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THE BROWNIES AT HOME

BY
PALMER COX



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1936

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W.H. 1802

LIKE fairies and goblins, are imaginary little sprites, who are supposed to delight in harmless pranks and helpful deeds. They work and sport while weary households sleep, and never allow themselves to be seen by mortal eyes.

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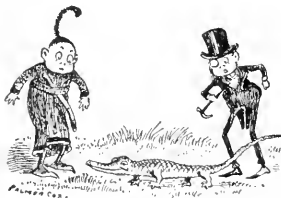
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THE BROWNIES IN JANUARY.



When January laid the snow

On mountain high and valley low,
And gliding sleigh and jingling bell
Showed folks improved their chances well,
The Brownies planned, with language bold,
A ride across the country cold.
Said one: "No cutter frail and light
Will answer our demands to-night;
We must have something large and strong
To carry all the band along,
And stand the strain of going fast

On wintry roads where drifts are cast."

Another cried: "I know a place
Where rests a rig to suit the case;
'T is like a life-boat, long and wide,
In which the sailors brave the tide:
'T will hold us all. I well believe
Full half the band can seats receive,



While those who are a seat denied
Can in some other manner ride.
It has the plumes, all blue and red,
To stream so gaily overhead.
There's nothing lacking there, I know,
That we require to make a show."



A third remarked: "To make it grand
A splendid team is near at hand;
They will not take a second lash
Before the harness goes to smash,
But, treated skilfully, will glide
As fast as you will care to ride.
It matters not how hills may rise,
Or how the snow before them lies,—
Once on the road, you may depend,
They 'll strive to find the other end.
When going fast the lines I 'll hold,—
More teams than one I have controlled
While comrades trembled in their places
With bristling hair and pallid faces."
Another spoke: "Excuse my smile;
No disrespect is meant the while;



But, sir, to state the matter plain,
You 're hardly fit to hold a rein.
You may have strength, and courage too,
And in your way may wonders do.
But 't is not all in pull and haul,
Some judgment there must be, withal;
And that 's a quality or crown
With which you are not weighted down."

Then brief discussions started there
In settling which the whip should bear;



THE BROWNIES IN JANUARY.



For half a dozen filed a claim
To wield that implement of shame.
Said one: "I 'll make it snap so loud
'T will wake an echo in the cloud."
But others said: "You 're far too bold;
No hasty hand the whip should hold,
That in each trivial action may
See cause to bring it into play."

Those who have seen the Brownie band
In other scenes by sea or land,
Know how the cunning rogues agree
Upon a scheme, whate'er it be:
While those who have not studied o'er
Their wondrous doings, heretofore,



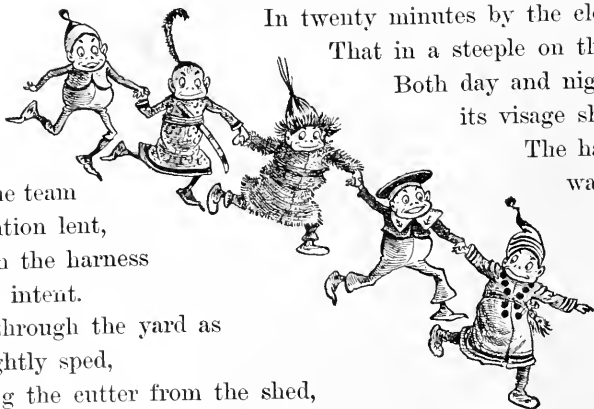
Will learn, if they pursue the rhyme,
How much the Brownies value time.

In twenty minutes by the clock
That in a steeple on the block
Both day and night
its visage showed,

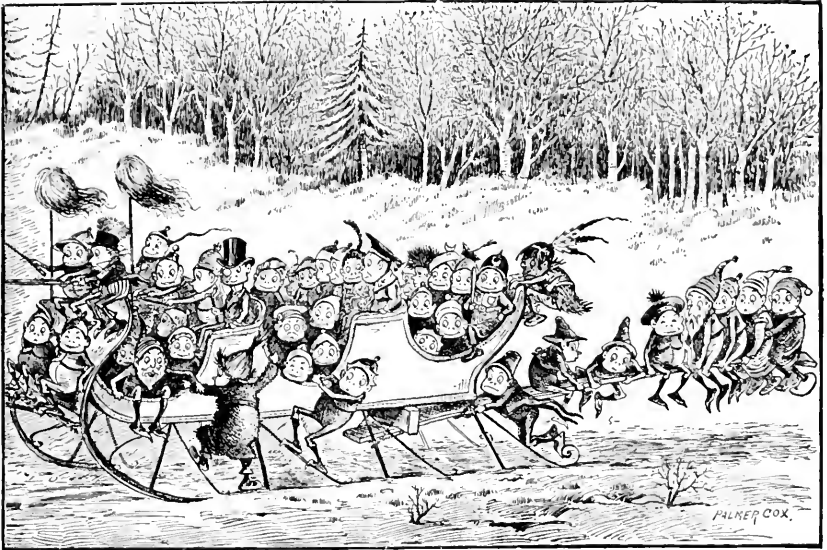
Some
to the team
attention lent,
And on the harness
were intent.

More through the yard as
sprightly sped,
To drag the cutter from the shed,
The seats to portion or divide
So every one could share the ride,—

The happy band
was on
the road.



The Brownies when occasion calls
Can almost roll themselves in balls,
In order to conform aright
To places that may crowd them tight.
But one by one the seats were jammed,
And spaces in between were crammed
With Brownies well content to seat
Themselves among the others' feet.



A picnic party on a barge
That floats, a puffing tug-boat's charge
Upon the river or the bay,
When workers take a holiday,
Could hardly show such faces bright
As from the sleigh peeped out that night.

THE BROWNIES IN JANUARY.

For several miles, with nothing wrong,
Behind the team they slid along.
But, though the start was all indeed
That one could wish for sport and speed,
They found mishaps, you may depend,
If you pursue them to the end.



Some, rather than to be left out
At such a time, had crawled about

Until they found a friendly brace
 Or rail that offered them a place;
 While, disregarding pride and ease,
 Some rode on rattling whiffletrees,
 And kept their seat through jolts and jogs,
 And sudden turns round stumps and logs,—
 Content to be, as it would seem,
 At least the nearest to the team.
 More rigged a board they chanced to find,
 Which, like a rudder, reached behind,
 And formed a seat and “teeter” gay
 Unknown to makers of the sleigh.

At certain bends and gravel banks
 The wind had played its winter pranks,
 And turned a road as smooth as glass
 Into a choked and dangerous pass
 Where walls and ditches hidden lay
 And caused the Brownies great dismay.

Sometimes a jolt would cost the string
 Upon the plank an upward fling
 That seemed to roughly set aside
 Their claims to any farther ride.
 They bounced in air as though to seize
 The moon, that sailed above the trees,
 And drag it from its heavenly way
 To be a head-light for their sleigh.
 A shout would rise from all the crew,
 But loudest from the hapless few
 Who thus appeared to be consigned
 To trouble of the gravest kind.



But through agility so grand
'T is seldom found outside the band,
They held their own while in the air,
And, chasing after the affair,
The plank was soon regained by each
Before it passed beyond their reach.
They circled round the country wide,
And then commenced their homeward ride
But as they near the city drew,
The road divided into two.

Some thought the right-hand one the best.
The left seemed better to the rest;
And each one pulled, to reason blind,
According to his turn of mind.
Too many cooks around the pot
Will spoil the broth, now doubt it not:
Too many hands to reins applied
Will surely spoil the finest ride.
The team was not inclined to wait
Until they settled their debate,
But an impartial spirit showed,
And did not take to either road,
But carried out the neutral plan
And straight ahead between them ran.
Now some pulled left, and more pulled right,
While those who could not manage quite
To reach the lines from where they stood
Gave free advice to those who could.
But counsel was not worth a pin,
For some fell out, and some fell in,

And all that showed above the seat,
At sundry places, were the feet;
While those who took the outward fall
Had all the field in which to sprawl,
And nobly strove to do their share
In covering all the ground was there.



But those who had the team to drive,
And to their duty were alive,

Had barely time a glance to throw
At comrades tumbling in the snow,
When to a sloping place they drew
Where danger more apparent grew.
Then followed soon a sudden pitch,
And sleigh and load went in the ditch!
Now every one began to find
A chance to exercise his mind,
For speedy action wins the prize
At such a time, you may surmise.
Some grabbed the team without delay,
And some began to right the sleigh,
While others dug to bring to light
Companions who had gone from sight.
It was no easy task to know
Just who was missing in the snow,
For when the sleigh was overthrown
Each thought about himself alone,

And took small heed, as o'er he went,
How friends made out in their descent.
They had no time to call the roll,
But here and there a sunken hole
Would to the anxious searchers tell
Where some one in the snowdrift fell;

A foot would next uplifted be
And tell who struggled to be free.

But when they came at length in view
A bosom friend one hardly knew,
So fearfully the smash had told
On garments fine and bearing bold.



Thus was distress much quicker found
Than in these lines I now compound.
But as they had no time to spare
To talk about the mishap there,
They turned the team the proper way,
And gained the road that nearest lay.
Although the shaking up was bad,
They thought the pleasant ride they had
Did more than pay for the upset
Which at the forking road they 'd met
Each horse again had found its stall,
Was watered, fed, rubbed down, and all,
Before the lagging winter day
Began to drive the night away.



Then through the fields and down the road
A rapid gait the Brownies showed,—
Now through a place where gas-lamps shone,
Now through a tunnel made of stone,
That briefly hid them all from sight;
Then, breaking out into the light,
With equal interest, equal speed,
Each struggled hard to gain the lead,
While bright and brighter spread the glare
Of morning as they scampered there,

THE BROWNIES IN JANUARY.



Till needed shelter came in view
And secret haunts that well they knew.
Then Brownies found a place to hide,
And chat about their splendid ride.





THE BROWNIES

IN FEBRUARY.



February rolled around,
An early chance the Brownies found
To meet and talk about the way
The people toil from day to day,—
Some piling up what'e'r they please
And turning it to gain with ease;
Some losing what they've saved for years
In spite of all their care and tears.
Said one: "Through all the rack and strife
That may be found in human life
From year to year, the truth to tell,
They hold to ancient customs well;
And in this month some moments find
To keep St. Valentine in mind."

A second spoke: "Ah! Cupid's arrow
The hardest heart can deeply harrow.
The miser, tyrant, soldier, king,
Have felt its power, and its sting.
And after all 't is well indeed
That men should Cupid's arrow heed,



For love 's a gift that man alone,
As poets sing, can call his own,
And shall not Brownies do their part
To praise the true and loving heart?
Now we who note from day to day
Mankind at large, as well we may,

Can speak our minds both fair and free
On matters that we chance to see,
And this is plain as is the nose
On every face this meeting shows:
No sweeter sight can meet the eye
Than hearts bound in one loving tie,
Prepared to brave all kinds of weather
And, if need be, to bleed together."



A third remarked: "Your speech defines
The feeling in the poets' lines,
So count it not as odd if we
In sentiment and soul agree.
'T is strange to see a grasping man,
Whose mind to money-getting ran,
Devote his time and patient care
To rhymes in praise of woman fair.
How many thousands, great and small,—
Yes, millions,—on this earthly ball
Do find surprises in the mail.
Some stare thereon with anger pale,
Then crowd the documents from sight
Or hold them up for laughter light;
While more with pleasure and with pride
Display the gifts on every side,

That prove without a doubt or fear
They still are loved and counted dear."

"Your glowing words have filled my head
With notions strange," another said.
"To-night the band will undertake
Some striking valentines to make,
And then to buildings low and high,
When all are done, we'll quickly fly,
And leave them there to cause surprise
When people in the morning rise.
Those who delight to pick and choose
The words that best express their views,



Can as their part devote their time
To spinning out the strings of rhyme,
While others draw the pictures fine
Who to that special art incline.
Thus each will have a task assigned
Well suited to his turn of mind.
It won't take long, when once we start,
To prove we're not devoid of art;
The work is done, 'right off the reel,
In which all hands an interest feel."

