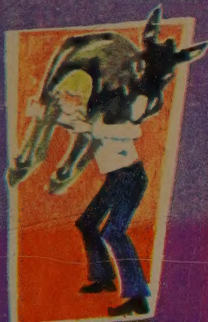
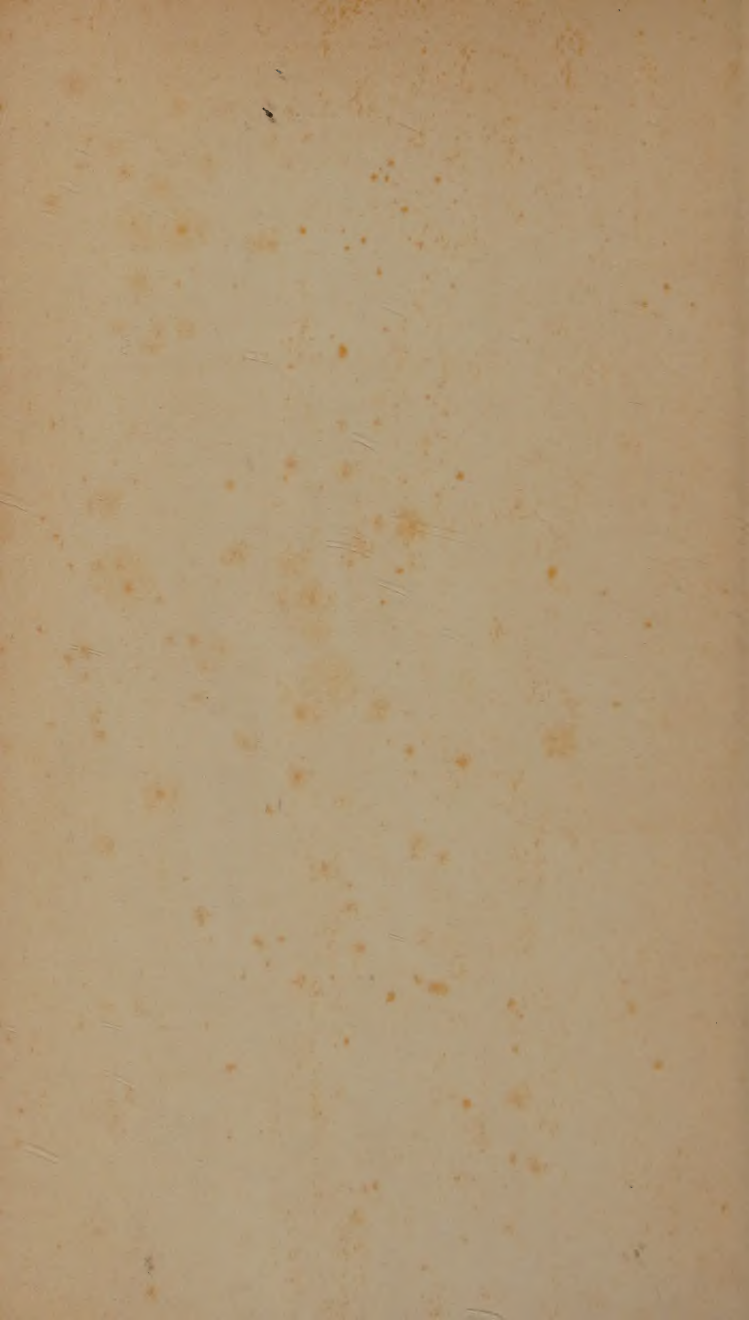




English Fairy Tales

JOSEPH JACOBS





Russell

PUFFIN BOOKS

Editor: Kaye Webb

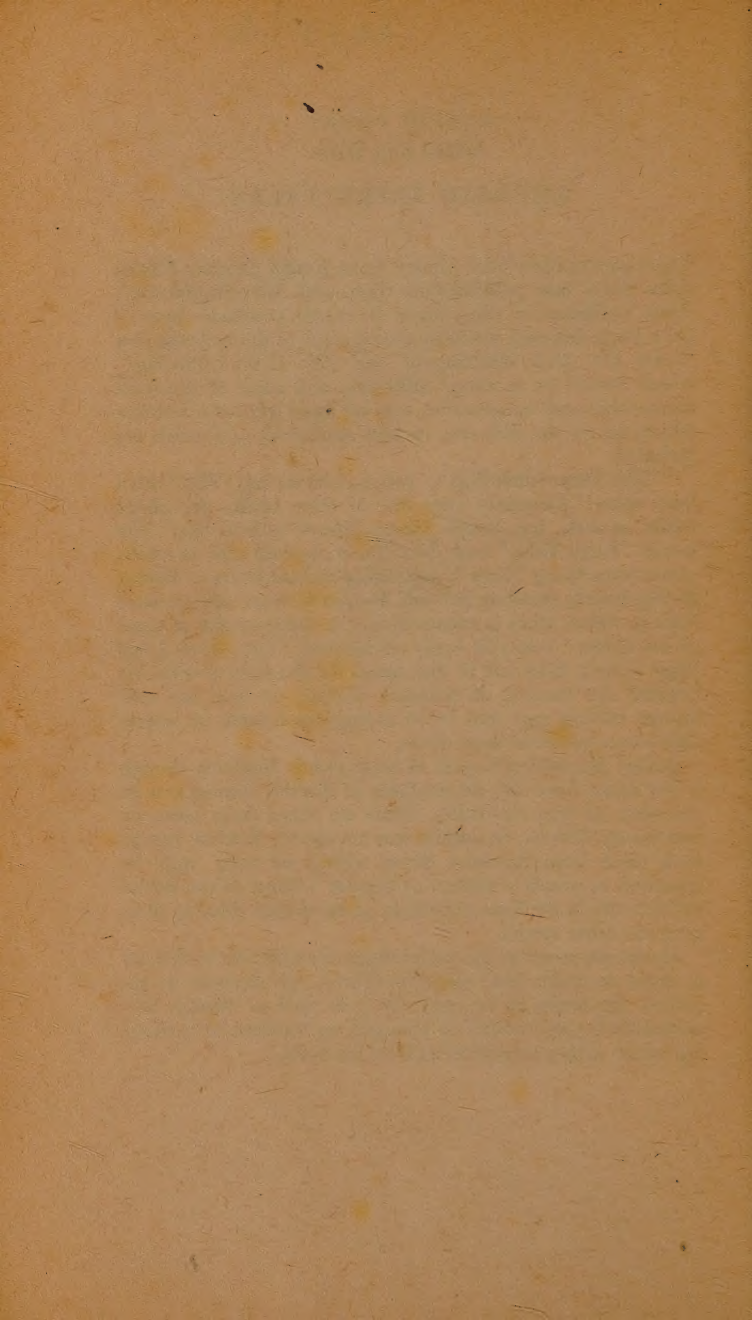
ENGLISH FAIRY TALES

These stories have been chosen from Joseph Jacobs's *English Fairy Tales*, first published in 1890, and *More English Fairy Tales*, published in 1894. Since we couldn't include them all (in a book this size) we have picked some of the very familiar stories, like 'Dick Whittington' and 'The Three Little Pigs', which should be in every collection, and some of the most memorable and imaginative, and we have left out a number which are on the dull side, or very similar to ones which are included.

"'The Three Little Pigs', you may be saying, 'That's not a fairy story!' Certainly very few of these stories are about fairies as such, but Joseph Jacobs himself tells us that 'The words "Fairy Tales" must be taken to include tales in which occurs something "fairy", something extraordinary - fairies, giants, dwarfs, speaking animals. It must be taken also to cover tales in which what is extraordinary is the stupidity of some of the actors.' You will easily understand 'The Three Little Pigs' to be a fairy tale in that sense, for the story is certainly beyond the bounds of ordinary reality; no one has ever known talking pigs that build themselves houses, or wolves that come and blow them down.

Joseph Jacobs found most of his stories in England, though a few came from the descendants of English immigrants in America, or from Australia, where he heard them when he was young. Others, he admits, are not strictly English, but he took them from Lowland Scots, which, he says, 'may be regarded as simply a dialect of English'! Some of the stories existed only in the form of ballads, so he re-told them to fit in with the other stories.

He usually re-wrote the stories that were told him in dialect, in order to make them easier to follow, and because he intended the books to be read aloud as well as silently. Occasionally he also added or changed an incident in a story, but never without mentioning it in his notes.



Joseph Jacobs
English Fairy Tales



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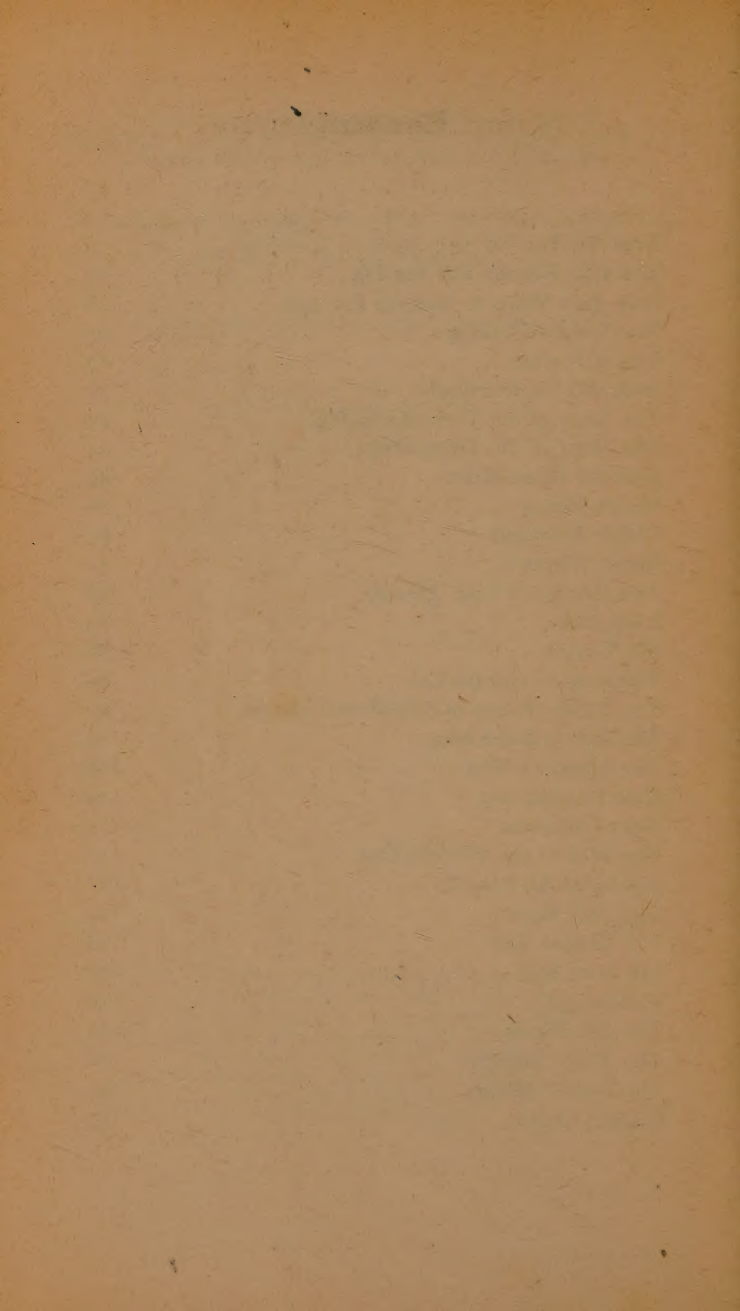
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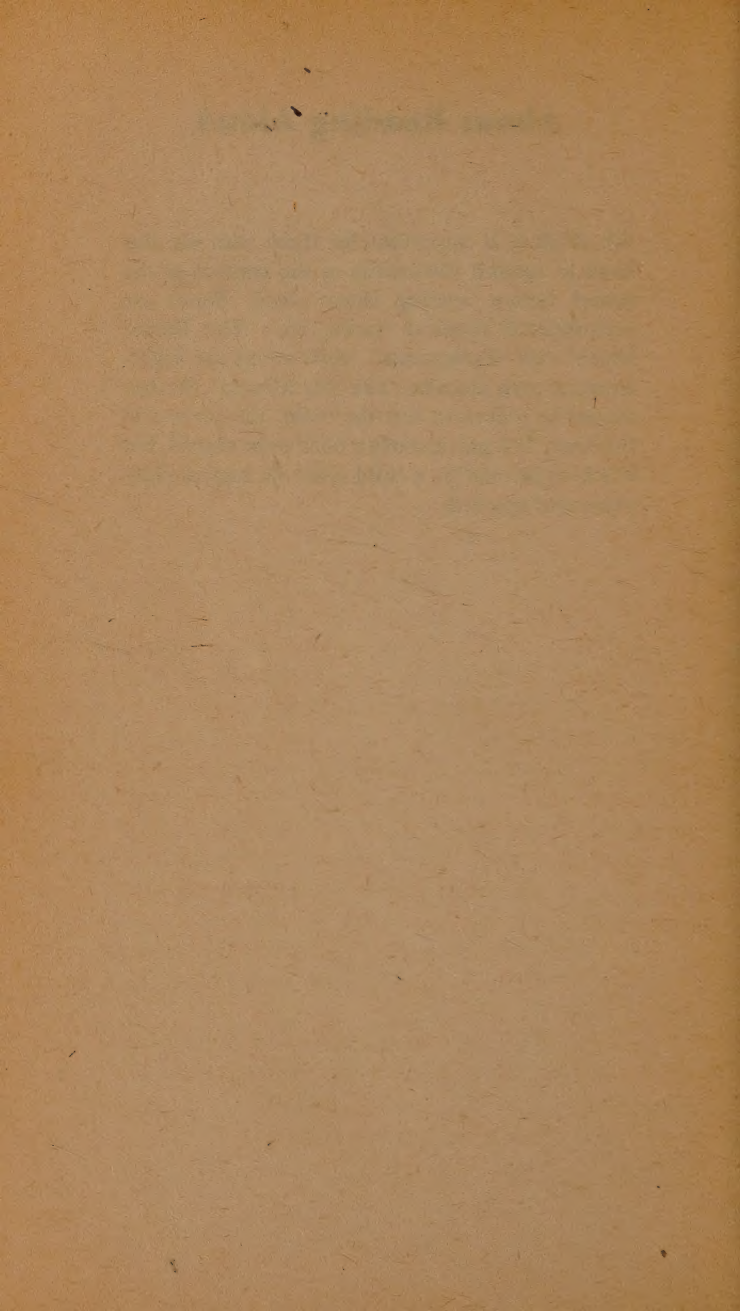
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About Reading Aloud

We think it is important for those who use this book to remind themselves of the content of the stories before reading them aloud. Some are sophisticated magical stories, like 'The Buried Moon' and 'Tattercoats', while others are frightening or even macabre, like 'Mr Miacca'. So they should be picked to suit the child, the place and the hour. It is particularly a book to be shared, but if it is to be read by a child alone we suggest eight years and upwards.





Tom Tit Tot

ONCE upon a time there was a woman, and she baked five pies. And when they came out of the oven, they were that overbaked the crusts were too hard to eat. So she says to her daughter:

‘Darter,’ says she, ‘put you them there pies on the shelf, and leave ’em there a little, and they’ll come again.’ – She meant, you know, the crust would get soft.

But the girl, she says to herself: ‘Well, if they’ll come again, I’ll eat ’em now.’ And she set to work and ate ’em all, first and last.

Well, come supper-time the woman said: ‘Go you, and get one o’ them there pies. I dare say they’ve come again now.’

The girl went and she looked, and there was nothing but the dishes. So back she came and says she: ‘Noo, they ain’t come again.’

‘Not one of ’em?’ says the mother.

‘Not one of ’em,’ says she.

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'Well, come again, or not come again,' said the woman, 'I'll have one for supper.'

'But you can't, if they ain't come,' said the girl.

'But I can,' says she. 'Go you, and bring the best of 'em.'

'Best or worst,' says the girl, 'I've ate 'em all, and you can't have one till that's come again.'

Well, the woman she was done, and she took her spinning to the door to spin, and as she span she sang:

'My darter ha' ate five, five pies today.

My darter ha' ate five, five pies today.'

The king was coming down the street, and he heard her sing, but what she sang he couldn't hear, so he stopped and said:

'What was that you were singing, my good woman?'

The woman was ashamed to let him hear what her daughter had been doing, so she sang, instead of that:

'My darter ha' spun five, five skeins today.

My darter ha' spun five, five skeins today.'

'Stars o' mine!' said the king, 'I never heard tell of any-one that could do that.'

Then he said: 'Look you here, I want a wife, and I'll marry your daughter. But look you here,' says he, 'eleven months out of the year she shall have all she likes to eat, and all the gowns she likes to get, and all the company she likes to keep; but the last month of the year she'll have to spin five skeins every day, and if she don't I shall kill her.'

'All right,' says the woman; for she thought what a grand marriage that was. And as for the five skeins, when the time came, there'd be plenty of ways of getting out of it, and likeliest, he'd have forgotten all about it.

Well, so they were married. And for eleven months the girl had all she liked to eat, and all the gowns she liked to get, and all the company she liked to keep.

Tom Tit Tot

But when the time was getting over, she began to think about the skeins and to wonder if he had 'em in mind. But not one word did he say about 'em, and she thought he'd wholly forgotten 'em.

However, the last day of the last month he takes her to a room she'd never set eyes on before. There was nothing in it but a spinning-wheel and a stool. And says he: 'Now, my dear, here you'll be shut in tomorrow with some victuals and some flax, and if you haven't spun five skeins by the night, your head'll go off.'

And away he went about his business.

Well, she was that frightened, she'd always been such a gatless girl, that she didn't so much as know how to spin, and what was she to do tomorrow with no one to come nigh her to help her? She sat down on a stool in the kitchen, and law! how she did cry!

However, all of a sudden she heard a sort of knocking low down on the door. She upped and oped it, and what should she see but a small little black thing with a long tail. That looked up at her right curious, and that said:

'What are you a-crying for?'

'What's that to you?' says she.

'Never you mind,' that said, 'but tell me what you're a-crying for.'

'That won't do me no good if I do,' says she.

'You don't know that,' that said, and twirled that's tail round.

'Well,' says she, 'that won't do no harm, if that don't do no good,' and she upped and told about the pies, and the skeins, and everything.

'This is what I'll do,' says the little black thing. 'I'll come to your window every morning and take the flax and bring it spun at night.'

'What's your pay?' says she.

That looked out of the corner of that's eyes, and that

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said: 'I'll give you three guesses every night to guess my name, and if you haven't guessed it before the month's up you shall be mine.'

Well, she thought, she'd be sure to guess that's name before the month was up. 'All right,' says she, 'I agree.'

'All right,' that says, and law! how that twirled that's tail.

Well, the next day, her husband took her into the room, and there was the flax and the day's food.

'Now, there's the flax,' says he, 'and if that ain't spun up this night, off goes your head.' And then he went out and locked the door.

He'd hardly gone, when there was a knocking against the window.

She upped and she oped it, and there sure enough was the little old thing sitting on the ledge.

'Where's the flax?' says he.

'Here it be,' says she. And she gave it to him.

Well, come the evening a knocking came again to the window. She upped and she oped it, and there was the little old thing with five skeins of flax on his arm.

'Here it be,' says he, and he gave it to her.

'Now, what's my name?' says he.

'What, is that Bill?' says she.

'Noo, that ain't,' says he, and he twirled his tail.

'Is that Ned?' says she.

'Noo, that ain't,' says he, and he twirled his tail.

'Well, is that Mark?' says she.

'Noo, that ain't,' says he, and he twirled his tail harder, and away he flew.

Well, when her husband came in, there were the five skeins ready for him. 'I see I shan't have to kill you to-night, my dear,' says he; 'you'll have your food and your flax in the morning,' says he, and away he goes.

Well, every day the flax and the food were brought, and

Tom Tit Tot

every day that there little black impet used to come mornings and evenings. And all the day the girl sate trying to think of names to say to it when it came at night. But she never hit on the right one. And as it got towards the end of the month, the impet began to look so maliceful, and that twirled that's tail faster and faster each time she gave a guess.

At last it came to the last day but one. The impet came at night along with the five skeins, and that said:

'What, ain't you got my name yet?'

'Is that Nicodemus?' says she.

'Noo, 't ain't,' that says.

'Is that Sammlle?' says she.

'Noo, 't ain't,' that says.

'A-well, is that Methusalem?' says she.

'Noo, 't ain't that neither,' that says.

Then that looks at her with that's eyes like a coal of fire, and that says: 'Woman, there's only tomorrow night, and then you'll be mine!' And away it flew.

Well, she felt that horrid. However, she heard the king coming along the passage. In he came, and when he sees the five skeins, he says, says he:

'Well, my dear,' says he. 'I don't see but what you'll have your skeins ready tomorrow night as well, and as I reckon I shan't have to kill you, I'll have supper in here tonight.' So they brought supper, and another stool for him, and down the two sate.

Well, he hadn't eaten but a mouthful or so, when he stops and begins to laugh.

'What is it?' says she.

'A-why,' says he, 'I was out a-hunting today, and I got away to a place in the wood I'd never seen before. And there was an old chalk-pit. And I heard a kind of a sort of humming. So I got off my hobby, and I went right quiet to the pit, and I looked down. Well, what should there be

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but the funniest little black thing you ever set eyes on. And what was that doing, but that had a little spinning wheel, and that was spinning wonderful fast, and twirling that's tail. And as that span that sang:

'Nimmy nimmy not
My name's Tom Tit Tot.'

Well, when the girl heard this, she felt as if she could have jumped out of her skin for joy, but she didn't say a word.

Next day that there little thing looked so malicious when he came for the flax. And when night came she heard that knocking against the window panes. She oped the window, and that came right in on the ledge. That was grinning from ear to ear, and Oo! that's tail was twirling round so fast.

'What's my name?' that says, as that gave her the skeins.

'Is that Solomon?' she says, pretending to be afeard.

'Noo, 'tain't,' that says, and that came further into the room.

'Well, is that Zebedee?' says she again.

'Noo, 'tain't,' says the impet. And then that laughed and twirled that's tail you couldn't hardly see it.

'Take time, woman,' that says; 'next guess, and you're mine.' And that stretched out that's black hands at her.

Well, she backed a step or two, and she looked at it, and then she laughed out, and says she, pointing her finger at it:

'Nimmy nimmy not
Your name's Tom Tit Tot.'

Well, when that heard her, that gave an awful shriek and away that flew into the dark, and she never saw it any more.



The Old Woman and her Pig

AN old woman was sweeping her house, and she found a little crooked sixpence. 'What,' said she, 'shall I do with this little sixpence? I will go to market, and buy a little pig.'

As she was coming home, she came to a stile: but the piggy wouldn't go over the stile.

She went a little farther, and she met a dog. So she said to him: 'Dog! dog! bite pig; piggy won't go over the stile; and I shan't get home tonight.' But the dog wouldn't.

She went a little farther, and she met a stick. So she said: 'Stick! stick! beat dog! dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home tonight.' But the stick wouldn't.

She went a little farther, and she met a fire. So she said: 'Fire! fire! burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't

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bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home tonight.' But the fire wouldn't.

She went a little farther, and she met some water. So she said: 'Water! water! quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home tonight.' But the water wouldn't.

She went a little farther, and she met an ox. So she said: 'Ox! ox! drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home tonight.' But the ox wouldn't.

She went a little farther, and she met a butcher. So she said: 'Butcher! butcher! kill ox; ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home tonight.' But the butcher wouldn't.

She went a little farther, and she met a rope. So she said: 'Rope! rope! hang butcher; butcher won't kill ox; ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire, fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home tonight.' But the rope wouldn't.

She went a little farther, and she met a rat. So she said: 'Rat! rat! gnaw rope; rope won't hang butcher; butcher won't kill ox; ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home tonight.' But the rat wouldn't.

She went a little farther, and she met a cat. So she said: 'Cat! cat! kill rat; rat won't gnaw rope; rope won't hang butcher; butcher won't kill ox; ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the

The Old Woman and her Pig

stile; and I shan't get home tonight.' But the cat said to her, 'If you will go to yonder cow, and fetch me a saucer of milk, I will kill the rat.' So away went the old woman to the cow.

