upon a golden frame, so that her shining hair made the harp-strings. And when the wind played through the living chords the fairy notes came quivering out, and the harp fairy sang a magic song to suit the music.

'Play,' roared the Giant; and immediately the fairy music began and the Spirit of the harp sang until the air quivered with the golden notes.

Then, as the Ogre fell asleep and began to snore, the music died away, and Jack crept out of the boiler. He seized the harp with both hands and ran softly towards the door.

But he had forgotten that the harp was really a fairy, and when he seized her she cried in her loudest voice, 'Master, master!'

Up sprang the Ogre in the twinkling of an eye, and gave a frightful roar when he saw Jack dart out of the door and run off along the straight white road.

Jack had never run so fast in all his life as he did then, but the Ogre ran faster still. He thundered along, getting closer at every step, and had just stretched out his hand to seize the thief when Jack reached the top of the beanstalk and began climbing swiftly down.

The Ogre stopped for a moment, for he was not sure if this strange tree would bear his weight.



'Master, master,' cried the harp

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'Master, master!' cried the harp, and that made the Ogre so furious that he began to climb down after Jack as quick as he could.

The beanstalk swayed and creaked, and Jack, in terror, went faster and faster, until he reached the bottom, and then he saw the Ogre's great feet just above his head.

'Mother, mother, an axe!' shouted Jack, and he seized it from her hands and began to chop at the beanstalk with all his might.

It swayed, it creaked, and crash it fell with a tremendous thud, and the Ogre lay buried beneath the ruins.

Then Jack danced for joy and the fairy harp played soft music. And now that the beanstalk was gone he lived contentedly at home with his mother, and the golden hen, and the fairy harp, which brought them more riches than they knew how to spend.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

Once upon a time there lived a King and Queen who had no children, and who longed for a little daughter more than anything in the world. The Queen grew sadder and sadder, and could think of nothing else, until one day she went to bathe in the cool water of the palace fountain, when a frog suddenly jumped out and sat at the edge gazing at her.

‘You shall have your wish,’ he croaked. ‘This very time next year, when the briar-rose begins to flower, a living rosebud shall blossom for you.’

And the next year, just at the time of the roses, the Queen had a little baby-daughter, just as the frog had promised.

No words can describe the delight of the King and Queen. Joy bells were rung, and bonfires were lighted, and the whole land rejoiced. Of course, they had the grandest christening possible, to which all the fairies

were invited. At least they were all invited except one, because it happened that unfortunately there were thirteen fairies, and the King had only twelve gold plates for the feast. So he was obliged to pretend he had forgotten the thirteenth fairy.

The twelve fairies came to the christening in their very best dresses made of woven moonbeans edged with rose-leaves, and they each brought a magic gift to the infant Princess.

One gave her beauty, another health and happiness, another cleverness, another sweet temper and a kind heart, and so on until it came to the twelfth fairy.

But before she could speak the door flew open and in there swept the thirteenth fairy, who had not been invited. She had an ugly frown on her face, and looked so angry that every one drew back to let her pass. Straight up to the baby's cradle she went, and pulling back the rose-coloured curtains, she looked crossly at the little sleeping face.

'You shall have my gift, though I was not invited to the christening,' she said with a

spiteful smile. 'When you are fifteen years old, you shall prick your finger with a spindle and fall down dead.'

Then she cast an evil look all round, and flew out of the window.

Every one stood quite silent with grief and horror, until the twelfth fairy stepped forward and waved her wand.

'I have still a gift to bestow,' she said, 'and though I may not change the wicked fairy's prophecy, I can at least make it less evil. The Princess shall not die when she pricks her finger with the spindle, but she shall fall into a deep sleep, which will last a hundred years.'

Then all the fairies left the palace, and the King and Queen began to think that perhaps the wicked fairy had been only a bad dream. But in case any harm should really come to the little Princess Briar-Rose, it was ordered that every spinning-wheel in the kingdom should be destroyed. And very soon not a spindle was to be found throughout all the length and breadth of the land.

Now the fairy gifts which had been given

to the Princess when she was in her cradle were seen more and more clearly by mortal eyes as she grew older. She was as beautiful as a flower, and as clever as she was good, and as happy as the day was long. The King and Queen thought no more of the evil prophecy, and so the years slipped by until Briar-Rose was fifteen.

It happened that on her fifteenth birthday the King and Queen went out together, and the Princess was left all alone in the palace and began to feel very dull. She played battledoor and shuttlecock and all the one-person games she could think of, and when she grew tired of them she thought she would go through all the rooms in the palace and look for adventures.

After a while she came to a little turret-stair which she never remembered having seen before, and when she climbed to the top she came to a curious little door. The Princess knocked, for she had always been taught to be polite, and an old cracked voice cried out 'Come in.'

And when Briar-Rose opened the door she

saw a little old woman sitting there with a spinning-wheel, spinning soft white yarn.

‘Oh, what a funny thing that is!’ said Briar-Rose, looking at the spinning-wheel, for she had never seen such a thing before. ‘How I should love to make it go whirling round and round!’

And she put out her hand to touch the soft wool, but the spindle pricked her finger and a tiny drop of blood sprang out. Before she had even time to cry out, part of the fairy’s evil prophecy came true, for she sank down on the stone bench and fell fast asleep.

At that very moment everybody and everything in the palace stopped what they were doing, and fell fast asleep too.

The King and Queen, who had just returned and were walking through the hall, sank down in two royal chairs; the cook in the kitchen, who was just going to box the scullion’s ears, went fast asleep with her hand still in the air. The scullion, with his mouth wide open, ready to roar with the pain, left it open and went fast asleep too. The

horses in the stable went to sleep in the middle of eating their corn; the pigeons on the stable roof hadn't even time to tuck their heads under their wings, but fell asleep as they were strutting around with their tails still spread out. The flies slept on the ceiling; the canary did not want to have the green cover put over its cage, but slept in broad daylight. The only person to whom the fairy's prophecy made no difference was the cat, but then she was already fast asleep, as usual, by the kitchen fire. But the fire stopped crackling and burning, the pots stopped boiling, nothing stirred, nothing moved, not a sound was heard. Only round the palace there sprung up a hedge of briar-roses which grew taller and taller, as time went on, until the palace was quite hidden, and not even the top of the flagstaff could be seen.

And as the years went by people began to forget about the palace. Only the old people would tell the children sometimes about the beautiful Princess who once lived in a palace where the briar-roses grew. But the children

thought it was a make-believe story, for the hedge was so thick and so high that no one could see what was inside.

Sometimes a Prince would come riding by and listen to the tale, and then try and cut his way through the thick hedge, to see if there was really a beautiful Princess on the other side. But the thorns tore every one who tried to force his way through, and sometimes put out his eyes, so the Princes grew tired of trying, and each year the hedge grew taller and thicker.

Now it happened that on the very day when the Princess had been asleep for a hundred years, there chanced to come to that country a Prince who was braver and handsomer than any of the Princes who had come before. He had never known what it meant to be beaten or to give in, and when he heard the story of the Princess Briar-Rose he made up his mind to find her.

'The thorns in the hedge will tear you to pieces,' all the people said.

'The last Prince came back quite blind,' added some one else.

'I shall never come back at all, unless I can win my way through,' answered the Prince, and set off bravely.

But when he got to the great hedge, he found it covered with pale pink roses, and the branches parted in front of him to make a passage, and all the thorns looked the other way. On he walked through the cool, green path, while the roses nodded and smiled on him all the way. And when he came to the other side he saw a stately palace, just as the old people had described it. Not a sound broke the solemn stillness, not a leaf whispered in the breeze. He saw the pigeons fast asleep on the stable roof, and the watch-dog lying in front of his kennel.

Then, when he entered the great hall, he saw the King and Queen fast asleep on their royal chairs, and everything and everybody were exactly the same as when they had fallen asleep a hundred years ago.

Presently the Prince noticed the turret steps that led to the tower, and he climbed them, just as the Princess had done. And

when he opened the door and stepped on to the balcony, he stood still in wonder and delight.

The Princess lay there fast asleep, her fair face turned towards him, just as she had sunk down to rest a hundred years ago. Everything was unchanged except that now around the couch was a canopy of briar-roses protecting her as she slept. The flowers breathed their beauty around her, and the sharp thorns guarded her from all harm.

So beautiful did the Princess look lying there, like a pale rose herself, that the Prince was drawn to her side, and bending over her he kissed her cheek.

The Princess's eyelids quivered, and the next moment her eyes opened. She looked up and saw the Prince bending over her, and when their eyes met she gave a little cry of joy.

'Oh,' she cried, 'you have come at last. I have been dreaming and dreaming of you, and I thought you were never coming to wake me.'

Now the moment the Princess opened her



He stood still in wonder and delight

eyes every one and everything in the palace began to awake too. The King and Queen walked with stately tread through the hall, the cook gave the scullion a sounding box on his ear. The scullion roared with his mouth wide open, the horses went on eating their corn, the pigeons strutted about on the roof, the flies walked busily up and down the ceiling, and the canary piped the end of his song and said to himself, 'Dear me, I dreamed I went to sleep without my covering.'

And the great hedge of briar-roses sank down and down till it vanished in the earth, and not even a bud was left.

'But what does it matter if the roses are gone?' said the Prince, 'since I have got my own Briar-Rose, who is fairest of them all.'

And so they were married and lived happily ever after.

THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

There was once an old mother pig who had three little pigs. Now the three little pigs grew so fast that the old mother pig thought it was time they should go out into the world to earn their own living. So one day she called them all together and told them what they must do.

'My dear children,' she said, 'it is quite time you left off saying, "Wee, wee, wee," and learned to say, "Umph, umph, umph," as I do. You will never learn to be grown-up at home, so you must go away and seek your fortunes.'

The eldest little pig was delighted to go off, and he started out proudly, for he felt sure he was quite grown-up already, and that he knew all about everything.

He had not gone far along the road when he met a man carrying a load of straw.

'Kind sir,' said the little pig politely, 'will you give me some straw to build a house?'

And the man gave him the straw at once, and the little pig built a grand house and was very pleased with himself.

But presently the old grey Wolf came trotting along, and when he saw the straw house he stopped and knocked at the door and cried out, 'Little pig, little pig, will you let me in?'

And the little pig answered, 'No, no, by the hair of my chinny, chin, chin.'

'Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in,' growled the Wolf.

And he huffed, and he puffed, and he blew the house in, and ate up the little pig.

Then the second little pig set out to seek his fortune, and he met a man carrying a bundle of furze.

'Will you give me some furze to build my house?' asked the little pig. And the man gave him all he asked for.

So he built a beautiful house, and was just sitting down to enjoy himself, when the old grey Wolf came creeping along the road.

The first little pig had tasted so good that he longed for more, so he was very glad when he saw the furze house. He went to the front door and gave a thundering knock, and cried out, 'Little pig, little pig, will you let me in?'