"I know a place," another cried,
"Where we with paint can be supplied,
And paper, too, of every grade
For just such dainty painting made.
No other task, the truth to tell,
Could suit the Brownies half so well
As this which gives a chance to show
And tell the people what we know."



THE BROWNIES IN FEBRUARY.

To find the paint and paper, too,
And pen and ink the Brownies flew;
Then, safely housed away from sight,
Some painted pictures half the night,
While others matched the form or face
With verses full of wit or grace,
According to the kind required
To pique, or please, as they desired.



Some Brownies of a comic vein
From work on hand did pleasure gain,
And smiled to think how well their wit
Would certain heads around them fit;
While more with sentiment divine
Poured love into each glowing line,
Until the ardent declaration
Was bound to start a palpitation.



They round the dictionary press'd
To choose the words that suited best
To tell of Love's undying flame
That at first sight or meeting came,
And ever warm and warmer glowed
As time still greater beauty showed.
A Brownie has a level head,
Although perhaps not college-bred,
And knows just when to stop and **start**,

Or round a phrase to catch the heart;
And though sarcastic flings at men
They may indulge in now and then,
The earnest, active Brownie mind
To thoughts of love is more inclined;
So hearts and arrows, in the main,
The Brownies' missives did contain.
When every picture was complete
And all the verses had their feet,
The Brownies wrote addresses down
And started promptly through the
town,



To soon distribute, as they planned,
In humble homes and mansions grand,
The valentines that were designed
To mystify the human kind.
They climbed up winding stairs so high
Their breath gave out ere they were **nigh**

THE BROWNIES IN FEBRUARY.

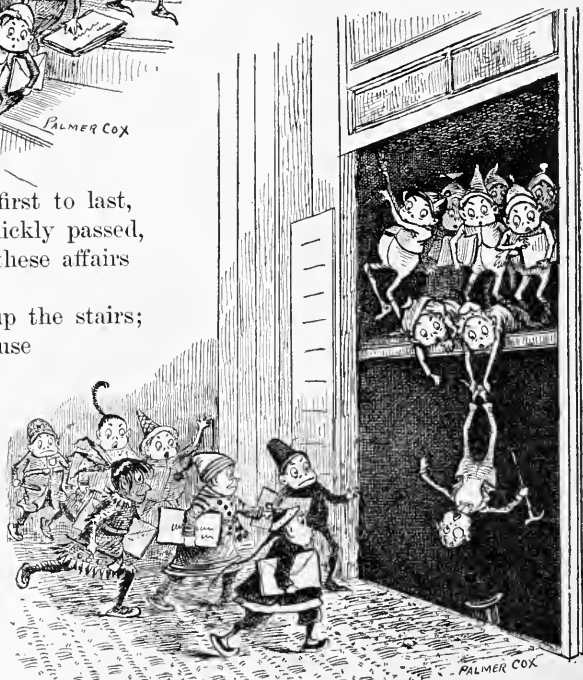


The place they sought—
the upper flat;
So on the steps
in rows they sat
To pant a while
and moralize
How people from
low stations rise.
At other buildings
Brownies called
And in the
elevators crawled—

Then, shooting up from first to last,
To all the floors they quickly passed,
And smiled to see how these affairs
Saved the long tramping
up the stairs;

And wished in every house
they 'd find
Some useful fixture
of the kind.

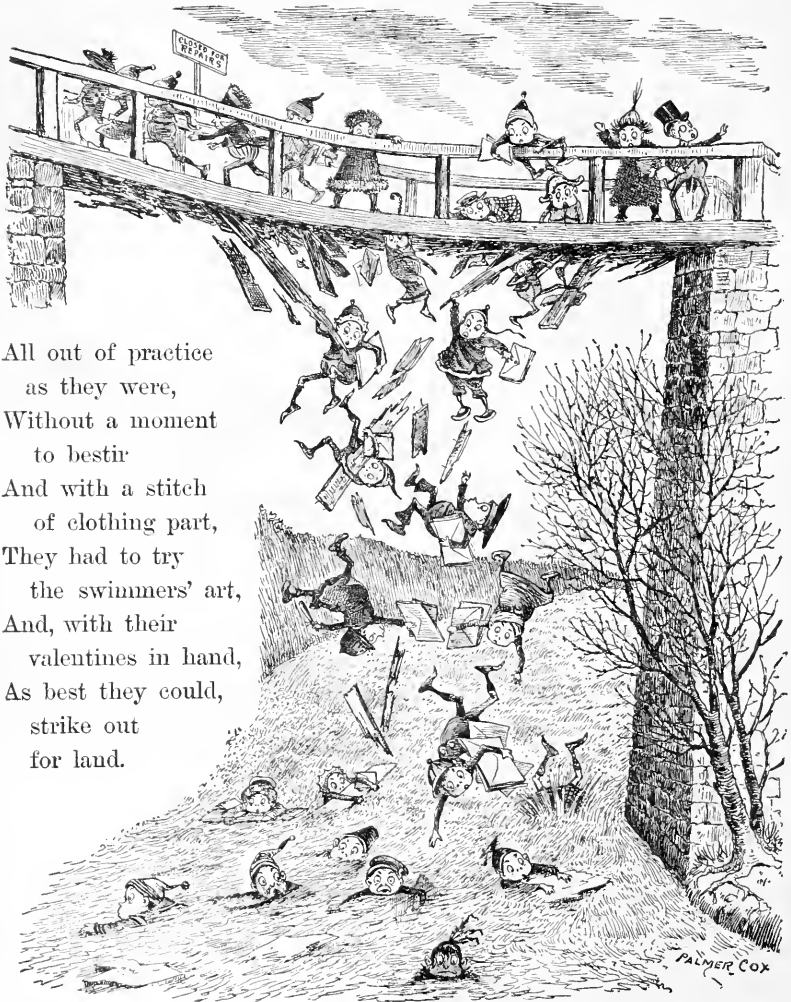
But fear at times
instead of fun
The Brownies knew
ere they were done.
One, slipping off
just as it rose,
Was caught by comrades
by the toes,



And carried in that wretched plight,
At risk of being lost outright,
Till, at a halt, he had acquired
A situation more desired.
Few pleasures people here below
Can find unmixed with pain or woe.
Whate'er the sport, the pang is near
And has its inning, never fear.
And Brownies though on pleasure bent
Found some mishaps as on they went,
And trials that would soon disgrace
Or crush a less determined race.



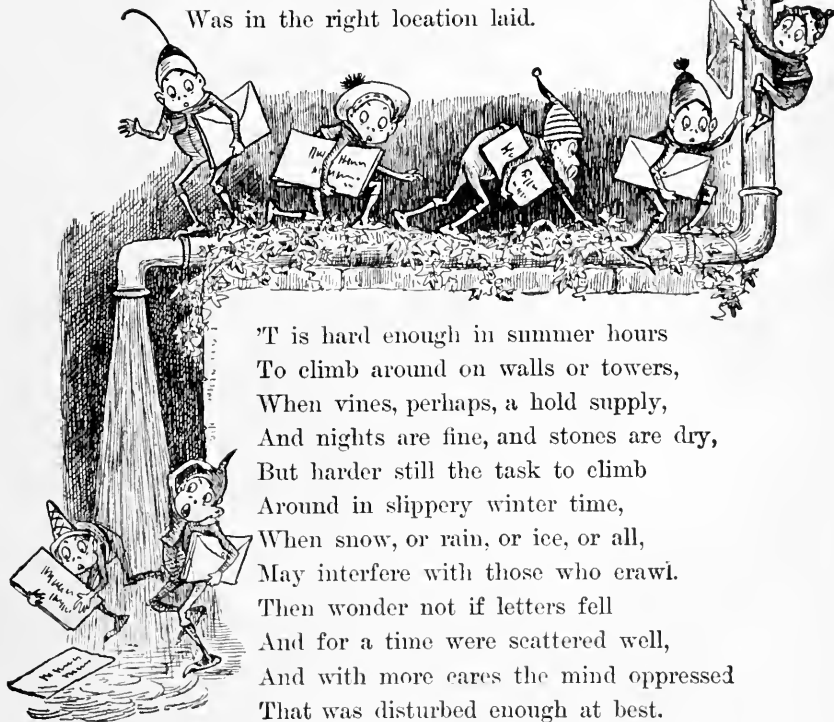
While on a lone suburban road
The Brownies ran, each with his load,
A bridge that needed some repairs
Gave way and much increased their cares;
For though some held to stringers well
And broken planks that all but fell,
A number, tumbling from the path,
Were quickly treated to a bath.
No meditated leap was here,
With graceful pose from float or pier.
Into a summer flood that gave
Warm invitations to its wave;
But head and heels, just as they ran.
The Brownies' sudden dive began
To currents neither warm nor nice,
For here and there a cake of ice
Was drifting on the water chill
And proved that winter lingered still.



All out of practice
as they were,
Without a moment
to bestir
And with a stitch
of clothing part,
They had to try
the swimmers' art,
And, with their
valentines in hand,
As best they could,
strike out
for land.

THE BROWNIES IN FEBRUARY.

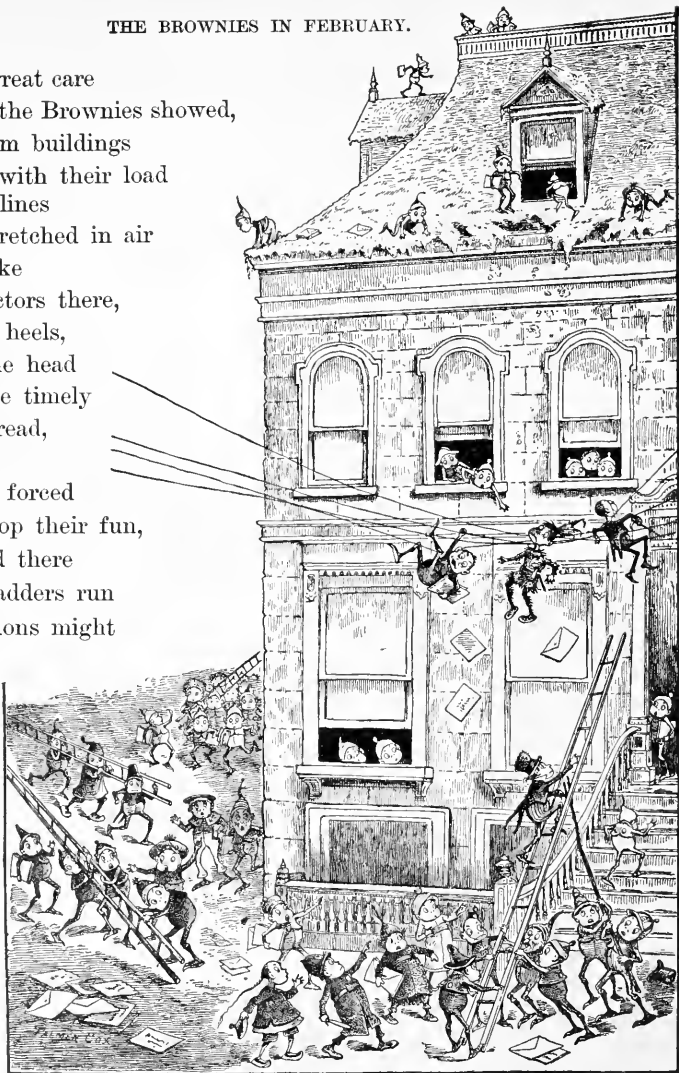
Now mortal folk, as well we know,
Would soon have let their bundles go,
And troubled neither hand nor head
About the saints, alive or dead.
But, gentle reader, don't believe
That Brownies would their hands relieve
Of loving missives made to cheer
The hearts of those they held so dear,
Till every valentine they made
Was in the right location laid.



'T is hard enough in summer hours
To climb around on walls or towers,
When vines, perhaps, a hold supply,
And nights are fine, and stones are dry,
But harder still the task to climb
Around in slippery winter time,
When snow, or rain, or ice, or all,
May interfere with those who crawl.
Then wonder not if letters fell
And for a time were scattered well,
And with more cares the mind oppressed
That was disturbed enough at best.

THE BROWNIES IN FEBRUARY.