But the cow said to her: 'If you will go to yonder hay-stack, and fetch me a handful of hay, I'll give you the milk.' So away went the old woman to the hay-stack; and she brought the hay to the cow.

As soon as the cow had eaten the hay, she gave the old woman the milk; and away she went with it in a saucer to the cat.

As soon as the cat had lapped up the milk, the cat began to kill the rat; the rat began to gnaw the rope; the rope began to hang the butcher; the butcher began to kill the ox; the ox began to drink the water; the water began to quench the fire; the fire began to burn the stick; the stick began to beat the dog; the dog began to bite the pig; the little pig in a fright jumped over the stile; and so the old woman got home that night.



How Jack Went to Seek his Fortune

ONCE on a time there was a boy named Jack, and one morning he started to go and seek his fortune.

He hadn't gone very far before he met a cat.

'Where are you going, Jack?' said the cat.

'I am going to seek my fortune.'

'May I go with you?'

'Yes,' said Jack, 'the more the merrier.'

So on they went, jiggelty-jolt, jiggelty-jolt.

They went a little farther and they met a dog.

'Where are you going, Jack?' said the dog.

'I am going to seek my fortune.'

'May I go with you?'

'Yes,' said Jack, 'the more the merrier.'

So on they went, jiggelty-jolt, jiggelty-jolt.

They went a little farther and they met a goat.

'Where are you going, Jack?' said the goat.

'I am going to seek my fortune.'

How Jack went to Seek his Fortune

'May I go with you?'

'Yes,' said Jack, 'the more the merrier.'

So on they went, jiggelty-jolt, jiggelty-jolt.

They went a little farther and they met a bull.

'Where are you going, Jack?'

'I am going to seek my fortune.'

'May I go with you?'

'Yes,' said Jack, 'the more the merrier.'

So on they went, jiggelty-jolt, jiggelty-jolt.

They went a little farther and they met a rooster.

'Where are you going, Jack?' said the rooster.

'I am going to seek my fortune.'

'May I go with you?'

'Yes,' said Jack, 'the more the merrier.'

So on they went, jiggelty-jolt, jiggelty-jolt.

Well, they went on till it was about dark, and they began to think of some place where they could spend the night. About this time they came in sight of a house, and Jack told them to keep still while he went up and looked in through the window. And there were some robbers counting over their money. Then Jack went back and told them to wait till he gave the word, and then to make all the noise they could. So when they were all ready Jack gave the word, and the cat mewed, and the dog barked, and the goat bleated, and the bull bellowed, and the rooster crowed, and altogether they made such a dreadful noise that it frightened the robbers all away.

And then they went in and took possession of the house. Jack was afraid the robbers would come back in the night, and so when it came time to go to bed he put the cat in the rocking-chair, and he put the dog under the table, and he put the goat upstairs, and he put the bull in the cellar, and the rooster flew up on to the roof, and Jack went to bed.

By and by the robbers saw it was all dark and they sent

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one man back to the house to look after their money. Before long he came back in a great fright and told them his story.

'I went back to the house,' said he, 'and went in and tried to sit down in the rocking-chair, and there was an old woman knitting, and she stuck her knitting-needles into me.' That was the cat, you know.

'I went to the table to look after the money and there was a shoemaker under the table, and he stuck his awl into me.' That was the dog, you know.

'I started to go upstairs, and there was a man up there threshing, and he knocked me down with his flail.' That was the goat, you know.

'I started to go down the cellar, and there was a man down there chopping wood, and he knocked me up with his axe.' That was the bull, you know.

'But I shouldn't have minded all that if it hadn't been for that little fellow on top of the house, who kept a-hollering, "Chuck him up to me-e! Chuck him up to me-e!"' Of course, that was the cock-a-doodle-do.



Nix Nought Nothing

THERE once lived a king and a queen as many a one has been. They were long married and had no children; but at last a baby-boy came to the queen when the king was away in the far countries. The queen would not christen the boy till the king came back, and she said: 'We will just call him *Nix Nought Nothing* until his father comes home.' But it was long before he came home, and the boy had grown a fine, bonny laddie. At length the king was on his way back; but he had a big river to cross, and there was a whirlpool, and he could not get over the water. But a giant came up to him, and said: 'I'll carry you over.' But the king said: 'What's your pay?' 'Oh, give me Nix, Nought, Nothing, and I will carry you over the water on my back.' The king had never heard that his son was called Nix Nought Nothing, and so he said: 'Oh, I'll give you that and my thanks into the bargain.' When the king got home again, he was very happy to see his wife again,

and his young son. She told him that she had not given the child any name, but just Nix Nought Nothing, until he should come home again himself. The poor king was in a terrible case. He said: 'What have I done? I promised to give the giant who carried me over the river on his back, Nix Nought Nothing.' The king and the queen were sad and sorry, but they said: 'When the giant comes we will give him the hen-wife's boy; he will never know the difference.' The next day the giant came to claim the king's promise, and he sent for the hen-wife's boy; and the giant went away with the boy on his back. He travelled till he came to a big stone, and there he sat down to rest. He said:

'Hidge, Hodge, on my back, what time of day is that?'

The poor little lad said: 'It is the time that my mother, the hen-wife, takes up the eggs for the queen's breakfast.'

Then the giant was very angry, and dashed the boy on the stone and killed him.

Back he went in a tower of a temper and this time they gave him the gardener's boy. He went off with him on his back till they got to the stone again when the giant sat down to rest. And he said:

'Hidge, Hodge, on my back, what time of day do you make that?'

The gardener's boy said: 'Sure, it's the time that my mother takes up the vegetables for the queen's dinner.'

Then the giant was as wild as could be, and killed him, too.

Then the giant went back to the king's house in a terrible temper and said he would destroy them all if they did not give him Nix Nought Nothing this time. They had to do it; and when he came to the big stone, the giant said: 'What time of day is that?' Nix Nought Nothing said: 'It is the time that my father the king will be sitting down to supper.' The giant said: 'I've got the right one

Nix Nought Nothing

now'; and took Nix Nought Nothing to his own house and brought him up till he was a man.

The giant had a bonny daughter, and she and the lad grew very fond of each other. The giant said one day to Nix Nought Nothing: 'I've work for you tomorrow. There is a stable seven miles long and seven miles broad, and it has not been cleaned for seven years, and you must clean it tomorrow, or I will have you for my supper.'

The giant's daughter went out next morning with the lad's breakfast, and found him in a terrible state, for always as he cleaned out a bit, it just fell in again. The giant's daughter said she would help him, and she cried all the beasts in the field, and all the fowls in the air, and in a minute they all came, and carried away everything that was in the stable and made it all clean before the giant came home. He said: 'Shame on the wit that helped you; but I have a worse job for you tomorrow.' Then he said to Nix Nought Nothing: 'There is a lake seven miles long, and seven miles deep, and seven miles broad, and you must drain it tomorrow by nightfall, or else I'll have you for my supper.' Nix Nought Nothing began early next morning and tried to lave the water with his pail, but the lake was never getting any less, and he didn't know what to do; but the giant's daughter called on all the fish in the sea to come and drink the water, and very soon they drank it dry. When the giant saw the work done he was in a rage, and said: 'I've a worse job for you tomorrow; there is a tree, seven miles high, and no branch on it, till you get to the top, and there is a nest with seven eggs in it, and you must bring down all the eggs without breaking one, or else I'll have you for my supper.' At first the giant's daughter did not know how to help Nix Nought Nothing; but she cut off first her fingers and then her toes, and made steps of them, and he clomb the tree and got all the eggs

safe till he came just to the bottom, and then one was broken. So they determined to run away together, and after the giant's daughter had gone back to her room, and got her magic flask they set out together as fast as they could run. And they hadn't got but three fields away when they looked back and saw the giant walking along at full speed after them. 'Quick, quick!' called out the giant's daughter, 'take my comb from my hair and throw it down.' Nix Nought Nothing took her comb from her hair and threw it down, and out of every one of its prongs there sprung up a fine thick briar in the way of the giant. You may be sure it took him a long time to work his way through the briar bush, and by the time he was well through, Nix Nought Nothing and his sweetheart had run far, far away from him. But he soon came along after them, and was just like to catch 'em up when the giant's daughter called out to Nix Nought Nothing, 'Take my hair dagger and throw it down, quick, quick!' So Nix Nought Nothing threw down the hair dagger and out of it grew as quick as lightning a thick hedge of sharp razors placed criss-cross. The giant had to tread very cautiously to get through all this and meanwhile they both ran hard, and on, and on, and on, till they were nearly out of sight. But at last the giant was through, and it wasn't long before he was like to catch them up. But just as he was stretching out his hand to catch Nix Nought Nothing his daughter took out her magic flask and dashed it on the ground. And as it broke, out of it welled a big, big wave that grew, and that grew, till it reached the giant's waist and then his neck, and when it got to his head, he was drowned dead, and dead, and dead indeed.

But Nix Nought Nothing fled on till where do you think they came to? Why, to near the castle of Nix Nought Nothing's father and mother. But the giant's daughter was so weary that she couldn't move a step farther. So Nix

Nix Nought Nothing

Nought Nothing told her to wait there while he went and found out a lodging for the night. And he went on towards the lights of the castle, and on the way he came to the cottage of the hen-wife whose boy, you'll remember, had been killed by the giant. Now she knew Nix Nought Nothing in a moment, and hated him because he was the cause of her son's death. So when he asked his way to the castle, she put a spell upon him, and when he got to the castle, no sooner was he let in than he fell down dead asleep upon a bench in the hall. The king and queen tried all they could do to wake him up, but all in vain. So the king promised that if any maiden could wake him she could marry him. Meanwhile the giant's daughter was waiting and waiting for him to come back. And she went up into a tree to watch for him. The gardener's daughter, going to draw water in the well, saw the shadow of the lady in the water and thought it was herself, and said: 'If I'm so bonny, if I'm so brave, why do you send me to draw water?' She she threw down her pail and went to see if she could wed the sleeping stranger. And she went to the hen-wife, who taught her an unspelling charm which would keep Nix Nought Nothing awake as long as the gardener's daughter liked. So she went up to the castle and sang her charm and Nix Nought Nothing was wakened for a while and they promised to wed him to the gardener's daughter. Meanwhile the gardener went down to draw water from the well and saw the shadow of the lady in the water. So he looked up and found her, and he brought the lady from the tree, and led her into his house. And he told her that a stranger was to marry his daughter, and took her up to the castle and showed her the man: and it was Nix Nought Nothing asleep in a chair. And she saw him, and she cried to him: 'Waken, waken, and speak to me!' But he would not waken, and soon she cried:

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'I cleaned the stable, I laved the lake, and I clomb the tree,
And all for the love of thee,
And thou wilt not waken and speak to me.'

The king and queen heard this, and came to the bonny young lady, and she said:

'I cannot get Nix Nought Nothing to speak to me, for all that I can do.'

Then were they greatly astonished when she spoke of Nix Nought Nothing, and asked where he was, and she said: 'He that sits there in that chair.' Then they ran to him and kissed him and called him their own dear son; so they called for the gardener's daughter and made her sing her charm, and he wakened, and told them all that the giant's daughter had done for him, and of all her kindness. Then they took her in their arms and kissed her, and said she should now be their daughter, for their son should marry her. But as for the hen-wife, she was put to death. And they lived happy all their days.



Cap o' Rushes

WELL, there was once a very rich gentleman, and he had three daughters, and he thought he'd see how fond they were of him. So he says to the first, 'How much do you love me, my dear?'

'Why,' says she, 'as I love my life.'

'That's good,' says he.

So he says to the second, 'How much do you love me, my dear?'

'Why,' says she, 'better nor all the world.'

'That's good,' says he.

So he says to the third, 'How much do you love me, my dear?'

'Why, I love you as fresh meat loves salt,' says she.

Well, but he was angry. 'You don't love me at all,' says he, 'and in my house you stay no more.' So he drove her out there and then, and shut the door in her face.

Well, she went away on and on till she came to a fen,

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and there she gathered a lot of rushes and made them into a kind of a sort of a cloak with a hood, to cover her from head to foot, and to hide her fine clothes. And then she went on and on till she came to a great house.

‘Do you want a maid?’ says she.

‘No, we don’t,’ said they.

‘I haven’t nowhere to go,’ says she; ‘and I ask no wages, and do any sort of work,’ says she.

‘Well,’ said they, ‘if you like to wash the pots and scrape the saucepans you may stay,’ said they.

So she stayed there and washed the pots and scraped the saucepans and did all the dirty work. And because she gave no name they called her ‘Cap o’ Rushes’.

Well, one day there was to be a great dance a little way off, and the servants were allowed to go and look on at the grand people. Cap o’ Rushes said she was too tired to go, so she stayed at home.

But when they were gone, she offed with her cap o’ rushes, and cleaned herself, and went to the dance. And no one there was so finely dressed as she.

Well, who should be there but her master’s son, and what should he do but fall in love with her the minute he set eyes on her. He wouldn’t dance with anyone else.

But before the dance was done, Cap o’ Rushes slept off, and away she went home. And when the other maids came back, she was pretending to be asleep with her cap o’ rushes on.

Well, next morning they said to her, ‘You did miss a sight, Cap o’ Rushes!’

‘What was that?’ says she.

‘Why, the beautifullest lady you ever see, dressed right gay and ga’. The young master, he never took his eyes off her.’

‘Well, I should have liked to have seen her,’ says Cap o’ Rushes.

Cap o' Rushes

'Well, there's to be another dance this evening, and perhaps she'll be there.'

But, come the evening, Cap o' Rushes said she was too tired to go with them. Howsoever, when they were gone, she offed with her cap o' rushes and cleaned herself, and away she went to the dance.

The master's son had been reckoning on seeing her, and he danced with no one else, and never took his eyes off her. But, before the dance was over, she slipt off, and home she went, and when the maids came back she pretended to be asleep with her cap o' rushes on.

Next day they said to her again, 'Well, Cap o' Rushes, you should ha' been there to see the lady. There she was again, gay and ga', and the young master he never took his eyes off her.'

'Well, there,' says she, 'I should ha' liked to ha' seen her.'

'Well,' says they, 'there's a dance again this evening, and you must go with us, for she's sure to be there.'

Well, come this evening, Cap o' Rushes said she was too tired to go, and do what they would she stayed at home. But when they were gone, she offed her cap o' rushes and cleaned herself, and away she went to the dance.

The master's son was rarely glad when he saw her. He danced with none but her and never took his eyes off her. When she wouldn't tell him her name, nor where she came from, he gave her a ring and told her if he didn't see her again he should die.

Well, before the dance was over, off she slipped, and home she went, and when the maids came home she was pretending to be asleep with her cap o' rushes on.

Well, next day they says to her, 'There, Cap o' Rushes, you didn't come last night, and now you won't see the lady, for there's no more dances.'

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'Well, I should have rarely liked to have seen her,' says she.

The master's son tried every way to find out where the lady was gone, but go where he might, and ask whom he might he never heard anything about her. And he got worse and worse for the love of her till he had to keep his bed.

'Make some gruel for the young master,' they said to the cook. 'He's dying for the love of the lady.' The cook set about making it when Cap o' Rushes came in.

'What are you a-doing of?' says she.

'I'm going to make some gruel for the young master,' says the cook, 'for he's dying for love of the lady.'

'Let me make it,' says Cap o' Rushes.

Well, the cook wouldn't at first, but at last she said yes, and Cap o' Rushes made the gruel. And when she had made it, she slipped the ring into it on the sly before the cook took it upstairs.

The young man he drank it and then he saw the ring at the bottom.

'Send for the cook,' says he.

So up she comes

'Who made this gruel here?' says he.

'I did,' says the cook, for she was frightened.

And he looked at her.

'No, you didn't,' says he. 'Say who did, and you shan't be harmed.'

'Well, then, t'was Cap o' Rushes,' says she.

'Send Cap o' Rushes here,' says he.

So Cap o' Rushes came.

'Did you make my gruel?' says he.

'Yes, I did,' says she.

'Where did you get this ring?' says he.

'From him that gave it me,' says she.

'Who are you, then?' says the young man.

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'I'll show you,' says she. And she offed with her cap o' rushes, and there she was in her beautiful clothes.

Well, the master's son he got well very soon, and they were to be married in a little time. It was to be a very grand wedding, and everyone was asked far and near. And Cap o' Rushes's father was asked. But she never told anybody who she was.

But before the wedding, she went to the cook, and says she:

'I want you to dress every dish without a mite o' salt.'

'That'll be rare nasty,' says the cook.

'That doesn't signify,' says she.

'Very well,' says the cook.

Well, the wedding day came, and they were married. And after they were married, all the company sat down to the dinner. When they began to eat the meat, it was so tasteless they couldn't eat it. But Cap o' Rushes's father tried first one dish and then another, and then he burst out crying.

'What is the matter?' said the master's son to him.

'Oh!' says he, 'I had a daughter. And I asked her how much she loved me. And she said "As much as fresh meat loves salt." And I turned her from my door, for I thought she didn't love me. And now I see she loved me best of all. And she may be dead for aught I know.'

'No, father, here she is!' said Cap o' Rushes. And she goes up to him and puts her arms round him.

And so they were all happy ever after.



Jack and the Beanstalk

THERE was once upon a time a poor widow who had an only son named Jack, and a cow named Milky-white. And all they had to live on was the milk the cow gave every morning, which they carried to the market and sold. But one morning Milky-white gave no milk, and they didn't know what to do.

'What shall we do, what shall we do?' said the widow, wringing her hands.

'Cheer up, mother, I'll go and get work somewhere,' said Jack.

'We've tried that before, and nobody would take you,' said his mother; 'we must sell Milky-white and with the money start shop, or something.'

'All right, mother,' says Jack; 'it's market-day today, and I'll soon sell Milky-white, and then we'll see what we can do.'

So he took the cow's halter in his hand, and off he

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started. He hadn't gone far when he met a funny-looking old man, who said to him: 'Good morning, Jack.'

'Good morning to you,' said Jack, and wondered how he knew his name.

'Well, Jack, and where are you off to?' said the man.

'I'm going to market to sell our cow here.'

'Oh, you look the proper sort of chap to sell cows,' said the man; 'I wonder if you know how many beans make five.'

'Two in each hand and one in your mouth,' says Jack, as sharp as a needle.

'Right you are,' says the man, 'and here they are, the very beans themselves,' he went on, pulling out of his pocket a number of strange-looking beans. 'As you are so sharp,' says he, 'I don't mind doing a swop with you – your cow for these beans.'

'Go along,' says Jack; 'wouldn't you like it?'

'Ah! you don't know what these beans are,' said the man; 'if you plant them overnight, by morning they grow right up to the sky.'

'Really?' said Jack; 'you don't say so.'

'Yes, that is so, and if it doesn't turn out to be true you can have your cow back.'

'Right,' says Jack, and hands him over Milky-white's halter and pockets the beans.

Back goes Jack home, and as he hadn't gone very far it wasn't dusk by the time he got to his door.

'Back already, Jack?' said his mother; 'I see you haven't got Milky-white, so you've sold her. How much did you get for her?'

'You'll never guess, mother,' says Jack.

'No, you don't say so. Good boy! Five pounds, ten, fifteen, no, it can't be twenty.'

'I told you you couldn't guess. What do you say to these beans; they're magical, plant them overnight and –'

'What!' says Jack's mother, 'have you been such a fool, such a dolt, such an idiot, as to give away my Milky-white, the best milker in the parish, and prime beef to boot, for a set of paltry beans? Take that! Take that! Take that! And as for your precious beans here they go out of the window. And now off with you to bed. Not a sup shall you drink, and not a bit shall you swallow this very night.'

So Jack went upstairs to his little room in the attic, and sad and sorry he was, to be sure, as much for his mother's sake, as for the loss of his supper.

At last he dropped off to sleep.

When he woke up, the room looked so funny. The sun was shining into part of it, and yet all the rest was quite dark and shady. So Jack jumped up and dressed himself and went to the window. And what do you think he saw? Why, the beans his mother had thrown out of the window into the garden had sprung up into a big beanstalk which went up and up and up till it reached the sky. So the man spoke truth after all.

The beanstalk grew up quite close past Jack's window, so all he had to do was to open it and give a jump on to the beanstalk which ran up just like a big ladder. So Jack climbed, and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed till at last he reached the sky. And when he got there he found a long broad road going as straight as a dart. So he walked along and he walked along and he walked along till he came to a great big tall house, and on the doorstep there was a great big tall woman.

'Good morning, mum,' says Jack, quite polite-like. 'Could you be so kind as to give me some breakfast?' For he hadn't had anything to eat, you know, the night before and was as hungry as a hunter.

'It's breakfast you want, is it?' says the great big tall

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woman, 'it's breakfast you'll be if you don't move off from here. My man is an ogre and there's nothing he likes better than boys broiled on toast. You'd better be moving on or he'll soon be coming.'

'Oh! please, mum, do give me something to eat, mum. I've had nothing to eat since yesterday morning, really and truly, mum,' says Jack. 'I may as well be broiled as die of hunger.'

Well, the ogre's wife was not half so bad after all. So she took Jack into the kitchen, and gave him a hunk of bread and cheese and a jug of milk. But Jack hadn't half finished these when thump! thump! thump! the whole house began to tremble with the noise of someone coming.

'Goodness gracious me! It's my old man,' said the ogre's wife, 'what on earth shall I do? Come along quick and jump in here.' And she bundled Jack into the oven just as the ogre came in.

He was a big one, to be sure. At his belt he had three calves strung up by the heels, and he unhooked them and threw them down on the table and said: 'Here, wife, broil me a couple of these for breakfast. Ah! what's this I smell?

'Fee-fi-fo-fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman,
Be he alive, or be he dead
I'll have his bones to grind my bread.'

'Nonsense, dear,' said his wife, 'you're dreaming. Or perhaps you smell the scraps of that little boy you liked so much for yesterday's dinner. Here, you go and have a wash and tidy up, and by the time you come back your breakfast'll be ready for you.'

So off the ogre went, and Jack was just going to jump out of the oven and run away when the woman told

him not. 'Wait till he's asleep,' says she; 'he always has a doze after breakfast.'

Well, the ogre had his breakfast, and after that he goes to a big chest and takes out of it a couple of bags of gold, and down he sits and counts till at last his head began to nod and he began to snore till the whole house shook again.

Then Jack crept out on tiptoe from his oven, and as he was passing the ogre he took one of the bags of gold under his arm, and off he pelters till he came to the beanstalk, and then he threw down the bag of gold, which, of course, fell into his mother's garden, and then he climbed down and climbed down till at last he got home and told his mother and showed her the gold and said: 'Well, mother, wasn't I right about the beans? They are really magical, you see.'

So they lived on the bag of gold for some time, but at last they came to the end of it, and Jack made up his mind to try his luck once more at the top of the beanstalk. So one fine morning he rose up early, and got on to the beanstalk, and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed till at last he came out on to the road again and up to the great tall house he had been to before. There, sure enough, was the great big tall woman a-standing on the doorstep.

'Good morning, mum,' says Jack, as bold as brass, 'could you be so good as to give me something to eat?'

'Go away, my boy,' said the big tall woman, 'or else my man will eat you up for breakfast. But aren't you the youngster who came here once before? Do you know, that very day my man missed one of his bags of gold.'

'That's strange, mum,' said Jack, 'I dare say I could tell you something about that, but I'm so hungry I can't speak till I've had something to eat.'

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Well, the big tall woman was so curious that she took him in and gave him something to eat. But he had scarcely begun munching it as slowly as he could when thump! thump! they heard the giant's footsteps, and his wife hid Jack away in the oven.

All happened as it did before. In came the ogre as he did before, said: 'Fe-fi-fo-fum', and had his breakfast off three broiled oxen. Then he said: 'Wife, bring me the hen that lays the golden eggs.' So she brought it, and the ogre said: 'Lay,' and it laid an egg all of gold. And then the ogre began to nod his head, and to snore till the house shook.

Then Jack crept out of the oven on tiptoe and caught hold of the golden hen, and was off before you could say 'Jack Robinson'. But this time the hen gave a cackle which woke the ogre, and just as Jack got out of the house he heard him calling: 'Wife, wife, what have you done with my golden hen?'

And the wife said: 'Why, my dear?'