'No, no, by the hair of my chinny, chin, chin,' answered the little pig gaily.

'Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in,' said the Wolf with a growl.

And he huffed and he puffed, and he puffed and he huffed, and he huffed and he puffed, until at last he blew down the house and ate up the little pig.

Now the third little pig was much wiser than his two brothers, and when he set out to seek his fortune he would not build his house of straw or furze, but went on until he met a man with a cartload of bricks.

'That is exactly what I want,' said the little pig to himself. So he begged the man to let him have enough bricks to build a house. And the man gave him as many as he wanted.

So the little pig built himself a comfortable

little house with a neat kitchen and a big chimney. And he painted the front door green, and put a new brass knocker on it. And then he went to market and bought a great many pots and pans, and one very large pot for soup.

Presently down the road came the old grey Wolf, and when he saw the cottage he went up to the green door and gave a loud knock with the new brass knocker.

'Little pig, little pig, will you let me in?' he growled.

'No, no, by the hair of my chinny, chin, chin,' answered the little pig, peeping through the curtains of the sitting-room window.

'Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in,' said the Wolf in his most frightening voice.

And he huffed and he puffed, and he puffed and he huffed, and he huffed and he puffed, until he had no breath left, but it was all no use. He could not blow down the strong little brick house.

So he had to think of some other plan,

and, as he was a very cunning old Wolf, he tried to make his voice as sweet as possible, and pretended to be quite friendly.

‘Little pig,’ he said, ‘would you like some fine turnips? I can show you a field where you can get as many as you like.’

‘Thank you kindly,’ said the little pig. ‘Where is the field, and when will you come?’

‘It is on Mr. Smith’s farm, and I will come at six o’clock to-morrow morning,’ said the Wolf.

But next morning the little pig went off to the turnip field at five o’clock, and had carried home a large bag of turnips before the old Wolf appeared.

This made the Wolf very angry, but he tried to smile as if he thought it a joke, and he talked again to the little pig in his friendly voice.

‘Little pig,’ he said, ‘would you like me to go with you to get some apples?’

‘Thank you kindly,’ answered the little pig. ‘Where is the apple-tree, and when will you come for me?’

'The apple-tree is in Mr. Brown's orchard, and I will come at five o'clock to-morrow morning,' said the Wolf.

But of course the little pig got up at four o'clock, and thought he would be back with the apples before the old Wolf was ready. But this time the Wolf got up at four o'clock too, and came prowling into the orchard just as the little pig was filling his sack with apples.

Now as soon as the little pig saw the old Wolf coming he was dreadfully frightened, and climbed up the apple-tree as fast as he could, and then peeped down through the branches.

'Good-morning, Mr. Wolf,' he called out politely. 'Would you like me to throw down some apples to you?'

And he began to throw the apples as far away as he could, so that they rolled down the hill. And when the Wolf ran to pick them up the little pig slipped down the tree, slung the sack over his shoulder, and ran home as fast as his feet could carry him. But though he ran very fast, the Wolf ran

faster still, and came nearer and nearer, until he almost snapped off the end of the little pig's curly tail as it disappeared inside the green door. But the door was slammed in his face, and the little pig was safe that time.

But still the cunning old Wolf tried to pretend he was not angry at all, and he talked in his softest voice.

'Little pig,' he said, 'do you know there is a Fair in the village to-day? If you would like to go with me I will call for you at three o'clock this afternoon.'

'Thank you kindly,' said the little pig. 'I will be ready at three o'clock.'

But long before the clock struck three the little pig arrived at the Fair. He bought a churn, and was gaily rolling it home when whom should he see coming up the hill but the wicked old Wolf.

The little pig was terribly frightened, for he thought the Wolf would certainly catch him this time and gobble him up. There was no place to hide except in the churn, so in crept the little pig, hoping that he might lie hidden there until the Wolf should go

past. But as he tucked his hind feet in he gave the churn a jerk, and away it went rolling down the hill, with the little pig safe inside.

Now the churn looked such a frightening thing as it rolled and bumped along that the old Wolf was terrified when he saw it coming, and he turned round and ran away as fast as he could. So when the churn stopped at the foot of the hill the little pig was able to creep out and carry the churn safely home.

And presently the old Wolf trotted along and knocked at the door.

'Little pig,' he said, 'it was a good thing you did not go to the Fair as you promised. I met the most terrible monster coming down the hill. It had no legs, but it rolled so swiftly that I only just managed to escape from it.'

'Ha, ha!' laughed the little pig. 'So you did not guess I was inside the monster. It was only my new churn which I had bought at the Fair.'

Then the Wolf was so furiously angry that he could not pretend any longer.

'I shall find my way in and eat you up if I have to climb down the chimney,' he growled in his most terrible voice.

Then the little pig ran to the kitchen and filled the biggest pot with water and put it on the fire to boil. And before very long he heard a dreadful scrabble, scrabble, scrabble coming down the chimney, and he knew it was the old Wolf. In a moment he whipped the cover off the pot, and only just in time, for down came the Wolf with a horrible clatter and fell right into the water. Before he could scramble out, the little pig had clapped on the cover, and the old Wolf was soon boiled into soup.

So the little pig gave a feast to all his friends, and every one was happy to think there was no longer a wicked old Wolf ready to eat up good little pigs.

PUSS-IN-BOOTS

Once upon a time there lived a miller who had three sons, and when he died he left all that he had to be divided amongst them. It was only fair that the eldest son should have the mill, and of course the second son claimed the donkey and cart, so all that was left for the youngest was the miller's black cat.

'Dear me!' said the boy as he took the cat in his arms and stroked her gently, 'I am very fond of you, Pussy dear, but I can't see how I am to make a living out of you.'

'Just leave that to me, dear Master,' said the cat, rubbing his head against the boy's shoulder. 'If you can manage to get me a large bag and a pair of top-boots you will see how I can serve you.'

So the miller's son took the last few shillings he had and bought a large bag with a string run round the top of it. And then at

the shoemaker's he bought a pair of yellow top-boots, which he thought would go well with the cat's black coat.

Puss was very much pleased with the yellow boots, and she put them on at once. Then she ran to the garden and cut some fine young lettuces, and put them in the bottom of her new bag, and went off to the woods. As soon as she came to a nice large rabbit hole she put the bag down with its mouth open, so that the lettuces could be seen, and then she crept away and hid behind some ferns close by.

Presently a fat grey rabbit came peeping out. He smelt the lettuce, and his white tail sat straight up with joy as he hopped into the bag to begin his feast. But Puss-in-Boots crept quickly round the other side and drew the strings together swiftly, so that the grey rabbit was safely caught.

Then Puss slung the bag over her shoulder and set off walking in her yellow boots until she came to the King's Court. The sentinel stood in the way and wanted to stop her, but Puss-in-Boots held her head very high and

said in a grand voice, 'A Cat may look at a King.' And so she passed on until they presented her to the King himself.

'Your Majesty,' said the Cat, bowing very low, 'I have brought you a fat rabbit from the estate of my master, the Marquis of Carabas.'

The King could not help smiling as he looked at the black cat in yellow boots, but he accepted the present graciously and Puss-in-Boots left the Court with great dignity.

The next day Puss took her bag again, and this time she put a handful of grain in it and took it out to the fields. Then she stretched herself out close by and pretended she was dead. Very soon two partridges came and began to pick up the corn, and when they were very busy Puss crept round softly and pulled the string so suddenly that they were both caught in the twinkling of an eye. Then she shouldered the bag and set off once more for the palace. This time the sentinel knew Puss-in-Boots and let her pass with a smile, and every one made way for her until she came to the King.

‘My master, the Marquis of Carabas, begs your acceptance of these two partridges,’ said Puss-in-Boots, bowing gracefully to the King.

‘Tell your master, the Marquis, that I am pleased to accept his present,’ said the King. ‘He must have a fine estate.’

Puss said it was a very fine estate indeed, and bowed herself out. But before leaving the palace she managed to find out that the King was going to drive past the river that afternoon, and that the Princess, his daughter, was to be with him.

Without losing a moment Puss-in-Boots scampered back to her master and began to tell him all about her visit to the palace.

‘Now, dear Master,’ she continued, ‘will you do exactly as I ask you? I want you to go and bathe in the river this afternoon, and if any one should ask you what your name is, will you promise me to say it is the Marquis of Carabas?’

The miller’s son smiled at the strange request, but he felt so sad and hopeless that he was quite ready to do whatever the cat



The King could not help smiling as he looked at the black cat in yellow boots

advised. So he went off to bathe in the river, and left Puss to guard his clothes on the bank.

Now that was exactly what Puss-in-Boots wanted, and she quickly gathered her master's clothes together and hid them behind a great stone. And at that very moment the King's golden coach came bowling along the road.

'Help! Help!' cried Puss. 'The Marquis of Carabas is drowning.'

The King commanded the coach to be stopped at once, and ordered the servants to rescue the drowning Marquis. Then Puss went up to the carriage and stood, hat in hand, bowing to the King and the Princess.

'It is indeed a happy chance for my master that you happened to be passing just now,' she said. 'But, alas! some thief has stolen all the clothes which the Marquis left on the bank when he went to bathe, and it is too far to send to his castle for others.'

'One of my men shall fetch a suit from the palace instantly,' said the King. And before long the miller's son was dressed in a gold-embroidered suit and a plumed hat.

'This is my master, the Marquis of Carabas,' said Puss-in-Boots, gracefully introducing him to the King and the Princess. 'We trust your Majesty will drive on and dine with the Marquis.'

'With the greatest of pleasure,' said the King, and he invited the Marquis to sit opposite the Princess in the royal carriage.

Then Puss disappeared in front and ran like the wind, taking a short cut, so that she left the carriage far behind. And first she came to a field of hay, where the haymakers were busy working in the bright sunshine.

'See here,' cried Puss-in-Boots as the haymakers stopped to stare at a black cat in yellow boots, 'when the King passes this way and asks to whom this field of hay belongs, you are to say, "To the Marquis of Carabas, your Majesty." If you do not say exactly these words you shall be hanged and chopped into mincemeat.'

Then she ran on until she came to a field of wheat which the reapers were busy cutting. 'Look here, my fine fellows,' said

Puss-in-Boots, shaking a paw at them, 'the King will soon pass by, and when he asks who is the owner of this wheat-field, you are to say, "It all belongs to the Marquis of Carabas, your Majesty." If you say anything else you will be chopped up into small pieces, and that is a very painful death, I assure you.'

Then off she ran again until she came to a great castle where a terrible Ogre lived. He was such a fierce and powerful Ogre that he lived all alone and no one would ever come near him. But Puss-in-Boots pulled the bell boldly, and when the Ogre opened the door and glared out she bowed politely and walked in with little, mincing steps, showing off her yellow boots. And the Ogre was so astonished to see such a visitor that he could only stare with his mouth open.