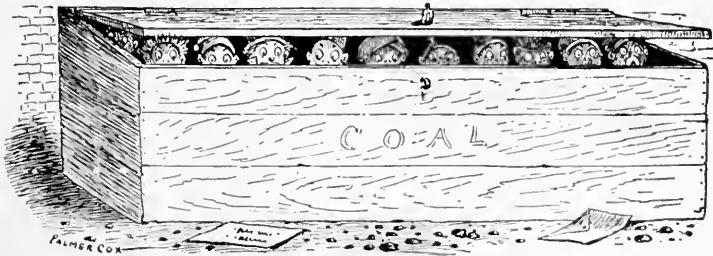
And though great care
the Brownies showed,
Some fell from buildings
with their load
To catch on lines
that stretched in air
And swing like
malefactors there,
Some by the heels,
some by the head
As chance the timely
net had spread,
Till friends
were forced
to stop their fun,
And here and there
for ladders run
So safe positions might
be gained
While yet
a spark
of life
remained.
Their breath
was short,
their necks
were long
Ere they
were freed
from wires
strong.





On fire-escapes they climbed about,
On brackets, caps, and trimmings stout,
And on the roof or window-sill
They kept their minds on business still,
Till verses of a tender strain,
And those of a more comie vein,
With pictures drawn to suit each case,
Could safely reach their proper place.

Said one: "But that delight it brings
To children to receive such things,
I 'd throw my packets in the fire
And to some hiding-place retire,
Because I 've hardly got a stitche
That is not torn with hook or hiteh
While climbing round just like a mouse,
To slip them into every house."



At times a false alarm would spring
And wildest consternation bring,
Then into barrels and boxes near
At once they 'd dive and disappear
Till, reassured, at length they rose
To bring their labors to a close.

The valentines for old and young
Were into doors and windows flung;
The full-grown people, dames and misters,
The brothers and, of course, the sisters,
Were all remembered by the band,
And valentines reached every hand.



The people wondered—
 well they might!—
How mail had got there
 in the night.
For high and low
 on every side
Were packages sealed up,
 or tied—
The selfish man,
 who did n't care
For friend or neighbor,
 got his share,

Saw how the creature looks for whom
The world is loath to furnish room,
And learned in couplets scribbled free
Just what his epitaph might be.
But he who had a noble mind,
With generous heart and feelings kind,
Was told by picture and by verse
How tears would fall around his hearse,
And sweetest flowers strew the ground
When he his final rest had found.
The children to surmising fell,
Still wondering who knew them so well;



THE BROWNIES IN FEBRUARY.



PALMER CO. N.Y.

THE BROWNIES IN FEBRUARY.



Knew every whim, and hope, and fear,
Like kind, observing mothers dear;
And in addresses full and plain
They studied hard the key to gain,
But every hand was strange and new,
And gave them not the slightest clue.
For Brownies study everywhere
To cover up their tracks with care,
And, crowded though they often are
For time to work or travel far,
Their hands and feet show extra power
To suit the lateness of the hour.
Then roads were filled from side to side
With Brownies as they ran to hide;
The weaker, aided by the strong,
Were hurried on their way along,
For it would ill become the band
To now deny a helping hand
To those on whom the manifold
Misfortunes of the night had told.





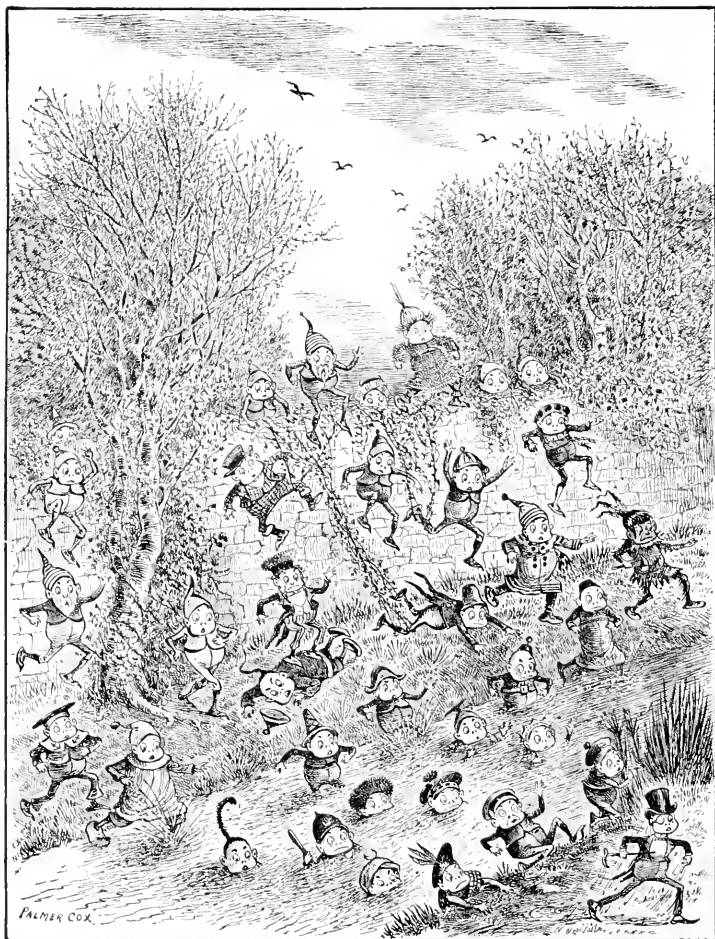
THE BROWNIES IN MARCH.



Brownie band, while roaming round
In blustering March, one evening found
Themselves upon a windy height
That brought the Capitol in sight.
Said one: "That dome that looms so high
It seems to pierce the starry sky,
Proves we behold, from where we stand,
The central city of the land.

Here you the Mandarin may see
Who represents the Land of Tea;
The Russian from the vast domain
Where iron-handed despots reign;
The Pasha working for the weal
Of states beneath a neighbor's heel;
Outlying tracts, of which we hear
But little, have their lookouts near
To see that nothing wrong is planned
Or carried on against their land:

THE BROWNIES IN MARCH.



Though it may seem scarce worth the show
To guard an iceberg from a foe,

THE BROWNIES IN MARCH.

Or come with feathers, frills, and style,
To represent some desert isle.
Now while we chance to be so nigh,
A trip into the town we 'll try.
Through its broad avenues we 'll race,
And gain some knowledge of the place;
And ere the night gives place to day,
A visit to the White House pay."



Another cried :

"The race begin,
And don't be slow
to count me in;
For I 'll be with
you to ascend
The White House steps,
you may depend."

The city that before them lay
Was, after all, some miles away;
And though the Brownies travel fast,
Full half an hour or more had passed
While they were crossing country there
To reach a leading thoroughfare.
They clambered over walls of stone
With brush and ivy overgrown,
But neither thorns nor poison-vine
Could check their pace, or break their line.
Like soldiers charging some redoubt
When "Death or Victory!" they shout,
The eager Brownies onward ran,
So jumped and looked ahead to scan

THE BROWNIES IN MARCH.

The certain place they sought to win,
So plunged in ditches to the chin,
So scrambled up the slippery bank,
So, tumbling, to the bottom sank
To rise again and still renew
The struggle for the point in view.
Thus, at the start into the town,
Wet through and through from toe to crown
And dripping freely, on they hied,
Nor changed their plan nor turned aside,
For daring Brownies never dread
A cold from wetting foot or head.



No influenza, gout, or grip
Comes like a penalty to nip
Their operations through the year,
Or keep them muffled up in fear.

When town was reached, the Brownies tried
Their speed through streets both long and wide.
They spryly moved as locusts light
When fields of grain break on their sight,

And previous fasts have whetted keen
Their appetite for something green.
But nothing their attention drew
Until the White House came in view.
Then every foot came to a stand,
And every visage did expand
In giving freedom to the smile
That lighted up each face the while.
Said one: "A snow-white mansion, sure,
Designed some centuries to endure;



Let the day
be dark or bright
Keep the heart
within you light.

THE BROWNIES IN MARCH.



Broad at the base, compact and low,
Built more for service than for show;
No peaks for thunderbolts to strike,
To tempt tornadoes and the like.
Those who of planning it had charge
Displayed good sense and caution large.”
Another spoke, who ventured nigh
And scanned the place with searching eye:
“With bolts and bars some two or three
The doors are fast, as they should be
Where so much plate is lying round
As in this mansion may be found.”
One soon replied: “We little care
How many bolts and bars are there,
Or heavy locks that would defy
The prowling burglar’s pick or pry.

THE BROWNIES IN MARCH.

We pass inside a place at will,
In spite of all the care and skill



That may be spent in work about
A plan to keep intruders out.

THE BROWNIES IN MARCH.



The massive doors that may outface
The seeker after bread or place,
Can on their heavy hinges rest,
Because the Brownie band is blest
With powers that make the bolt and law
As worthless as a barley-straw.
For one, I 'm not content to go
Till more about the place I know
Than may be gained by just a sight
Of outer walls and columns white.
I neither seek a place of power,
Nor food to serve the passing hour;
But, all the same, I 'm bound to win
An entrance to the rooms within.

We 'll not disturb their silverware,
Nor furniture so rich and rare;
We 'll simply all the paintings view,
And have, perhaps, a dance or two
In those historie rooms, to show
How we as well can trip the toe
As those who proudly gather here
To grand receptions every year."
Ere long they rambled round with ease,
As if they had a bunch of keys.
The President was not around,
And those in charge were sleepers sound,
So they were free to dance or run
From room to room in search of fun.
Upon the library they made
A full advance, or rather, raid;



THE BROWNIES IN MARCH.

The volumes there the Brownies found
From hand to hand were passed around,
Until each member wise could tell
The author, and his views as well.
There on all sides they bent to pore
O'er books on tables and on floor,
Engaged in reading long debates
About the laws or rights of States,
To find if prophecies were true,
Propounded when the land was new.
Some read of long-forgotten things:
Of wars with neighbors and with kings;
Of rows with tribes of Indians red,
In forest, swamp, and lava-bed.

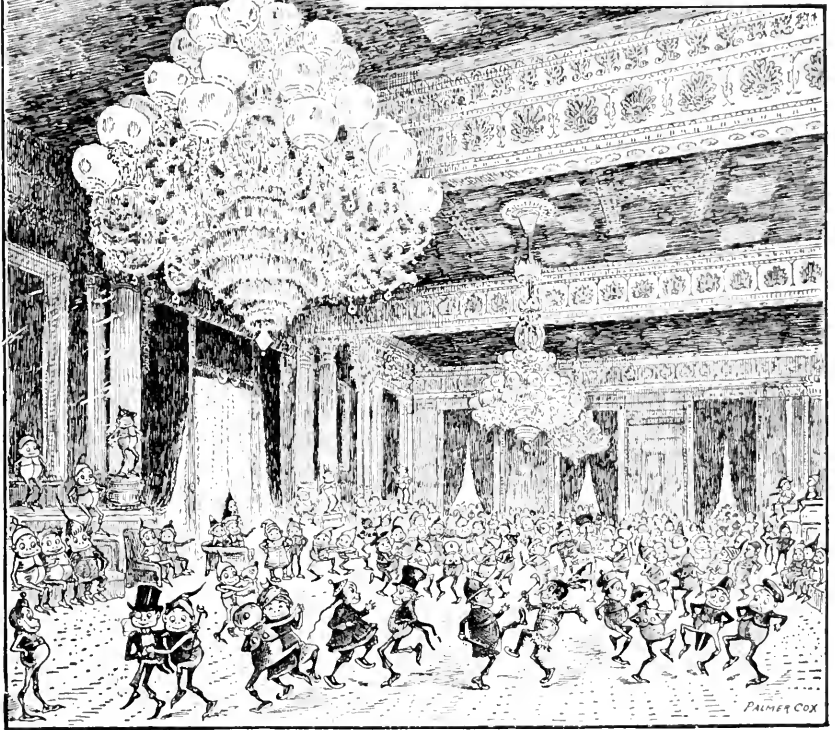


Like students thirsting after fame,
They took the pages as they came,
While more stood round and listened well,
As if a sermon on them fell
With all the earnest, striking power
That turns to gloom the brightest hour.