But that was all Jack heard, for he rushed off to the beanstalk and climbed down like a house on fire. And when he got home he showed his mother the wonderful hen, and said 'Lay' to it; and it laid a golden egg every time he said 'Lay.'

Well, Jack was not content, and it wasn't very long before he determined to have another try at his luck up there at the top of the beanstalk. So one fine morning, he rose up early, and got on to the beanstalk, and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed till he got to the top. But this time he knew better than to go straight to the ogre's house. And when he got near it, he waited behind a bush till he saw the ogre's wife come out with a pail to get some water, and then he crept into the house and got into the copper. He hadn't been there

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long when he heard thump! thump! thump! as before, and in came the ogre and his wife.

'Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman,' cried out the ogre. 'I smell him, wife, I smell him.'

'Do you, my dearie?' says the ogre's wife. 'Then, if it's that little rogue that stole your gold and the hen that laid the golden eggs he's sure to have got into the oven.' And they both rushed to the oven. But Jack wasn't there, luckily, and the ogre's wife said: 'There you are again with your fee-fi-fo-fum. Why, of course, it's the boy you caught last night that I've just broiled for your breakfast. How forgetful I am, and how careless you are not to know the difference between live and dead after all these years.'

So the ogre sat down to the breakfast and ate it, but every now and then he would mutter: 'Well, I could have sworn -' and he'd get up and search the larder and the cupboards and everything, only, luckily, he didn't think of the copper.

After breakfast was over, the ogre called out: 'Wife, wife, bring me my golden harp.' So she brought it and put it on the table before him. Then he said: 'Sing!' and the golden harp sang most beautifully. And it went on singing till the ogre fell asleep, and commenced to snore like thunder.

Then Jack lifted up the copper-lid very quietly and got down like a mouse and crept on hands and knees till he came to the table, when up he crawled, caught hold of the golden harp and dashed with it towards the door. But the harp called out quite loud: 'Master! Master!' and the ogre woke up just in time to see Jack running off with his harp.

Jack ran as fast as he could, and the ogre came rushing after, and would soon have caught him only Jack had a start and dodged him a bit and knew where he was

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going. When he got to the beanstalk the ogre was not more than twenty yards away when suddenly he saw Jack disappear like, and when he came to the end of the road he saw Jack underneath climbing down for dear life. Well, the ogre didn't like trusting himself to such a ladder, and he stood and waited, so Jack got another start. But just then the harp cried out: 'Master! Master!' and the ogre swung himself down on to the beanstalk, which shook with his weight. Down climbs Jack, and after him climbed the ogre. By this time Jack had climbed down and climbed down and climbed down till he was very nearly home. So he called out: 'Mother! Mother! bring me an axe, bring me an axe.' And his mother came rushing out with the axe in her hand, but when she came to the beanstalk she stood stock still with fright, for there she saw the ogre with his legs just through the clouds.

But Jack jumped down and got hold of the axe and gave a chop at the beanstalk which cut it half in two. The ogre felt the beanstalk shake and quiver, so he stopped to see what was the matter. Then Jack gave another chop with the axe, and the beanstalk was cut in two and began to topple over. Then the ogre fell down and broke his crown, and the beanstalk came toppling after.

Then Jack showed his mother his golden harp, and what with showing that and selling the golden eggs, Jack and his mother became very rich, and he married a great princess, and they lived happy ever after.



The Story of the Three Little Pigs

Once upon a time when pigs spoke rhyme
And monkeys chewed tobacco,
And hens took snuff to make them tough,
And ducks went quack, quack, quack, O!

THERE was an old sow with three little pigs, and as she had not enough to keep them, she sent them out to seek their fortune. The first that went off met a man with a bundle of straw, and said to him:

‘Please, man, give me that straw to build me a house.’

Which the man did, and the little pig built a house with it. Presently came along a wolf, and knocked at the door, and said:

‘Little pig, little pig, let me come in.’

To which the pig answered:

‘No, no, by the hair of my chiny chin chin.’

The wolf then answered to that:

‘Then I’ll huff, and I’ll puff, and I’ll blow your house in.’

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

The second little pig met a man with a bundle of furze and said:

‘Please, man, give me that furze to build a house.’

Which the man did, and the pig built his house. Then along came the wolf, and said:

‘Little pig, little pig, let me come in.’

‘No, no, by the hair of my chiny chin chin.’

‘Then I’ll huff, and I’ll puff, and I’ll blow your house in.’

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

The third little pig met a man with a load of bricks, and said:

‘Please, man, give me those bricks to build a house with.’

So the man gave him the bricks, and he built his house with them. So the wolf came, as he did to the other little pigs, and said:

‘Little pig, little pig, let me come in.’

‘No, no, by the hair on my chiny chin chin.’

‘Then I’ll huff, and I’ll puff, and I’ll blow your house in.’

Well, he huffed, and he puffed, and he huffed and he puffed, and he puffed and huffed; but he could *not* get the house down. When he found that he could not, with all his huffing and puffing, blow the house down, he said:

‘Little pig, I know where there is a nice field of turnips.’

‘Where?’ said the little pig.

‘Oh, in Mr Smith’s Home-field, and if you will be ready tomorrow morning I will call for you, and we will go together, and get some for dinner.’

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'Very well,' said the little pig, 'I will be ready. What time do you mean to go?'

'Oh, at six o'clock.'

Well, the little pig got up at five, and got the turnips before the wolf came (which he did about six), who said:

'Little pig, are you ready?'

The little pig said: 'Ready! I have been and come back again, and got a nice potful for dinner.'

The wolf felt very angry at this, but thought that he would be up to the little pig somehow or other, so he said:

'Little pig, I know where there is a nice apple tree.'

'Where?' said the pig.

'Down at Merry-garden,' replied the wolf, 'and if you will not deceive me I will come for you at five o'clock tomorrow and get some apples.'

Well, the little pig bustled up the next morning at four o'clock, and went off for the apples, hoping to get back before the wolf came; but he had farther to go, and had to climb the tree, so that just as he was coming down from it, he saw the wolf coming, which, as you may suppose, frightened him very much. When the wolf came up he said:

'Little pig, what! are you here before me? Are they nice apples?'

'Yes, very,' said the little pig. 'I will throw you down one.'

And he threw it so far, that, while the wolf was gone to pick it up, the little pig jumped down and ran home.

The next day the wolf came again, and said to the little pig:

'Little pig, there is a fair at Shanklin this afternoon, will you go?'

'Oh yes,' said the pig, 'I will go; what time shall you be ready?'

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'At three,' said the wolf. So the little pig went off before the time as usual, and got to the fair, and bought a butter-churn, which he was going home with, when he saw the wolf coming. Then he could not tell what to do. So he got into the churn to hide, and by so doing turned it round, and it rolled down the hill with the pig in it, which frightened the wolf so much, that he ran home without going to the fair. He went to the little pig's house, and told him how frightened he had been by a great round thing which came down the hill past him. Then the little pig said:

'Hah, I frightened you, then. I had been to the fair and bought a butter-churn, and when I saw you, I got into it, and rolled down the hill.'

Then the wolf was very angry indeed, and declared he *would* eat up the little pig, and that he would get down the chimney after him. When the little pig saw what he was about, he hung on the pot full of water, and made up a blazing fire, and, just as the wolf was coming down, took off the cover, and in fell the wolf; so the little pig put on the cover again in an instant, boiled him up, and ate him for supper, and lived happy ever afterwards.



The Story of the Three Bears

ONCE upon a time there were Three Bears, who lived together in a house of their own, in a wood. One of them was a Little, Small, Wee Bear; and one was a Middle-sized Bear, and the other was a Great, Huge Bear. They had each a pot for their porridge, a little pot for the Little, Small, Wee Bear, and a middle-sized pot for the Middle Bear; and a great pot for the Great, Huge Bear. And they each had a chair to sit in; a little chair for the Little, Small, Wee Bear; and a middle-sized chair for the Middle Bear; and a great chair for the Great, Huge Bear. And they each had a bed to sleep in; a little bed for the Little, Small, Wee Bear; and a middle-sized bed for the Middle Bear; and a great bed for the Great, Huge Bear.

One day, after they had made the porridge for their breakfast, and poured it into their porridge-pots, they walked out into the wood while the porridge was cooling, that they might not burn their mouths, by beginning too soon to eat it. And while they were walking, a little old

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Woman came to the house. She could not have been a good, honest old Woman; for first she looked in at the window, and then she peeped in at the keyhole; and seeing nobody in the house, she lifted the latch. The door was not fastened, because the Bears were good Bears, who did nobody any harm, and never suspected that anybody would harm them. So the little old Woman opened the door, and went in; and well pleased she was when she saw the porridge on the table. If she had been a good little old Woman, she would have waited till the Bears came home, and then, perhaps, they would have asked her to breakfast; for they were good Bears – a little rough or so, as the manner of Bears is, but for all that very good-natured and hospitable. But she was an impudent, bad old Woman, and set about helping herself.

So first she tasted the porridge of the Great, Huge Bear, and that was too hot for her; and she said a bad word about that. And then she tasted the porridge of the Middle Bear, and that was too cold for her; and she said a bad word about that, too. And then she went to the porridge of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, and tasted that; and that was neither too hot nor too cold, but just right; and she liked it so well that she ate it all up: but the naughty old Woman said a bad word about the little porridge-pot, because it did not hold enough for her.

Then the little old Woman sate down in the chair of the Great, Huge Bear, and that was too hard for her. And then she sate down in the chair of the Middle Bear, and that was too soft for her. And then she sate down in the chair of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, and that was neither too hard, nor too soft, but just right. So she seated herself in it, and there she sate till the bottom of the chair came out, and down she came, plump upon the ground. And the naughty old Woman said a wicked word about that, too.

Then the little old Woman went upstairs into the bed-chamber in which the three Bears slept. And first she lay upon the bed of the Great, Huge Bear; but that was too high at the head for her. And next she lay down upon the bed of the Middle Bear, and that was too high at the foot for her. And then she lay down upon the bed of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, and that was neither too high at the head nor at the foot, but just right. So she covered herself up comfortably, and lay there till she fell fast asleep.

By this time the Three Bears thought their porridge would be cool enough, so they came home to breakfast. Now the little old Woman had left the spoon of the Great, Huge Bear, standing in his porridge.

'Somebody has been at my porridge!'

said the Great, Huge Bear, in his great, rough, gruff voice. And when the Middle Bear looked at his, he saw that the spoon was standing in it, too. They were wooden spoons; if they had been silver ones, the naughty old Woman would have put them in her pocket.

'Somebody has been at my porridge!'

said the Middle Bear in his middle voice.

Then the Little, Small, Wee Bear looked at his, and there was the spoon in the porridge-pot, but the porridge was all gone.

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

said the Little, Small, Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.

Upon this the Three Bears, seeing that someone had entered their house, and eaten up the Little, Small, Wee Bear's breakfast, began to look about them. Now the little old Woman had not put the hard cushion straight when she rose from the chair of the Great, Huge Bear.

The Story of the Three Bears

'Somebody has been sitting in my chair!'

said the Great, Huge Bear, in his great, rough, gruff voice.

And the little old Woman had squatted down the soft cushion of the Middle Bear.

'Somebody has been sitting in my chair!'

said the Middle Bear, in his middle voice.

And you know what the little old Woman had done to the third chair.

'Somebody has been sitting in my chair, and has sate the bottom out of it!'

said the Little, Small, Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.

Then the three Bears thought it necessary that they should make further search; so they went upstairs into their bed-chamber. Now the little old Woman had pulled the pillow of the Great, Huge Bear out of its place.

'Somebody has been lying in my bed!'

said the Great, Huge Bear, in his great, rough, gruff voice.

And the little old Woman had pulled the bolster of the Middle Bear out of its place.

'Somebody has been lying in my bed!'

said the Middle Bear, in his middle voice.

And when the Little, Small, Wee Bear came to look at his bed, there was the bolster in its right place, and the pillow in its place upon the bolster; and upon the pillow was the little old Woman's ugly, dirty head – which was not in its place, for she had no business there.

'Somebody has been lying in my bed – and here she is!'

said the Little, Small, Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.

The little old Woman had heard in her sleep the great,

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rough, gruff voice of the Great, Huge Bear; but she was so fast asleep that it was no more to her than the roaring of wind or the rumbling of thunder. And she had heard the middle voice, of the Middle Bear, but it was only as if she had heard someone speaking in a dream. But when she heard the little, small, wee voice of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, it was so sharp, and so shrill, that it awakened her at once. Up she started; and when she saw the Three Bears on one side of the bed, she tumbled herself out at the other, and ran to the window. Now the window was open, because the Bears, like good, tidy Bears as they were, always opened their bed-chamber window when they got up in the morning. Out the little old Woman jumped; and whether she broke her neck in the fall; or ran into the wood and was lost there; or found her way out of the wood, and was taken up by the constable and sent to the House of Correction for a vagrant as she was, I cannot tell. But the Three Bears never saw anything more of her.



Jack the Giant-Killer

WHEN good King Arthur reigned, there lived near the Land's End of England, in the county of Cornwall, a farmer who had one only son called Jack. He was brisk and of ready, lively wit, so that nobody or nothing could worst him.

In those days the Mount of Cornwall was kept by a huge giant named Cormoran. He was eighteen feet in height, and about three yards round the waist, of a fierce and grim countenance, the terror of all the neighbouring towns and villages. He lived in a cave in the midst of the Mount, and whenever he wanted food he would wade over to the mainland, where he would furnish himself with whatever came in his way. Everybody at his approach ran out of their houses, while he seized on their cattle, making nothing of carrying half a dozen oxen on his back at a time; and as for their sheep and hogs, he would tie them round his waist like a bunch of tallow-dips. He had done this for many years, so that all Cornwall was in despair.

English Fairy Tales

One day Jack happened to be at the town-hall when the magistrates were sitting in council about the Giant. He asked: 'What reward will be given to the man who kills Cormoran?' 'The giant's treasure,' they said, 'will be the reward.' Quoth Jack: 'Then let me undertake it.'

So he got a horn, shovel, and pickaxe, and went over to the Mount in the beginning of a dark winter's evening, when he fell to work, and before morning had dug a pit twenty-two feet deep, and nearly as broad, covering it over with long sticks and straw. Then he strewed a little mould over it, so that it appeared like plain ground. Jack then placed himself on the opposite side of the pit, farthest from the giant's lodging, and, just at the break of day, he put the horn to his mouth, and blew, Tantivy, Tantivy. This noise roused the giant, who rushed from his cave, crying: 'You incorrigible villain, are you come here to disturb my rest? You shall pay dearly for this. Satisfaction I will have, and this it shall be, I will take you whole and broil you for breakfast.' He had no sooner uttered this, than he tumbled into the pit, and made the very foundations of the Mount to shake. 'Oh, Giant,' quoth Jack, 'where are you now? Oh, faith, you are gotten now into Lob's Pound, where I will surely plague you for your threatening words; what do you think now of broiling me for your breakfast? Will no other diet serve you but poor Jack?' Then having tantalized the giant for a while, he gave him a most weighty knock with his pickaxe on the very crown of his head, and killed him on the spot.

Jack then filled up the pit with earth, and went to search the cave, which he found contained much treasure. When the magistrates heard of this they made a declaration he should henceforth be termed

JACK THE GIANT-KILLER,

Jack the Giant-Killer

and presented him with a sword and a belt, on which were written these words embroidered in letters of gold:

‘Here’s the right valiant Cornish man,
Who slew the giant Cormoran.’

The news of Jack’s victory soon spread over all the West of England, so that another giant, named Blunderbore, hearing of it, vowed to be revenged on Jack, if ever he should light on him. This giant was the lord of an enchanted castle situated in the midst of a lonesome wood. Now Jack, about four months afterwards, walking near this wood in his journey to Wales, being weary, seated himself near a pleasant fountain and fell fast asleep. While he was sleeping the giant, coming there for water, discovered him, and knew him to be the far-famed Jack the Giant-Killer by the lines written on the belt. Without ado, he took Jack on his shoulders and carried him towards his castle. Now, as they passed through a thicket, the rustling of the boughs awakened Jack, who was strangely surprised to find himself in the clutches of the giant. His terror was only begun, for, on entering the castle, he saw the ground strewn with human bones, and the giant told him his own would ere long be among them. After this the giant locked poor Jack in an immense chamber, leaving him there while he went to fetch another giant, his brother, living in the same wood, who might share in the meal on Jack.

After waiting some time Jack, on going to the window, beheld afar off the two giants coming towards the castle. ‘Now,’ quoth Jack to himself, ‘my death or my deliverance is at hand.’ Now, there were strong cords in a corner of the room in which Jack was, and two of these he took, and made a strong noose at the end; and while the giants were unlocking the iron gate of the castle he threw the ropes over each of their heads. Then he drew the other

ends across a beam, and pulled with all his might, so that he throttled them. Then, when he saw they were black in the face, he slid down the rope, and drawing his sword, slew them both. Then, taking the giant's keys, and unlocking the rooms, he found three fair ladies tied by the hair of their heads, almost starved to death. 'Sweet ladies,' quoth Jack, 'I have destroyed this monster and his brutish brother, and obtained your liberties.' This said he presented them with the keys, and so proceeded on his journey to Wales.

Jack made the best of his way by travelling as fast as he could, but lost his road, and was benighted, and could find no habitation until, coming into a narrow valley, he found a large house, and in order to get shelter took courage to knock at the gate. But what was his surprise when there came forth a monstrous giant with two heads; yet he did not appear so fiery as the others were, for he was a Welsh giant, and what he did was by private and secret malice under the false show of friendship. Jack, having told his condition to the giant, was shown into a bedroom, where, in the dead of night, he heard his host in another apartment muttering these words:

'Though here you lodge with me this night,
You shall not see the morning light:
My club shall dash your brains outright!'

'Say'st thou so,' quoth Jack; 'that is like one of your Welsh tricks, yet I hope to be cunning enough for you.' Then, getting out of bed, he laid a billet in the bed in his stead, and hid himself in a corner of the room. At the dead time of night in came the Welsh giant, who struck several heavy blows on the bed with his club, thinking he had broken every bone in Jack's skin. The next morning Jack, laughing in his sleeve, gave him hearty thanks for his night's lodging. 'How have you rested?' quoth the giant;

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'did you not feel anything in the night?' 'No,' quoth Jack, 'nothing but a rat, which gave me two or three slaps with her tail.' With that, greatly wondering, the giant led Jack to breakfast, bringing him a bowl containing four gallons of hasty pudding. Being loth to let the giant think it too much for him, Jack put a large leather bag under his loose coat, in such a way that he could convey the pudding into it without its being perceived. Then, telling the giant he would like to show him a trick, taking a knife, Jack ripped open the bag, and out came all the hasty pudding. Whereupon, saying, 'Odds splutters her nails, hur can do that trick hursel', the monster took the knife, and ripping open his belly, fell down dead.

Now, it happened in these days that King Arthur's only son asked his father to give him a large sum of money, in order that he might go and seek his fortune in the principality of Wales, where lived a beautiful lady possessed with seven evil spirits. The king did his best to persuade his son from it, but in vain; so at last gave way and the prince set out with two horses, one loaded with money, the other for himself to ride upon. Now, after several days' travel, he came to a market-town in Wales, where he beheld a vast crowd of people gathered together. The prince asked the reason of it, and was told that they had arrested a corpse for several large sums of money which the deceased owed when he died. The prince replied that it was a pity creditors should be so cruel, and said: 'Go bury the dead, and let his creditors come to my lodging, and there their debts shall be paid.' They came, in such great numbers that before night he had only twopence left for himself.

Now Jack the Giant-Killer, coming that way, was so taken with the generosity of the prince that he desired to be his servant. This being agreed upon, the next morning they set forward on their journey together, when, as they

were riding out of the town, an old woman called after the prince, saying, 'He has owed me twopence these seven years; pray pay me as well as the rest.' Putting his hand into his pocket, the prince gave the woman all he had left, so that after their day's food, which cost what small store Jack had by him, they were without a penny between them.

When the sun got low, the king's son said: 'Jack, since we have no money, where can we lodge this night?'

But Jack replied: 'Master, we'll do well enough, for I have an uncle lives within two miles of this place; he is a huge and monstrous giant with three heads; he'll fight five hundred men in armour, and make them to fly before him.'

'Alas!' quoth the prince, 'what shall we do there? He'll certainly chop us up at a mouthful. Nay, we are scarce enough to fill one of his hollow teeth!'

'It is no matter for that,' quoth Jack; 'I myself will go before and prepare the way for you; therefore stop here and wait till I return.' Jack then rode away at full speed, and coming to the gate of the castle, he knocked so loud that he made the neighbouring hills resound. The giant roared out at this like thunder: 'Who's there?'

Jack answered: 'None but your poor cousin Jack.'

Quoth he: 'What news with my poor cousin Jack?'

He replied: 'Dear uncle, heavy news, God wot!'

'Prithee,' quoth the giant, 'what heavy news can come to me? I am a giant with three heads, and besides thou knowest I can fight five hundred men in armour, and make them fly like chaff before the wind.'

'Oh, but,' quoth Jack, 'here's the king's son a-coming with a thousand men in armour to kill you and destroy all that you have!'

'Oh, cousin Jack,' said the giant, 'this is heavy news indeed! I will immediately run and hide myself, and thou

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shalt lock, bolt, and bar me in, and keep the keys until the prince is gone.' Having secured the giant, Jack fetched his master, when they made themselves heartily merry whilst the poor giant lay trembling in a vault under the ground.

Early in the morning Jack furnished his master with a fresh supply of gold and silver, and then sent him three miles forward on his journey, at which time the prince was pretty well out of the smell of the giant. Jack then returned, and let the giant out of the vault, who asked what he should give him for keeping the castle from destruction. 'Why,' quoth Jack, 'I want nothing but the old coat and cap, together with the old rusty sword and slippers which are at your bed's head.' Quoth the giant: 'You know not what you ask; they are the most precious things I have. The coat will keep you invisible, the cap will tell you all you want to know, the sword cuts asunder whatever you strike, and the shoes are of extraordinary swiftness. But you have been very serviceable to me, therefore take them with all my heart.' Jack thanked his uncle, and then went off with them. He soon overtook his master and they quickly arrived at the house of the lady the prince sought, who, finding the prince to be a suitor, prepared a splendid banquet for him. After the repast was concluded, she told him she had a task for him. She wiped his mouth with a handkerchief, saying: 'You must show me that handkerchief tomorrow morning, or else you will lose your head.' With that she put it in her bosom. The prince went to bed in great sorrow, but Jack's cap of knowledge informed him how it was to be obtained. In the middle of the night she called upon her familiar spirit to carry her to Lucifer. But Jack put on his coat of darkness and his shoes of swiftness, and was there as soon as she was. When she entered the place of the demon, she gave the handkerchief to him, and he laid it upon a shelf, whence Jack took it and

brought it to his master, who showed it to the lady next day, and so saved his life. On that day, she gave the prince a kiss and told him he must show her the lips tomorrow morning that she kissed last night, or lose his head.

‘Ah!’ he replied, ‘if you kiss none but mine, I will.’

‘That is neither here nor there,’ said she; ‘if you do not, death’s your portion!’

At midnight she went as before, and was angry with the demon for letting the handkerchief go. ‘But now,’ quoth she, ‘I will be too hard for the king’s son, for I will kiss thee, and he is to show me thy lips.’ Which she did, and Jack, when she was not standing by, cut off Lucifer’s head and brought it under his invisible coat to his master, who the next morning pulled it out by the horns before the lady. This broke the enchantment and the evil spirit left her, and she appeared in all her beauty. They were married the next morning, and soon after went to the Court of King Arthur, where Jack for his many great exploits, was made one of the Knights of the Round Table.