'Good-afternoon, your Mightiness,' said Puss calmly. 'I have heard so much about you that I thought I would call and see you. Is it really true that you can turn yourself into a wild beast?'

'Just wait and see!' said the Ogre, much

gratified, for he was very proud of the wonderful things he could do.

And in a second he had vanished, and a great, ramping, roaring lion sprang towards Puss-in-Boots, who disappeared swiftly up the chimney.

'Ha, ha !' laughed the Ogre when he had changed himself back again. 'How do you like me when I am a lion ?'

'Not very much, thank you,' said Puss, cautiously creeping out. 'Of course, it is very wonderful for such a great Ogre as you are, to turn yourself into a big beast, but I suppose it would be quite impossible to change into a tiny animal, such as a mouse, for instance ?'

'Pooh ! that would be quite as easy for me,' said the Ogre proudly. And in a moment he had vanished and a little sleek mouse ran across the floor.

With one pounce Puss was on him. She seized him with her teeth, gave one shake, and the Ogre was dead.

Meanwhile the royal carriage came rolling along the road, and when it came to the

hayfield the King called to the haymakers and asked, 'To whom does this fine hay belong?'

'To the Marquis of Carabas,' said the haymakers, trembling with fear, for they were sure the cat with the yellow boots was listening close by.

Then the carriage drove on until it came to the wheat-field, and again the King stopped and asked who was the owner of this fine crop.

'It all belongs to the Marquis of Carabas, your Majesty,' said the reapers in trembling tones.

'You really have a splendid estate,' said the King, turning to the miller's son. And he thought to himself, 'This young man is almost good enough to marry the Princess.'

And by-and-by they came to the Ogre's castle, and there Puss-in-Boots helped them to alight and showed them into the banqueting-hall, where a splendid dinner had been prepared for the Ogre.

'My dear Marquis,' said the King, 'your title is not fit for this splendid castle. You

shall no longer be called a Marquis but the Prince of Carabas.'

So the miller's son knelt before the King, and under the stroke of the royal sword he became a Prince. And as he loved the Princess and the Princess loved him, they were married and lived together happily in the Ogre's castle.

Of course, Puss-in-Boots lived with them, and was made Mistress of the Robes. And though she never needed to go hunting again, she always kept the bag which her master had given her, and always wore top-boots of yellow leather.

LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD

In the long ago days, when there were so many wild beasts prowling about the forests that no one was surprised to meet a wolf or a bear at any moment, there lived a little girl called Red Riding-Hood. This was not her real name, but every one called her that, because she wore a red cloak and hood which her kind grandmother had made for her.

Red Riding-Hood lived with her mother in a cottage quite close to a wood, and her father, who was a wood-cutter, went every day into the forest to cut down trees. Now the kind grandmother, who had given little Red Riding-Hood the scarlet cloak, lived all by herself in a dear little cottage all covered with roses, further off in the wood, and there was nothing Red Riding-Hood loved better than going to see her grandmother.

So one day when she had been a very

good child her mother said to her: 'You shall have a holiday to-day, my dear, and go to visit your grandmother. See, I have put a little pot of honey and a pat of butter in this basket, and two fresh eggs for tea. Carry them carefully, and do not loiter on the way.'

Red Riding-Hood promised to carry the basket most carefully, and to go straight to the cottage ; so her mother tied on her little red hood and kissed her good-bye, and off she went.

At first she walked very properly and carried the basket most carefully, but when she got into the wood her feet began to dance a little, and she longed to put down the basket and pick the flowers that smiled up at her, and to chase the sunbeams that danced across her path.

Just then a great grey Wolf came loitering along the path, and seeing Little Red Riding-Hood he stopped to speak to her.

'Good-morning,' he said ; 'where are you going to this fine day?'

'Good-morning, Mr. Wolf,' said Red

Riding-Hood, politely dropping a curtsey. 'I am going to see my grandmother, to take her a pot of honey and some butter and eggs.'

'And where does your grandmother live, my dear?' asked the Wolf in his sweetest voice.

'She lives all by herself in a little cottage covered with roses not far from here,' answered Red Riding-Hood; 'you take the second turning to the right and the first to the left, and there you see the cottage.'

'And when you arrive at the cottage, how do you get in?' asked the Wolf.

'Oh, I just tap at the door,' said Red Riding-Hood, 'and then grandmother says, "Lift the latch and come in."'

'Well,' said the Wolf, 'it does seem a shame that you must walk so slowly and carefully. Why don't you put down your basket and gather a bunch of flowers for your kind old grandmother? You can do that easily before tea-time.'

Then the Wolf trotted off, and Red Riding-Hood thought it was a very good idea to gather some flowers for her grandmother.

So she put down her basket, and quite forgot that she had promised her mother not to loiter, as she wandered further and further away from the path.

Now as soon as that wicked old Wolf was out of Red Riding-Hood's sight, he turned round and went back by another way as fast as he could.

'The second turning to the right and then the first to the left,' he said to himself. 'Aha! I shall gobble up the old grandmother first, and then have Red Riding-Hood for dessert.'

And in a few minutes he came in sight of the little cottage covered with roses, and going up to the door he tapped as gently as he could.

'Lift up the latch and come in,' cried an old voice from within.

So the Wolf lifted the latch, and the door flew open and in he rushed and gobbled up the poor old grandmother at one mouthful. Then he took one of her big frilled nightcaps out of a drawer, and tied it on his sinful, old, grey head and jumped into bed, taking care to pull the clothes well up under his chin.

He had not long to wait, for by this time Red Riding-Hood had picked enough flowers and came running quickly to the cottage to make up for lost time.

'May I come in, dear grandmother?' she cried as she tapped at the door.

'Lift the latch and come in,' said the Wolf in his softest voice. But his softest voice was nothing but a growl, and Red Riding-Hood looked quite anxious when she walked in.

'I have brought you a pot of honey and a pat of butter and two fresh eggs,' she said as she put the basket on the table; 'but grandmother, how strange your voice sounds, and why are you in bed?'

'I have a cold on my chest,' answered the Wolf. 'Come here, my dear, and sit on my bed.'

Then Red Riding-Hood came to the foot of the bed, and her eyes grew rounder and rounder with surprise.

'Grandmother, grandmother, what great eyes you've got!' she said as she saw the hungry gleam in the Wolf's eyes.

'All the better to see you with, my dear,' answered the Wolf.

'But grandmother, grandmother, what great ears you've got!'

'All the better to hear you with, my dear.'

'But, O grandmother, grandmother, what great teeth you've got!'

'All the better to eat you up with, my dear.' And the old Wolf threw off the bedclothes, and with one bound sprang at Little Red Riding-Hood. She turned and ran screaming to the door, but the Wolf was after her, and had just caught her little red cloak in his mouth when the door burst open, and Red Riding-Hood's own dear father came rushing in. He lifted his axe, and with one blow struck the wicked old Wolf dead, and then caught up Red Riding-Hood in his arms.

'Oh, I think he must have eaten up poor dear grandmother,' sobbed Red Riding-Hood.

'We'll soon see if he has,' said her father, and took out his knife. Then he carefully ripped the old Wolf up, and there was the

old grandmother safe and sound, for the Wolf had swallowed her so hastily that his great teeth had not touched her.

So they boiled the kettle and had tea together, and ate up the honey and the butter and the fresh eggs, and never was there a merrier feast. And Little Red Riding-Hood promised that she would never, never, never talk to any wolf she might meet, or loiter on her way when sent on an errand by her dear mother.

JACK THE GIANT-KILLER

In the happy days of Once upon a Time, when fairies and giants and magicians were still to be met with, there lived in England a terrible Giant called Cormoran. His home was in a great cave at the top of the Mount in Cornwall, and he was the terror of all that countryside.

This Giant was three times as tall as any man, and his waist was so big that it would have taken any one ten minutes to walk round him. He had red hair, and great goggling eyes, and when he walked, the earth shook as if there was an earthquake underneath.

Now the worst of this Giant was that he was always hungry, and when he was hungry he always stepped across from the Mount to the mainland and looked about over all the farms for something to eat. Sometimes he would take half-a-dozen oxen

and sling them over his shoulder, or a dozen sheep, which he tucked into his waistband. And then he coolly stalked home again, and ate them up for one meal, and was ready for more.

No one dared to tell Cormoran he was a thief and a robber, or to cry 'Hands off,' for he was so big and strong that every one ran away in terror when they heard him coming.

There was only one person who was not afraid of the Giant, and that was a boy named Jack, a farmer's son, who lived quite close to the Mount. He grew more and more angry each time that Cormoran came and carried off the sheep and oxen without so much as saying 'By your leave,' and he made up his mind to put a stop to it.

'It is time somebody punished this horrible monster,' said Jack one day. 'And if no one else will do it, I will.'

So he took a shovel and a pickaxe and a horn, and one evening, when it began to grow dark, he went across to the Mount. All night long he dug and dug until he made

a large deep hole at the foot of the Mount in front of the Giant's cave. This hole he carefully covered over with long sticks and straw, and then he spread earth on the top so that it looked like solid ground.

By this time the dawn of the new day was just beginning, and the sea and sky were preparing to give the sun a golden welcome when Jack took up his horn and blew a long, loud blast.

'Who dares make such a hideous noise and wake me from my morning sleep?' thundered a voice from the Giant's cave. And presently the earth began to shake as Cormoran came stamping down the hill. The moment he saw Jack he shook with rage, and his goggling eyes flashed fire.

'So it was you, you miserable little shrimp, who dared to disturb me,' he shouted. 'I will put you in the pot and boil you like an egg for my breakfast.' And as he said this he rushed forward to seize Jack.

But Jack had wisely taken his stand on the other side of the covered hole, and before the Giant could reach him, the earth and

straw and sticks gave way, and the Giant tumbled headlong into the trap.

‘Ho, ho!’ laughed Jack. ‘So you would boil me for breakfast, would you?’

And as the Giant struggled to his feet and his hand appeared just above the ground, Jack took his pickaxe and with a mighty swing brought it down on the Giant’s crown and killed him on the spot.

Then there were great rejoicings all around when the people heard that Cormoran was dead. And they were so proud of Jack that they declared he should be known throughout the land as Jack the Giant-Killer. Moreover, they made him a splendid belt, on which was embroidered in golden letters :

‘This is the valiant Cornishman
Who slew the Giant Cormoran.’

The fame of Jack’s brave deed soon spread all over that countryside, and every giant who heard of it vowed vengeance against the Giant-Killer. There was one Giant who was specially furious, for he was Cormoran’s

brother, and lived close by in a great castle which stood in the midst of a lovely wood.

Now it happened that one day Jack set out on a journey to Wales, and his way led him through this very wood. He knew nothing about the Giant who lived there, and as it was a hot day he sat down to rest under the trees and soon fell asleep.