Then in the largest room they found
They danced in sets both square and round.
Oh, could the portraits on the wall,
That many an honored name recall,
Have glanced down through the lifelike shade
Of lashes that the brush had made,
They would have witnessed more than we,
While in the flesh, can hope to see:
Or had they tongues, and cared to speak
About each frolic, prank, or freak,

THE BROWNIES IN MARCH.

They could more wondrous tales relate
Than stirred them in their mortal state :



For never since that house first stood
On its foundations firm and good,
Was such a scene enacted there
Of dances round and dances square;
Strange dances that are only seen
In Asiatic groves, I ween,

THE BROWNIES IN MARCH.

By streams that water far Cathay,
Or through Japan's rich valleys stray,
Were introduced and formed aright
Upon that carpet soft and bright ;
Now whirling round, now squatting low,
Now bounding like the startled doe,



Until their heads came very near
To contact with the chandelier.
For Brownies have elastic toes,
As he who reads their history knows,
And not a rabbit of the plain,
Or acrobat who jumps for gain,
Or spry performers anywhere,
Can spring more lightly in the air.
Odd figures, that are only found
Where ice forever coats the ground
And people wade around in snow,
And dances therefore must be slow,
Upon the programme found a place ;
And thus with dignity and grace
The cunning Brownies took in hand
The dances of the frozen land.



Then came the barn-door jig, and reel,
And fling that tries the Highland heel,
The contra-dance, fandango too,
And ghost-dance of the painted Sioux.
All changing partners every set,
They bowed and scraped, and crossed and met
And carried through in lively way
The figures of the present day.

THE BROWNIES IN MARCH.

On ornaments and trimmings stout
Some climbed, to keep a sharp lookout
In case while sport went on they 'd find
Surprises of a sudden kind,
And they some signal would require
Upon the instant to retire.



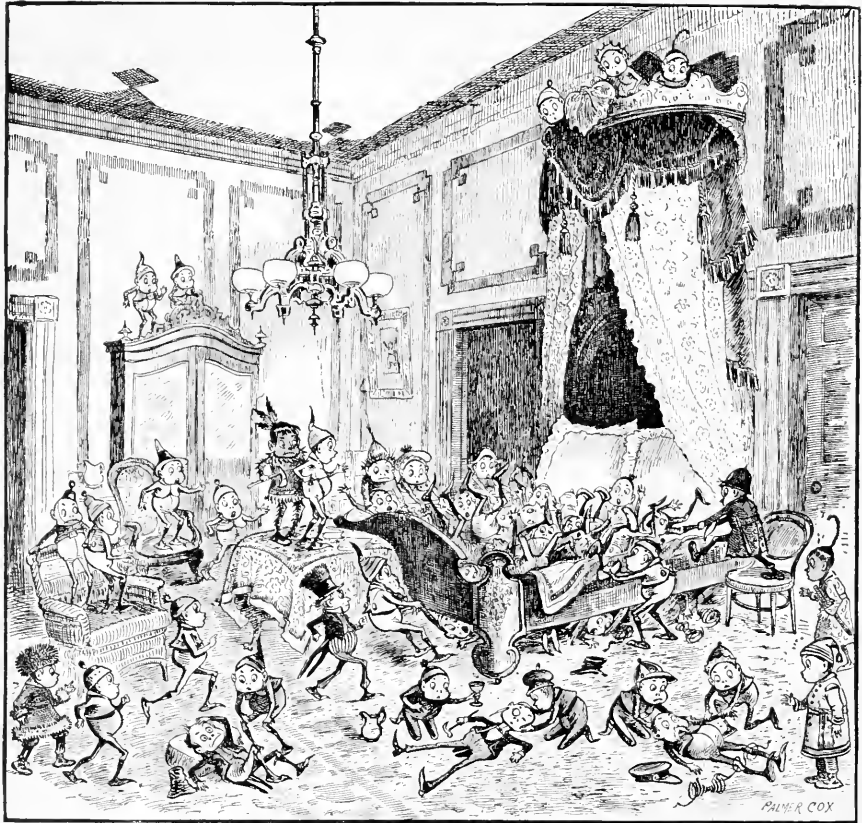
They sat in chairs
both new and old,
To prove how many
they would hold;
And on them jumped
for half an hour,

To try their strength or springing power.
Although no time they had to sleep
Ere morning light would on them creep,
Some Brownies crawled, with laughter great,
Into the very bed of state,
Until some seven faces bright
Were peeping from the linen white.



Said one: "We wish to have it said
That we have tried the nation's bed,
And we can now aver with pride
That Uncle Sam does well provide
For those whom he is pleased to call
To Washington, to govern all."

THE BROWNIES IN MARCH.



Alas! so many Brownies spry
Were anxious on that bed to lie,
Wherein great men had taken rest
When with their country's cares oppressed,
They broke it down, and tumbled through

THE BROWNIES IN MARCH.

Upon the floor with much ado ;
The splintered slats and parted wire
Gave evidence of ruin dire.
Those who by chance escaped the crash,
Were nowise slow to make a dash
To aid the rogues who sank from sight
Enveloped in the bedding white.



And work enough they found to do,
As from the creaking wreck they drew
By hands and heels, for mercy's sake,
The hapless victims of the break.
Some Brownies, rolled into a ball,
Had scarcely strength for aid to call ;
While more, half smothered in the bed,
Were dragged to light not far from dead.

Some gasped for water, some for wine
Brought from the vineyards of the Rhine,
And every sort of drink had found
A welcome there, had they been round,
To help the action of the heart,
And strength to nerves and brain impart.
The floor was littered all about
With those who had some cause to shout,
If bad contusion, break, and sprain
Gave them good reason to complain ;
But other injuries they knew
Than outward bruises, black and blue.
Internal troubles, doctors say,
Are hardest ailments to allay ;



THE BROWNIES IN MARCH.

And now the doctors of the band
Had cases of this kind on hand:
Some swallowed feathers, hair, and dust,
And some had cotton down them thrust
So far, they doubted which was best—
To take it out, or let it rest.



And had the band surprises known
While in that wild confusion thrown,
While some were struggling in the hold
Of twisted wire, or blanket fold,
Or by the shock were senseless made,
And flat upon the carpet laid,
They might have found it hard indeed
To leave with all their wonted speed;
But, lucky for the Brownie force,
No trouble came from such a source.
When all at length were brought to view,
To work the active Brownies flew
To reconstruct the bed of state
That nearly proved a bed of fate.



At your task
be never late
For the moments
will not wait.

Said one: "Ambition leads astray
Its ill-starred victims day by day;
The race for wealth, or social fame,
Oft ends in courts, or stripes of shame,
And even we may trouble find
Through an ambitious turn of mind."
But little time could they remain
To moralize on longings vain.
Because the eastern sky was spread
With streaks of purple and of red,

THE BROWNIES IN MARCH.



Which told the sun was on its way
To open wide the gates of day,
And let the golden flood of light
Dispel once more the gloom of night.
So Brownies hastened from the spot—
Who took the lead it mattered not
So all could find a place to hide
Where they through day could safely bide;
And with a view of keeping clear
Of swampy fields or marshes drear,
Now dark against the brightening sky
They ran along on ridges high,
Where greatest speed could be attained,
And hiding-places quickly gained.



*All the stars are gone I vow!
We must scamper for it now.*



THE BROWNIES

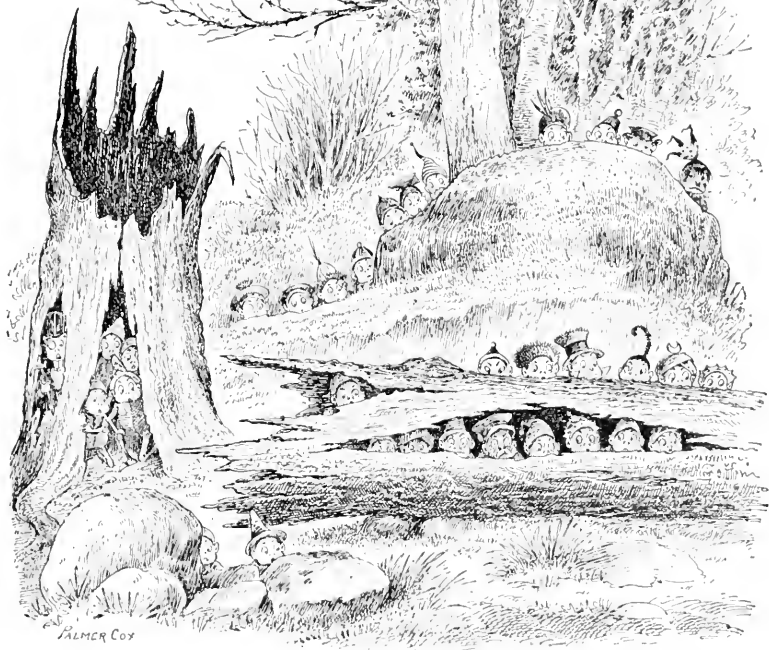
IN APRIL.



One evening, when the fields were bare,
And milder grew the April air,
The Brownies met, with faces bright,
In pleasant sport to spend the night.
For hours they had been stowed away
In waiting for the close of day—
Some jammed in hollows of the trees,
More crouched upon their hands and knees
Behind the logs and boulders white
That hid them from the people's sight,
Who still were passing to and fro
Upon the wagon road below.
To see and not be seen they aim,
And squeezed in every shape the frame,
Like weasels in a fence of stone
They showed a nose or eye alone.
And every moment popped a face
Anew from some unlooked-for place.
The human kind both small and great
Can never truly estimate

THE BROWNIES IN APRIL.

How oft they are,
when passing by,
Fit objects for
a Brownie's eye.
They see them
in their busy
hours,



When exercising all their powers;
They see them when they shirk their task,
Or for too much of others ask;

THE BROWNIES IN APRIL.



If the
top most
round you'd
win
upward
stepping
now begin.

They know the ones who freely give
That sick and orphan babes may live,
And see the hand withhold the cent
That for the heathen should be spent;
They know where frowns too much abide,
And where destruction follows pride;
They know that underneath the smile
The villain oft may lurk the while;
They know that lips may kisses press,
And pout displeasure none the less;

And Brownies do not
Impressions that are
What once they learn,
Will in their memory



soon forget
firmly set,—
you may be sure,
long endure.

But hands move round the dial-plate,
And hours will pass, if one can wait
Until the moving seconds slow
Shall file their records as they go;
So bright the sunny hours passed,
And flitting bats came out at last,
Then, with a whisper, sign, or call,
The Brownies soon commenced to crawl
From hiding-places here and there,

For evening pleasures to prepare.
Said one: "The month at length is here,
To every youngster's heart so dear,
Because the country far and wide
Has flung its winter coat aside,
And they those pleasures can renew
That were denied the season through.



Again the sidewalk, marked with chalk,
Tells where to hop, or skip, or walk ;
Again the hoops are rolling spry,
Again the kites are soaring high,
Again the tops on every street
Are spinning round the people's feet,
And Brownies should not be behind
At trying sport of every kind."



Another said: "The truth you speak ;
New life now glows in every cheek,
Pinned up for months without a chance
In open air to run and dance :
They must, indeed, with pleasure hail
The time when outdoor sports prevail.
As for ourselves, we little care :
Through all the year we have our share
Of fun ; however cold or hot
The months may be, it matters not.



But still some play may not be wrong
That to the present days belong.
The time of year is now at hand
For troops to march in order grand,—
To tramp about as soldiers do
Might well become the Brownie crew.
For me, I like that sort of thing,—
To step erect, to wheel, and bring
Myself around in proper pose
To either face my friends or foes.
But some, I know, would rather hop,
Or spin for hours a buzzing top ;

While others still prefer to stoop
And chase for miles a rolling hoop.
There 's no accounting for one's taste :
Some like to skip, more like to paste
A kite, and watch it proudly sail
Above the town with streaming tail."