Jack soon went searching for giants again, but he had not ridden far, when he saw a cave, near the entrance of which he beheld a giant sitting upon a block of timber, with a knotted iron club by his side. His goggle eyes were like flames of fire, his countenance grim and ugly, and his cheeks like a couple of large flitches of bacon, while the bristles of his beard resembled rods of iron wire, and the locks that hung down upon his brawny shoulders were like curled snakes or hissing adders. Jack alighted from his horse, and, putting on the coat of darkness, went up close to the giant, and said softly: ‘Oh! are you there? It will not be long before I take you fast by the beard.’ The giant all this while could not see him, on account of his invisible coat, so that Jack, coming up close to the monster, struck a blow with his sword at his head, but, missing his aim, he cut off the nose instead. At this, the giant roared like

Jack the Giant-Killer

claps of thunder, and began to lay about him with his iron club like one stark mad. But Jack, running behind, drove his sword up to the hilt in the giant's back, so that he fell down dead. This done, Jack cut off the giant's head, and sent it, with his brother's also, to King Arthur, by a waggoner he hired for that purpose.

Jack now resolved to enter the giant's cave in search of his treasure, and, passing along through a great many windings and turnings, he came at length to a large room paved with freestone, at the upper end of which was a boiling cauldron, and on the right hand a large table, at which the giant used to dine. Then he came to a window, barred with iron, through which he looked and beheld a vast number of miserable captives, who, seeing him, cried out: 'Alas! young man, art thou come to be one among us in this miserable den?'

'Ay,' quoth Jack, 'but pray tell me what is the meaning of your captivity?'

'We are kept here,' said one, 'till such time as the giants have a wish to feast, and then the fattest among us is slaughtered! And many are the times they have dined upon murdered men!'

'Say you so,' quoth Jack, and straightway unlocked the gate and let them free, who all rejoiced like condemned men at sight of a pardon. Then searching the giant's coffers, he shared the gold and silver equally among them and took them to a neighbouring castle, where they all feasted and made merry over their deliverance.

But in the midst of all this mirth a messenger brought news that one Thunderdell, a giant with two heads, having heard of the death of his kinsmen, had come from the northern dales to be revenged on Jack, and was within a mile of the castle, the country people flying before him like chaff. But Jack was not a bit daunted, and said: 'Let him come! I have a tool to pick his teeth; and you, ladies

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and gentlemen, walk out into the garden, and you shall witness this giant Thunderdell's death and destruction.'

The castle was situated in the midst of a small island surrounded by a moat thirty feet deep and twenty feet wide, over which lay a drawbridge. So Jack employed men to cut through this bridge on both sides, nearly to the middle; and then, dressing himself in his invisible coat, he marched against the giant with his sword of sharpness. Although the giant could not see Jack, he smelt his approach, and cried out in these words:

'Fee, fi, fo, fum!

I smell the blood of an Englishman!

Be he alive or be he dead,

I'll grind his bones to make me bread!'

'Say'st thou so,' said Jack; 'then thou art a monstrous miller indeed.'

The giant cried out again: 'Art thou that villain who killed my kinsmen? Then I will tear thee with my teeth, suck thy blood, and grind thy bones to powder.'

'You'll have to catch me first,' quoth Jack, and throwing off his invisible coat, so that the giant might see him, and putting on his shoes of swiftness, he ran from the giant, who followed like a walking castle, so that the very foundations of the earth seemed to shake at every step. Jack led him a long dance, in order that the gentlemen and ladies might see; and at last to end the matter, ran lightly over the drawbridge, the giant, in full speed, pursuing him with his club. Then, coming to the middle of the bridge, the giant's great weight broke it down, and he tumbled headlong into the water, where he rolled and wallowed like a whale. Jack, standing by the moat, laughed at him all the while; but though the giant foamed to hear him scoff, and plunged from place to place in the moat, yet he could not get out to be revenged. Jack at length got a cart

Jack the Giant-Killer

rope and cast it over the two heads of the giant and drew him ashore by a team of horses, and then cut off both his heads with his sword of sharpness, and sent them to King Arthur.

After some time spent in mirth and pastime, Jack, taking leave of the knights and ladies, set out for new adventures. Through many woods he passed, and came at length to the foot of a high mountain. Here, late at night, he found a lonesome house, and knocked at the door, which was opened by an aged man with a head as white as snow. 'Father,' said Jack, 'can you lodge a benighted traveller that has lost his way?' 'Yes,' said the old man; 'you are right welcome to my poor cottage.' Whereupon Jack entered, and down they sat together, and the old man began to speak as follows: 'Son, I see by your belt you are the great conqueror of giants, and behold, my son, on the top of this mountain is an enchanted castle; this is kept by a giant named Galligantua, and he, by the help of an old conjurer, betrays many knights and ladies into his castle, where by magic art they are transformed into sundry shapes and forms. But above all, I grieve for a duke's daughter, whom they fetched from her father's garden, carrying her through the air in a burning chariot drawn by fiery dragons, when they secured her within the castle, and transformed her into a white hind. And though many knights have tried to break the enchantment, and work her deliverance, yet no one could accomplish it, on account of two dreadful griffins which are placed at the castle gate and which destroy everyone who comes near. But you, my son, may pass by them undiscovered, where on the gates of the castle you will find engraven in large letters how the spell may be broken.' Jack gave the old man his hand, and promised that in the morning he would venture his life to free the lady.

In the morning Jack arose and put on his invisible coat

and magic cap and shoes, and prepared himself for the fray. Now, when he had reached the top of the mountain he soon discovered the two fiery griffins, but passed them without fear, because of his invisible coat. When he had got beyond them, he found upon the gates of the castle a golden trumpet hung by a silver chain, under which these lines were engraved:

'Whoever shall this trumpet blow,
Shall soon the giant overthrow,
And break the black enchantment straight;
So all shall be in happy state.'

Jack had no sooner read this but he blew the trumpet, at which the castle trembled to its vast foundations, and the giant and conjurer were in horrid confusion, biting their thumbs and tearing their hair, knowing their wicked reign was at an end. Then the giant stooping to take up his club, Jack at one blow cut off his head; whereupon the conjurer, mounting up into the air, was carried away in a whirlwind. Then the enchantment was broken, and all the lords and ladies who had so long been transformed into birds and beasts returned to their proper shapes, and the castle vanished away in a cloud of smoke. This being done, the head of Galligantua was likewise, in the usual manner, conveyed to the Court of King Arthur, where, the very next day, Jack followed, with the knights and ladies who had been delivered. Whereupon, as a reward for his good services, the king prevailed upon the duke to bestow his daughter in marriage on honest Jack. So married they were, and the whole kingdom was filled with joy at the wedding. Furthermore, the king bestowed on Jack a noble castle, with a very beautiful estate thereto belonging, where he and his lady lived in great joy and happiness all the rest of their days.



Henny-Penny

ONE day Henny-penny was picking up corn in the corn-yard when – whack; – something hit her upon the head. ‘Goodness gracious me!’ said Henny-penny; ‘the sky’s a-going to fall; I must go and tell the king.’

So she went along and she went along and she went along till she met Cocky-locky. ‘Where are you going, Henny-penny?’ says Cocky-locky. ‘Oh! I’m going to tell the king the sky’s a-falling,’ says Henny-penny. ‘May I come with you?’ says Cocky-locky. ‘Certainly,’ says Henny-penny. So Henny-penny and Cocky-locky went to tell the king the sky was falling.

They went along, and they went along, and they went along, till they met Ducky-daddles. ‘Where are you going to, Henny-penny and Cocky-locky?’ says Ducky-daddles. ‘Oh! we’re going to tell the king the sky’s a-falling,’ said Henny-penny and Cocky-locky. ‘May I come with you?’ says Ducky-daddles. ‘Certainly,’ said Henny-penny and Cocky-locky. So Henny-penny, Cocky-locky and Ducky-daddles went to tell the king the sky was a-falling.

So they went along, and they went along, and they went

along, till they met Goosey-poosey. 'Where are you going to, Henny-penny, Cocky-locky and Ducky-daddles?' said Goosey-poosey. 'Oh! we're going to tell the king the sky's a-falling,' said Henny-penny and Cocky-locky and Ducky-daddles. 'May I come with you?' said Goosey-poosey. 'Certainly,' said Henny-penny, Cocky-locky and Ducky-daddles. So Henny-penny, Cocky-locky, Ducky-daddles and Goosey-poosey went to tell the king the sky was a-falling.

So they went along, and they went along, and they went along, till they met Turkey-lurkey. 'Where are you going, Henny-penny, Cocky-locky, Ducky-daddles and Goosey-poosey?' says Turkey-lurkey. 'Oh! we're going to tell the king the sky's a-falling,' said Henny-penny, Cocky-locky, Ducky-daddles and Goosey-poosey. 'May I come with you, Henny-penny, Cocky-locky, Ducky-daddles and Goosey-poosey?' said Turkey-lurkey. 'Oh, certainly, Turkey-lurkey,' said Henny-penny, Cocky-locky, Ducky-daddles and Goosey-poosey. So Henny-penny, Cocky-locky, Ducky-daddles, Goosey-poosey and Turkey-lurkey all went to tell the king the sky was a-falling.

So they went along, and they went along, and they went along, till they met Foxy-woxy, and Foxy-woxy said to Henny-penny, Cocky-locky, Ducky-daddles, Goosey-poosey and Turkey-lurkey: 'Where are you going, Henny-penny, Cocky-locky, Ducky-daddles, Goosey-poosey and Turkey-lurkey?' And Henny-penny, Cocky-locky, Ducky-daddles, Goosey-poosey and Turkey-lurkey said to Foxy-woxy: 'We're going to tell the king the sky's a-falling.' 'Oh! but this is not the way to the king, Henny-penny, Cocky-locky, Ducky-daddles, Goosey-poosey and Turkey-lurkey,' says Foxy-woxy; 'I know the proper way; shall I show it you?' 'Oh, certainly, Foxy-woxy,' said Henny-penny, Cocky-locky, Ducky-daddles, Goosey-poosey and Turkey-lurkey. So Henny-penny, Cocky-locky, Ducky-daddles, Goosey-

Henny-Penny

poosey, Turkey-lurkey and Foxy-woxy all went to tell the king the sky was a-falling. So they went along, and they went along, and they went along, till they came to a narrow and dark hole. Now this was the door of Foxy-woxy's cave. But Foxy-woxy said to Henny-penny, Cocky-locky, Ducky-daddles, Goosey-poosey and Turkey-lurkey: 'This is the short way to the king's palace: you'll soon get there if you follow me. I will go first and you come after, Henny-penny, Cocky-locky, Ducky-daddles, Goosey-poosey and Turkey-lurkey.' 'Why, of course, certainly, without doubt, why not?' said Henny-penny, Cocky-locky, Ducky-daddles, Goosey-poosey and Turkey-lurkey.

So Foxy-woxy went into his cave, and he didn't go very far, but turned round to wait for Henny-penny, Cocky-locky, Ducky-daddles, Goosey-poosey and Turkey-lurkey. So at last at first Turkey-lurkey went through the dark hole into the cave. He hadn't got far when 'Hrumph', Foxy-woxy snapped off Turkey-lurkey's head and threw his body over his left shoulder. Then Goosey-poosey went in, and 'Hrumph', off went her head and Goosey-poosey was thrown beside Turkey-lurkey. Then Ducky-daddles waddled down, and 'Hrumph', snapped Foxy-woxy, and Ducky-daddles's head was off and Ducky-daddles was thrown alongside Turkey-lurkey and Goosey-poosey. Then Cocky-locky strutted down into the cave, and he hadn't gone far when 'Snap, Hrumph!' went Foxy-woxy, and Cocky-locky was thrown alongside of Turkey-lurkey, Goosey-poosey, and Ducky-daddles.

But Foxy-woxy had made two bites at Cocky-locky, and when the first snap only hurt Cocky-locky, but didn't kill him, he called out to Henny-penny. But she turned tail and off she ran home, so she never told the king the sky was a-falling.



Childe Rowland

CHILDE ROWLAND and his brothers twain
Were playing at the ball,
And there was their sister Burd Ellen
In the midst, among them all.

Childe Rowland kicked it with his foot
And caught it with his knee;
At last as he plunged among them all
O'er the church he made it flee.

Burd Ellen round about the aisle
To seek the ball is gone,
But long they waited, and longer still,
And she came not back again.

They sought her east, they sought her west,
They sought her up and down,
And woe were the hearts of those brethren,
For she was not to be found.

Childe Rowland

So at last her eldest brother went to the Warlock Merlin and told him all the case, and asked him if he knew where Burd Ellen was. 'The fair Burd Ellen,' said the Warlock Merlin, 'must have been carried off by the fairies, because she went round the church "widdershins" – the opposite way to the sun. She is now in the Dark Tower of the King of Elfland; it would take the boldest knight in Christendom to bring her back.'

'If it is possible to bring her back,' said her brother, 'I'll do it, or perish in the attempt.'

'Possible it is,' said the Warlock Merlin, 'but woe to the man or mother's son that attempts it, if he is not well taught beforehand what he is to do.'

The eldest brother of Burd Ellen was not to be put off, by any fear of danger, from attempting to get her back, so he begged the Warlock Merlin to tell him what he should do, and what he should not do, in going to seek his sister. And after he had been taught, and had repeated his lesson, he set out for Elfland.

But long they waited, and longer still,
With doubt and muckle pain,
But woe were the hearts of his brethren,
For he came not back again.

Then the second brother got tired and tired of waiting, and he went to the Warlock Merlin and asked him the same as his brother. So he set out to find Burd Ellen.

But long they waited, and longer still,
With muckle doubt and pain,
And woe were his mother's and brother's heart,
For he came not back again.

And when they had waited and waited a good long time, Childe Rowland, the youngest of Burd Ellen's brothers, wished to go, and went to his mother, the good

queen, to ask her to let him go. But she would not at first. for he was the last and dearest of her children, and if he was lost, all would be lost. But he begged, and he begged, till at last the good queen let him go; and gave him his father's good brand that never struck in vain, and as she girt it round his waist, she said the spell that would give it victory.

So Childe Rowland said good-bye to the good queen, his mother, and went to the cave of the Warlock Merlin. 'Once more, and but once more,' he said to the Warlock, 'tell how man or mother's son may rescue Burd Ellen and her brothers twain.'

'Well, my son,' said the Warlock Merlin, 'there are but two things, simple they may seem, but hard they are to do. One thing to do, and one thing not to do. And the thing to do is this: after you have entered the land of Fairy, whoever speaks to you, till you meet the Burd Ellen, you must out with your father's brand and off with their head. And what you've not to do is this: bite no bit, and drink no drop, however hungry or thirsty you be; drink a drop, or bite a bit, while in Elfland you be and never will you see Middle Earth again.'

So Childe Rowland said the two things over and over again, till he knew them by heart, and he thanked the Warlock Merlin and went on his way. And he went along, and along, and along, and still farther along, till he came to the horse-herd of the King of Elfland feeding his horses. These he knew by their fiery eyes, and knew that he was at last in the land of Fairy. 'Canst thou tell me,' said Childe Rowland to the horse-herd, 'where the King of Elfland's Dark Tower is?' 'I cannot tell thee,' said the horse-herd, 'but go on a little farther and thou wilt come to the cow-herd, and he, maybe, can tell thee.'

Then, without a word more, Childe Rowland drew the

Childe Rowland

good brand that never struck in vain, and off went the horse-herd's head, and Childe Rowland went on farther, till he came to the cow-herd, and asked him the same question. 'I can't tell thee,' said he, 'but go on a little farther, and thou wilt come to the hen-wife, and she is sure to know.' Then Childe Rowland out with his good brand, that never struck in vain, and off went the cow-herd's head. And he went on a little farther, till he came to an old woman in a grey cloak, and he asked her if she knew where the Dark Tower of the King of Elfland was. 'Go on a little farther,' said the hen-wife, 'till you come to a round green hill, surrounded with terrace-rings, from the bottom to the top; go round it three times "widdershins", and each time say:

"Open, door! open, door!
And let me come in."

and the third time the door will open, and you may go in.' And Childe Rowland was just going on, when he remembered what he had to do; so he out with the good brand, that never struck in vain, and off went the hen-wife's head.

Then he went on, and on, and on, till he came to the round green hill with the terrace-rings from top to bottom, and he went round it three times, 'widdershins', saying each time:

'Open, door! open, door!
And let me come in.'

And the third time the door did open, and he went in, and it closed with a click, and Childe Rowland was left in the dark.

It was not exactly dark, but a kind of twilight or gloaming. There were neither windows nor candles and he could not make out where the twilight came from, if not through the walls and roof. These were rough arches made of a

transparent rock, incrustated with sheepsilver and rock spar, and other bright stones. But though it was rock, the air was quite warm, as it always is in Elfland. So he went through this passage till at last he came to two wide and high folding doors which stood ajar. And when he opened them, there he saw a most wonderful and gracious sight. A large and spacious hall, so large that it seemed to be as long, and as broad, as the green hill itself. The roof was supported by fine pillars, so large and lofty that the pillars of a cathedral were as nothing to them. They were all of gold and silver, with fretted work, and between them and around them wreaths of flowers, composed of what do you think? Why, of diamonds and emeralds, and all manner of precious stones. And the very key-stones of the arches had for ornaments clusters of diamonds and rubies, and pearls, and other precious stones. And all these arches met in the middle of the roof, and just there, hung by a gold chain, an immense lamp made out of one big pearl hollowed out and quite transparent. And in the middle of this was a big, huge carbuncle, which kept spinning round and round, and this was what gave light by its rays to the whole hall, which seemed as if the setting sun was shining on it.

The hall was furnished in a manner equally grand, and at one end of it was a glorious couch of velvet, silk and gold, and there sate Burd Ellen, combing her golden hair with a silver comb. And when she saw Childe Rowland she stood up and said:

‘God pity ye, poor luckless fool,
What have ye here to do?

‘Hear ye this, my youngest brother,
Why didn’t ye bide at home?
Had you a hundred thousand lives
Ye couldn’t spare any a one.

Childe Rowland

'But sit ye down; but woe, O, woe,
That ever ye were born,
For come the King of Elfland in,
Your fortune is forlorn.'

Then they sate down together, and Childe Rowland told her all that he had done, and she told him how their two brothers had reached the Dark Tower, but had been enchanted by the King of Elfland, and lay there entombed as if dead. And then after they had talked a little longer Childe Rowland began to feel hungry from his long travels, and told his sister Burd Ellen how hungry he was and asked for some food, forgetting all about the Warlock Merlin's warning.

Burd Ellen looked at Childe Rowland sadly, and shook her head, but she was under a spell, and could not warn him. So she rose up, and went out, and soon brought back a golden basin full of bread and milk. Childe Rowland was just going to raise it to his lips, when he looked at his sister and remembered why he had come all that way. So he dashed the bowl to the ground, and said: 'Not a sup will I swallow, nor a bite will I bite, till Burd Ellen is set free.'

Just at that moment they heard the noise of someone approaching, and a loud voice was heard saying:

'Fee, fi, fo, fum,
I smell the blood of a Christian man,
Be he dead, be he living, with my brand,
I'll dash his brains from his brain-pan.'

And then the folding doors of the wall were burst open, and the King of Elfland rushed in.

'Strike then, Bogle, if thou darest,' shouted out Childe Rowland, and rushed to meet him with his good brand that never yet did fail. They fought, and they fought, and they fought, till Childe Rowland beat the King of Elfland

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down on to his knees, and caused him to yield and beg for mercy. 'I grant thee mercy,' said Childe Rowland; 'release my sister from thy spells and raise my brothers to life, and let us all go free, and thou shalt be spared.' 'I agree,' said the Elfin King, and rising up he went to a chest from which he took a phial filled with a blood-red liquor. With this he anointed the ears, eyelids, nostrils, lips and finger-tips of the two brothers, and they sprang at once into life and declared that their souls had been away, but had now returned. The Elfin King then said some words to Burd Ellen, and she was disenchanted, and they all four passed out of the hall, through the long passage, and turned their back on the Dark Tower, never to return again. So they reached home and the good queen their mother, and Burd Ellen never went round a church 'widdershins' again.



Molly Whuppie

ONCE upon a time there was a man and a wife had too many children, and they could not get meat for them, so they took the three youngest and left them in a wood. They travelled and travelled and could never see a house. It began to be dark, and they were hungry. At last they saw a light and made for it; it turned out to be a house. They knocked at the door, and a woman came to it, who said: 'What do you want?' They said: 'Please let us in and give us something to eat.' The woman said: 'I can't do that, as my man is a giant, and he would kill you if he comes home.' They begged hard. 'Let us stop for a little while,' said they, 'and we will go away before he comes.' So she took them in, and set them down before the fire, and gave them milk and bread; but just as they had begun to eat, a great knock came to the door, and a dreadful voice said:

'Fee, fie, fo, fum,
I smell the blood of some earthly one.'

Who have you there, wife?' 'Eh,' said the wife, 'it's three poor lassies cold and hungry, and they will go away. Ye won't touch 'em, man.' He said nothing, but ate up a big supper, and ordered them to stay all night. Now he had three lassies of his own, and they were to sleep in the same bed with the three strangers. The youngest of the three strange lassies was called Molly Whuppie, and she was very clever. She noticed that before they went to bed the giant put straw ropes round her neck and her sisters', and round his own lassies' necks he put gold chains. So Molly took care and did not fall asleep, but waited till she was sure everyone was sleeping sound. Then she slipped out of bed, and took the straw ropes off her own and her sisters' necks, and took the gold chains off the giant's lassies. She then put the straw ropes on the giant's lassies and the gold on herself and her sisters, and lay down. And in the middle of the night up rose the giant, armed with a great club, and felt for the necks with the straw. It was dark. He took his own lassies out of the bed on to the floor, and battered them until they were dead, and then lay down again, thinking he had managed finely. Molly thought it time she and her sisters were off and away, so she wakened them and told them to be quiet, and they slipped out of the house. They all got out safe, and they ran and ran, and never stopped until morning, when they saw a grand house before them. It turned out to be a king's house: so Molly went in, and told her story to the king. He said: 'Well, Molly, you are a clever girl, and you have managed well; but, if you would manage better, and go back, and steal the giant's sword that hangs on the back of his bed, I would give your eldest sister my eldest son to marry.' Molly said she would try. So she went back, and managed to slip into the giant's house, and crept in below the bed. The giant came home, and ate up a great supper, and went to bed. Molly waited until he was snoring, and she

Molly Whuppie

crept out, and reached over the giant and got down the sword; but just as she got it out over the bed it gave a rattle, and up jumped the giant, and Molly ran out at the door and the sword with her; and she ran, and he ran, till they came to the 'Bridge of one hair'; and she got over, but he couldn't and he says, 'Woe worth ye, Molly Whuppie! never ye come again.' And she says: 'Twice yet, carle,' quoth she, 'I'll come to Spain.' So Molly took the sword to the king, and her sister was married to his son.

Well, the king he says: 'Ye've managed well, Molly; but if ye would manage better, and steal the purse that lies below the giant's pillow, I would marry your second sister to my second son.' And Molly said she would try. So she set out for the giant's house, and slipped in and hid again below the bed, and waited till the giant had eaten his supper, and was snoring sound asleep. She slipped out and slipped her hand below the pillow, and got out the purse; but just as she was going out the giant wakened, and ran after her; and she ran, and he ran, till they came to the 'Bridge of one hair', and she got over, but he couldn't, and he said, 'Woe worth ye, Molly Whuppie! never you come again.' 'Once yet, carle,' quoth she, 'I'll come to Spain.' So Molly took the purse to the king, and her second sister was married to the king's second son.

After that the king says to Molly: 'Molly, you are a clever girl, but if you would do better yet, and steal the giant's ring that he wears on his finger, I will give you my youngest son for yourself.' Molly said she would try. So back she goes to the giant's house, and hides herself below the bed. The giant wasn't long ere he came home, and, after he had eaten a great big supper, he went to his bed, and shortly was snoring loud. Molly crept out and reached over the bed, and got hold of the giant's hand, and she pulled and she pulled until she got off the ring; but just as she got it off the giant got up, and gripped her by the

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hand and he says: 'Now I have caught you, Molly Whuppie, and, if I had done as much ill to you as ye have done to me, what would ye do to me?'

Molly says: 'I would put you into a sack, and I'd put the cat inside wi' you, and the dog aside you, and a needle and thread and a shears, and I'd hang you up upon the wall, and I'd go to the wood, and choose the thickest stick I could get, and I would come home, and take you down, and bang you till you were dead.'

'Well, Molly,' says the giant, 'I'll just do that to you.'

So he gets a sack, and puts Molly into it, and the cat and the dog beside her, and a needle and thread and shears, and hangs her up upon the wall, and goes to the wood to choose a stick.