Just then the Giant, whose name was Blunderbore, happened to be passing that way. He might have passed on and never have noticed Jack had not his eye caught the glint of something shining on the ground. When he looked closer he saw a boy lying fast asleep with the sun shining on the golden letters written round his belt:

‘This is the valiant Cornishman
Who slew the Giant Cormoran.’

‘Ah, ha! my fine fellow,’ cried Blunderbore, ‘I’ll teach you to go about slaying giants.’ And he lifted Jack up between his finger and thumb and carried him off to the castle.

Jack was terribly frightened when he woke

up and found out where he was. The Giant shook him well, and then with a hoarse laugh threw him into a room above the gateway and locked him in.

'I am going to invite another Giant to come and share my supper,' he called out, as he left Jack sitting alone in the great empty room.

Poor Jack looked round to see if there was no chance of escape, but the only thing he could find in the room was a coil of thick rope.

'Now for death or freedom!' he cried aloud. And he made two large loops at the ends of the rope, and climbed into the window to watch for the return of the two Giants.

He soon saw them hurrying along towards the castle, and as they came underneath the gate he dropped the rope down so deftly that the two loops slipped over the Giants' heads. Then he jerked the rope tight and tied it to a beam, and pulled so hard that the Giants were choked in two minutes. And before they had time to free themselves Jack slid down the rope and cut off both their heads.

‘Now I shall see what treasure I can find in the castle,’ said Jack. And he took the key from Blunderbore’s belt and unlocked the great gate.

As soon as he had entered the castle he heard sounds of weeping and wailing, and soon made his way to a room, where he found three fair ladies, whom the Giant had meant to eat for his supper. They were sitting weeping together, bound by the strands of their own golden hair.

‘Gentle ladies,’ said Jack, ‘your sorrows are ended. Blunderbore is dead, and I am come to set you free.’

Then he cut their golden chains and gave them the keys of the castle. For he himself was obliged to journey on.

All that day Jack travelled merrily along, but when the evening shadows lengthened the road began to look strange, and as it grew darker and darker Jack began to think he had lost his way. So he made up his mind that he would seek shelter at the first house he came to. For the place had a wild and desolate look which he did not like.

Presently, to his joy, he spied a great house by the wayside, and he went up at once and knocked boldly at the big front door. The door was flung open in an instant, and there, towering above Jack, stood a hideous Giant with two heads.

Jack started back in surprise, but the Giant pretended to be quite friendly, and spoke so politely that Jack walked in and sat down to supper with him. After supper the Giant showed his guest to a bedroom, where everything was prepared for his comfort. So he gladly crept into bed, for he was very weary.

But in the middle of the night Jack awoke with a start, for he heard a voice mutter, mutter, mutter on the other side of the wall. And as he listened this is what it said:

‘Peaceful though you sleep this night,
You shall die by morning light.
With this club your life I’ll take
Ere from happy dreams you wake.

‘Oh, indeed!’ said Jack, wide awake in a moment. ‘We shall see about that!’

So he slipped out of bed and took a great log of wood from the fireplace, and put it in his bed. Then he hid himself at the other end of the room.

In a few minutes the door opened slowly, slowly, and the Giant came stealing in, treading so softly that not a board creaked. He felt his way, in the dark, to the bedside, and then he lifted his great club and brought it down with a tremendous thwack across the log of wood which was covered up by the bed-clothes. Three terrific blows the Giant gave, and then he went off grinning to himself. For now he was sure he had put an end to Jack the Giant-Killer.

But in the morning who should come strolling in to breakfast but Jack himself. The Giant's eyes in both his heads grew rounder and rounder with surprise.

'Did you sleep well last night?' he asked at last. 'Did nothing disturb you?'

'Nothing but the rats,' said Jack. 'One of them ran across my bed and gave me three taps with its tail, but I soon dropped off to sleep again.'

Now Jack had felt sure that the Giant would expect him to eat a very big breakfast, so he had carefully fastened a great leather bag under his coat, in such a way that he could easily slip the food into its mouth instead of his own. There was hasty-pudding for breakfast, and the Giant ladled out a bowlful, as big as a bath, for Jack to eat. Then he sat down to watch him, but to his surprise Jack took spoonful after spoonful until the bowl was quite empty.

'I wonder if you can cut yourself open as I can?' said Jack carelessly, when he had finished. Then he took a sharp knife and cut a large slit in the bag, and all the pudding came tumbling out.

'Of course I can,' said the Giant, for he was not going to be outdone by Jack.

Then he seized the knife and cut a big hole in himself, and of course he dropped down dead at once.

Now Jack had heard that this Giant had four very wonderful things hidden away amongst his treasures. One was a coat

which made any one who should wear it invisible, another was a sword which could cut anything in half, another a pair of shoes which carried the wearer along more swiftly than the wind, and lastly a cap which knew every secret on earth. So he searched through the house and among all the treasures until at last he found the magic coat and sword, and shoes and cap. Then he once more set off on his journey.

This time his way led him through the mountains, and before long he came to a gloomy cavern among the rocks. And in front of the cavern sat the most dreadful Giant which Jack had ever seen.

He was bigger than any of the other Giants, his hair and beard were like thick ropes, and his mouth was so huge that he could have taken Jack in at one bite. There he lay fast asleep, with his great spiked club lying by his side. He was snoring so loudly that the earth shook.

Then Jack slipped on his invisible coat, and stealing close to the Giant, gave him a blow with the flat side of his sword.

The Giant sprang to his feet in a moment, his eyes blazing like balls of fire, as he roared and hit out on all sides with his spiked club. But, of course, he could not see Jack, who kept well out of his reach. Then he turned round and round, looking for the person who had dared to strike him. But Jack ran swiftly in, and, with one blow of his magic sword, he cut off the Giant's head and hurled him to the ground.

'Now I wonder what the old monster has in his cave,' said Jack to himself. And he began to search through all the passages until he came to an inner cave which was shut in by an iron grating. Groans and moans sounded from within, and when Jack opened the door he found a great company of knights and ladies who sat weeping and bewailing their sad fate.

They looked up when they saw Jack and cried out sadly, 'Are you also to be cooked for the Giant's supper?'

But Jack only laughed and waved his sword above his head.

'I have come to set you free,' he cried.

'The Giant is dead, and you have nothing now to fear.'

Then he led them all out into the sunshine until they came to a beautiful castle near at hand. And there they all feasted and made merry.

But in the middle of the feasting a most dreadful noise was heard, and a messenger rushed in, pale with terror, to tell them that the Giant Thunderdell was on his way to avenge his brother's death.

'Let him come!' said Jack, fearlessly grasping his magic sword. 'And you, knights and fair ladies, when you have finished your feast, come out upon the terrace and see, if you will, how Jack the Giant-Killer deals with all such monsters.'

Now the castle was surrounded by a deep moat full of water, and the only way to enter the castle was over the drawbridge. Then Jack quickly ordered his men to cut away both sides of the bridge nearly to the middle, so that the moment any one stepped upon it, it would give way. And when this was done he put on the invisible coat and shoes

of swiftness, took his magic sword in his hand, and went out to meet the Giant. Louder and louder sounded the thundering noise as the Giant drew near, and when he met Jack, though he could not see him, he smelt the smell of human flesh and shouted aloud in a furious rage:

‘Fe-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman.

Be he living, or be he dead,
I’ll grind his bones to make my bread.

‘Ha-ha!’ laughed Jack, ‘a nice loaf of bread I shall make!’

Then he took off his invisible coat and stood where the Giant could see him.

‘Catch me if you can,’ he shouted. And the Giant, with a great roar of rage, rushed after him towards the castle.

But the magic shoes went even faster than the Giant could run, and Jack was safe on the other side of the drawbridge just as the Giant came thundering behind him. No sooner had Thunderdell placed his heavy foot on the middle of the bridge than it went

down with a crash, and the Giant disappeared with a most terrific splash into the waters of the moat below.

There he lay like a great whale, puffing and blowing in the water, until Jack threw a rope around him and bade his men haul him ashore. Then with one stroke of the magic sword the Giant's two heads were cut clean off and rolled to the ground.

The knights and ladies were overjoyed when they saw the Giant slain, and they thought Jack was the greatest hero that had ever lived. And so the feasting and dancing began again, but Jack grew tired of being idle, and so he bid them all farewell and went on to seek for more adventures.

For many days Jack journeyed on, past peaceful farms and flowery meadow-land, until at last he came to a more gloomy region at the foot of a wild and lonely mountain. Everything looked so grey and desolate that Jack felt sure some evil thing must dwell close by, but though he gazed all round he could see nothing but a little old house built on the side of a great grey

rock. 'Somebody may be living there, thought Jack, so he went up and knocked loudly at the door.

'Come in and welcome, my son,' said a gentle old voice. And when Jack opened the door he found an old man with long white hair sitting by the fireside.

The old man rose to welcome Jack, and as he did so his eyes caught the glitter of the golden letters which were embroidered on the hero's belt.

'Art thou indeed Jack the Giant-Killer?' he cried. 'Thrice welcome then, my son. Surely none have needed thy aid as sorely as we.'

Then he told Jack that on the brow of the Dark Mountain, in an enchanted castle, there lived a fierce and terrible Giant, and with him a wicked Magician. By the help of evil spells and black magic these two were able to lure knights and ladies into the castle and there change them into all sorts of hideous shapes.

'Woe is me!' went on the old man. 'Saddest of all is the fate of the Duke's fair

daughter. She was playing in the sunshine, stooping to pick the daisies which she wove into a star-like chain, when a dark shadow blotted out the sun, and the gentle summer breeze changed to a whistling hurricane. Then down swooped two fiery dragons drawing a brazen car in which sat the Giant and that wicked Magician. They caught the maiden up and carried her off to the castle before she could even cry for help. But so fair and innocent was the lily maid that their black spells were powerless to work their will, and they could only change her into a gentle white doe, who even now lives in the woods around the Enchanted Castle.'

Jack's eyes flashed with anger as he listened to this tale, and he grasped his sword in hot haste.

'I will not rest until I have slain the monsters,' he cried.

'Beware how thou seekest to enter the castle,' said the old man gravely. 'At the gate are two fiery griffins who have torn to pieces many knights who sought to free the maiden. But once beyond them, all will

be well. For on the inner wall there is a legend cut in stone which will teach thee how to break the evil spell which is woven around all those within the walls of the Enchanted Castle.'

Without waiting to hear another word Jack quickly put on his magic coat, and with the shoes of swiftness he quickly climbed to the brow of the Dark Mountain. And there he saw the gloomy walls of the Enchanted Castle standing black against the sky; while at its gates two fiery dragons were breathing out smoke and flame, just as the old man had warned him.

But the dragons could not see Jack, for he had on his invisible coat, and he crept past them unnoticed and entered the inner court.