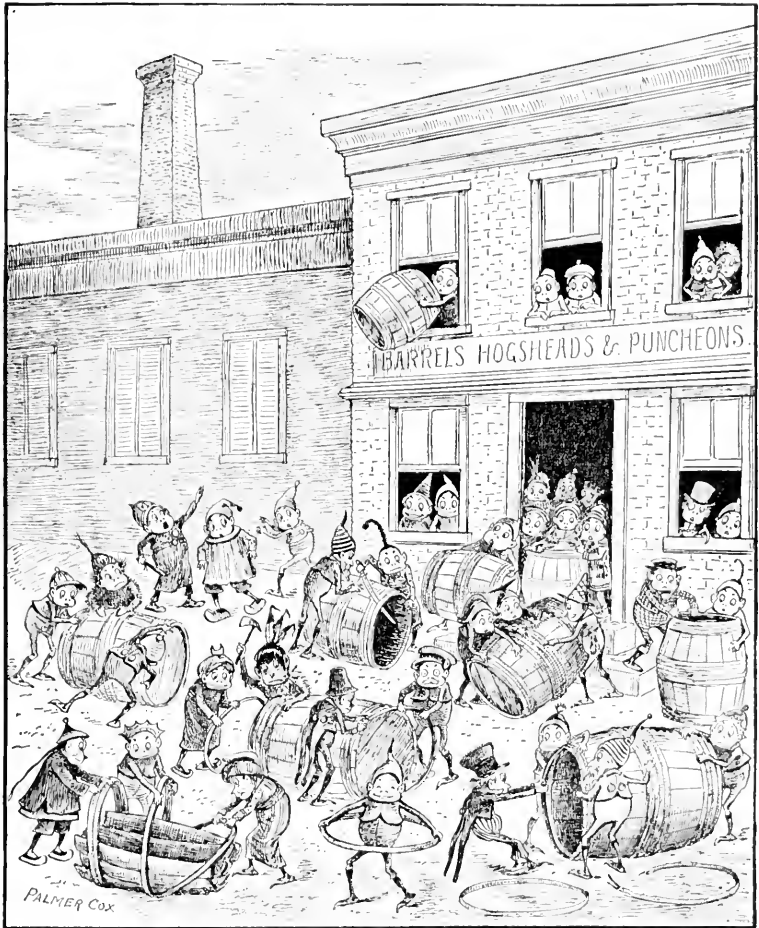
A third remarked: "We might indeed
To different kinds of sport proceed.
But I know where we can provide
Ourselves with hoops to roll and guide
With careful hand, until we prove
Who best can keep one on the move ;
And if I don't mistake my man,
You 'll see me bounding in the van
Ere many squares are gone about,
Or many furlongs measured out,
Because I 'm neither lame nor blind,
Nor out of training, as you 'll find,
But can the highest speed maintain
Until a given point I gain."

This brought replies from half the band,
And all declared they could not stand
Such talk while they, themselves, were blest
With speed not second to the best.

This wordy war, as one might know,
Soon made them all decide to go
And get the hoops, and prove, indeed,
If one could all the others lead.
A building, standing near, that eve
Was promptly entered without leave ;



THE BROWNIES IN APRIL.



But that is quite a common thing
With Brownies, who such power bring

THE BROWNIES IN APRIL.



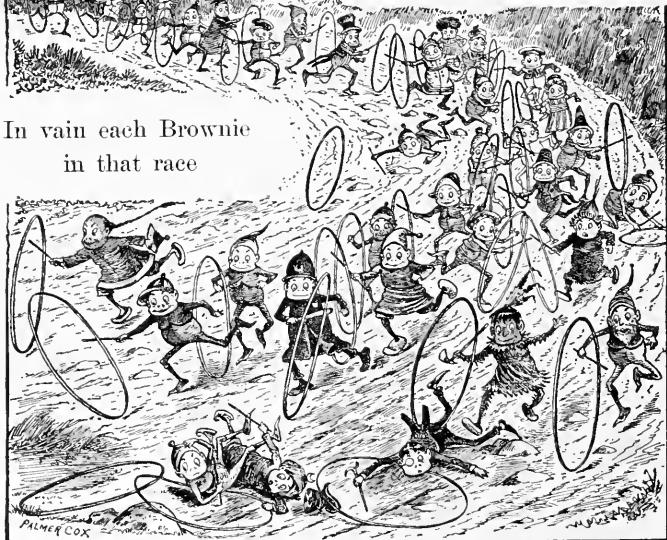
That locks all prove of no avail,
And scarce need mention in the tale.
Soon barrels were rolled to open air,
Where each could get his proper share
Of work at stripping hoops away
To serve them through their evening play.

Ere long the Brownies' fun began
As in an anxious crowd they ran,
All striving to keep well controlled

The hoops that fast
before them rolled.

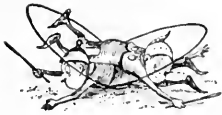


In vain each Brownie
in that race

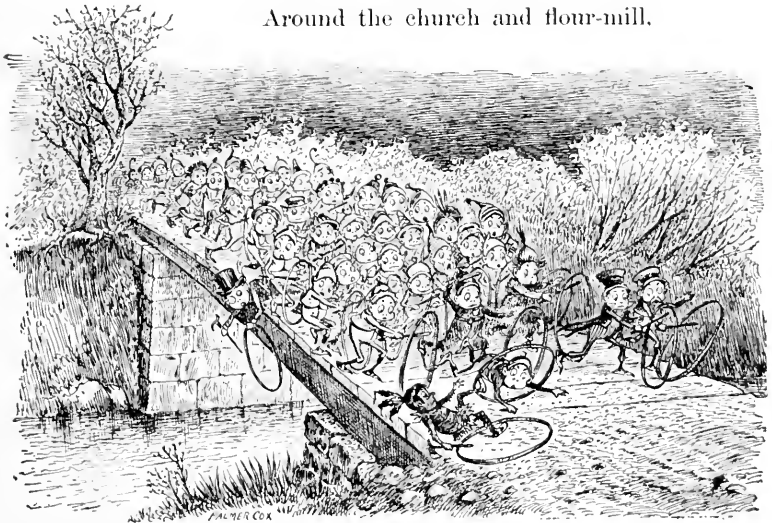


Would try to hold the foremost place,
For in the height of all their pride,

THE BROWNIES IN APRIL.



Some feet would trip, or hoops collide,
Which often to a tumble led.
Then some one else would shoot ahead,
And those whose chance was counted poor,
Through slips or falls would thus secure
A place in front, and for a while
Be wearing a triumphant smile.
They rolled them up and down the hill,
Around the church and flour-mill.



And o'er the bridge, without a rail,
Where one misstep might woe entail
On half the band, so close they ran
Along the edges of the span.
One well may wonder, crowding so,
How hoops were kept upon the go.



THE BROWNIES IN APRIL

But Brownies have a mystic way
Beyond the reach of mortal clay,
And we can only, wondering, gaze,
And feel impelled to lavish praise.



To be the first is much,
you 'll find,
With them as with
the human kind;
And though a second
place or prize
Is duly valued
in their eyes,

'T is only, speaking by the letter,
Accepted when they can't do better.
At times they left the dusty road
And through the fields endurance showed,
With many a tap and harder whack
To give the hoops the proper tack.
Thus sport went on, with here and there
An accident, or sudden scare,
Which still is likely to be found
Where daring Brownies scamper round.
Some broke their hoops, and had to stop
To mend, and far behind would drop;

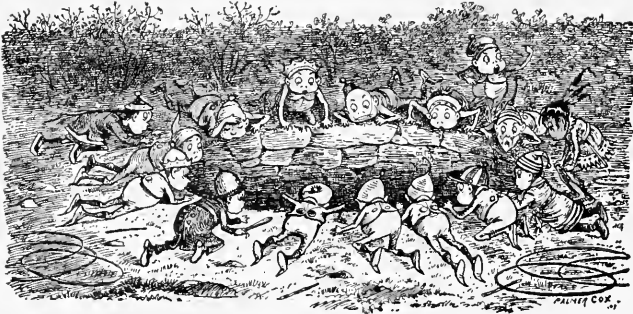
Some lost their hats, and others tore
The strongest garments that they wore;
Until it seemed as if the play
Would prove expensive in its way,
And bring the tailors of the band
Next morning into good demand.





One strange mishap occurred that night,
 For though the stars were shining bright,
 While chasing hoops some Brownies fell
 Head foremost in a curbless well.
 The fearful downward dive was fast,
 But water broke the fall at last.
 'T is sad to gaze into a place
 Where friends have met with sore disgrace,
 And are immured in durance vile
 Without a fee, a saw, or file,
 Or aught that might assist them there
 To breathe once more the open air.
 But sadder still to see one's friend
 Into a prison hole descend
 Where neither saw, nor file, nor fee
 Can be of use to set him free.
 Such was the scene, and such the woe
 That struck the band a telling blow,
 And stilled the heart, and paled the face,
 Of every Brownie in the race.
 To think of friends who side by side
 Had dared the steep toboggan slide;
 Had on the ocean spread their sail,
 Had ridden, on the spouting whale,





And in a thousand other ways
Had won from all the highest praise—
Now taken quickly from their sight,
While fun was at its greatest height,
To struggle in a place that gave
Small promise but to be their grave!
So wild alarms were quickly spread,
And comrades gathered there in dread,
And for a moment tried in vain
A glimpse of those below to gain.
But though their eyes could naught behold,
The splashing and the shouting told
They still had life, and would be glad
If prompt assistance could be had.
Then for a time it looked, indeed,
As if the Brownies must proceed
Thereafter to their nightly pranks
With grievously diminished ranks.
But Brownies, bless them! how they spring
To save from harm the slightest thing,

Much more to rescue three or four
Whose loss they deeply would deplore.
No lengthy rope was thereabout
With which to draw their comrades out,
Who proved by many a thrilling note
They managed still to keep afloat.
But soon the cunning Brownies planned
A way to lend a helping hand;
Indeed, delay in such a spot
Would soon prove fatal to the lot,
Because the well was deep and old,
And water at the time was cold,
And would not please them as it might
Upon some sultry summer's night.



The lofty sweep that o'er them stood
Was made to render service good:
To this, ere many moments passed,
They made an empty barrel fast.
Meanwhile a few took time to throw
Encouragement to those below,
And told with words of hope and love
How work was going on above.

The active Brownies jumped around,
Each aiding where a chance he found;
And soon the parts were well supplied,
And firm and fast the knots they tied;
Then lowered with a cheering yell
The life-preserver down the well.
The wretches who received the fall
Were glad enough in this to crawl,

Then Brownies
A proper place
So, thus assisted
It might uplift
In fact, when
A mightier spirit
And quickens
With grand
Now up, no
The victims
And safe,
a dripping
In course of
came in
Then shouts
from all

climbed aloft to keep
upon the sweep,
by their weight,
the burden great ;
comrades are distressed,
stirs the rest,
inventive mind
off we find.
they wished,
were fished,
the
results, as
sooner than
of the fall
though in
plight,
time they
sight.
went up
the band,



THE BROWNIES IN APRIL.

And many stretched a willing hand
To aid their comrades from the swing
That brought them from the icy spring.
Oh, happy hour! when they could find
Safe in their arms companions kind,
From danger that no life had cost,
Though all were looked upon as lost.
With feeling spoke a Brownie bright:
"Our friends we seldom value right,
However well they may be tried,
'Till they are taken from our side;
We then can estimate how blest
Were we who such true friends possessed,
And grace name and virtues find,
To which our eyes were wholly blind!"



Then all around the blazing wood
To warm themselves those Brownies stood,
Still thanking friends for timely aid,
And praising them for skill displayed;
And scarcely was their clothing dry
When signs of day showed in the sky.

THE BROWNIES IN APRIL.

But ere they sought a safe retreat,
Once more they hastened through the street,
To that deserted building bound
Where their supply of hoops was found,
To put them in their proper place
With willing hands in every case,
That never through the Brownies' sport
A dealer could a loss report.
Then hoops were set, as one may think,
With many a hasty rap and clink ;
And barrels that had dropped apart
Were fixed with all the cooper's art,
Until each one, as good as when
It outward rolled, was stored again.



Be fair
but
foremost
in the
race,
And having
won it
hold your
place.



When the birds commence to chirp
Then the Brownie band must skip.



THE BROWNIES IN MAY.

May brought gladness to the land,
And signs of life on every hand,
And tuneful birds poured out their song
In richest tones the whole day long,
The Brownies met to carry through
Some work they had that night in view.
They met, according to their plan,
Where turnpikes at right angles ran,
And so in several different ways
They hurried through the evening haze,
All straining every nerve and joint
To reach on time the meeting-point.