Molly she sings out: 'Oh, if ye saw what I see.'

'Oh,' says the giant's wife, 'what do ye see, Molly?'

But Molly never said a word but, 'Oh, if ye saw what I see!'

The giant's wife begged that Molly would take her up into the sack till she would see what Molly saw. So Molly took the shears and cut a hole in the sack, and took out the needle and thread with her, and jumped down and helped the giant's wife up into the sack, and sewed up the hole.

The giant's wife saw nothing, and began to ask to get down again; but Molly never minded, but hid herself at the back of the door. Home came the giant, and a great big tree in his hand, and he took down the sack, and began to batter it. His wife cried, 'It's me, man'; but the dog barked and the cat mewed, and he did not know his wife's voice. But Molly came out from the back of the door, and the giant saw her and he after her; and he ran, and she ran, till they came to the 'Bridge of one hair', and she got over but he couldn't; and he said, 'Woe worth you, Mollie

Molly Whuppie

Whuppie! never you come again.' 'Never more, carle,' quoth she, 'will I come again to Spain.'

So Molly took the ring to the king, and she was married to his youngest son, and she never saw the giant again.



The History of Tom Thumb

IN the days of the great Prince Arthur there lived a mighty magician, called Merlin, the most learned and skilful enchanter the world has ever seen.

This famous magician, who could take any form he pleased, was travelling about as a poor beggar, and being very tired he stopped at the cottage of a ploughman to rest himself, and asked for some food.

The countryman bade him welcome, and his wife, who was a very good-hearted woman, soon brought him some milk in a wooden bowl, and some coarse brown bread on a platter.

Merlin was much pleased with the kindness of the ploughman and his wife; but he could not help noticing that though everything was neat and comfortable in the cottage, they both seemed to be very unhappy. He therefore asked them why they were so melancholy, and learned

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that they were miserable because they had no children.

The poor woman said, with tears in her eyes: 'I should be the happiest creature in the world if I had a son; although he was no bigger than my husband's thumb, I would be satisfied.'

Merlin was so much amused with the idea of a boy no bigger than a man's thumb that he determined to grant the poor woman's wish. Accordingly, in a short time after, the ploughman's wife had a son, who, wonderful to relate! was not a bit bigger than his father's thumb.

The queen of the fairies, wishing to see the little fellow, came in at the window while the mother was sitting up in the bed admiring him. The queen kissed the child, and giving it the name of Tom Thumb, sent for some of the fairies, who dressed her little godson according to her orders:

An oak-leaf hat he had for his crown;
His shirt of web by spiders spun;
With jacket wove of thistle's down;
His trowsers were of feathers done.
His stockings, of apple-rind, they tie
With eyelash from his mother's eye:
His shoes were made of mouse's skin,
Tann'd with the downy hair within.

Tom never grew any larger than his father's thumb, which was only of ordinary size; but as he got older he became very cunning and full of tricks. When he was old enough to play with the boys, and had lost all his own cherry-stones, he used to creep into the bags of his play-fellows, fill his pockets, and, getting out without their noticing him, would again join in the game.

One day, however, as he was coming out of a bag of cherry-stones, where he had been stealing as usual, the boy to whom it belonged chanced to see him. 'Ah, ah! my little Tommy,' said the boy, 'so I have caught you stealing

my cherry-stones at last, and you shall be rewarded for your thievish tricks.' On saying this, he drew the string tight round his neck, and gave the bag such a hearty shake that poor little Tom's legs, thighs and body were sadly bruised. He roared out with pain, and begged to be let out, promising never to steal again.

A short time afterwards his mother was making a batter-pudding, and Tom, being very anxious to see how it was made, climbed up to the edge of the bowl; but his foot slipped, and he plumped over head and ears into the batter, without his mother noticing him, who stirred him into the pudding-bag, and put him in the pot to boil.

The batter filled Tom's mouth, and prevented him from crying; but, on feeling the hot water, he kicked and struggled so much in the pot that his mother thought that the pudding was bewitched, and, pulling it out of the pot, she threw it outside the door. A poor tinker, who was passing by, lifted up the pudding, and, putting it into his budget, he then walked off. As Tom had now got his mouth cleared of the batter, he then began to cry aloud, which so frightened the tinker that he flung down the pudding and ran away. The pudding being broke to pieces by the fall, Tom crept out covered all over with the batter, and walked home. His mother, who was very sorry to see her darling in such a woeful state, put him into a teacup, and soon washed off the batter; after which she kissed him, and laid him in bed.

Soon after the adventure of the pudding, Tom's mother went to milk her cow in the meadow, and she took him along with her. As the wind was very high, for fear of being blown away, she tied him to a thistle with a piece of fine thread. The cow soon observed Tom's oak-leaf hat, and liking the appearance of it, took poor Tom and the thistle at one mouthful. While the cow was chewing the thistle, Tom was afraid of her great teeth, which

The History of Tom Thumb

threatened to crush him in pieces, and he roared out as loud as he could: 'Mother, mother!'

'Where are you, Tommy, my dear Tommy?' said his mother.

'Here, mother,' replied he, 'in the red cow's mouth.'

His mother began to cry and wring her hands; but the cow, surprised at the odd noise in her throat, opened her mouth and let Tom drop out. Fortunately his mother caught him in her apron as he was falling to the ground, or he would have been dreadfully hurt. She then put Tom in her bosom and ran home with him.

Tom's father made him a whip of a barley straw to drive the cattle with, and having one day gone into the fields, Tom slipped a foot and rolled into the furrow. A raven, which was flying over, picked him up, and flew with him over the sea, and there dropped him.

A large fish swallowed Tom the moment he fell into the sea, which was soon after caught, and bought for the table of King Arthur. When they opened the fish in order to cook it, everyone was astonished at finding such a little boy, and Tom was quite delighted at being free again. They carried him to the king, who made Tom his dwarf, and he soon grew a great favourite at court; for by his tricks and gambols he not only amused the king and queen, but also all the Knights of the Round Table.

It is said that when the king rode out on horseback, he often took Tom along with him, and if a shower came on, he used to creep into his majesty's waistcoat pocket, where he slept till the rain was over.

King Arthur one day asked Tom about his parents, wishing to know if they were as small as he was, and whether they were well off. Tom told the king that his father and mother were as tall as anybody about the court, but in rather poor circumstances. On hearing this, the king carried Tom to the treasury, the place where

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he kept all his money, and told him to take as much money as he could carry home to his parents, which made the poor little fellow caper with joy. Tom went immediately to procure a purse, which was made of a water-bubble, and then returned to the treasury, where he received a silver threepenny-piece to put into it.

Our little hero had some difficulty in lifting the burden upon his back; but he at last succeeded in getting it placed to his mind, and set forward on his journey. However, without meeting with any accident, and after resting himself more than a hundred times by the way, in two days and two nights he reached his father's house in safety.

Tom had travelled forty-eight hours with a huge silver-piece on his back, and was almost tired to death, when his mother ran out to meet him, and carried him into the house. But he soon returned to court.

As Tom's clothes had suffered much in the batter-pudding, and the inside of the fish, his majesty ordered him a new suit of clothes, and to be mounted as a knight on a mouse.

Of Butterfly's wings his shirt was made,
His boots of chicken's hide;
And by a nimble fairy blade,
Well learnèd in the tailoring trade,
His clothing was supplied.
A needle dangled by his side;
A dapper mouse he used to ride,
Thus strutted Tom in stately pride!

It was certainly very diverting to see Tom in this dress and mounted on the mouse, as he rode out a-hunting with the king and nobility, who were all ready to expire with laughter at Tom and his fine prancing charger.

The king was so charmed with his address that he ordered a little chair to be made, in order that Tom might

The History of Tom Thumb

sit upon his table, and also a palace of gold, a span high, with a door an inch wide, to live in. He also gave him a coach, drawn by six small mice.

The queen was so enraged at the honours conferred on Sir Thomas that she resolved to ruin him, and told the king that the little knight had been saucy to her.

The king sent for Tom in great haste, but being fully aware of the danger of royal anger, he crept into an empty snail-shell, where he lay for a long time until he was almost starved with hunger; but at last he ventured to peep out, and seeing a fine large butterfly on the ground, near the place of concealment, he got close to it and jumping astride on it, was carried up into the air. The butterfly flew with him from tree to tree and from field to field, and at last returned to the court, where the king and nobility all strove to catch him; but at last poor Tom fell from his seat into a watering-pot, in which he was almost drowned.

When the queen saw him, she was in a rage, and said he should be beheaded; and he was again put into a mouse trap until the time of his execution.

However, a cat, observing something alive in the trap, patted it about till the wires broke, and set Thomas at liberty.

The king received Tom again into favour, which he did not live to enjoy, for a large spider one day attacked him; and although he drew his sword and fought well, yet the spider's poisonous breath at last overcame him.

He fell dead on the ground where he stood,
And the spider suck'd every drop of his blood.

King Arthur and his whole court were so sorry at the loss of their little favourite that they went into mourning and raised a fine white marble monument over his grave with the following epitaph:

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Here lies Tom Thumb, King Arthur's knight,
Who died by a spider's cruel bite.
He was well known in Arthur's court,
Where he afforded gallant sport;
He rode a tilt and tournament,
And on a mouse a-hunting went. :
Alive he filled the court with mirth;
His death to sorrow soon gave birth.
Wipe, wipe your eyes, and shake your head
And cry,—Alas! Tom Thumb is dead!



Lazy Jack

ONCE upon a time there was a boy whose name was Jack, and he lived with his mother on a common. They were very poor, and the old woman got her living by spinning, but Jack was so lazy that he would do nothing but bask in the sun in the hot weather, and sit by the corner of the hearth in the winter-time. So they called him Lazy Jack. His mother could not get him to do anything for her, and at last told him, one Monday, that if he did not begin to work for his porridge she would turn him out to get his living as he could.

This roused Jack, and he went out and hired himself for the next day to a neighbouring farmer for a penny; but as he was coming home, never having had any money before, he lost it in passing over a brook. 'You stupid boy,' said his mother, 'you should have put it in your pocket.' 'I'll do so another time,' replied Jack.

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On Wednesday, Jack went out again and hired himself to a cow-keeper, who gave him a jar of milk for his day's work. Jack took the jar and put it into the large pocket of his jacket, spilling it all, long before he got home. 'Dear me!' said the old woman; 'you should have carried it on your head.' 'I'll do so another time,' said Jack.

So on Thursday, Jack hired himself again to a farmer, who agreed to give him a cream cheese for his services. In the evening Jack took the cheese, and went home with it on his head. By the time he got home the cheese was all spoilt, part of it being lost, and part matted with his hair. 'You stupid lout,' said his mother, 'you should have carried it very carefully in your hands.' 'I'll do so another time,' replied Jack.

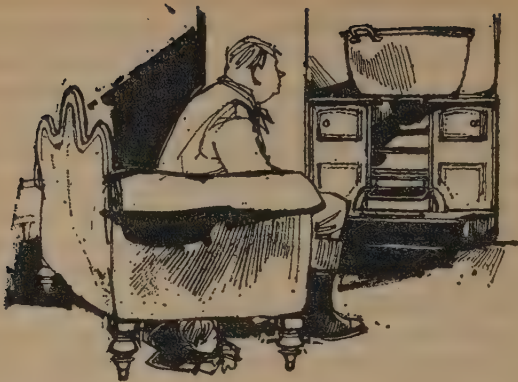
On Friday, Lazy Jack again went out, and hired himself to a baker, who would give him nothing for his work but a large tom-cat. Jack took the cat, and began carrying it very carefully in his hands, but in a short time pussy scratched him so much that he was compelled to let it go. When he got home, his mother said to him, 'You silly fellow, you should have tied it with a string, and dragged it along after you.' 'I'll do so another time,' said Jack.

So on Saturday, Jack hired himself to a butcher, who rewarded him by the handsome present of a shoulder of mutton. Jack took the mutton, tied it to a string, and trailed it along after him in the dirt, so that by the time he had got home the meat was completely spoilt. His mother was this time quite out of patience with him, for the next day was Sunday, and she was obliged to do with cabbage for her dinner. 'You ninney-hammer,' she said to her son; 'you should have carried it on your shoulder.' 'I'll do so another time,' replied Jack.

On the next Monday, Lazy Jack went once more and hired himself to a cattle-keeper, who gave him a donkey for his trouble. Jack found it hard to hoist the donkey

Lazy Jack

on his shoulders, but at last he did it, and began walking slowly home with his prize. Now it happened that in the course of his journey there lived a rich man with his only daughter, a beautiful girl, but deaf and dumb. Now she had never laughed in her life, and the doctors said she would never speak till somebody made her laugh. This young lady happened to be looking out of the window when Jack was passing with the donkey on his shoulders, with the legs sticking up in the air, and the sight was so comical and strange that she burst out into a great fit of laughter, and immediately recovered her speech and hearing. Her father was overjoyed, and fulfilled his promise by marrying her to Lazy Jack, who was thus made a rich gentleman. They lived in a large house, and Jack's mother lived with them in great happiness until she died.



Mr Miacca

TOMMY GRIMES was sometimes a good boy, and sometimes a bad boy; and when he was a bad boy, he was a very bad boy. Now his mother used to say to him: 'Tommy, Tommy, be a good boy, and don't go out of the street, or else Mr Miacca will take you.' But still when he was a bad boy he would go out of the street; and one day, sure enough, he had scarcely got round the corner, when Mr Miacca did catch him and popped him into a bag upside down, and took him off to his house.

When Mr Miacca got Tommy inside, he pulled him out of the bag and sat him down, and felt his arms and legs. 'You're rather tough,' says he; 'but you're all I've got for supper, and you'll not taste bad boiled. But body o' me, I've forgot the herbs, and it's bitter you'll taste without herbs. Sally! Here, I say, Sally!' and he called Mrs Miacca.

So Mrs Miacca came out of another room and said: 'What d'ye want, my dear?'

Mr Miacca

'Oh, here's a little boy for supper,' said Mr Miacca, 'and I've forgot the herbs. Mind him, will ye, while I go for them.'

'All right, my love,' says Mrs. Miacca, and off he goes.

Then Tommy Grimes said to Mrs Miacca: 'Does Mr Miacca always have little boys for supper?'

'Mostly, my dear,' said Mrs Miacca, 'if little boys are bad enough, and get in his way.'

'And don't you have anything else but boy-meat? No pudding?' asked Tommy.

'Ah, I loves pudding,' says Mrs Miacca. 'But it's not often the likes of me gets pudding.'

'Why, my mother is making a pudding this very day,' said Tommy Grimes, 'and I am sure she'd give you some, if I ask her. Shall I run and get some?'

'Now, that's a thoughtful boy,' said Mrs Miacca, 'only don't be long and be sure to be back for supper.'

So off Tommy pelted, and right glad he was to get off so cheap; and for many a long day he was as good as good could be, and never went round the corner of the street. But he couldn't always be good; and one day he went round the corner, and as luck would have it, he hadn't scarcely got round it when Mr Miacca grabbed him up, popped him in his bag, and took him home.

When he got him there, Mr Miacca dropped him out; and when he saw him, he said: 'Ah, you're the youngster that served me and my missus such a shabby trick, leaving us without any supper. Well, you shan't do it again. I'll watch over you myself. Here, get under the sofa, and I'll set on it and watch the pot boil for you.'

So poor Tommy Grimes had to creep under the sofa, and Mr Miacca sat on it and waited for the pot to boil. And they waited and they waited, but still the pot didn't boil, till at last Mr Miacca got tired of waiting, and he said: 'Here, you under there, I'm not going to wait any

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longer; put out your leg, and I'll stop your giving us the slip.'

So Tommy put out a leg and Mr Miacca got a chopper, and chopped it off, and pops it in the pot.

Suddenly he calls out: 'Sally, my dear, Sally!' and nobody answered. So he went into the next room to look out for Mrs Miacca, and while he was there Tommy crept out from under the sofa and ran out of the door. For it was a leg of the sofa that he had put out.

So Tommy Grimes ran home, and he never went round the corner again till he was old enough to go alone.



Whittington and his Cat

IN the reign of the famous King Edward III there was a little boy called Dick Whittington, whose father and mother died when he was very young. As poor Dick was not old enough to work, he was very badly off; he got but little for his dinner, and sometimes nothing at all for his breakfast; for the people who lived in the village were very poor indeed, and could not spare him much more than the parings of potatoes, and now and then a hard crust of bread.

Now Dick had heard many, many very strange things about the great city called London; for the country people at that time thought that folks in London were all fine gentlemen and ladies; and that there was singing and music there all day long; and that the streets were all paved with gold.

One day a large waggon and eight horses, all with bells at their heads, drove through the village while Dick was

standing by the signpost. He thought that this waggon must be going to the fine town of London; so he took courage, and asked the waggoner to let him walk with him by the side of the waggon. As soon as the waggoner heard that poor Dick had no father or mother, and saw by his ragged clothes that he could not be worse off than he was, he told him he might go if he would, so off they set together.

So Dick got safe to London, and was in such a hurry to see the fine street paved all over with gold that he did not even stay to thank the kind waggoner; but ran off as fast as his legs would carry him, through many of the streets, thinking every moment to come to those that were paved with gold; for Dick had seen a guinea three times in his own little village, and remembered what a deal of money it brought in change; so he thought he had nothing to do but to take up some little bits of the pavement, and should then have as much money as he could wish for.

Poor Dick ran till he was tired, and had quite forgot his friend the waggoner; but at last, finding it grow dark, and that every way he turned he saw nothing but dirt instead of gold, he sat down in a dark corner and cried himself to sleep.

Little Dick was all night in the streets; and next morning, being very hungry, he got up and walked about, and asked everybody he met to give him a halfpenny to keep him from starving; but nobody stayed to answer him, and only two or three gave him a halfpenny; so that the poor boy was soon quite weak and faint for the want of victuals.

In this distress he asked charity of several people and one of them said crossly: 'Go to work for an idle rogue.' 'That I will,' said Dick, 'I will go to work for you, if you will let me.' But the man only cursed at him and went on.

At last a good-natured-looking gentleman saw how hungry he looked. 'Why don't you go to work, my lad?'

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said he to Dick. 'That I would, but I do not know how to get any,' answered Dick. 'If you are willing, come along with me,' said the gentleman, and took him to a hay-field, where Dick worked briskly, and lived merrily till the hay was made.

After this he found himself as badly off as before; and being almost starved again, he laid himself down at the door of Mr Fitzwarren, a rich merchant. Here he was soon seen by the cook-maid, who was an ill-tempered creature, and happened just then to be very busy dressing dinner for her master and mistress; so she called out to poor Dick: 'What business have you there, you lazy rogue? There is nothing else but beggars. If you do not take yourself away, we will see how you will like a sousing of some dish-water; I have some here hot enough to make you jump.'

Just at that time Mr Fitzwarren himself came home to dinner; and when he saw a dirty ragged boy lying at the door, he said to him: 'Why do you lie there, my boy? You seem old enough to work; I am afraid you are inclined to be lazy.'

'No, indeed, sir,' said Dick to him, 'that is not the case, for I would work with all my heart, but I do not know anybody, and I believe I am very sick for the want of food.'

'Poor fellow, get up; let me see what ails you.'

Dick now tried to rise, but was obliged to lie down again, being too weak to stand, for he had not eaten any food for three days, and was no longer able to run about and beg a halfpenny of people in the street. So the kind merchant ordered him to be taken into the house, and have a good dinner given him, and he kept to do what work he was able to do for the cook.

Little Dick would have lived very happy in this good family if it had not been for the ill-natured cook. She used to say: 'You are under me, so look sharp; clean the

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spit and the dripping-pan, make the fires, wind up the jack, and do all the scullery work nimbly, or – ' and she would shake the ladle at him. Besides, she was so fond of basting that when she had no meat to baste she would baste poor Dick's head and shoulders with a broom, or anything else that happened to fall in her way. At last her ill-usage of him was told to Alice, Mr Fitzwarren's daughter, who told the cook she should be turned away if she did not treat him kinder.

The behaviour of the cook was now a little better; but besides this, Dick had another hardship to get over. His bed stood in a garret, where there were so many holes in the floor and the walls that every night he was tormented with rats and mice. A gentleman having given Dick a penny for cleaning his shoes, he thought he would buy a cat with it. The next day he saw a girl with a cat, and asked her, 'Will you let me have that cat for a penny?' The girl said: 'Yes, that I will, master, though she is an excellent mouser.'

Dick hid his cat in the garret, and always took care to carry a part of his dinner to her; and in a short time he had no more trouble with the rats and mice, but slept quite sound every night.

Soon after this, his master had a ship ready to sail; and as it was the custom that all his servants should have some chance for good fortune as well as himself, he called them all into the parlour and asked them what they would send out.

They all had something that they were willing to venture except poor Dick, who had neither money nor goods, and therefore could send nothing. For this reason he did not come into the parlour with the rest; but Miss Alice guessed what was the matter, and ordered him to be called in. She then said: 'I will lay down some money for him,

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from my own purse'; but her father told her: 'This will not do, for it must be something of his own.'

When poor Dick heard this, he said: 'I have nothing but a cat which I bought for a penny some time since of a little girl.'

'Fetch your cat then, my lad,' said Mr Fitzwarren, 'and let her go.'

Dick went upstairs and brought down poor puss, with tears in his eyes, and gave her to the captain; 'For,' he said, 'I shall now be kept awake all night by the rats and mice.' All the company laughed at Dick's odd venture; and Miss Alice, who felt pity for him, gave him some money to buy another cat.

This, and many other marks of kindness shown him by Miss Alice, made the ill-tempered cook jealous of poor Dick, and she began to use him more cruelly than ever, and always made game of him for sending his cat to sea. She asked him: 'Do you think your cat will sell for as much money as would buy a stick to beat you?'

At last poor Dick could not bear this usage any longer, and he thought he would run away from his place; so he packed up his few things, and started very early in the morning, on All-Hallows Day, the first of November. He walked as far as Holloway; and there sat down on a stone, which to this day is called 'Whittington's Stone', and began to think to himself which road he should take.

While he was thinking what he should do, the Bells of Bow Church, which at that time were only six, began to ring, and at their sound seemed to say to him:

'Turn again, Whittington,
Thrice Lord Mayor of London.'

'Lord Mayor of London!' said he to himself. 'Why, to be sure, I would put up with almost anything now, to be

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Lord Mayor of London, and ride in a fine coach, when I grow to be a man! Well, I will go back, and think nothing of the cuffing and scolding of the old cook, if I am to be Lord Mayor of London at last.'

Dick went back, and was lucky enough to get into the house, and set about his work before the old cook came downstairs.

We must now follow Mrs Puss to the coast of Africa. The ship with the cat on board was a long time at sea; and was at last driven by the winds on a part of the coast of Barbary, where the only people were the Moors, unknown to the English. The people came in great numbers to see the sailors, because they were of different colour to themselves, and treated them civilly; and, when they became better acquainted, were very eager to buy the fine things that the ship was loaded with.

When the captain saw this, he sent patterns of the best things he had to the king of the country; who was so much pleased with them that he sent for the captain to the palace. Here they were placed, as it is the custom of the country, on rich carpets flowered with gold and silver. The king and queen were seated at the upper end of the room; and a number of dishes were brought in for dinner. They had not sat long, when a vast number of rats and mice rushed in, and devoured all the meat in an instant. The captain wondered at this, and asked if these vermin were not unpleasant.

'Oh yes,' said they, 'very offensive; and the king would give half his treasure to be freed of them, for they not only destroy his dinner, as you see, but they assault him in his chamber, and even in bed, so that he is obliged to be watched while he is sleeping, for fear of them.'

The captain jumped for joy; he remembered poor Whittington and his cat, and told the king he had a creature on board the ship that would dispatch all these

vermin immediately. The king jumped so high at the joy which the news gave him that his turban dropped off his head. 'Bring this creature to me,' says he; 'vermin are dreadful in a court, and if she will perform what you say, I will load your ship with gold and jewels in exchange for her.'

The captain, who knew his business, took this opportunity to set forth the merits of Mrs Puss. He told his majesty: 'It is not very convenient to part with her, as, when she is gone, the rats and mice may destroy the goods in the ship – but to oblige your majesty, I will fetch her.'