There against the gate hung a silver trumpet, and underneath were these words graven in the stone:

'He who dares this trumpet blow
Shall the Giant overthrow.
Black enchantment's day is past
When shall sound the silver blast.'

The moment he had read these words, Jack seized the trumpet with both hands and blew such a blast upon it that it seemed as if the very walls of the castle shook.

An answering noise as of distant thunder came from within the castle, and in a moment the Giant and the Magician appeared at the gate, their eyes rolling with terror, and their knees knocking together. For they knew their wicked spells were broken for ever.

Before the Giant could grasp his club Jack waved the magic sword in the air and cut off his head at one blow. Then, with a shriek of despair, the Magician bounded into the brazen car and was carried out of sight by the fiery griffins.

And scarcely had the last echoes of the silver blast died away, when the black shadow was lifted from the Enchanted Castle and all the knights and ladies were changed back to their proper shapes. The trees burst out into blossom and the flowers sprang up in the garden, and instead of the White Doe there stood the most beautiful maiden that Jack had ever seen.

So the wicked spell was broken and every one was set free. And when King Arthur heard of all the brave deeds which Jack had done, he made him one of his own knights, and for a reward gave him the hand of the beautiful maiden, and the Enchanted Castle for his home.

So Jack was married to the lily maid, and people came from far and near to do honour to their brave deliverer, Jack the Giant-Killer.

TOM THUMB

In the days when King Arthur ruled in Merrie England, and Merlin the Magician cast his spells and worked his magic, there lived a ploughman and his wife close to the royal palace.

These two good people were very unhappy, for they had no children, and, as the years passed by, they longed so greatly for a child, that at last the ploughman went to seek the aid of the great Magician Merlin.

'Great master,' he pleaded, 'help us with thy wondrous magic art. We long with all our hearts to have a son, even if he be no bigger than my thumb.'

Then Merlin smiled, for it pleased him to think how curious such a tiny child would look. But he promised the ploughman that he should have what he asked for. And so it happened that the magic baby was born.

He was the tiniest child that ever was

seen, and though he began to get fatter and bigger every day, still he never grew taller than his father's thumb.

The Fairy Queen herself came to his christening, and clapped her hands with delight when she saw how small he was.

'He shall be called Tom Thumb,' she cried, 'and I will be his Fairy Godmother.'

Then she gave him a tiny shirt, spun from a spider's web, and a little suit made of finest thistle-down. His hat she made of a russet oak-leaf, all daintily cocked up on one side. His stockings she chose should be of apple-green, which was taken from the thinnest of the outside rind, and, to keep them trim and neat upon his little legs, she tied them round with garters, made of two eyelashes borrowed from his mother's eyes. His shoes were made of mouse-skin, nicely tanned and with soft grey fur inside, and when he was dressed he strutted about, the gayest little gallant that ever was seen.

Tom soon grew old enough to go to school and play with the village children, but he was so nimble and quick that no one had

a chance of winning when Tom was in the game. And when they played for cherry-stones and all Tom's store was lost, he had only to creep into somebody else's bag and steal as many cherry-stones as he wanted.

But one day two great fingers caught poor Tom just as he had slipped into a neighbour's bag, and they thrust him in and shook him up for punishment, until he thought that all his bones were broken.

'Let me out, let me out!' he cried. 'I will never steal your cherry-stones again, and I will show you my prettiest new trick.'

So they opened the bag and out Tom hopped. The boys all gathered round to see the trick, and Tom Thumb took an ink-pot from the desk and hung it on a sunbeam which was sending its golden shaft across the room.

This, of course, was quite an easy trick for Tom to do, because he was a magic child, but when the other boys tried to hang their inkpots up, alack! they fell with a crash to the floor, and all the ink was spilt.

Then in walked the angry schoolmaster,

cane in hand, and as the blows fell thick and fast, Tom danced with glee and laughed out loud.

But when his mother heard the tale, she said it was only naughty boys that played such tricks, and that he now should stay at home until he had learnt to behave better.

'Oh! I will gladly stay at home,' Tom cried, 'and then I can help you cook, dear mother.' And he climbed up on to the edge of the big bowl in which she was making a batter pudding.

But Tom never stayed quiet for a moment, and he was so anxious to see what was in the pudding, that he leaned too far over, and before his mother noticed what he was doing, he tumbled in, head over heels, and was swallowed up in the batter. She never saw even the soles of his feet, but went on stirring busily until it was ready. Then she put it into a basin, and tied it up in a cloth, and dropped it into a pot of boiling water.

Now as soon as Tom felt the heat of the boiling water, he began to hop and jump

about in the batter, until the pudding bounced up and down, and round about, as if it was caught in a whirlwind.

'What can be the matter?' cried the poor woman. 'The pudding is surely bewitched.' And she seized it in great haste and threw it out on to the road.

Just then a tinker happened to be passing, and when he saw the steaming pudding he caught it up and hid it under his red cloak. But he had not gone further than the stile when he felt the pudding begin to shake, and a little voice cried out, 'Oh, let me out, let me out!'

In a terrible fright the poor tinker dropped the pudding and climbed over the stile as fast as he could.

'It must be an evil spirit,' he cried in terror.

But as the pudding fell, the bowl was broken and the cloth became untied, so Tom Thumb poked his little head out, all covered with batter, and shouted with laughter when he saw the tinker running away.

After this adventure Tom stayed quietly



In a terrible fright he dropped the pudding

in the house until one day when his mother took him out with her to milk the cows. She was determined to be very careful this time, and so she took a strong thread and tied him safely to the top of a thistle.

'There you will stay until I am ready to take you home,' she said. 'I have tied you tightly so that the wind may not blow you away.'

She thought he was quite safe now, but, alas! before very long, a red cow came wandering past, munching and licking up the grass. Tom's oak-leaf hat looked good to eat, and before he could cry out, he and the thistle were sliding down the cow's throat.

'Tom, Tom, where are you?' cried his mother when she turned round to find neither the thistle nor her precious son where she had left them.

'I'm here, mother,' cried a little voice which sounded as if it came from the inside of the red cow, which was peacefully munching close by.

And just then Tom began to kick with all

his might until the poor cow felt as if she had swallowed a reaping-machine. She opened her mouth and gave a mighty roar of pain, and out jumped Tom and flew into his mother's arms.

'I will take better care of you after this,' cried his mother as she put him carefully into a corner of her pocket, and carried him home.

But the very next day, when his father went out to plough, Tom begged to go too, and as usual he got his own way. He sat behind the horse's ear and cracked his whip, which was made of a barley straw, and was driving along right merrily, when down swooped a great black raven and seized him in her beak.

She carried him off as easily as if he had been a grain of corn and then flew far over the hills until she came to the Giant's castle. There she stopped, and, as she opened her beak, down dropped Tom Thumb right into the bowl of porridge which the Giant was eating for breakfast.

Now the Giant did not notice Tom at all.

He only thought there was a black speck in his porridge, and so poor Tom was swallowed up in the next spoonful. But very soon the Giant felt most uncomfortable, for something seemed to pinch and tickle his throat. He coughed a good deal, and at last gave such a mighty sneeze that Tom was sneezed right out into the middle of the sea.

‘Aha! here is a tadpole for my dinner,’ cried a big fish when he spied Tom floating on the waves. Then, with one gulp, poor Tom was swallowed once again.

But that was the last meal that the fish ever had, for at that very moment he was caught in a net and carried ashore to be sold in the market.

‘This is a very fine fish,’ said the Court cook, who was out buying King Arthur’s dinner.

So he bought the fish and carried it to the palace. But what was his surprise when he cut it open to see a tiny head poked out, followed by a funny little body and a nimble pair of legs! ‘This will make a fine present for the King,’ said the cook, delighted with

his luck. So Tom Thumb was carried off and set down before King Arthur.

'Tis the gayest little gallant that ever came to Court,' cried the King. 'We will keep him here among our knights, and he shall make sport for us.'

Then indeed began a merry time for Tom! He had all that he could wish for, and was the favourite of all King Arthur's Court. He even danced a minuet upon the Queen's right hand, and showed such grace and quickness that every one cried 'Bravo,' and the King pulled off his royal signet-ring and gave it to the little dancer.

Now this ring was just large enough to make a girdle for Tom Thumb, and so he slipped inside it and wore it ever after, with great pride.

Such a favourite did Tom Thumb become that the King would go nowhere without his little knight. He sat on the royal saddle-bow when the King went riding, and if the rain came on, or if the wind blew chill, Tom would creep through a buttonhole and nestle close to the great King's heart. And

being there he would often ask a favour of the kind heart, which was granted as soon as asked.

‘Your Majesty,’ said Tom one day, ‘I pray you give me as much silver as I can carry, that I may take it back to my good father and mother, for they are very poor.’

Then the King ordered that Tom should be taken to the treasury and allowed to take all that he could carry. It seemed a great load to Tom, but, truth to tell, it was only three silver pennies, and off he set, staggering under the heavy weight.

Tom’s father and mother lived but half a mile from the royal palace, but that seemed a terrible journey to Tom Thumb. For the silver pennies were heavy to carry, and his little legs were short, and it took him full two days to reach his home.

Never were two happier or prouder people than Tom Thumb’s father and mother when the door opened and their little son walked in. They could not do enough to welcome him home. His mother put a walnut shell by the fireside for him to rest in, and they

feasted him for three days upon a hazel nut.

But now it was time to return to Court. So Tom said good-bye to his father and mother, and was just setting out when several drops of rain began to fall. That looked very serious, for one big drop alone was enough to drown Tom Thumb. So his father thought of a better plan, and he took down his horn and blew such a mighty blast upon it that Tom was blown right into King Arthur's Court.

Then began the tilts and tournaments, and Tom earned such honour and renown that all the Court was ringing with his fame. Even Sir Lancelot himself was no match for this small knight, for he was so nimble and moved so quickly that it would have been much easier to fight a midge. Sometimes the Queen would take a ring off her fair finger and hold it out, and then Tom Thumb would run and jump clean through it, so gracefully and lightly, that he never even touched it.

But, alas ! one day the little knight fell ill,

and though the doctors came and looked at him through a magnifying glass, they could not cure him, but only sadly shook their heads. Then the Queen of the Fairies came with all her dancing, green-robed nymphs, and with gentle hands they lifted Tom Thumb and carried him off to Fairyland.

But King Arthur and all the Court mourned many days for their little favourite. And still to-day in Merrie England the children have not forgotten him. For when the moon shines clear upon the fairy rings, and the green-robed nymphs get ready to dance, we tell the story of little Tom Thumb, and we wonder if the Fairy Queen will one day bring him back to us from Fairyland.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

There was once upon a time a Merchant who had three beautiful daughters. But though the two eldest were very lovely, the youngest, who was called Beauty, was the fairest of all. For besides being beautiful she had a kind, gentle heart, which shone out of her eyes and made her always look happy and bright. The elder sisters were selfish and discontented, and only cared for jewels and fine clothes. So it was no wonder that the father loved his youngest daughter best.