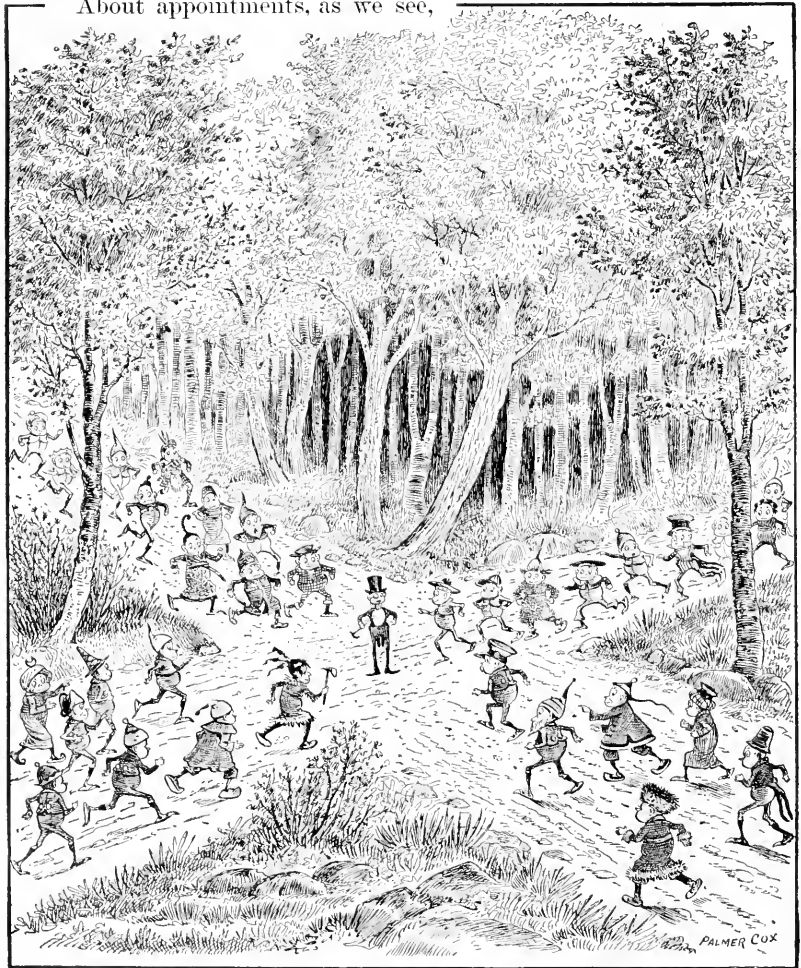


The busy hand and kind
Will leave good works behind



THE BROWNIES IN MAY.

They 're not the kind to careless be
About appointments, as we see,



PALMER COX

Nor think it right for some to play,
 Or dilly-dally by the way,
 While others stamp impatient feet
 Or sit upon the anxious seat.
 When Brownies say, "At six we 'll dine,"
 They do not mean it shall be nine.



Because one's dressing is too slow,
 Or he must chat an hour or so,
 And stare in windows at the price
 Of things so very cheap and nice,
 The Brownie guest arriving late
 Will not be troubled with a plate.
 Or when they say, "At dark we 'll meet,"
 On such a road, or such a street,
 No tardy laundress makes them late;
 No gaiters mourning for a mate,
 No gloves misplaced by careless hands
 Take moments that the trip demands;
 But, with perhaps some time to spare,
 The Brownie band will all be there.
 All breathless with a lengthy race
 The Brownies gathered at the place;
 Then started off at once to find
 The piece of work they had in mind,
 And soon before a dwelling fine
 The band drew up in double line.
 Said one: "This house we stand about
 Is all in shape for fitting out.
 The furniture is ready all,
 The carpets lying in the hall,

The paper for the walls is there
 In rolls, piled underneath the stair;
 But trouble of a serious kind
 Has much disturbed the people's mind
 Who here intended to reside,
 And so all things are laid aside.
 Thus people oft a blank will draw
 Though plans are laid without a flaw.
 Yes, though they study day by day
 And throw no precious hours away,
 But lie awake of nights to plan
 Some better way to cope with man,
 Still unforeseen misfortunes rise
 And every hope in ruin lies.
 Sometimes a sharp decline in stocks
 The bottom out of business knocks;
 Sometimes a conflagration dire
 Sends fortunes up in smoke and fire;
 Sometimes the one who was to tread
 The altar steps, with flowers spread,
 Alas! with trembling limbs has trod
 The pathway to the broken sod."



Another said: "I think our skill
 Will answer all demands that will
 Be made to-night, in every case,
 While putting things in proper place.
 If Brownies cannot drive a tack,
 Put up a bedstead or a rack,
 'T is time we should be bragging less
 About the powers that we possess."



A third replied: "I think so too,
 And I, for one, my share will do.
 I care not whether on the floor
 I stretch the carpet more and more,
 Or with the paste the walls I smear,—
 I 'll do my portion, never fear.
 At outdoor work I 've done my share,
 As those who know me can declare;
 I 've proved myself no nerveless boy
 With hod, or pickax, spade or loy;
 And those who 'll try me even now
 Will have to wipe a sweating brow."

Another cried: "Whatever part
 You take in hand to show your art,
 Or mode of working, fast and free,
 You 'll find, I think, your match in me.
 I 'm not the one to advertise
 What I can do when wants arise;
 But if inventions are required
 Just call on one who is inspired."



So chatting freely, plans were laid
 And soon a move the Brownies made;
 Some in the room spread carpets wide
 And held them down at either side,
 Still stretching them to suit the case,
 While others tacked them in their place.
 Some on the ladders stood to spread
 The paste on walls high over head,
 While others hung the paper there
 Without a wrinkle, twist or tear;





And then the border pasted fast,
To make a fine effect at last.
What power lies in Brownies' hands!
What skill to answer all demands!
Outdoors or indoors, all the same,
The highest praise they rightly claim.
No old indentures can be found
To prove they were to masters bound,
Who boxed them well about the ears
For dulling saws or breaking shears;
No one has claimed in note or will
To him they owe their wondrous skill,
Or through his fostering care had gained
The honored place they have attained.

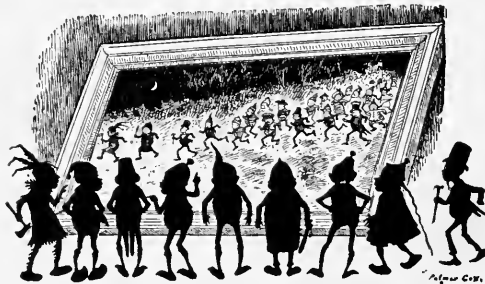
No strong trades-unions, old or new,
 Their sheltering arms around them threw,
 But through the dust of centuries dead,
 With skilful hand and cunning head,
 They rose equipped for every task
 That night could bring, or need could ask—
 A hand, indeed, to which one turns
 When hope into the socket burns,
 And other hands than mortal may
 Take up the tools we fling away.



So work went on
 as moments flew,
 For much the Brownies
 had to do.
 They put the hat-rack
 in the hall,
 The calendar
 upon the wall,
 And hoisted up
 the ancient clock
 Into its niche
 without a shock;

Then wound it up, and set it right,
 According to the time of night;
 For though the Brownies never bear
 A watch, or any such affair,
 The rooster knows not better when
 To crow, and rouse the sleeping hen,
 Than do the cunning Brownies know
 The fitting moments as they go.

Then busy hands the pictures found
That were to grace the walls around;
And with the rest, to their delight,
A Brownie picture came in sight.
And with discrimination fine
They hung it on the favor line,
Where the observing eye could rest
Upon it, from all points the best.



Then hammers for a time were still
As Brownies did the parlor fill,
All crowding there in great surprise,
The work of art to criticize.
One spoke, when he had looked with care
At every Brownie running there.
“But one,” said he, “as far as known
Has to the world the Brownies shown
Drawn to the life, and all the band
Complete, as here to-night we stand;
And though the name is wanting here,
His style of handling us is clear.”



No sooner was
the carpet laid
And paper on
the walls displayed,
Than they began,
with much ado,
All sorts of things
to bring in view.



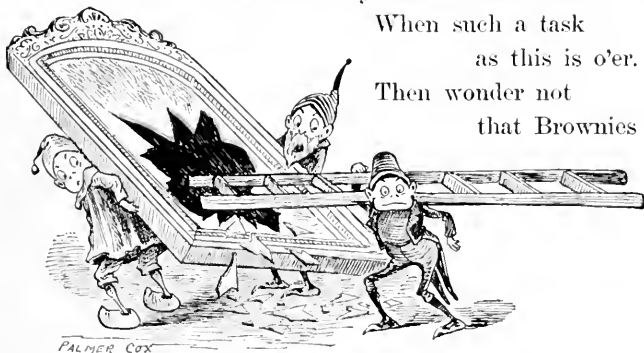
And while they pushed, with eager haste,
A ladder was at times displaced

Whereon some stood to hang aright
The mirrors and the mottoes bright.
Then down would rattle, in a fall,
The Brownies, ornaments and all.
But many a man and wife can tell
How moving tries the patience well,



And how they are both lame and sore
When such a task
as this is o'er.

Then wonder not
that Brownies found



Some hardships as they worked around.
Said one: "My friends, but that I grieve

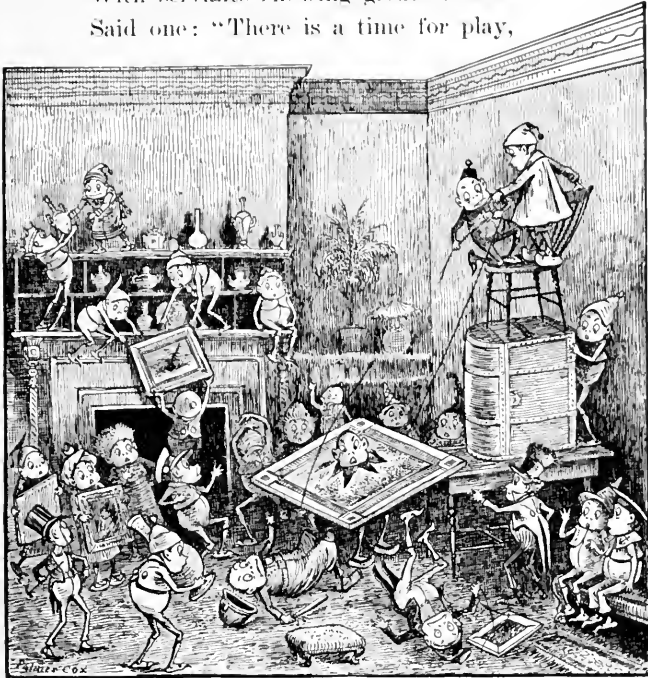
THE BROWNIES IN MAY.

For people in distress, I 'd leave
The work just where it is, and go
To some retreat, and never show
The least concern in such a case,
Or knock my joints all out of place."



But though one here and there would get
Discouraged at the ills they met,
The mass of workers were content
To finish all before they went,
And kept engaged without a rest
Arranging things as pleased them best.
Of course, slight accidents befell—
Some articles, however well
They worked to keep the pieces whole,
At times would get beyond control,
And overturned, or downward flew,
To cause alarms, and damage, too.
'T is true some things received a blow
That lowered them in price, you know,
But that might happen anywhere

With servants showing greatest care,
Said one: "There is a time for play,



And time for work, as writers say;
But work o'er which some make a fuss,
Or strive to shirk, is fun for us.
We Brownies don't spend all our hours
In secret caves, or shady bowers,
But now and then, as folks will find,
Come forth to render service kind;
And when we turn our hands to toil
There 's not a tiller of the soil

Now tumbling over what he bore,
Or dropping that to run for more.
When everything, from first to last,
Had through their hands in order passed,
And all the house looked clean and new,
So they had nothing else to do
But quit the place, and get from sight
While there was yet a shade of night,
Said one: "I wish we could provide
A place near by this house to hide,
So we might watch the great surprise
That will enlarge the people's eyes
When they arrive and gaze around
And see that everything has found
Its place, as well as if their care
And skill had been exerted there.
But we must now be on the move
And every tick of time improve,
Or else not all our powers to run
Can save us from the rising sun."