'Run, run!' said the queen; 'I am impatient to see the dear creature.'

Away went the captain to the ship, while another dinner was got ready. He put Puss under his arm, and arrived at the palace just in time to see the table full of rats. When the cat saw them, she did not wait for bidding, but jumped out of the captain's arms, and in a few minutes laid almost all the rats and mice dead at her feet. The rest of them in their fright scampered away to their holes.

The king was quite charmed to get rid so easily of such plagues, and the queen desired that the creature who had done them so great a kindness might be brought to her, that she might look at her. Upon which the captain called: 'Pussy, pussy, pussy!' and she came to him. He then presented her to the queen, who started back, and was afraid to touch a creature who had made such a havoc among the rats and mice. However, when the captain stroked the cat and called: 'Pussy, pussy', the queen also touched her and cried: 'Putty, putty', for she had not learned English. He then put her down on the queen's lap, where she purred and played with her majesty's hand, and then purred herself to sleep.

The king, having seen the exploits of Mrs Puss, and be-

ing informed that her kittens would stock the whole country, and keep it free from rats, bargained with the captain for the whole ship's cargo, and then gave him ten times as much for the cat as all the rest amounted to.

The captain then took leave of the royal party, and set sail with a fair wind for England, and after a happy voyage arrived safe in London.

One morning, early, Mr Fitzwarren had just come to his counting-house and seated himself at the desk, to count over the cash, and settle the business for the day, when somebody came tap, tap, at the door. 'Who's there?' said Mr Fitzwarren. 'A friend,' answered the other; 'I come to bring you good news of your ship *Unicorn*.' The merchant, bustling up in such a hurry that he forgot his gout, opened the door, and who should he see waiting but the captain and factor, with a cabinet of jewels and a bill of lading; when he looked at this the merchant lifted up his eyes and thanked Heaven for sending him such a prosperous voyage.

They then told the story of the cat, and showed the rich present that the king and queen had sent for her to poor Dick. As soon as the merchant heard this, he called out to his servants:

'Go send him in, and tell him of his fame;
Pray call him Mr Whittington by name.'

Mr Fitzwarren now showed himself to be a good man; for when some of his servants said so great a treasure was too much for him, he answered: 'God forbid I should deprive him of the value of a single penny; it is his own, and he shall have it to a farthing.'

He then sent for Dick, who at that time was scouring pots for the cook, and was quite dirty. He would have excused himself from coming into the counting-house, saying, 'The room is swept, and my shoes are dirty and

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full of hob-nails.' But the merchant ordered him to come in.

Mr Fitzwarren ordered a chair to be set for him, and so he began to think they were making game of him, and at the same time said to them: 'Do not play tricks with a poor simple boy, but let me go down again, if you please, to my work.'

'Indeed, Mr Whittington,' said the merchant, 'we are all quite in earnest with you, and I most heartily rejoice in the news that these gentlemen have brought you; for the captain has sold your cat to the King of Barbary, and brought you in return for her more riches than I possess in the whole world; and I wish you may long enjoy them!'

Mr Fitzwarren then told the men to open the great treasure they had brought with them, and said: 'Mr Whittington has nothing to do but to put it in some place of safety.'

Poor Dick hardly knew how to behave himself for joy. He begged his master to take what part of it he pleased, since he owed it all to his kindness. 'No, no,' answered Mr Fitzwarren, 'this is all your own; and I have no doubt but you will use it well.'

Dick next asked his mistress, and then Miss Alice, to accept part of his good fortune; but they would not, and at the same time told him they felt great joy at his good success. But this poor fellow was too kind-hearted to keep it all to himself; so he made a present to the captain, the mate, and the rest of Mr Fitzwarren's servants; and even to the ill-natured old cook.

After this Mr Fitzwarren advised him to send for a proper tailor, and get himself dressed like a gentleman; and told him he was welcome to live in his house till he could provide himself with a better.

When Whittington's face was washed, his hair curled, his hat cocked, and he was dressed in a nice suit of clothes

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he was as handsome and genteel as any young man who visited at Mr Fitzwarren's; so that Miss Alice, who had once been so kind to him, and thought of him with pity, now looked upon him as fit to be her sweetheart; and the more so, no doubt, because Whittington was now always thinking what he could do to oblige her, and making her the prettiest presents that could be.

Mr Fitzwarren soon saw their love for each other, and proposed to join them in marriage; and to this they both readily agreed. A day for the wedding was soon fixed; and they were attended to church by the Lord Mayor, the court of aldermen, the sheriffs, and a great number of the richest merchants in London, whom they afterwards treated with a very rich feast.

History tells us that Mr Whittington and his lady lived in great splendour, and were very happy. They had several children. He was Sheriff of London, thrice Lord Mayor, and received the honour of knighthood by Henry V.

He entertained this king and his queen at dinner, after his conquest of France, so grandly, that the king said: 'Never had prince such a subject'; when Sir Richard heard this, he said: 'Never had subject such a prince.'

The figure of Sir Richard Whittington with his cat in his arms, carved in stone, was to be seen till the year 1780 over the archway of the old prison at Newgate, which he built for criminals.



The Laidly Worm of Spindleston Heugh

IN Bamborough Castle once lived a king who had a fair wife and two children, a son named Childe Wynd and a daughter named Margaret. Childe Wynd went forth to seek his fortune, and soon after he had gone the queen his mother died. The king mourned her long and faithfully, but one day while he was hunting he came across a lady of great beauty, and fell so much in love with her that he determined to marry her. So he sent word home that he was going to bring a new queen to Bamborough Castle.

Princess Margaret was not very glad to hear of her mother's place being taken, but she did not repine, but did her father's bidding, and at the appointed day came down to the castle gate with the keys all ready to hand over to her stepmother. Soon the procession drew near,

and the new queen came towards Princess Margaret, who bowed low and handed her the keys of the castle. She stood there with blushing cheeks and eyes on ground, and said: 'O welcome, father dear, to your halls and bowers, and welcome to you, my new mother, for all that's here is yours', and again she offered the keys. One of the king's knights who had escorted the new queen cried out in admiration: 'Surely this Northern princess is the loveliest of her kind.' At that the new queen flushed up and cried out: 'At least your courtesy might have excepted me', and then she muttered below her breath: 'I'll soon put an end to her beauty.'

That same night the queen, who was a noted witch, stole down to a lonely dungeon wherein she did her magic and with spells three times three, and with passes nine times nine she cast Princess Margaret under her spell. And this was her spell:

I weird ye to be a Laidly Worm,
And borrowed shall ye never be,
Until Childe Wynd, the King's own son
Come to the Heugh and thrice kiss thee;
Until the world comes to an end,
Borrowed shall ye never be.

So Lady Margaret went to bed a beauteous maiden, and rose up a Laidly Worm. And when her maidens came in to dress her in the morning they found coiled up on the bed a dreadful dragon, which uncoiled itself and came towards them. But they ran away shrieking, and the Laidly Worm crawled and crept, and crept and crawled till it reached the Heugh or rock of the Spindleston round which it coiled itself, and lay there basking with its terrible snout in the air.

Soon the country round about had reason to know of the Laidly Worm of Spindleston Heugh. For hunger

The Laidly Worm of Spindleston Heugh

drove the monster out from its cave and it used to devour everything it could come across. So at last they went to a mighty warlock and asked him what they should do. Then he consulted his works and his familiar, and told them: 'The Laidly Worm is really the Princess Margaret and it is hunger that drives her forth to do such deeds. Put aside for her seven kine, and each day as the sun goes down, carry every drop of milk they yield to the stone trough at the foot of the Heugh, and the Laidly Worm will trouble the country no longer. But if ye would that she be borrowed to her natural shape, and that she who bespelled her be rightly punished, send over the seas for her brother, Childe Wynd.'

All was done as the warlock advised; the Laidly Worm lived on the milk of the seven kine, and the country was troubled no longer. But when Childe Wynd heard the news, he swore a mighty oath to rescue his sister and revenge her on her cruel stepmother. And three-and-thirty of his men took the oath with him. Then they set to work and built a long ship, and its keel they made of the rowan-tree. And when all was ready, they out with their oars and pulled sheer for Bamborough Keep.

But as they got near the keep the stepmother felt by her magic power that something was being wrought against her, so she summoned her familiar imps and said: 'Childe Wynd is coming over the seas; he must never land. Raise storms, or bore the hull, but nohow must he touch the shore.' Then the imps went forth to meet Childe Wynd's ship, but when they got near they found they had no power over the ship, for its keel was made of the rowan-tree. So back they came to the queen witch, who knew not what to do. She ordered her men-at-arms to resist Childe Wynd if he should land near them, and by her spells she caused the Laidly Worm to wait by the entrance of the harbour.

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As the ship came near, the Worm unfolded its coils, and, dipping into the sea, caught hold of the ship of Childe Wynd, and banged it off the shore. Three times Childe Wynd urged his men on to row bravely and strong, but each time the Laidly Worm kept it off the shore. Then Childe Wynd ordered the ship to be put about, and the witch-queen thought he had given up the attempt. But instead of that, he only rounded the next point and landed safe and sound in Buddle Creek, and then, with sword drawn and bow bent, rushed up, followed by his men, to fight the terrible Worm that had kept him from landing.

But the moment Childe Wynd had landed, the witch-queen's power over the Laidly Worm had gone, and she went back to her bower all alone, not an imp, nor a man-at-arms to help her, for she knew her hour was come. So when Childe Wynd came rushing up to the Laidly Worm it made no attempt to stop him or hurt him, but just as he was going to raise his sword to slay it, the voice of his own sister Margaret came from its jaws saying:

'O, quit your sword, unbend your bow,
And give me kisses three;
For though I am a poisonous worm,
No harm I'll do to thee.'

Childe Wynd stayed his hand, but he did not know what to think if some witchery were not in it. Then said the Laidly Worm again:

'O, quit your sword, unbend your bow,
And give me kisses three,
If I'm not won ere set of sun,
Won never shall I be.'

Then Childe Wynd went up to the Laidly Worm and kissed it once; but no change came over it. Then Childe

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Wynd kissed it once more; but yet no change came over it. For a third time he kissed the loathsome thing, and with a hiss and a roar the Laidly Worm reared back and before Childe Wynd stood his sister Margaret. He wrapped his cloak about her, and then went up to the castle with her. When he reached the keep, he went off to the witch-queen's bower, and when he saw her, he touched her with a twig of a rowan-tree. No sooner had he touched her than she shrivelled up and shrivelled up, till she became a huge ugly toad, with bold staring eyes and a horrible hiss. She croaked and she hissed, and then hopped away down the castle steps, and Childe Wynd took his father's place as king, and they all lived happy afterwards.

But to this day a loathsome toad is seen at times haunting the neighbourhood of Bamborough Keep, and the wicked witch-queen is that Laidly Toad.



The Fish and the Ring

ONCE upon a time, there was a mighty baron in the North Countrie who was a great magician and knew everything that would come to pass. So one day, when his little boy was four years old, he looked into the Book of Fate to see what would happen to him. And to his dismay, he found that his son would wed a lowly maid that had just been born in a house under the shadow of York Minster. Now the Baron knew the father of the little girl was very, very poor, and he had five children already. So he called for his horse, and rode into York, and passed by the father's house, and saw him sitting by the door, sad and doleful. So he dismounted and went up to him and said: 'What is the matter, my good man?' And the man said: 'Well, your honour, the fact is, I've five children already, and now a sixth's come, a little lass, and where to get the bread from to fill their mouths, that's more than I can say.'

'Don't be downhearted, my man,' said the Baron. 'If

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that's your trouble, I can help you. I'll take away the last little one, and you won't have to bother about her.'

'Thank you kindly, sir,' said the man; and he went in and brought out the lass and gave her to the Baron, who mounted his horse and rode away with her. And when he got by the bank of the River Ouse, he threw the little thing into the river, and rode off to his castle.

But the little lass didn't sink; her clothes kept her up for a time, and she floated, and she floated, till she was cast ashore just in front of a fisherman's hut. There the fisherman found her, and took pity on the poor little thing and took her into his house, and she lived there till she was fifteen years old, and a fine handsome girl.

One day it happened that the Baron went out hunting with some companions along the banks of the River Ouse, and stopped at the fisherman's hut to get a drink, and the girl came out to give it to them. They all noticed her beauty, and one of them said to the Baron: 'You can read fates, Baron, whom will she marry, d'ye think?'

'Oh! that's easy to guess,' said the Baron; 'some yokel or other. But I'll cast her horoscope. Come here, girl, and tell me on what day you were born.'

'I don't know sir,' said the girl, 'I was picked up just here after having been brought down by the river about fifteen years ago.'

Then the Baron knew who she was, and when they went away, he rode back and said to the girl: 'Hark ye, girl, I will make your fortune. Take this letter to my brother in Scarborough, and you will be settled for life.' And the girl took the letter and said she would go. Now this is what he had written in the letter:

DEAR BROTHER, - Take the bearer and put her to death immediately,

Yours affectionately,

HUMPHREY.

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So soon after the girl set out for Scarborough, and slept for the night at a little inn. Now that very night a band of robbers broke into the inn, and searched the girl, who had no money, and only the letter. So they opened this and read it, and thought it a shame. The captain of the robbers took a pen and paper and wrote this letter:

DEAR BROTHER, — Take the bearer and marry her to my son immediately,

Yours affectionately,

HUMPHREY,

And then he gave it to the girl, bidding her begone. So she went on to the Baron's brother at Scarborough, a noble knight, with whom the Baron's son was staying. When she gave the letter to his brother, he gave orders for the wedding to be prepared at once, and they were married that very day.

Soon after, the Baron himself came to his brother's castle, and what was his surprise to find the very thing he had plotted against had come to pass. But he was not to be put off that way; and he took the girl out for a walk, as he said, along the cliffs. And when he got her all alone, he took her by the arms, and was going to throw her over. But she begged hard for her life. 'I have not done anything,' she said: 'if you will only spare me, I will do whatever you wish. I will never see you or your son again till you desire it.' Then the Baron took off his gold ring and threw it into the sea, saying: 'Never let me see your face till you can show me that ring'; and he let her go.

The poor girl wandered on and on, till at last she came to a great noble's castle, and she asked to have some work given to her; and they made her the scullion girl of the castle, for she had been used to such work in the fisherman's hut.

Now one day, who should she see coming up to the

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noble's house but the Baron and his brother and his son, her husband. She didn't know what to do; but thought they would not see her in the castle kitchen. So she went back to her work with a sigh, and set to cleaning a huge big fish that was to be boiled for their dinner. And, as she was cleaning it, she saw something shine inside it, and what do you think she found? Why, there was the Baron's ring, the very one he had thrown over the cliff at Scarborough. She was glad indeed to see it, you may be sure. Then she cooked the fish as nicely as she could, and served it up.

Well, when the fish came on the table, the guests liked it so well that they asked the noble who cooked it. He said he didn't know, but called to his servants: 'Ho, there, send the cook who cooked that fine fish.' So they went down to the kitchen and told the girl she was wanted in the hall.

When the banqueters saw such a young and beautiful cook they were surprised. But the Baron was in a tower of temper, and started up as if he would do her some violence. So the girl went up to him with her hand before her with the ring on it; and she put it down before him on the table. Then at last the Baron saw that no one could fight against Fate, and he handed her to a seat and announced to all the company that this was his son's true wife; and he took her and his son home to his castle; and they all lived happy as could be ever afterwards.



The Magpie's Nest

Once upon a time when pigs spoke rhyme
And monkeys chewed tobacco,
And hens took snuff to make them tough,
And ducks went quack, quack, quack, O!

ALL the birds of the air came to the magpie and asked her to teach them how to build nests. For the Magpie is the cleverest bird of all at building nests. So she put all the birds round her and began to show them how to do it. First of all she took some mud and made a sort of round cake with it.

'Oh, that's how it's done,' said the thrush; and away it flew, and so that's how thrushes build their nests.

Then the magpie took some twigs and arranged them round in the mud.

'Now I know all about it,' says the blackbird, and off he flew; and that's how the blackbirds make their nests to this very day.

The Magpie's Nest

Then the magpie put another layer of mud over the twigs.

'Oh that's quite obvious,' said the wise owl, and away it flew; and owls have never made better nests since.

After this the magpie took some twigs and twined them round the outside.

'The very thing!' said the sparrow, and off he went; so sparrows make rather slovenly nests to this day.

Well, then Madge Magpie took some feathers and stuff and lined the nest very comfortably with it.

'That suits me,' cried the starling, and off it flew; and very comfortable nests have starlings.

So it went on, every bird taking away some knowledge of how to build nests, but none of them waiting to the end. Meanwhile Madge Magpie went on working and working without looking up till the only bird that remained was the turtle-dove, and that hadn't paid any attention all along, but only kept on saying its silly cry: 'Take two, Taffy, take Two-o-o-o.'

At last the magpie heard this just as she was putting a twig across. So she said: 'One's enough.'

But the turtle-dove kept on saying: 'Take two, Taffy, take two-o-o-o.'

Then the magpie got angry and said: 'One's enough, I tell you.'

Still the turtle-dove cried: 'Take two, Taffy, take two-o-o-o.'

At last, and at last, the magpie looked up and saw nobody near her but the silly turtle-dove, and then she got rarely angry and flew away and refused to tell the birds how to build nests again. And that is why different birds build their nests differently.



Kate Crackernuts

ONCE upon a time there was a king and a queen, as in many lands have been. The king had a daughter, Anne, and the queen had one named Kate, but Anne was far bonnier than the queen's daughter, though they loved one another like real sisters. The queen was jealous of the king's daughter being bonnier than her own, and cast about to spoil her beauty. So she took counsel of the hen-wife, who told her to send the lassie to her next morning fasting.

So next morning early, the queen said to Anne, 'Go, my dear, to the hen-wife in the glen, and ask her for some eggs.' So Anne set out, but as she passed through the kitchen she saw a crust, and she took and munched it as she went along.

When she came to the hen-wife's she asked for eggs, as she had been told to do; the hen-wife said to her, 'Lift the lid off that pot there and see.' The lassie did so, but

nothing happened. 'Go home to your minnie and tell her to keep her larder door better locked,' said the hen-wife. So she went home to the queen and told her what the hen-wife had said. The queen knew from this that the lassie had had something to eat, so watched the next morning and sent her away fasting; but the princess saw some country-folk picking peas by the roadside, and being very kind she spoke to them and took a handful of the peas, which she ate by the way.

When she came to the hen-wife's the hen-wife said, 'Lift the lid off the pot and you'll see.' So Anne lifted the lid, but nothing happened. Then the hen-wife was rare angry and said to Anne, 'Tell your minnie the pot won't boil if the fire's away.' So Anne went home and told the queen.

The third day the queen goes along with the girl herself to the hen-wife. Now, this time, when Anne lifted the lid off the pot, off falls her own pretty head, and on jumps a sheep's head.

So the queen was now quite satisfied, and went back home.

Her own daughter, Kate, however, took a fine linen cloth and wrapped it round her sister's head and took her by the hand and they both went out to seek their fortune. They went on, and they went on, and they went on, till they came to a castle. Kate knocked at the door and asked for a night's lodging for herself and a sick sister. They went in and found it was a king's castle, who had two sons, and one of them was sickening away to death and no one could find out what ailed him. And the curious thing was that whoever watched him at night was never seen any more. So the king had offered a peck of silver to anyone who would stop up with him. Now Katie was a very brave girl, so she offered to sit up with him.

Till midnight all went well. As twelve o'clock rang, however, the sick prince rose, dressed himself, and slipped

downstairs. Kate followed, but he didn't seem to notice her. The prince went to the stable, saddled his horse, called his hound, jumped into the saddle, and Kate leaped lightly up behind him. Away rode the prince and Kate through the greenwood, Kate, as they passed, plucking nuts from the trees and filling her apron with them. They rode on and on till they came to a green hill. The prince here drew bridle and spoke, 'Open, open, green hill, and let the young prince in with his horse and his hound', and Kate added, 'and his lady behind him'.

Immediately the green hill opened and they passed in. The prince entered a magnificent hall, brightly lighted up, and many beautiful fairies surrounded the prince and led him off to the dance. Meanwhile, Kate, without being noticed, hid herself behind the door. There she saw the prince dancing, and dancing, and dancing, till he could dance no longer and fell upon a couch. Then the fairies would fan him till he could rise again and go on dancing.

At last the cock crew, and the prince made all haste to get on horseback; Kate jumped up behind and home they rode. When the morning sun rose, they came in and found Kate sitting down by the fire and cracking her nuts. Kate said the prince had a good night; but she would not sit up another night unless she was to get a peck of gold. The second night passed as the first had done. The prince got up at midnight and rode away to the green hill and the fairy ball, and Kate went with him, gathering nuts as they rode through the forest. This time she did not watch the prince, for she knew he would dance, and dance, and dance. But she saw a fairy baby playing with a wand, and overheard one of the fairies say: 'Three strokes of that wand would make Kate's sister as bonnie as ever she was.' So Kate rolled nuts to the fairy baby, and rolled nuts till the baby toddled after the nuts and let fall the wand, and Kate took it up and put it in her apron. And at cockcrow

Kate Crackernuts

they rode home as before, and the moment Kate got home to her room she rushed and touched Anne three times with the wand, and the nasty sheep's head fell off and she was her own pretty self again. The third night Kate consented to watch, only if she should marry the sick prince. All went on as on the first two nights. This time the fairy baby was playing with a birdie; Kate heard one of the fairies say: 'Three bites of that birdie would make the sick prince as well as ever he was.' Kate rolled all the nuts she had to the fairy baby till the birdie was dropped, and Kate put it in her apron.

At cockcrow they set off again, but instead of cracking her nuts as she used to do, this time Kate plucked the feathers off and cooked the birdie. Soon there arose a very savoury smell. 'Oh!' said the sick prince, 'I wish I had a bite of that birdie', so Kate gave him a bite of the birdie, and he rose up on his elbow. By and by he cried out again: 'Oh, if I had another bite of that birdie!' so Kate gave him another bite, and he sat up on his bed. Then he said again: 'Oh! If I had but a third bite of that birdie!' So Kate gave him a third bite, and he rose hale and strong, dressed himself, and sat down by the fire, and when the folk came in next morning they found Kate and the young prince cracking nuts together. Meanwhile his brother had seen Anne and had fallen in love with her, as everybody did who saw her sweet pretty face. So the sick son married the well sister, and the well son married the sick sister, and they all lived happy and died happy, and never drank out of a dry cappy.



Fairy Ointment

DAME GOODY was a nurse that looked after sick people, and minded babies. One night she was woke up at midnight, and when she went downstairs, she saw a strange squinny-eyed, little ugly old fellow, who asked her to come to his wife who was too ill to mind her baby. Dame Goody didn't like the look of the old fellow, but business is business; so she popped on her things, and went down to him. And when she got down to him, he whisked her up on to a large coal-black horse with fiery eyes, that stood at the door; and soon they were going at a rare pace, Dame Goody holding on to the old fellow like grim death.

They rode, and they rode, till at last they stopped before a cottage door. So they got down and went in and found the good woman abed with the children playing about; and the babe, a fine bouncing boy, beside her.

Dame Goody took the babe, which was as fine a baby boy as you'd wish to see. The mother, when she handed

Fairy Ointment

the baby to Dame Goody to mind, gave her a box of ointment, and told her to stroke the baby's eyes with it as soon as it opened them. After a while it began to open its eyes. Dame Goody saw that it had squinny eyes just like its father. So she took the box of ointment and stroked its two eyelids with it. But she couldn't help wondering what it was for, as she had never seen such a thing done before. So she looked to see if the others were looking, and, when they were not noticing, she stroked her own right eyelid with the ointment.

No sooner had she done so, than everything seemed changed about her. The cottage became elegantly furnished. The mother in the bed was a beautiful lady, dressed up in white silk. The little baby was still more beautiful than before, and its clothes were made of a sort of silvery gauze. Its little brothers and sisters around the bed were flat-nosed imps with pointed ears, who made faces at one another, and scratched their polls. Sometimes they would pull the sick lady's ears with their long and hairy paws. In fact, they were up to all kinds of mischief; and Dame Goody knew that she had got into a house of pixies. But she said nothing to nobody, and as soon as the lady was well enough to mind the baby, she asked the old fellow to take her back home. So he came round to the door with the coal-black horse with eyes of fire, and off they went as fast as before, or perhaps a little faster, till they came to Dame Goody's cottage, where the squinny-eyed old fellow lifted her down and left her, thanking her civilly enough, and paying her more than she had ever been paid before for such service.