Now it happened one day that the Merchant was obliged to go off on a long journey, and before he started he asked his three daughters to choose what present he should bring home to them.

‘Oh! bring me a necklace of emeralds, the finest you can find,’ said the eldest.

'I would like a string of pearls,' cried the second.

'And what would you like, little Beauty?' asked her father, for Beauty had not been as quick to answer as her sisters.

'I would like you to bring yourself back as soon as possible,' said Beauty. 'And if you could find a white rose for me, I would like that best of all.'

So the Merchant rode off, while the two sisters laughed at Beauty, because she had asked for such a common gift.

'You have roses enough in your garden,' they said scornfully.

'But my roses are all red, and I want a white one,' said Beauty. And she wondered how her sisters could choose to have jewels when they might have living flowers.

The Merchant did not forget the presents for his daughters, and before he started for home again he bought a necklace of emeralds and a string of pearls. But a white rose he could not find. It was too late for roses, people said, and so he had to set off without a present for Beauty.

It was growing late and the roads were dark, and before he had gone very far, the Merchant found he had missed his way. He could not tell where he was, for everything looked strange to him, and he was sure that he had never travelled along this way before. He was just about to turn back and try another road when, to his joy, he saw lights shining in front, and presently he came to a great castle.

‘I must ask if they will give me shelter here for to-night,’ said the Merchant to himself. So he rode through the garden and went up to the great door.

To his surprise the door stood wide open, and not a servant was anywhere to be seen. He went to the stables and tied up his horse, and then returned to the hall, where he found a splendid supper prepared. Everything was made ready as if a prince had been expected. Still there was no one to be seen, so the Merchant sat down and began to enjoy the feast, for he was very hungry.

When he had finished supper and was feeling very sleepy, he noticed an open door

leading out of the hall into a room. He walked to the door, looked in, and found it was a bedroom where everything was ready for him just as the supper had been. He was so tired that he went to bed at once and slept soundly until the next morning. When he awoke and looked about he was more surprised than ever, for a beautiful velvet suit was laid out ready for him to put on, and in the hall a delicious breakfast was awaiting him.

He really felt most grateful to his unknown host, and when he was ready to set out again, he wished there had been some way in which to show his gratitude.

Still thinking of his strange adventure, the Merchant walked slowly through the garden. He scarcely noticed the wonderful flowers which lined his path, until suddenly he spied a beautiful white rose growing on a bush above his head.

'Why, I shall have a present for Beauty after all,' he cried out gladly. And he reached up and picked the beautiful white rose.

But scarcely had he snapped its stalk when

a terrible roar sounded from the bushes close by, and out there sprang a great fierce Beast.

‘Who is stealing my white rose?’ he growled, glaring at the poor Merchant, who trembled with terror. ‘You came to my castle and I gave you all you could wish, and this is your gratitude.’

‘I did not mean to steal,’ said the Merchant very humbly. ‘My little daughter begged me to bring her a white rose, and this is the only one I have been able to find.’

‘It is my favourite rose,’ said the Beast, ‘and any one who touches it is instantly put to death. But I will let you go free if you will promise me one thing. Come back in a month’s time and bring with you the first thing that runs to meet you when you reach home.’

The Merchant promised at once, glad to be set free so easily. He only hoped it might be the cat and not his favourite dog that would run to meet him, for he did not mind parting with the cat.

But, alas! it was neither the cat nor the

dog! It was no other than his little daughter Beauty.

She had been watching all the morning from the tower, and when she saw him riding along the road she was so glad that she ran out quickly to welcome him.

'O father!' she cried, 'I see you have brought me my beautiful white rose.'

But her father looked so white and strange, and gazed at her so sadly, that she grew frightened.

'Dear father, what has happened?' she asked, 'and why do you look so troubled?'

Then the Merchant dismounted and took Beauty's hand. And as they walked through the garden he told her all that had happened to him, and the promise he had made to the Beast.

'But I will never, never give you up, my little Beauty,' said her father, when he had told her all.

'But, father, it was a promise,' said Beauty, 'and I could not let you break your word for my sake. I will go back with you to meet the Beast, and perhaps, after all, he

will not hurt me. He must be a good Beast if he loves to have such beautiful white roses in his garden.'

So the Merchant let Beauty have her way, hoping that something might happen before the month was ended. But the time slipped quickly by, and the day came when he must return with Beauty to the palace of the Beast.

Beauty rode on her own white pony by her father's side, and they went silently through the forest, for they were both too sad to talk.

And when they came to the palace, which the Merchant remembered so well, the door stood wide open just as it had done before. There, too, in the hall a feast was prepared, but this time two places were set, as if for a prince and princess.

Poor Beauty and her father sat down very sadly to supper, but they could eat nothing. And just then the clock struck nine, and a terrible roaring noise was heard outside. Then the door opened and the Beast came in.

Now, although he looked so fierce and terrible, the Beast had a kind voice, and he spoke quite gently to the trembling Merchant.

‘Is this your daughter for whom you stole my rose?’ he asked.

‘Yes, this is Beauty,’ answered her father. ‘I would have broken my promise to you, but she would not allow me.’

‘You are welcome to stay here for one night,’ said the Beast. ‘But to-morrow you must go away and leave Beauty with me. She shall have everything she can wish for here, therefore do not be unhappy about her.’

So the next morning the poor father was obliged to ride off alone. He was very, very sad, but Beauty leaned out of her window and smiled, and waved her handkerchief to him, that he might believe she was quite happy.

Indeed she soon grew quite gay and contented, for she had everything in the castle which she could want. Her bedroom was the prettiest room she had ever seen, with pink and white walls and daintiest silken

curtains, and the roses, which peeped through the window, framed a wonderful mirror which stood upon the table. Beauty knew at once this was a magic mirror, for underneath in golden letters she read :

‘This my magic heart of glass
Paints your wishes as they pass.
Know, by these our fairy laws,
What you wish for shall be yours.’

‘I shall be able to wish myself home, whenever I am unhappy,’ said Beauty, clapping her hands. ‘And so I need never feel lonely.’

Now Beauty had no one to play with and was quite alone all the day long. Only at supper-time, when the clock struck nine and she was seated at the great table in the hall, there would come a knock at the door and a voice would say, ‘May I come in, Beauty?’

‘Certainly, Beast,’ she would answer. And then the door opened and the Beast would come in.

And they would have supper together, and after they had finished Beauty would

sit and sing, with the soft light of the tall candles shining on her golden hair, while the poor Beast sat spellbound listening to her music.

'Do you think I am very ugly?' asked the Beast one night. And his voice sounded so sad that Beauty found it very difficult to answer quite truthfully.

'You have a kind face,' she said at last with a sigh, 'but you really are very ugly.'

'Then I suppose you hate me,' said the Beast mournfully.

'O! no, indeed, I do not,' said Beauty. 'I like you very much.'

'O Beauty,' cried the Beast, 'will you marry me, then?'

'How can I marry a beast?' said Beauty, the tears standing in her blue eyes. 'I do not love you enough for that.'

When Beauty went to bed that night she felt very sad because she had made the poor Beast so unhappy. And then she began to long to see her home and her father again. So she went to the magic mirror, and as she looked, her wish was painted on its shining

surface, and she saw her old home and her dear father lying ill in bed.

Next day Beauty could neither play nor work, and could only wait impatiently until supper-time came. Then when the door opened and the Beast came in, she ran to meet him and asked if she might go home, just for one week, to see her father.

‘If you go you will never, never come back,’ said the Beast slowly.

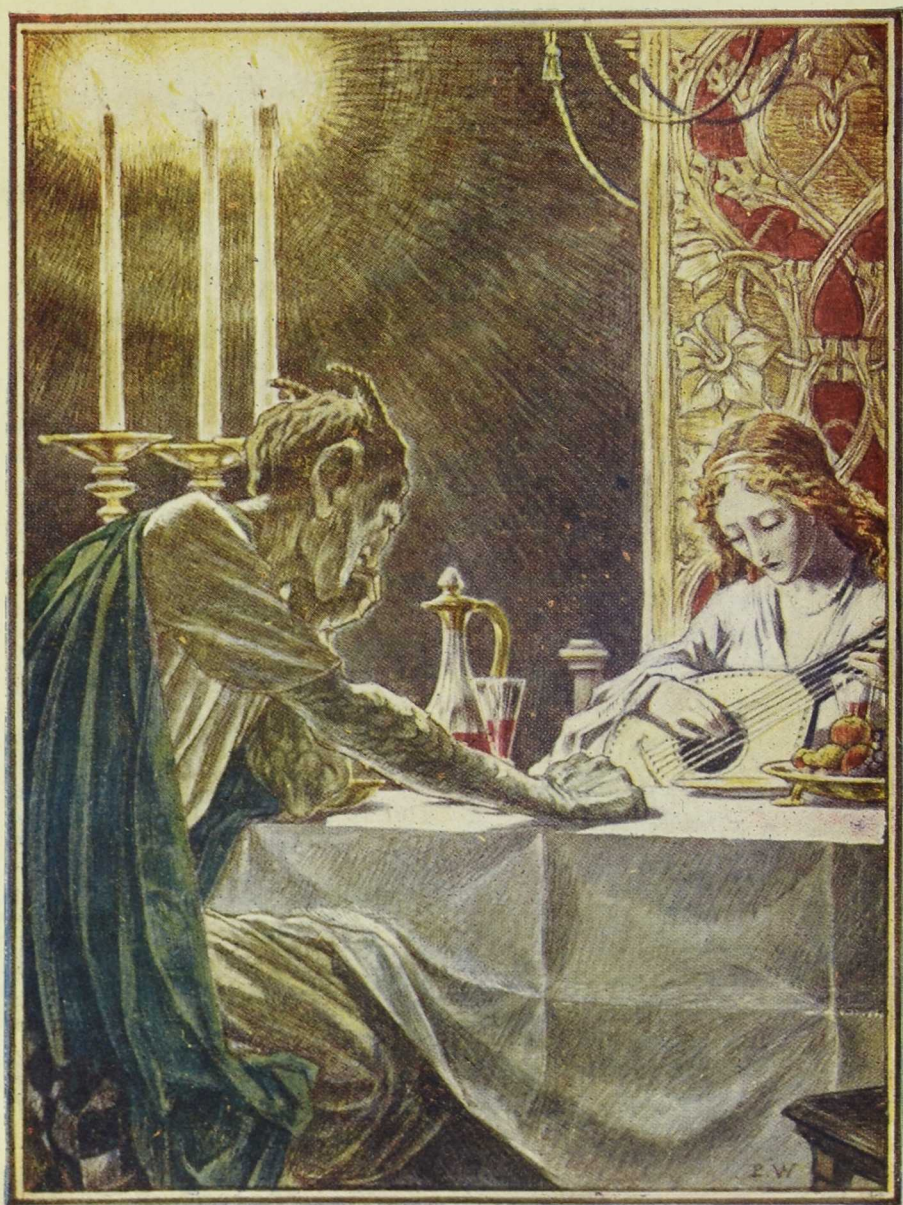
‘I promise you that I will come back in one week, dear Beast,’ said Beauty, and there was the sound of a sob in her voice.