But morning light
came on apace
And found the Brownies
in the place.
Then wild and stirring
scenes began,

As from the upper floors they ran:
Some took the steps with active spring,
As light as birds upon the wing,
While more, to save a moment's time,

Upon the rail made haste to climb,

Where lying down,

or else astride,

As fancy led,

they took

the slide,

And downward

shooting, to

the hall,

Slid over

newel post

and all!

When Brownies

reach the

open air,

Escaping after

some affair

That 's kept

them busy

till the day

Gives them

short time

to flit

away,

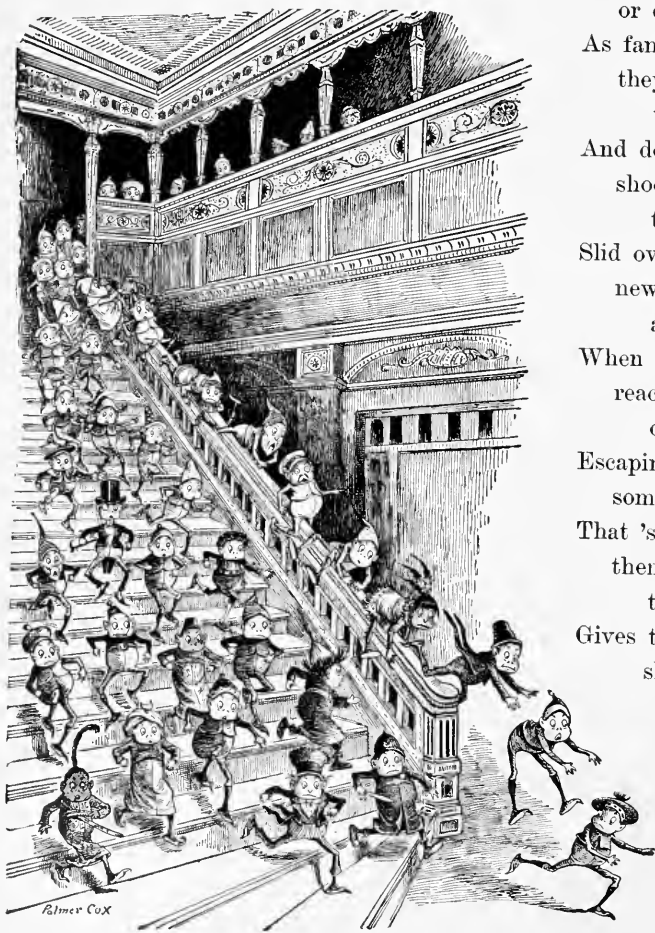
It does

not take

them

long

to cross



A street or square, or wildly toss
Their limbs above a fence or wall
Upon the safest side to fall.
And short the time they now required
To reach the hiding-place desired,
Where they could rest both hand and head
Till night once more her mantle spread.



THE BROWNIES IN JUNE.



One night in June, when skies were clear
The Brownies sought a city near.
Right well their plans had all been laid
To reach the town at evening shade,
And spend the night in sporting there
Upon a bridge so high in air
That ships from every country ran
In safety underneath its span.
Impatiently, you well may think,
They waited for the sun to sink.
It seemed to loiter in the sky
And vexed them as the time drew nigh



The world is cold
to those who fail
So keep your hold
with tooth and nail.

For them to start upon their way,
From stations that through all the day
Afforded them a resting place,
And screened them from the human race.

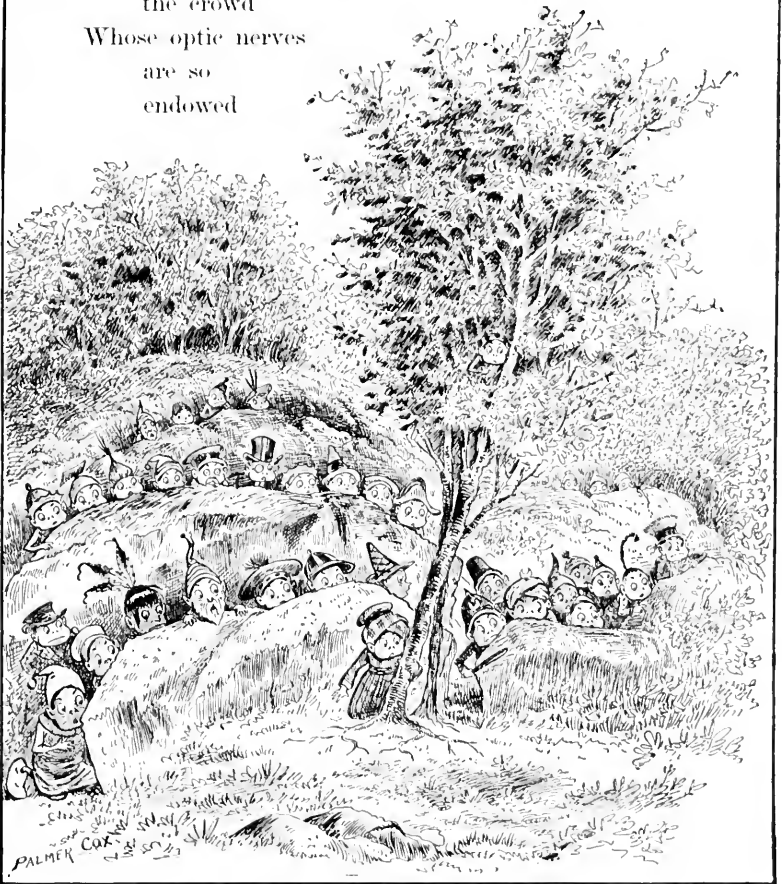


It has to be a gifted eye
That can the cunning Brownies spy;
No commonplace, plain business sight
Can bring the shadowy rogues to light:
It takes a vision stronger far
Than that to see them as they are
When by the rocks and trees concealed
They wait their turn to take the field.
One may be quick to note a flaw
In grammar, etiquette, or law;
Or in the ledger-column see
A numeral where it should n't be;

Find errors in the
grocer's bill,
Or lightness in his weight,
but still
Lack special sharpness
to behold
The slightest glimpse of
Brownies bold;

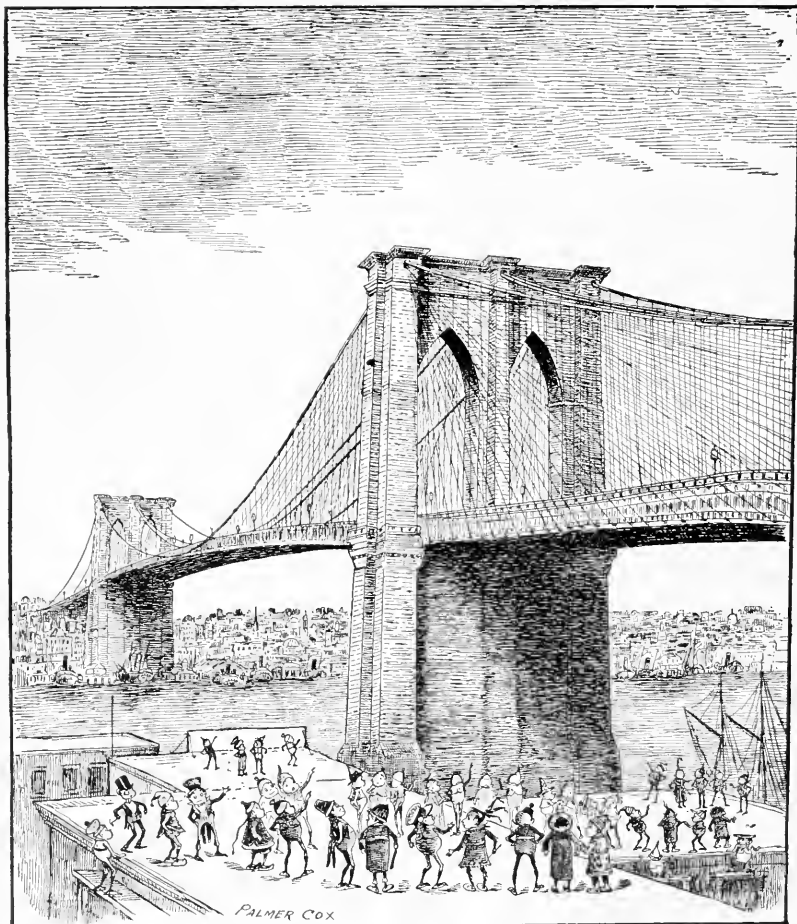


For few there are among
the crowd
Whose optic nerves
are so
endowed



That they through second-sight can mark
Their doings in the light and dark.

THE BROWNIES IN JUNE.



The wished-for night soon made her call
And spread o'er land and sea her pall,

THE BROWNIES IN JUNE.

And scarce the bat had tried its wing
Before the Brownies in a string
Were skipping down the road in glee
To reach those cities by the sea.
They heeded not the buildings tall,
But to the bridge fast hurried all.

They reached it when the lamps' bright glare
Revealed its bowed proportions fair,
With ends well anchored either side
In cities spreading far and wide.
From roofs of buildings standing nigh,
The Brownies got a chance to eye
The structure stretched with graceful sweep
Across the river, dark and deep.



Said one: "We here can sport and play
Upon this bridge till break of day,
Of seeing wonders never tire,
Nor lack a chance to climb a wire.
In fact, each member here can find
A rope to suit his hand or mind,
On which to climb, or swing at ease
Like monkeys on Brazilian trees."
Now here and there the Brownies went,
On seeing all the bridge intent;

Some had the nerve
and strength
to crawl
At once upon
the towers
tall,





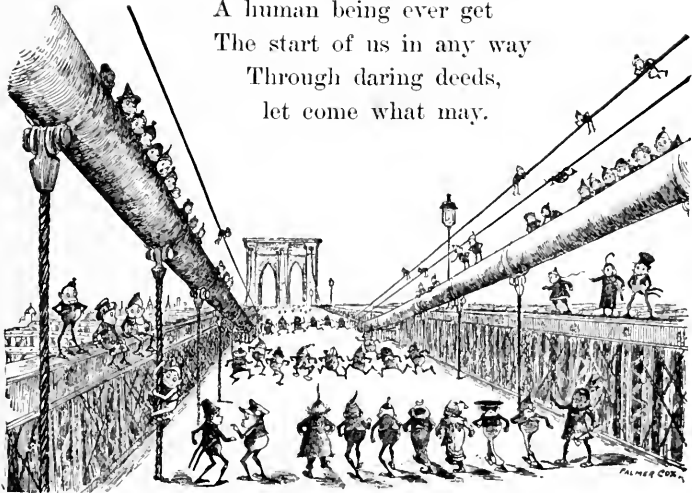
And right and left
 their glances
 threw,
 Of distant points
 to gain
 a view,
 Or gaze upon the sea
 of light
 That through a city
 spreads at night.
 At times, while climbing
 ropes of wire,
 The topmost Brownie's
 hands would tire,
 And slipping back, his
 weight would bring
 No small distress to all
 the string
 That clung below with
 might and main
 To hold their own against
 the strain.
 Then down they 'd sit to
 rest, or chat
 In Brownie style, of this
 or that,
 Or glances on the flood
 to throw
 That lay so dark and
 far below.



Then on the foot-path, long and wide,
For half an hour their speed was tried;
Sometimes in squads of eight or nine
They took their stations in a line,
And back and forth between the piers
They ran a race, 'mid shouts and cheers
From those who climbed on cables high
To watch them as they scampered by.

Said one: "I've heard it said that men
Have come upon this bridge, and when
No officer did near them stand,
To interfere with schemes on hand,
They reached the center beam, or rail,
And jumped, yet lived to tell the tale."

Another said: "We cannot let
A human being ever get
The start of us in any way
Through daring deeds,
let come what may.