Now next day happened to be market-day, and as Dame Goody had been away from home, she wanted many things in the house, and trudged off to get them at the market. As she was buying the things she wanted, who should she see but the squinny-eyed old fellow who had

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taken her on the coal-black horse. And what do you think he was doing? Why he went about from stall to stall taking things from each, here some fruit, and there some eggs, and so on; and no one seemed to take any notice.

Now Dame Goody did not think it her business to interfere, but she thought she ought not to let so good a customer pass without speaking. So she ups to him and bobs a curtsey and said: 'Gooden, sir, I hopes as how your good lady and the little one are as well as —'

But she couldn't finish what she was a-saying, for the funny old fellow started back in surprise, and he says to her, says he: 'What! do you see me today?'

'See you,' says she, 'why, of course I do, as plain as the sun in the skies, and what's more,' says she, 'I see you are busy, too, into the bargain.'

'Ah, you see too much,' said he; 'now, pray, with which eye do you see all this?'

'With the right eye to be sure,' said she, as proud as can be to find him out.

'The ointment! The ointment!' cried the old pixy thief. 'Take that for meddling with what don't concern you: you shall see me no more.' And with that he struck her on the right eye, and she couldn't see him any more; and, what was worse, she was blind on the right side from that hour till the day of her death.



The Well of the World's End

ONCE upon a time, and a very good time it was, though it wasn't in my time, nor in your time, nor anyone else's time, there was a girl whose mother had died, and her father married again. And her stepmother hated her because she was more beautiful than herself, and she was very cruel to her. She used to make her do all the servant's work, and never let her have any peace. At last, one day, the stepmother thought to get rid of her altogether; so she handed her a sieve and said to her: 'Go, fill it at the Well of the World's End and bring it home to me full, or woe betide you.' For she thought she would never be able to find the Well of the World's End, and, if she did, how could she bring home a sieve full of water?

Well, the girl started off, and asked everyone she met to tell her where was the Well of the World's End. But nobody knew, and she didn't know what to do, when a queer little old woman, all bent double, told her where

it was, and how she could get to it. So she did what the old woman told her, and at last arrived at the Well of the World's End. But when she dipped the sieve in the cold, cold water, it all ran out again. She tried and she tried again, but every time it was the same; and at last she sate down and cried as if her heart would break.

Suddenly she heard a croaking voice, and she looked up and saw a great frog with goggle eyes looking at her and speaking to her.

'What's the matter, dearie?' it said.

'Oh, dear, oh dear,' she said, 'my stepmother has sent me all this long way to fill this sieve with water from the Well of the World's End, and I can't fill it no how at all.'

'Well,' said the frog, 'if you promise me to do whatever I bid you for a whole night long, I'll tell you how to fill it.'

So the girl agreed, and the frog said:

'Stop it with moss and daub it with clay,
And then it will carry the water away';

and then it gave a hop, skip, and jump, and went flop into the Well of the World's End.

So the girl looked about for some moss, and lined the bottom of the sieve with it, and over that she put some clay, and then she dipped it once again into the Well of the World's End; and this time, the water didn't run out, and she turned to go away.

Just then the frog popped up its head out of the Well of the World's End, and said: 'Remember your promise.'

'All right,' said the girl; for thought she, 'What harm can a frog do me?'

So she went back to her stepmother, and brought the sieve full of water from the Well of the World's End. The stepmother was angry as angry, but she said nothing at all.

That very evening they heard something tap-tapping at the door low down, and a voice cried out:

The Well of the World's End

'Open the door, my hinny, my heart,
Open the door, my own darling;
Mind you the words that you and I spoke,
Down in the meadow, at the World's End Well.'

'Whatever can that be?' cried out the stepmother, and the girl had to tell her all about it, and what she had promised the frog.

'Girls must keep their promises,' said the stepmother. 'Go and open the door this instant.' For she was glad the girl would have to obey a nasty frog.

So the girl went and opened the door, and there was the frog from the Well of the World's End. And it hopped, and it hopped, and it jumped, till it reached the girl, and then it said:

'Lift me to your knee, my hinny, my heart;
Lift me to your knee, my own darling;
Remember the words you and I spoke,
Down in the meadow, by the World's End Well.'

But the girl didn't like to, till her stepmother said: 'Lift it up this instant, you hussy! Girls must keep their promises!'

So at last she lifted the frog up on to her lap, and it lay there for a time, till at last it said:

'Give me some supper, my hinny, my heart,
Give me some supper, my darling;
Remember the words you and I spake,
In the meadow, by the Well of the World's End.'

Well, she didn't mind doing that, so she got it a bowl of milk and bread, and fed it well. And when the frog had finished, it said:

'Go with me to bed, my hinny, my heart,
Go with me to bed, my own darling;
Mind you the words you spake to me,
Down by the cold well, so weary.'

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But that the girl wouldn't do, till her stepmother said: 'Do what you promised, girl; girls must keep their promises. Do what you're bid, or out you go, you and your froggie.'

So the girl took the frog with her to bed, and kept it as far away from her as she could. Well, just as the day was beginning to break what should the frog say but:

'Chop off my head, my hinny, my heart,
Chop off my head, my own darling;
Remember the promise you made to me,
Down by the cold well so weary.'

At first the girl wouldn't, for she thought of what the frog had done for her at the Well of the World's End. But when the frog said the words over again she went and took an axe and chopped off its head, and lo! and behold, there stood before her a handsome young prince, who told her that he had been enchanted by a wicked magician, and he could never be unspelled till some girl would do his bidding for a whole night, and chop off his head at the end of it.

The stepmother was surprised indeed when she found the young prince instead of the nasty frog, and she wasn't best pleased, you may be sure, when the prince told her that he was going to marry her stepdaughter because she had unspelled him. But married they were, and went away to live in the castle of the king, his father, and all the stepmother had to console her was that it was all through her that her stepdaughter was married to a prince.



Master of All Masters

A GIRL once went to the fair to hire herself for servant. At last a funny-looking old gentleman engaged her, and took her home to his house. When she got there, he told her that he had something to teach her, for that in his house he had his own names for things.

He said to her: 'What will you call me?'

'Master or mister, or whatever you please, sir,' says she.

He said: 'You must call me "master of all masters". And what would you call this?' pointing to his bed.

'Bed or couch, or whatever you please, sir.'

'No, that's my "barnacle". And what do you call these?' said he, pointing to his pantaloons.

'Breeches or trousers, or whatever you please, sir.'

'You must call them "squibs and crackers". And what would you call her?' pointing to the cat.

'Cat or kit, or whatever you please, sir.'

'You must call her "white-faced simminy". And this now,' showing the fire, 'what would you call this?'

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'Fire or flame, or whatever you please, sir.'

'You must call it "hot cockalorum", and what this?' he went on, pointing to the water.

'Water or wet, or whatever you please, sir.'

'No, "pondalorum" is its name. And what do you call all this?' asked he as he pointed to the house.

'House or cottage, or whatever you please, sir.'

'You must call it "high topper mountain".'

That very night the servant woke her master up in a fright and said: 'Master of all masters, get out of your barnacle and put on your squibs and crackers. For white-faced simminy has got a spark of hot cockalorum on its tail, and unless you get some pondalorum high topper mountain will be all on hot cockalorum' . . . That's all.



The Pied Piper

NEWTOWN, or Franchville, as't was called of old, is a sleepy little town, as you all may know, upon the Solent shore. Sleepy as it is now, it was once noisy enough, and what made the noise was – rats. The place was so infested with them as to be scarce worth living in. There wasn't a barn or a corn-rick, a store-room or a cupboard, but they ate their way into it. Not a cheese but they gnawed it hollow, not a sugar puncheon but they cleared out. Why, the very mead and beer in the barrels was not safe from them. They'd gnaw a hole in the top of the tun, and down would go one master rat's tail, and when he brought it up round would crowd all the friends and cousins, and each would have a suck at the tail.

Had they stopped here it might have been borne. But the squeaking and shrieking, the hurrying and scurrying, so that you could neither hear yourself speak nor get a wink of good honest sleep the livelong night! Not to mention that Mamma must needs sit up, and keep watch

and ward over baby's cradle, or there'd have been a big ugly rat running across the poor little fellow's face, and doing who knows what mischief.

Why didn't the good people of the town have cats? Well, they did, and there was a fair stand-up fight, but in the end the rats were too many, and the pussies were regularly driven from the field. Poison, I hear you say? Why, they poisoned so many that it fairly bred a plague. Ratcatchers! Why there wasn't a ratcatcher from John o'Groats house to the Land's End that hadn't tried his luck. But do what they might, cats or poison, terrier or traps, there seemed to be more rats than ever, and every day a fresh rat was cocking his tail or pricking his whiskers.

The Mayor and the town council were at their wits' end. As they were sitting one day in the town hall racking their poor brains, and bewailing their hard fate, who should run in but the town beadle. 'Please your Honour,' says he, 'here is a very queer fellow come to town. I don't rightly know what to make of him.' 'Show him in,' said the Mayor, and in he stepped. A queer fellow, truly. For there wasn't a colour of the rainbow but you might find it in some corner of his dress, and he was tall and thin, and had keen piercing eyes.

'I'm called the Pied Piper,' he began. 'And pray what might you be willing to pay me, if I rid you of every single rat in Franchville?'

Well, much as they feared the rats, they feared parting with their money more, and fain would they have higgled and haggled. But the Piper was not a man to stand nonsense, and the upshot was that fifty pounds were promised him (and it meant a lot of money in those old days) as soon as not a rat was left to squeak or scurry in Franchville.

Out of the hall stepped the Piper, and as he stepped

The Pied Piper

he laid his pipe to his lips and a shrill keen tune sounded through street and house. And as each note pierced the air you might have seen a strange sight. For out of every hole the rats came tumbling. There were none too old and none too young, none too big and none too little to crowd at the Piper's heels and with eager feet and up-turned noses to patter after him as he paced the streets. Nor was the Piper unmindful of the little toddling ones, for every fifty yards he'd stop and give an extra flourish on his pipe just to give them time to keep up with the older and stronger of the band.

Up Silver Street he went, and down Gold Street, and at the end of Gold Street is the harbour and the broad Solent beyond. And as he paced along, slowly and gravely, the townsfolk flocked to door and window, and many a blessing they called down upon his head.

As for getting near him there were too many rats. And now that he was at the water's edge he stepped into a boat, and not a rat, as he shoved off into deep water, piping shrilly all the while, but followed him, plashing, paddling and wagging their tails with delight. On and on he played and played until the tide went down, and each master rat sank deeper and deeper in the slimy ooze of the harbour, until every mother's son of them was dead and smothered.

The tide rose again, and the Piper stepped on shore, but never a rat followed. You may fancy the townsfolk had been throwing up their caps and hurrahing and stopping up rat holes and setting the church bells a-ringing. But when the Piper stepped ashore and not so much as a single squeak was to be heard, the Mayor and the council, and the townsfolk generally, began to hum and to ha and to shake their heads.

For the town money chest had been sadly emptied of late, and where was the fifty pounds to come from? Such

an easy job, too! Just getting into a boat and playing a pipe! Why the Mayor himself could have done that if only he had thought of it.

So he hummed and ha'd and at last, 'Come, my good man,' said he, 'you see what poor folk we are; how can we manage to pay you fifty pounds? Will you not take twenty? When all is said and done, 'twill be good pay for the trouble you've taken.'

'Fifty pounds was what I bargained for,' said the Piper shortly; 'and if I were you I'd pay it quickly. For I can pipe many kinds of tunes, as folk sometimes find to their cost.'

'Would you threaten us, you strolling vagabond?' shrieked the Mayor, and at the same time he winked to the council; 'the rats are all dead and drowned,' muttered he; and so 'You may do your worst, my good man', and with that he turned short upon his heel.

'Very well,' said the Piper, and he smiled a quiet smile. With that he laid his pipe to his lips afresh, but now there came forth no shrill notes, as it were, of scraping and gnawing, and squeaking and scurrying, but the tune was joyous and resonant, full of happy laughter and merry play. And as he paced down the streets the elders mocked, but from school-room and play-room, from nursery and workshop, not a child but ran out with eager glee and shout, following gaily at the Piper's call. Dancing, laughing, joining hands and tripping feet, the bright throng moved along up Gold Street and down Silver Street, and beyond Silver Street lay the cool green forest full of old oaks and wide-spreading beeches. In and out among the oak trees you might catch glimpses of the Piper's many-coloured coat. You might hear the laughter of the children break and fade and die away as deeper and deeper into the lone green wood the stranger went and the children followed.

All the while, the elders watched and waited. They

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mocked no longer now. And watch and wait as they might, never did they set their eyes again upon the Piper in his parti-coloured coat. Never were their hearts gladdened by the song and dance of the children issuing forth from among the ancient oaks of the forest.



The Golden Ball

THERE were two lasses, daughters of one mother, and as they came from the fair, they saw a right bonny young man stand at the house-door before them. They never saw such a bonny man before. He had gold on his cap, gold on his finger, gold on his neck, a red gold watch-chain – eh! but he had brass. He had a golden ball in each hand. He gave a ball to each lass, and she was to keep it, and if she lost it, she was to be hanged. One of the lasses, 'twas the youngest, lost her ball. I'll tell thee how. She was by a park paling, and she was tossing her ball, and it went up, and up, and up, till it went fair over the paling; and when she climbed up to look, the ball ran along the green grass, and it went right forward to the door of the house, and the ball went in and she saw it no more.

So she was taken away to be hanged by the neck till she was dead because she'd lost her ball.

But she had a sweetheart, and he said he would go and get the ball. So he went to the park gate, but 'twas shut; so he climbed the hedge, and when he got to the top of the hedge, an old woman rose up out of the dyke before him,

The Golden Ball

and said, if he wanted to get the ball, he must sleep three nights in the house. He said he would.

Then he went into the house, and looked for the ball, but could not find it. Night came on and he heard bogles move in the courtyard; so he looked out o' the window, and the yard was full of them.

Presently he heard steps coming upstairs. He hid behind the door, and was as still as a mouse. Then in came a big giant five times as tall as he, and the giant looked round but did not see the lad, so he went to the window and bowed to look out; and as he bowed on his elbows to see the bogles in the yard, the lad stepped behind him, and with one blow of his sword he cut him in twain, so that the top part of him fell in the yard, and the bottom part stood looking out of the window.

There was a great cry from the bogles when they saw half the giant come tumbling down to them, and they called out, 'There comes half our master; give us the other half.'

So the lad said, 'It's no use of thee, thou pair of legs, standing alone at the window, as thou hast no eye to see with, so go join thy brother'; and he cast the lower part of the giant after the top part. Now when the bogles had gotten all the giant they were quiet.

Next night the lad was at the house again, and now a second giant came in at the door, and as he came in the lad cut him in twain, but the legs walked on to the chimney and went up them. 'Go, get thee after thy legs,' said the lad to the head, and he cast the head up the chimney, too.

The third night the lad got into bed, and he heard the bogles striving under the bed, and they had the ball there, and they were casting it to and fro.

Now one of them has his leg thrust out from under the bed, so the lad brings his sword down and cuts it off. Then

another thrusts his arm out at other side of the bed, and the lad cuts that off. So at last he had maimed them all, and they all went crying and wailing off, and forgot the ball, but he took it from under the bed, and went to seek his true-love.

Now the lass was taken to York to be hanged; she was brought out on the scaffold, and the hangman said, 'Now, lass, thou must hang by the neck till thou be'st dead.' But she cried out:

'Stop, stop, I think I see my mother coming!
O mother, hast brought my golden ball
And come to set me free?'

'I've neither brought thy golden ball
Nor come to set thee free,
But I have come to see thee hung
Upon this gallows-tree.'

Then the hangman said, 'Now, lass, say thy prayers, for thou must die.' But she said:

'Stop, stop, I think I see my father coming!
O father, hast brought my golden ball
And come to set me free?'

'I've neither brought thy golden ball
Nor come to set thee free,
But I have come to see thee hung
Upon this gallows-tree.'

Then the hangman said, 'Hast thee done thy prayers? Now, lass, put thy head into the noose.'

But she answered, 'Stop, stop, I think I see my brother coming!' And again she sang, and then she thought she saw her sister coming, then her uncle, then her aunt, then her cousin; but after this the hangman said, 'I will stop no longer; thou'rt making game of me. Thou must be hung at once.'

The Golden Ball

But now she saw her sweetheart coming through the crowd, and he held over his head in the air her own golden ball; so she said:

‘Stop, stop, I see my sweetheart coming!
Sweetheart, hast brought my golden ball
And come to set me free?’

‘Aye, I have brought thy golden ball
And come to set thee free,
I have not come to see thee hung
Upon this gallows-tree.’

And he took her home, and they lived happy ever after.



My Own Self

IN a tiny house in the North Countrie, far away from any town or village, there lived not long ago, a poor widow all alone with her little son, a six-year-old boy.

The house-door opened straight on to the hillside and all round about were moorlands and huge stones, and swampy hollows; never a house nor a sign of life wherever you might look, for their nearest neighbours were the 'ferlies' in the glen below, and the 'will-o'-the-wisps' in the long grass along the pathside.

And many a tale she could tell of the 'good folk' calling to each other in the oak-trees, and the twinkling lights hopping on to the very window-sill, on dark nights; but in spite of the loneliness, she lived on from year to year in the little house, perhaps because she was never asked to pay any rent for it.

But she did not care to sit up late, when the fire burnt low, and no one knew what might be about; so, when they

had had their supper she would make up a good fire and go off to bed, so that if anything terrible *did* happen, she could always hide her head under the bed-clothes.

This, however, was far too early to please her little son; so when she called him to bed, he would go on playing beside the fire, as if he did not hear her.

He had always been bad to do with since the day he was born, and his mother did not often care to cross him; indeed, the more she tried to make him obey her, the less heed he paid to anything she said, so it usually ended by his taking his own way.

But one night, just at the fore-end of winter, the widow could not make up her mind to go off to bed, and leave him playing by the fireside; for the wind was tugging at the door, and rattling the window-panes, and well she knew that on such a night, fairies and suchlike were bound to be out and about, and bent on mischief. So she tried to coax the boy into going at once to bed:

'The safest bed to bide in, such a night as this!' she said: but no, he wouldn't.

Then she threatened to 'give him the stick', but it was no use.

The more she begged and scolded, the more he shook his head; and when at last she lost patience and cried that the fairies would surely come and fetch him away, he only laughed and said he wished they *would*, for he would like one to play with.

At that his mother burst into tears, and went off to bed in despair, certain that after such words something dreadful would happen; while her naughty little son sat on his stool by the fire, not at all put out by her crying.

But he had not long been sitting there alone, when he heard a fluttering sound near him in the chimney, and presently down by his side dropped the tiniest wee girl you could think of; she was not a span high, and had hair

like spun silver, eyes as green as grass, and cheeks as red as June roses.

The little boy looked at her with surprise.

'Oh!' said he; 'what do they call ye?'

'My own self,' she said in a shrill but sweet little voice, and she looked at him, too. 'And what do they call ye?'

'Just my own self, too!' he answered cautiously, and with that they began to play together.

She certainly showed him some fine games. She made animals out of the ashes that looked and moved like life; and trees with green leaves waving over tiny houses, with men and women an inch high in them, who, when she breathed on them, fell to walking and talking quite properly.

But the fire was getting low, and the light dim, and presently the little boy stirred the coals with a stick, to make them blaze; when out jumped a red-hot cinder, and where should it fall, but on the fairy-child's tiny foot.

Thereupon she set up such a squeal that the boy dropped the stick, and clapped his hands to his ears; but it grew to so shrill a screech that it was like all the wind in the world whistling through one tiny keyhole.

There was a sound in the chimney again, but this time the little boy did not wait to see what it was, but bolted off to bed, where he hid under the blankets and listened in fear and trembling to what went on.

A voice came from the chimney speaking sharply:

'Who's there, and what's wrong?' it said.

'It's my own self,' sobbed the fairy-child; 'and my foot's burnt sore. O-o-h!'

'Who did it?' said the voice angrily; this time it sounded nearer, and the boy, peeping from under the clothes, could see a white face looking out from the chimney-opening.

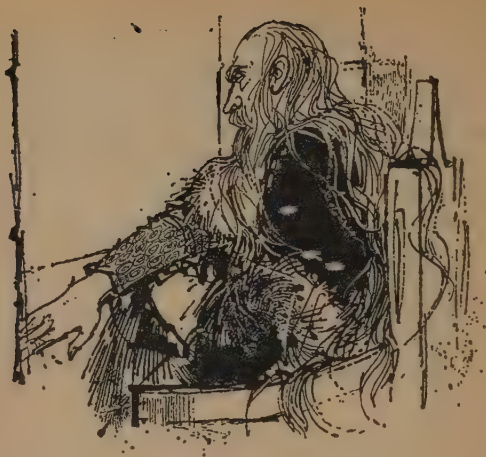
'Just my own self, too!' said the fairy-child again.

My Own Self

'Then if ye did it your own self,' cried the elf-mother shrilly, 'what's the use o' making all this fash about it?' – and with that she stretched out a long thin arm and caught the creature by its ear, and, shaking it roughly, pulled it after her, out of sight up the chimney.

The little boy lay awake a long time, listening, in case the fairy-mother should come back after all; and next evening after supper, his mother was surprised to find that he was willing to go to bed whenever she liked.

'He's taking a turn for the better at last!' she said to herself; but he was thinking just then that, when next a fairy came to play with him, he might not get off quite so easily as he had done this time.



Tattercoats

IN a great palace by the sea there once dwelt a very rich old lord, who had neither wife nor children living, only one little granddaughter, whose face he had never seen in all her life. He hated her bitterly, because at her birth his favourite daughter died; and when the old nurse brought him the baby, he swore, that it might live or die as it liked, but he would never look on its face as long as it lived.

So he turned his back, and sat by his window looking out over the sea, and weeping great tears for his lost daughter, till his white hair and beard grew down over his shoulders and twined round his chair and crept into the chinks of the floor, and his tears, dropping on to the window-ledge, wore a channel through the stone, and ran away in a little river to the great sea. And, meanwhile, his granddaughter grew up with no one to care for her, or

clothe her; only the old nurse, when no one was by, would sometimes give her a dish of scraps from the kitchen, or a torn petticoat from the rag-bag; while the other servants of the palace would drive her from the house with blows and mocking words, calling her 'Tattercoats', and pointing at her bare feet and shoulders, till she ran away crying, to hide among the bushes.

And so she grew up, with little to eat or wear, spending her days in the fields and lanes, with only the gooseherd for a companion, who would play to her so merrily on his little pipe, when she was hungry, or cold, or tired, that she forgot all her troubles, and fell to dancing, with his flock of noisy geese for partners.

But, one day, people told each other that the king was travelling through the land, and in the town near by was to give a great ball, to all the lords and ladies of the country, when the prince, his only son, was to choose a wife.

One of the royal invitations was brought to the palace by the sea, and the servants carried it up to the old lord, who still sat by his window, wrapped in his long white hair and weeping into the little river that was fed by his tears.

But when he heard the king's command, he dried his eyes and bade them bring shears to cut him loose, for his hair had bound him a fast prisoner and he could not move. And then he sent them for rich clothes, and jewels, which he put on; and he ordered them to saddle the white horse, with gold and silk, that he might ride to meet the king.

Meanwhile Tattercoats had heard of the great doings in the town, and she sat by the kitchen-door weeping because she could not go to see them. And when the old nurse heard her crying she went to the lord of the palace, and begged him to take his granddaughter with him to the king's ball.

But he only frowned and told her to be silent, while the servants laughed and said: 'Tattercoats is happy in her rags, playing with the gooseherd, let her be – it is all she is fit for.'

A second, and then a third time, the old nurse begged him to let the girl go with him, but she was answered only by black looks and fierce words, till she was driven from the room by the jeering servants, with blows and mocking words.