The Beast shook his head and sighed deeply.

‘Well, go if you wish it so much,’ he said, ‘but take this ring with you.’ And he placed on Beauty’s finger a curious old gold ring.

‘If you should ever want to come back,’ he said, ‘place this ring on your table before you go to bed, and when you wake up you will find yourself here in your own little pink and white room.’

Beauty promised to keep the ring care-



The poor Beast sat spellbound listening to Beauty's music

fully, and that night she looked again in the magic mirror and wished herself home.

In a moment the pink and white room faded away, and she found herself standing by her father's bedside, and he was weeping with joy to think he had found his little Beauty again. He began to get well at once, for the very sight of Beauty seemed to make him better.

But the week soon came to an end, and then Beauty felt she could not bear to leave her father. So she made up her mind she must break her promise and stay just one other week.

She could not help wondering what the poor Beast would think of her, and one night when she had been thinking a great deal about him, she dreamed a strange, sad dream.

She thought she was back in the garden of the Beast's palace, and as she wandered about she came to the white rose bush. There lay the poor Beast, so thin and wan that he looked as if he were dying, and as she ran towards him she heard him moan,

'O Beauty, Beauty, you have broken my heart, and I shall die without you!'

Then Beauty awoke with a cry, and she felt so unhappy that she slipped out of bed and placed her magic ring upon the table, for she longed to see her dear Beast again.

Next morning, just as the Beast had promised it should be, she woke up in her own little pink and white room, where the roses nodded a welcome through the open window.

All day she waited anxiously for supper-time, and when the clock struck nine she held her breath, waiting to hear the Beast's voice saying as usual, 'May I come in, Beauty?'

But no one knocked at the door, and a great stillness hung over the castle.

'Oh, what has happened to my dear Beast?' cried Beauty. And then she remembered her dream and ran quickly out into the garden to look for him.

Straight to the white rose bush she ran, and there lay the poor Beast, so stiff and quiet that she thought he must be dead.

The white roses bending over him had wept their white petals on his rough coat, but he never stirred.

'Oh, my dear Beast!' cried Beauty, and she kneeled down and threw her arms round his neck. 'I have come back to take care of you. Do not die, and I will marry you now, for I love you with all my heart.'

And Beauty hid her face in her hands and burst into tears.

Was the Beast indeed dead? Surely there was a sound as if something moved. Beauty looked up quickly, and through a mist of tears she saw the Beast was no longer there, but a handsome young Prince stood by her side.

'Who are you?' asked Beauty; 'and what have you done with my dear Beast? My heart will break if I do not find him.'

'Dear Beauty,' said the Prince, 'do you not know me? I am the Beast whom your love has brought back to life and happiness. An evil spell was cast around me so that I was obliged to take the form of a beast, and nothing could set me free until a beautiful

maiden should love me, and promise to marry me.'

'If you truly are my dear Beast, I will marry you,' said Beauty.

Then they wandered together in the moonlit garden, and the Prince made a crown of white roses, which he placed on Beauty's head. And together they went to the magic mirror, and when Beauty looked in she saw her dear father living for all the rest of his days in the palace with his little daughter Beauty, and when the Prince looked in he saw the picture of a wedding where the bride wore a wreath of pure white roses.

And the roses and the magic mirror nodded to one another, for they knew that the wishes would come true, and that there was nothing but happiness in store for Beauty and the Beast.

CINDERELLA

In the happy days of Long Ago, when every child had a Fairy Godmother, and every Fairy Godmother had a Magic Wand, there lived a little girl whose name was Ella. She was a very happy little girl as long as her mother was alive, but when her dear mother died all was changed. For, very soon, her father brought home a new wife who did not like little girls at all, and only cared for her own two proud, ugly daughters.

Now these two daughters were so idle and selfish that they made their poor little step-sister do all the work. She washed the dishes and cooked the dinner, she swept the rooms and made the beds, and when all the housework was finished she was obliged to wait on her two proud sisters, make their fine dresses, and brush their hair when they went to bed. And at last, when everything was done, she would be so tired that

she could only creep near the kitchen fire and rest among the cinders.

‘Sitting among the cinders as usual!’ her stepmother would cry. ‘You ought to be called Cinder-Ella instead of Ella.’

And soon no one thought of calling her anything but Cinderella.

It happened about this time that the Prince, whose father was King of that country, was nearly twenty-one years old, and to celebrate his birthday a splendid ball was to be given at the royal palace. Invitations were sent out far and near, and great was the delight of Cinderella’s step-sisters when they also received an invitation, sealed with the royal seal. They were so wild with joy that they could not help calling Cinderella from the kitchen to hear the good news.

‘I suppose it is not meant for me as well?’ asked Cinderella wistfully.

‘You indeed!’ screamed the elder sister. ‘Who would ask a dusty little ash-sweeper to go to a royal ball?’

‘Go back to your work,’ said the second

sister with a scornful toss of her head.
'You go to a ball indeed!'

So Cinderella went sadly back to her work, and all the time she was sweeping and dusting she dreamed of the lovely ball and the beautiful dresses, and at night she cried herself to sleep because she could not go.

What a stir there was when the night of the ball arrived! Poor Cinderella needed a dozen pairs of hands to do all that she was told to do.

'Come and brush my hair,' cried the eldest sister.

'Be quick and fasten my shoes,' said the second.

'And fetch my fan.'

'And find my gloves.'

But at last they were all dressed, and they stepped into the carriage and drove off to the ball, telling Cinderella to take care of the house, and to sit up to let them in. Poor Cinderella! It really was more than she could bear, and she sat down by the kitchen fire and sobbed as if her heart would break. She wanted to go to the ball

so much, and she was so tired of work. She did not even care to knit, and she sat sadly gazing into the fire while the black kitten rolled her ball of wool into a dreadful tangle.

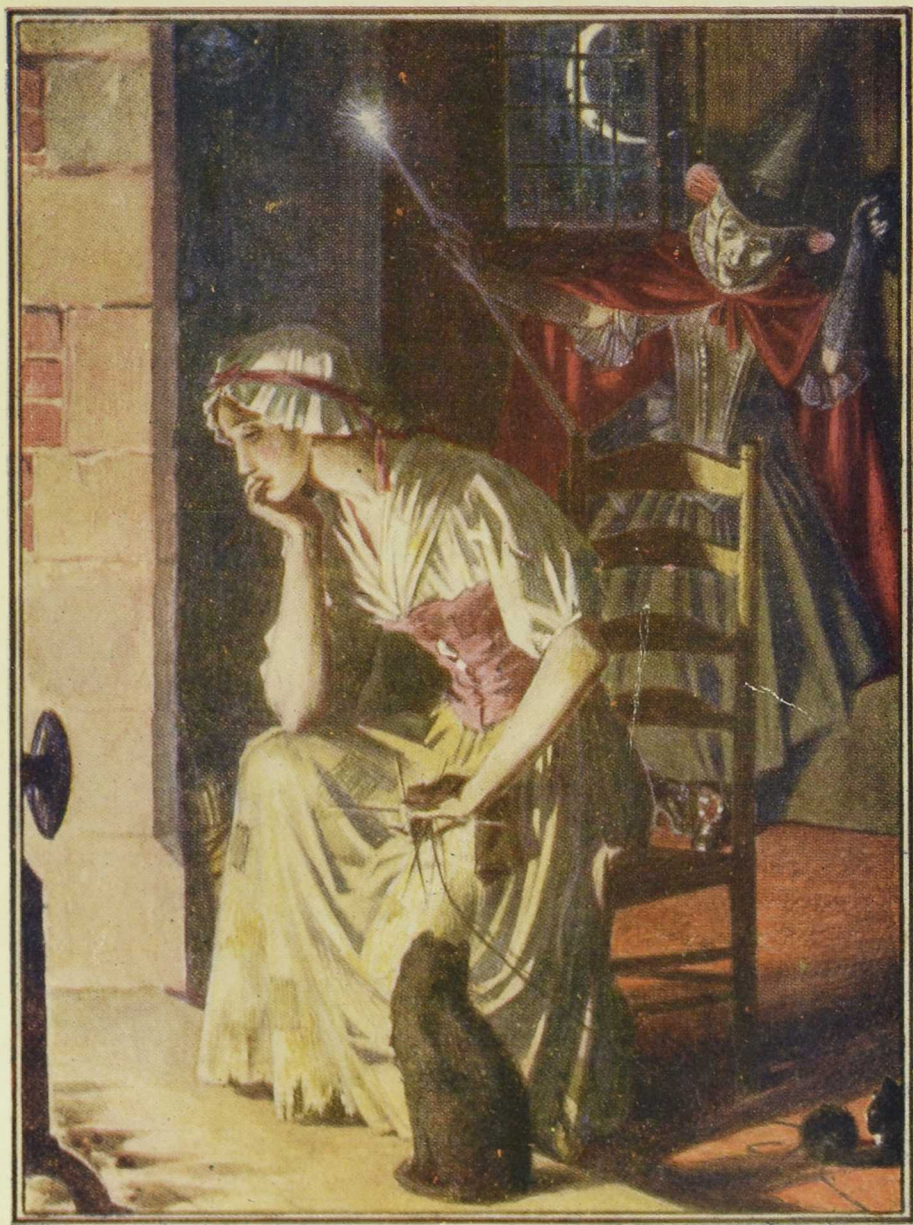
‘What are you crying about, my dear?’ cried a shrill old voice at her elbow, and Cinderella started with surprise.

She had thought she was all alone, but there by the window, through which the new moon was peeping, stood a little old lady. She was dressed in a red cloak, and a queer black-pointed hat, and in her hand she held a Magic Wand.

‘What are you crying about, my dear?’ she asked again. And she smiled so kindly that poor Cinderella felt sure she was a friend.

‘I am crying because I cannot go to the ball,’ answered Cinderella, getting up to drop a curtsey. ‘Please, may I ask who you are?’

‘Do you not know me, child?’ asked the old woman. ‘I am your Fairy Godmother, and I have come to-night to give you your wish.’



She sat sadly gazing into the fire

'Oh, Godmother dear,' cried Cinderella, her eyes shining with joy. 'Do you really mean that I shall go to the ball? But how can I go in this dusty old frock?' And her face grew sad again.