Weeping over her ill success, the old nurse went to look for Tattercoats; but the girl had been turned from the door by the cook, and had run away to tell her friend the gooseherd how unhappy she was because she could not go to the king's ball.

But when the gooseherd had listened to her story, he bade her cheer up, and proposed that they should go together into the town to see the king, and all the fine things; and when she looked sorrowfully down at her rags and bare feet, he played a note or two upon his pipe, so gay and merry that she forgot all about her tears, and her troubles, and before she well knew, the herdboy had taken her by the hand, and she, and he, and the geese before them, were dancing down the road towards the town.

Before they had gone very far, a handsome young man, splendidly dressed, rode up and stopped to ask the way to the castle where the king was staying; and when he found that they, too, were going thither, he got off his horse and walked beside them along the road.

The herdboy pulled out his pipe and played a low sweet tune, and the stranger looked again and again at Tattercoats' lovely face till he fell deeply in love with her, and begged her to marry him.

But she only laughed, and shook her golden head.

'You would be finely put to shame if you had a goose-

girl for your wife!' said she; 'go and ask one of the great ladies you will see tonight at the king's ball, and do not flout poor Tattercoats.'

But the more she refused him the sweeter the pipe played, and the deeper the young man fell in love; till at last he begged her, as a proof of his sincerity, to come that night at twelve to the king's ball, just as she was, with the herdboy and his geese, and in her torn petticoat and bare feet, and he would dance with her before the king and the lords and ladies, and present her to them all, as his dear and honoured bride.

So when night came, and the hall in the castle was full of light and music, and the lords and ladies were dancing before the king, just as the clock struck twelve, Tattercoats and the herdboy, followed by his flock of noisy geese, entered at the great doors, and walked straight up the ballroom, while on either side the ladies whispered, the lords laughed, and the king seated at the far end stared in amazement.

But as they came in front of the throne, Tattercoats' lover rose from beside the king, and came to meet her. Taking her by the hand, he kissed her thrice before them all, and turned to the king.

'Father!' he said, for it was the prince himself, 'I have made my choice, and here is my bride, the loveliest girl in all the land, and the sweetest as well!'

Before he had finished speaking, the herdboy put his pipe to his lips and played a few low notes that sounded like a bird singing far off in the woods; and as he played, Tattercoats' rags were changed to shining robes sewn with glittering jewels, a golden crown lay upon her golden hair, and the flock of geese behind her became a crowd of dainty pages, bearing her long train.

And as the king rose to greet her as his daughter, the

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trumpets sounded loudly in honour of the new princess, and the people outside in the street said to each other:

‘Ah! now the prince has chosen for his wife the loveliest girl in all the land!’

But the gooseherd was never seen again, and no one knew what became of him; while the old lord went home once more to his palace by the sea, for he could not stay at court, when he had sworn never to look on his granddaughter’s face.

So there he still sits by his window, if you could only see him, as you some day may, weeping more bitterly than ever, as he looks out over the sea.



The Old Witch

ONCE upon a time there were two girls who lived with their mother and father. Their father had no work, and the girls wanted to go away and seek their fortunes. Now one girl wanted to go to service, and her mother said she might if she could find a place. So she started for the town. Well, she went all about the town, but no one wanted a girl like her. So she went on farther into the country, and she came to the place where there was an oven where there was lots of bread baking. And the bread said, 'Little girl, little girl, take us out, take us out. We have been baking seven years, and no one has come to take us out.' So the girl took out the bread, laid it on the ground, and went on her way. Then she met a cow, and the cow said, 'Little girl, little girl, milk me, milk me! Seven years have I been waiting, and no one has come to milk me.' The girl milked the cow into the pails that stood by. As she was thirsty she drank some, and left the rest in the pails by

the cow. Then she went on a little farther, and came to an apple-tree, so loaded with fruit that its branches were breaking down, and the tree said, 'Little girl, little girl, help me shake my fruit. My branches are breaking, it is so heavy.' And the girl said, 'Of course I will, you poor tree.' So she shook the fruit all off, propped up the branches, and left the fruit on the ground under the tree. Then she went on again till she came to a house. Now in this house there lived a witch, and this witch took girls into her house as servants. And when she heard that this girl had left her home to seek service, she said that she would try her, and give her good wages. The witch told the girl what work she was to do. 'You must keep the house clean and tidy, sweep the floor and the fireplace; but there is one thing you must never do. You must never look up the chimney, or something bad will befall you.'

So the girl promised to do as she was told, but one morning as she was cleaning, and the witch was out, she forgot what the witch said, and looked up the chimney. When she did this a great bag of money fell down in her lap. This happened again and again. So the girl started to go off home.

When she had gone some way she heard the witch coming after her. So she ran to the apple-tree and cried:

'Apple-tree, apple-tree, hide me,
So the old witch can't find me;
If she does she'll pick my bones,
And bury me under the marble stones.'

So the apple-tree hid her. When the witch came up she said:

'Tree of mine, tree of mine,
Have you seen a girl
With a willy-willy wag, and a long-tailed bag,
Who's stole my money, all I had?'

The Old Witch

And the apple-tree said, 'No, mother; not for seven year.'

When the witch had gone down another way, the girl went on again, and just as she got to the cow heard the witch coming after her again, so she ran to the cow and cried:

'Cow, cow, hide me,
So the old witch can't find me;
If she does she'll pick my bones,
And bury me under the marble stones.'

So the cow hid her.

When the old witch came up, she looked about and said to the cow:

'Cow of mine, cow of mine,
Have you seen a girl
With a willy-willy wag, and a long-tailed bag,
Who's stole my money, all I had?'

And the cow said, 'No, mother, not for seven year.'

When the witch had gone off another way, the little girl went on again, and when she was near the oven she heard the witch coming after her again, so she ran to the oven and cried:

'Oven, oven, hide me,
So the old witch can't find me;
If she does she'll break my bones,
And bury me under the marble stones.'

And the oven said, 'I've no room, ask the baker,' and the baker hid her behind the oven.

When the witch came up she looked here and there and everywhere, and then said to the baker:

'Man of mine, man of mine,
Have you seen a girl,
With a willy-willy wag, and a long-tailed bag,
Who's stole my money, all I had?'

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So the baker said, 'Look in the oven.' The old witch went to look, and the oven said, 'Get in and look in the farthest corner.' The witch did so, and when she was inside the oven shut her door, and the witch was kept there for a very long time.

The girl then went off again, and reached her home with her money bags, married a rich man, and lived happy ever afterwards.

The other sister then thought she would go and do the same. And she went the same way. But when she reached the oven, and the bread said, 'Little girl, little girl, take us out. Seven years have we been baking, and no one has come to take us out,' the girl said, 'No, I don't want to burn my fingers.' So she went on till she met the cow, and the cow said, 'Little girl, little girl, milk me, milk me, do. Seven years have I been waiting, and no one has come to milk me.' But the girl said, 'No, I can't milk you, I'm in a hurry,' and went on faster. Then she came to the apple-tree, and the apple-tree asked her to help shake the fruit. 'No, I can't; another day p'raps I may,' and went on till she came to the witch's house. Well, it happened to her just the same as to the other girl – she forgot what she was told, and, one day when the witch was out, looked up the chimney, and down fell a bag of money. Well, she thought she would be off at once. When she reached the apple-tree, she heard the witch coming after her, and she cried:

'Apple-tree, apple-tree, hide me,
So the old witch can't find me;
If she does she'll break my bones,
And bury me under the marble stones.'

But the tree didn't answer, and she ran on farther. Presently the witch came up and said:

'Tree of mine, tree of mine,
Have you seen a girl,

The Old Witch

With a willy-willy wag, and a long-tailed bag,
Who's stole my money, all I had?'

The tree said, 'Yes, mother; she's gone down that way.'
So the old witch went after her and caught her; she took
all the money away from her, beat her, and sent her off
home just as she was.



The Three Wishes

ONCE upon a time, and be sure 'twas a long time ago, there lived a poor woodman in a great forest, and every day of his life he went out to fell timber. So one day he started out, and the goodwife filled his wallet and slung his bottle on his back, that he might have meat and drink in the forest. He had marked out a huge old oak, which, thought he, would furnish many and many a good plank. And when he was come to it, he took his axe in his hand and swung it round his head as though he were minded to fell the tree at one stroke. But he hadn't given one blow, when what should he hear but the pitifullest entreating, and there stood before him a fairy who prayed and beseeched him to spare the tree. He was dazed, as you may fancy, with wonderment and affright, and he couldn't open his mouth to utter a word. But he found his tongue at last, and, 'Well,' said he, 'I'll e'en do as thou wishest.'

'You've done better for yourself than you know,' answered the fairy, 'and to show I'm not ungrateful, I'll

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grant you your next three wishes, be they what they may.' And therewith the fairy was no more to be seen, and the woodman slung his wallet over his shoulder and his bottle at his side, and off he started home.

But the way was long, and the poor man was regularly dazed with the wonderful thing that had befallen him, and when he got home there was nothing in his noodle but the wish to sit down and rest. Maybe, too, 'twas a trick of the fairy's. Who can tell? Anyhow, down he sat by the blazing fire, and as he sat he waxed hungry, though it was a long way off supper-time yet.

'Hasn't thou naught for supper, dame?' said he to his wife.

'Nay, not for a couple of hours yet,' said she.

'Ah!' groaned the woodman, 'I wish I'd a good link of black pudding here before me.'

No sooner had he said the word, when clatter, clatter, rustle, rustle, what should come down the chimney but a link of the finest black pudding the heart of man could wish for.

If the woodman stared, the goodwife stared three times as much. 'What's all this?' says she.

Then all the morning's work came back to the woodman, and he told his tale right out, from beginning to end, and as he told it the goodwife glowered and glowered, and when he had made an end of it she burst out, 'Thou bee'st but a fool, Jan, thou bee'st but a fool; and I wish the pudding were at thy nose, I do indeed.'

And before you could say Jack Robinson, there the goodman sat and his nose was the longer for a noble link of black pudding.

He gave a pull, but it stuck, and she gave a pull, but it stuck, and they both pulled till they had nigh pulled the nose off, but it stuck and stuck.

'What's to be done now?' said he.

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"Tisn't so very unsightly," said she, looking hard at him.

Then the woodman saw that if he wished, he must need wish in a hurry; and wish he did, that the black pudding might come off his nose. Well! there it lay in a dish on the table, and if the goodman and goodwife didn't ride in a golden coach, or dress in silk and satin, why, they had at least as fine a black pudding for their supper as the heart of man could desire.



The Buried Moon

LONG ago, in my grandmother's time, the Carland was all in bogs, great pools of black water, and creeping trickles of green water, and squishy mools which squirted when you stepped on them.

Well, granny used to say how long before her time the Moon herself was once dead and buried in the marshes, and as she used to tell me, I'll tell you all about it.

The Moon up yonder shone and shone, just as she does now, and when she shone she lighted up the bog-pools, so that one could walk about almost as safe as in the day.

But when she didn't shine, out came the Things that dwelt in the darkness and went about seeking to do evil and harm; Bogles and Crawling Horrors, all came out when the Moon didn't shine.

Well, the Moon heard of this, and being kind and good – as she surely is, shining for us in the night instead of taking her natural rest – she was main troubled. 'T'll see

for myself, I will,' said she, 'maybe it's not so bad as folks make out.'

Sure enough, at the month's end down she stept, wrapped up in a black cloak, and a black hood over her yellow shining hair. Straight she went to the bog edge and looked about her. Water here and water there; waving tussocks and trembling mools, and great black snags all twisted and bent. Before her all was dark – dark but for the glimmer of the stars in the pools, and the light that came from her own white feet, stealing out of her black cloak.

The Moon drew her cloak faster about and trembled, but she wouldn't go back without seeing all there was to be seen; so on she went, stepping as light as the wind in summer from tuft to tuft between the greedy gurgling water-holes. Just as she came near a big black pool her foot slipped and she was nigh tumbling in. She grabbed with both hands at a snag near by to steady herself with, but as she touched it, it twined itself round her wrists, like a pair of handcuffs, and gript her so that she couldn't move. She pulled and twisted and fought, but it was no good. She was fast, and must stay fast.

Presently as she stood trembling in the dark, wondering if help would come, she heard something calling in the distance, calling, calling, and then dying away with a sob, till the marshes were full of this pitiful crying sound; then she heard steps floundering along, squishing in the mud and slipping on the tufts, and through the darkness she saw a white face with great feared eyes.

'Twas a man strayed in the bogs. Mazed with fear, he struggled on toward the flickering light that looked like help and safety. And when the poor Moon saw that he was coming nigher and nigher to the deep hole, farther and farther from the path, she was so mad and so sorry that she struggled and fought and pulled harder than

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ever. And though she couldn't get loose, she twisted and turned, till her black hood fell back off her shining yellow hair, and the beautiful light that came from it drove away the darkness.

Oh, but the man cried with joy to see the light again. And at once all evil things fled back into the dark corners, for they cannot abide the light. So he could see where he was, and where the path was, and how he could get out of the marsh. And he was in such haste to get away from the Quicks, and Bogles, and Things that dwelt there, that he scarce looked at the brave light that came from the beautiful shining yellow hair, streaming out over the black cloak and falling to the water at his feet. And the Moon herself was so taken up with saving him, and with rejoicing that he was back on the right path, that she clean forgot that she needed help herself, and that she was held fast by the Black Snag.

So off he went; spent and gasping, and stumbling and sobbing with joy, flying for his life out of the terrible bogs. Then it came over the Moon she would main like to go with him. So she pulled and fought as if she were mad, till she fell on her knees, spent with tugging, at the foot of the snag. And as she lay there, gasping for breath, the black hood fell forward over her head. So out went the blessed light and back came the darkness, with all its Evil Things, with a screech and a howl. They came crowding round her, mocking and snatching and beating; shrieking with rage and spite, and swearing and snarling, for they knew her for their old enemy, that drove them back into the corners, and kept them from working their wicked wills.

'Drat thee!' yelled the witch-bodies, 'thou'st spoiled our spells this year ago!'

'And us thou sent'st to brood in the corners!' howled the Bogles.

And all the Things joined in with a great 'Ho, ho!' till the very tussocks shook and the water gurgled. And they began again.

'We'll poison her—poison her!' shrieked the witches.

And 'Ho, ho!' howled the Things again.

'We'll smother her — smother her!' whispered the Crawling Horrors, and twined themselves round her knees.

And 'Ho, ho!' mocked the rest of them.

And again they all shouted with spite and ill will. And the poor Moon crouched down, and wished she was dead and done with.

And they fought and squabbled what they should do with her, till a pale grey light began to come in the sky; and it drew nigh the dawning. And when they saw that, they were feared lest they shouldn't have time to work their will; and they caught hold of her, with horrid bony fingers, and laid her deep in the water at the foot of the snag. And the Boggles fetched a strange big stone and rolled it on top of her, to keep her from rising. And they told two of the Will-o-the-wykes to take turns in watching on the black snag, to see that she lay safe and still, and couldn't get out to spoil their sport.

And there lay the poor Moon, dead and buried in the bog, till someone would set her loose, and who'd know where to look for her.

Well, the days passed, and 'twas the time for the new moon's coming, and the folk put pennies in their pockets and straws in their caps so as to be ready for her, and looked about, for the Moon was a good friend to the marsh folk, and they were main glad when the dark time was gone, and the paths were safe again, and the Evil Things were driven back by the blessed Light into the darkness and the water-holes.

But days and days passed, and the new Moon never

The Buried Moon

came, and the nights were aye dark, and the Evil Things were worse than ever. And still the days went on, and the new Moon never came. Naturally the poor folk were strangely feared and mazed, and a lot of them went to the Wise Woman who dwelt in the old mill, and asked if so be she could find out where the Moon was gone.

‘Well,’ said she, after looking in the brewpot, and in the mirror, and in the Book, ‘it be main queer, but I can’t rightly tell ye what’s happened to her. If ye hear of aught, come and tell me.’

So they went their ways; and as days went by, and never a Moon came, naturally they talked – my word! I reckon they *did* talk! Their tongues wagged at home, and at the inn, and in the garth. But so came one day, as they sat on the great settle in the inn, a man from the far end of the bog lands was smoking and listening, when all at once he sat up and slapped his knee. ‘My faicks!’ says he, ‘I’d clean forgot, but I reckon I kens where the Moon be!’ and he told them of how he was lost in the bogs, and how, when he was nigh dead with fright, the light shone out, and he found the path and got home safe.

So off they all went to the Wise Woman, and told her about it, and she looked long in the pot and the Book again, and then she nodded her head.

‘It’s dark still, childer, dark!’ says she, ‘and I can’t rightly see, but do as I tell ye, and ye’ll find out for yourselves. Go all of ye, just afore the night gathers, put a stone in your mouth, and take a hazel-twigg in your hands, and say never a word till you’re safe home again. Then walk on and fear not, far into the midst of the marsh, till ye find a coffin, a candle, and a cross. Then ye’ll not be far from your Moon; look, and m’appen ye’ll find her.’

So came the next night in the darklings, out they went all together, every man with a stone in his mouth, and a hazel-twigg in his hand, and feeling, thou may’st reckon,

main feared and creepy. And they stumbled and stottered along the paths into the midst of the bogs; they saw nought, though they heard sighings and flutterings in their ears, and felt cold wet fingers touching them; but all at once, looking around for the coffin, the candle, and the cross, while they came nigh to the pool beside the great snag, where the Moon lay buried. And all at once they stopped, quaking and mazed and skeery, for there was the great stone, half in, half out of the water, for all the world like a strange big coffin; and at the head was the black snag, stretching out its two arms in a dark gruesome cross, and on it a tidddy light flickered, like a dying candle. And they all knelt down in the mud, and said, 'Our Lord', first forward, because of the cross, and then backward, to keep off the Bogles; but without speaking out, for they knew that the Evil Things would catch them if they didn't do as the Wise Woman told them.

Then they went nigher, and took hold of the big stone, and shoved it up, and afterwards they said that for one tidddy minute they saw a strange and beautiful face looking up at them glad-like out of the black water; but the Light came so quick and so white and shining, that they stept back mazed with it, and the very next minute, when they could see again, there was the full Moon in the sky, bright and beautiful and kind as ever, shining and smiling down at them, and making the bogs and the paths as clear as day, and stealing into the very corners, as though she'd have driven the darkness and the Bogles clean away if she could.



Rushen Coatie

THERE was once a king and a queen, as many a one has been; few have we seen, and as few may we see. But the queen died, leaving only one bonny girl, and she told her on her deathbed: 'My dear, after I am gone, there will come to you a little red calf, and whenever you want anything, speak to it, and it will give it you.'

Now, after a while, the king married again an ill-natured wife with three ugly daughters of her own. And they hated the king's daughter because she was so bonny. So they took all her fine clothes away from her, and gave her only a coat made of rushes. So they called her Rushen Coatie, and made her sit in the kitchen nook, amid the ashes. And when dinner-time came, the nasty stepmother sent her out a thimbleful of broth, a grain of barley, a thread of meat, and a crumb of bread. But when she had eaten all this, she was just as hungry as before, so she said to herself: 'Oh! how I wish I had something to eat.' Just then, who should come in but a little red calf, and

said to her: 'Put your finger into my left ear.' She did so, and found some nice bread. Then the calf told her to put her finger into its right ear, and she found there some cheese, and made a right good meal of the bread and cheese. And so it went on from day to day.

Now the king's wife thought Rushen Coatie would soon die from the scanty food she got, and she was surprised to see her as lively and healthy as ever. So she set one of her ugly daughters on the watch at meal-times to find out how Rushen Coatie got enough to live on. The daughter soon found out that the red calf gave food to Rushen Coatie, and told her mother. So her mother went to the king and told him she was longing to have a sweetbread from a red calf. Then the king sent for his butcher, and had the little calf killed. And when Rushen Coatie heard of it, she sate down and wept by its side, but the dead calf said:

'Take me up, bone by bone,
And put me beneath yon grey stone;
When there is aught you want
Tell it me, and that I'll grant.'

So she did so, but could not find the shank-bone of the calf.

Now the very next Sunday was Yuletide, and all the folk were going to church in their best clothes, so Rushen Coatie said: 'Oh! I should like to go to church, too', but the three ugly sisters said: 'What would you do at the church, you nasty thing? You must bide at home and make the dinner.' And the king's wife said: 'And this is what you must make the soup of, a thimbleful of water, a grain of barley, and a crumb of bread.'

When they all went to church, Rushen Coatie sat down and wept, but looking up, who should she see coming in limping, laming, with a shank wanting, but the dear red

calf? And the red calf said to her: 'Do not sit there weeping, but go, put on these clothes, and above all, put on this pair of glass slippers, and go your way to church.'

'But what will become of the dinner?' said Rushen Coatie.

'Oh, do not fash about that,' said the red calf; 'all you have to do is to say to the fire:

“Every peat make t’other burn,
Every spit make t’other turn,
Every pot make t’other play,
Till I come from church this good Yuleday,”

and be off to church with you. But mind you come home first.'

So Rushen Coatie said this, and went off to church, and she was the grandest and finest lady there. There happened to be a young prince there, and he fell at once in love with her. But she came away before service was over, and was home before the rest, and had off with her fine clothes and on with her rushen coatie, and she found the calf had covered the table, and the dinner was ready, and everything was in good order when the rest came home. The three sisters said to Rushen Coatie: 'Eh, lassie, if you had seen the bonny fine lady in church today, that the young prince fell in love with!' Then she said: 'Oh! I wish you would let me go with you to the church tomorrow', for they used to go three days together to church at Yuletide.

But they said: 'What should the like of you do at church, nasty thing? The kitchen nook is good enough for you.'

So the next day they all went to church, and Rushen Coatie was left behind, to make dinner out of a thimbleful of water, a grain of barley, a crumb of bread, and a thread of meat. But the red calf came to her help again,

gave her finer clothes than before, and she went to church, where all the world was looking at her, and wondering where such a grand lady came from, and the prince fell more in love with her than ever, and tried to find out where she went to. But she was too quick for him, and got home long before the rest, and the red calf had the dinner all ready.

The next day the calf dressed her in even grander clothes than before, and she went to the church. And the young prince was there again, and this time he put a guard at the door to keep her, but she took a hop and a run and jumped over their heads, and as she did so, down fell one of her glass slippers. She didn't wait to pick it up, you may be sure, but off she ran home, as fast as she could go, on with the rushen coatie, and the calf had all things ready.

The young prince put out a proclamation that whoever could put on the glass slipper should be his bride. All the ladies of his court went and tried to put on the slipper. And they tried and tried and tried, but it was too small for them all. Then he ordered one of his ambassadors to mount a fleet horse and ride through the kingdom and find an owner for the glass shoe. He rode and he rode to town and castle, and made all the ladies try to put on the shoe. Many a one tried to get it on that she might be the prince's bride. But no, it wouldn't do, and many a one wept, I warrant, because she couldn't get on the bonny glass shoe. The ambassador rode on, and on till he came at the very last to the house where there were the three ugly sisters. The first two tried it and it wouldn't do, and the queen, mad with spite, hacked off the toes and heels of the third sister, and she could then put the slipper on, and the prince was brought to marry her, for he had to keep his promise. The ugly sister was dressed all in her best and was put up behind the prince on horseback,

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and off they rode in great gallantry. But ye all know, pride must have a fall, for as they rode along a raven sang out of a bush –

‘Hackèd Heels and Pinchèd Toes
Behind the young prince rides,
But Pretty Feet and Little Feet
Behind the cauldron bides.’

‘What’s that the birdie sings?’ said the young prince.

‘Nasty, lying thing,’ said the stepsister, ‘never mind what it says.’

But the prince looked down and saw the slipper dripping with blood, so he rode back and put her down. Then he said, ‘There must be someone that the slipper has not been tried on.’

‘Oh, no,’ said they, ‘there’s none but a dirty thing that sits in the kitchen nook and wears a rushen coatie.’

But the prince was determined to try it on Rushen Coatie, but she ran away to the grey stone, where the red calf dressed her in her bravest dress, and she went to the prince and the slipper jumped out of his pocket on to her foot, fitting her without any chipping or paring. So the prince married her that very day, and they lived happy ever after.



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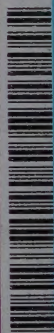
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