'Never mind the frock,' said her Godmother. 'Do exactly as I tell you, and leave the rest to me. First, go into the garden and bring me the biggest pumpkin you can find.'

Cinderella ran to the garden as quickly as she could, and brought back a great yellow pumpkin and put it just outside the door.

'Now look if there are any mice in the mouse-trap, and bring it to me,' said the Fairy Godmother.

Cinderella ran to the cupboard and brought the mouse-trap, with six mice in it.

'Now fetch the rat-trap,' ordered her Godmother.

And Cinderella brought the rat-trap from the cellar, with a fat old rat in it.

'That is well,' said the Fairy Godmother, nodding her head. 'There is just one more thing I want. Look on the warmest side of

the garden wall, and bring me two green lizards that you will find there.'

'Here they are, Godmother,' said Cinderella as she placed them beside the pumpkin, and the mouse-trap, and the rat-trap.

Then the Fairy Godmother waved her Magic Wand once over the pumpkin, and in the twinkling of an eye it was changed into a golden coach! Another wave of the wand, and the mice were changed into six cream-coloured ponies, the rat into a fat old coachman, and the two lizards into footmen in smart green liveries.

Cinderella clapped her hands with delight, but the Fairy Godmother had not finished yet. She waved her Magic Wand once more, and the old ragged frock which Cinderella wore was changed into the most beautiful robe of white shining gauze, which looked as if it had been woven from moonbeams and spangled with silver stars.

'O Godmother! Godmother!' cried Cinderella, 'how can I ever thank you?'

'Never mind about thanking me,' said her Godmother, 'but remember to do exactly as

I bid you. You must leave the ball before twelve o'clock, for when that hour strikes, the magic spell will lose its power. The coach will be a pumpkin once more, the ponies will be turned into mice, the coachman will be a rat again, the footmen will be lizards, and your beautiful dress will vanish and only your old rags will be left behind.'

'Indeed, I will do as you tell me,' said Cinderella earnestly. 'But, Godmother, how am I to dance in these old shoes?' And she pointed down to the worn-out shoes which peeped from beneath her beautiful dress.

'Tut, tut, I forgot the shoes,' said her Godmother. And then she took out of her pocket the most exquisite little pair of glass-slippers, which fitted as if they had been made for her.

'Now away to the ball, and do not forget what I have told you,' said the Fairy Godmother.

So Cinderella stepped into the golden coach, the coachman cracked his whip, the

footmen jumped up behind, and the six cream-coloured ponies went off like the wind.

The dancing had just begun at the palace, and all the fair ladies were wondering who would be asked to open the ball with the Prince, when a beautiful stranger entered the ball-room. The Prince held his breath with surprise; he had never seen any one half so beautiful before. Every one turned to look at her, and Cinderella's proud sisters whispered to each other, 'What a lovely dress! She must be a Princess.' They, of course, never dreamed that it could be their step-sister Cinderella, whom they had left alone by the kitchen fire at home.

All night long the Prince would dance with no one but the beautiful stranger, and the time passed so quickly, and Cinderella was so happy, that she quite forgot to look at the clock. But just as the Prince had led her out into the balcony, and wished to know her name, the clock began to strike twelve!

In a flash Cinderella remembered her Godmother's warning, and she darted away

and ran down the steps as fast as her feet could carry her. But in her haste she tripped, and one of her glass-slippers came off. She could not stop to pick it up, for the Prince was following close behind, and so she ran on without it. Just as she reached the great door the last stroke of twelve sounded, and when the Prince came running up and asked the guards if any one had passed that way, they said, 'Only a poor girl in rags, your Highness.'

Then the Prince went sadly back, for all that was left of the lovely stranger was the little shining glass-slipper which he had picked up.

Now what the Fairy Godmother had said was quite true, for when the last stroke of twelve sounded all the magic was undone. The golden coach and cream-coloured ponies, the coachman and footmen disappeared, and only a pumpkin stood in the courtyard, and six little mice scampered away, followed by a fat old rat and two green lizards. Cinderella's beautiful dress vanished, and she had only on her old patched frock as she

ran all the way home. The only thing left was the little glass-slipper, which she hid carefully away as soon as she reached home. Then she sat down by the fire to wait for the return of her stepmother and her two proud sisters.

‘Sitting among the cinders as usual,’ they cried when they came in. ‘Come, be quick and help us get ready for bed.’

‘Please tell me about the ball,’ said Cinderella humbly.

‘What should you know about balls?’ said the eldest sister crossly. She was in a very bad temper because the Prince had never asked her to dance with him.

‘Were there many beautiful ladies there?’ asked Cinderella.

‘None as beautiful as we were,’ said the second sister, ‘except perhaps a strange Princess who danced all night with the Prince.’

‘Do you think I shall ever go to a ball?’ asked Cinderella as she brushed their hair.

‘A pretty figure you would be at a ball!’ they both cried out together. ‘Be off to

bed ; you must be dreaming to think of such a thing.'

Meanwhile the Prince could think of nothing else but the beautiful lady whose name even he did not know, and next day he sent round heralds throughout the kingdom with a royal proclamation.

'To each and every subject in our kingdom be it known, whereas last night a glass-slipper was found in the royal palace, whomsoever it shall fit, she alone shall be the Prince's Bride.'

And the glass-slipper was placed on a purple velvet cushion and carried around to every house, that each lady might try it on.

When the herald arrived at the house where Cinderella lived, the proud sisters were so excited that their hands quite trembled.

'I shall try it on first,' said the eldest.

'My foot is smaller than yours,' said the second, and they pushed each other very rudely.

But the eldest snatched up the slipper first, and began to try it on. She pushed

and tugged till her face grew quite scarlet, but the shoe would not go even half-way on.

Then the second sister took it and managed to squeeze her toes in, but the heel would not go on.

'Silly thing; I don't believe it was meant to be worn,' she cried, as she kicked it off and burst into tears.

Meanwhile Cinderella had crept quietly into the room, and as the herald picked up the shoe, she said in a low voice, 'Please may I try on the glass-slipper?'

'How dare you come in here?' cried the eldest sister.

'You try on the shoe indeed!' cried the second one. 'Be off to the kitchen and sit among your cinders.'

But the herald bowed low to Cinderella and offered her the slipper upon the velvet cushion.

'It is the Prince's command that every one shall try on the slipper,' he said.

Then Cinderella sat down and fitted on the little glass-slipper as easily as if it had been made for her, and while every

one stared with surprise, she took from her pocket the other slipper which matched it.

‘It certainly fits her,’ said the herald.

‘Take it off at once,’ screamed the two sisters.

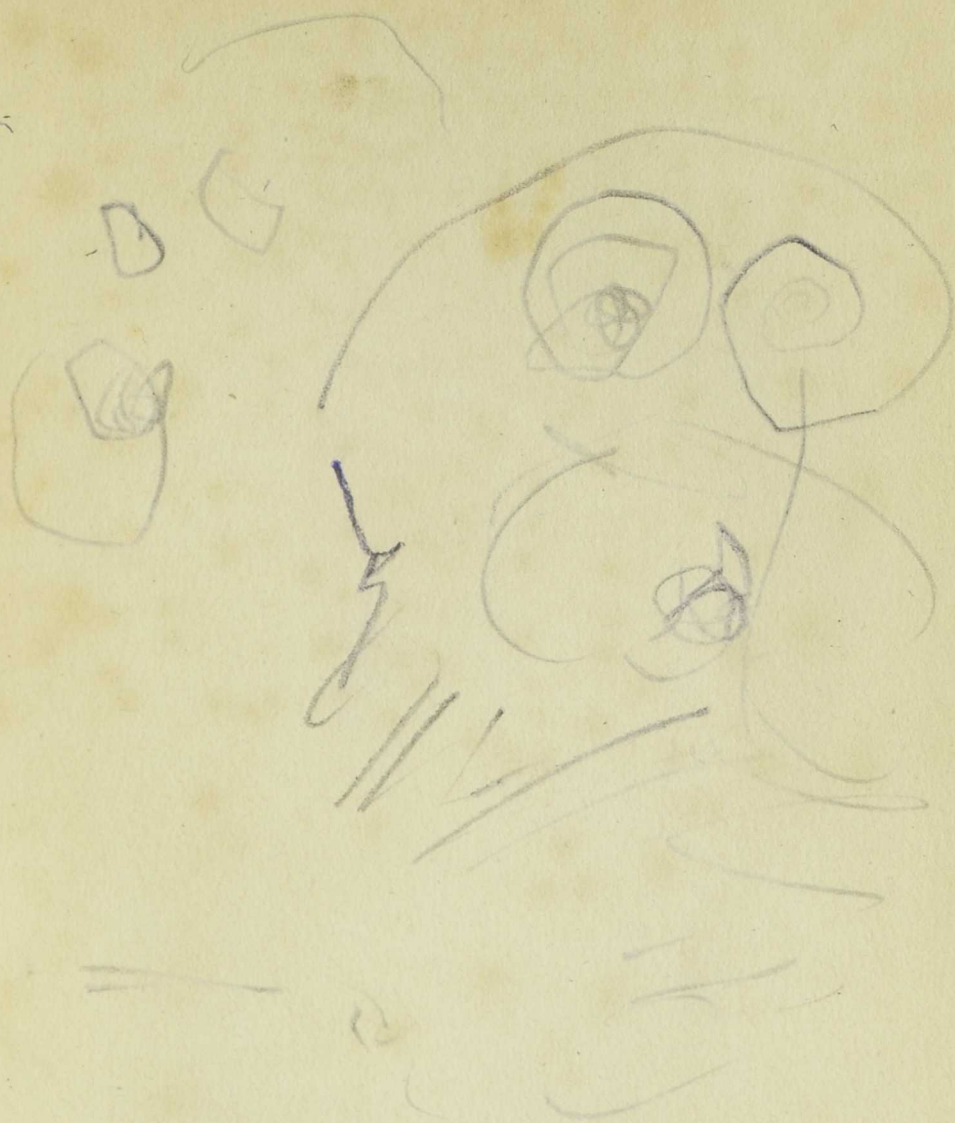
But before they could snatch off the shoe, a little old woman stood in front of Cinderella and waved her Magic Wand. And in an instant the old ragged dress had vanished, and there stood the beautiful lady of the ball, in her dress of woven moonbeams spangled with silver stars.

The Prince did not wait to ask if the glass-slipper had fitted her, for he knew his beautiful lady at once, and the wedding-bells were rung that very day.

The two proud sisters were sorry now that they had been so unkind to Cinderella, but she quite forgot all they had made her suffer, and was as kind to them as if they had been her own sisters.

And so Cinderella married the Prince, and lived happily ever after. She went to all the balls and always wore the glass-

slippers, for they never grew old, but always looked as shining and beautiful as on that first night when the Fairy Godmother had brought them out of her magic pocket.



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