Now to the selfsame place we 'll go,
And take our places in a row;
And, at a given signal, spring
Like birds when taking to the wing,
And keep feet downward, if we can,
According to the jumper's plan
To be not turned awry in air,
But strike the water plumb and fair.*

A third remarked: "You argue well
And show your sense, for truth to tell
We may, if we but manage right,
Immortalize ourselves to-night.
One man may jump and still escape
Without a hurt of any shape,
Yet he is only one in all
The millions on this turning ball.
But where was ever seen a crowd
Like us, with fortitude endowed,
That makes us in a body go
Through greatest dangers one can know?
We 've gone through many startling woes
And trying scenes, as history shows.
If people doubt, let them but read
And learn how we take little heed
Of dangers that go hand in hand
With all the doings of the band,
And even now you 'll find that we
Are valiant in a high degree.
Instead of shrinking in disgrace,
Each one will want the highest place."

A fourth exclaimed: "There's fame, no doubt,
In such a jump, if well worked out;
But I, for one, here let me say,
Won't look for fame in such a way.
Let those who want to feed the fish
Jump from the structure, if they wish
But be assured the lowest plate,
Or wire, upon this bridge so great,
Will high enough from water seem
Before you souse into the stream.
Now those with me who do not show
A crazy wish to famous grow,
Beneath the bridge in boats will keep,
And aid the ones who take the leap."
A fair division now was made:
Upon the bridge those Brownies stayed
Who did n't wish to have it said
That human beings were ahead;
While those who did n't care to seek
For fame through such a foolish freak
Went down for boats, and quickly ran
Beneath the center of the span,

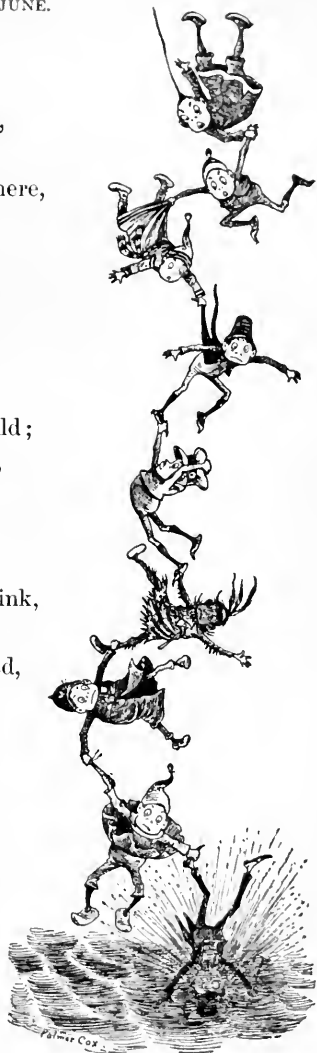
To be prepared their friends to save,
When they should drop into the wave.
Now, dark against the starry sky,
All those who were the jump to try
Crawled out upon the cable dim,
And perched like birds upon a limb,
All waiting for the signal scream
That was to start them for the stream.





Said one : " My word is still my bond,
So acts and words must correspond.
But had I not the utterance made
That I, for one, was not afraid,
And freely gave my name, I vow
I 'd hardly make the promise now!"
But one was quick to give the shout,
And at the cry they all sprang out
Like heroes bold, without delay,
And downward took their rapid way.
They struggled hard, while in mid-air,
To keep themselves erect and fair,
But quite a breeze was sweeping round
Between the ocean and the sound,
And as it o'er the river ran
It played sad havoc with their plan.
In spite of frantic kicks and flings,
And arms gyrating round like wings.

Some soon began to spread, or bend,
 And some were capsized, end for end,
 While more, through luck, or extra skill,
 Kept going down, feet foremost, still.
 Few words were passed between them there,
 For little breath they had to spare;
 But, judging by the look they wore,
 If they were on the bridge once more
 They 'd hardly take that daring spring
 For all the fame that it could bring.
 While striving for a balance good,
 They caught each other where they could;
 And once that nervous grip was gained,
 Through fear or friendship it remained.
 And thus, uniting firm and fast,
 As rapidly they downward passed,
 A chain was formed, while one could wink,
 Composed of many a twisted link,
 That lengthened as the flood they neared,
 And, still unbroken, disappeared.
 If Brownies in the boats below
 Had twenty eyes apiece to throw,
 They hardly could keep track of all
 As through the air they whirling fall;
 They splashing fell on every side,
 All disappearing in the tide!
 Those who had spread their very best
 Went quickly under with the rest,
 But first they rose again in sight,
 And signaled boatmen left and right.



THE BROWNIES IN JUNE.

Now had that daring Brownie crowd
Been just with mortal gifts endowed,
One half the band, or thereabout,
Would have been snuffed completely out:
And never more have brought a smile
On human face to play awhile.
But, thanks to their mysterious power
That stood them well in that dread hour,
They had no thought of ending here
For good and all their bright career.



Some stayed so long beneath the wave
Friends feared the river was their grave.
But pretty soon a distant yell
Would prove them safe, and swimming well.
They went so deep that when they rose
Some pounds of mud came with their toes,
And to the surface quite a few
Brought shedder-crabs, and lobsters, too,
Which clearly proved
to friends around
That they the river's
bed had found.
Though Brownies may
mishaps sustain



THE BROWNIES IN JUNE.

That cause some fear, if not some pain,
They seldom fail to carry through
The work laid out for them to do;



And though a few were somewhat sore,
And vowed they 'd take that leap no more,
Still, not a broken bone was there,
Or garment torn beyond repair.

Each was in trim to quickly crawl
In waiting boats, that took them all
Away as fast as oars could guide
The party to the nearest side,
And then the band had barely time
To quit the place ere morning prime.



THE BROWNIES IN JULY.



As soon as sunny-faced July
Brought round the time when banners fly
On every pole, o'er every door,
The country through from shore to shore,
The Brownies met to have their say
Respecting Independence Day.
Said one: "If I have reckoned right
The days as they have taken flight,
We stand upon the very brink
Of that great day when people think
Of heroes who so freely gave
Their sacred lives on field and wave,
That generations yet to be
Might live and move in liberty."

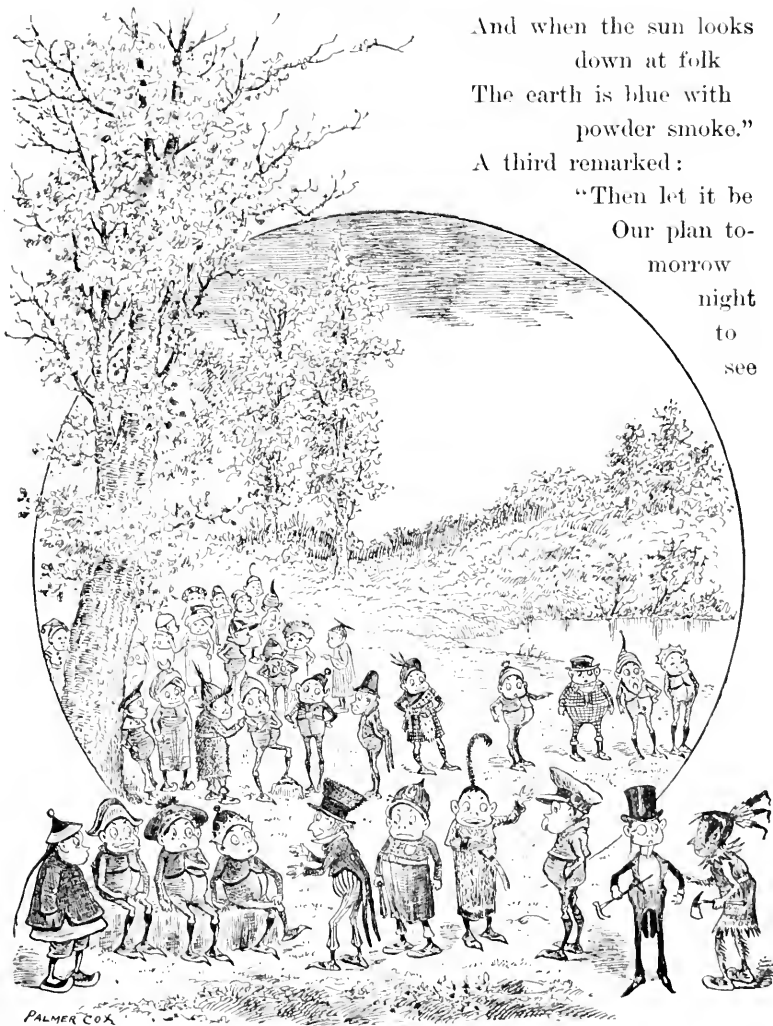


Another said: "My comrade true,
Your mental almanac won't do,
You're just two dozen hours too fast,
I have the days from first to last
All jotted down in black and white
As plain as printer's ink can write;
To-morrow night will usher in
The time for banners and for din.
When children all are up and dressed
Before the stars have gone to rest,



The happy
home
can only
be
where there
is love
and
liberty

And when the sun looks
down at folk
The earth is blue with
powder smoke.”
A third remarked:
“Then let it be
Our plan to-
morrow
night
to
see



PALMER COX

THE BROWNIES IN JULY.



Each
day
some
new
ledge
gain
That
wise
men
fill the
brain

That city stretching in its pride,
With streets so long, and parks so wide,
That holds the Hall where Congress broke
To finders fine the monarch's yoke,
To never after be resigned
To timber of that galling kind.
Around the table we will stand
Where people signed, with steady hand,
The document that did declare
Their home and country free as air.

We know what that act brought about—
Each fight, surrender, siege and rout,
Which followed soon the declaration
To found a free and mighty nation,
That like a link now lies between
The oceans boisterous and serene;
And while one part is wrapped in snow
Till trees bend down to earth below
With loads that storms have on them laid,
Still other parts are all arrayed
In flowers that sweetest fragrance send
To sunny skies that o'er them bend.
The war was long, and many fell,
As history's pages fully tell.
No conflict of a year or two
Could such a commonwealth subdue,
Nor could it cause the king to say
The colonies might go their way.
But seasons rolled, and still the fight
For liberty, or monarch's right,



Be brave
when trouble
tries
The coward
only
flies.

THE BROWNIES IN JULY.

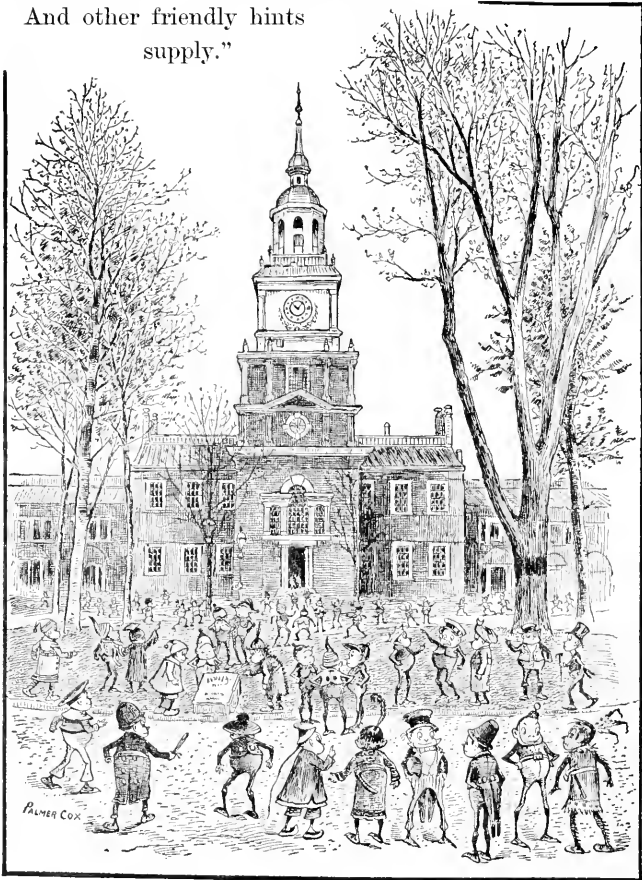
In icy fields through wintry days,
On scorching plains in summer's blaze,
Far off from land on ocean's wave,
Where hearts when few were doubly brave,
To bind in chains, or to be free,
The war went on by land and sea.
The child that stood upon the pave,
And saw his father, firm and grave,
With gun in hand and horn at side,
March off to stem tyrannic pride,
Grew up in time to take a hand
In battling for his native land—
To the same tune from drum and fife,
Went bravely forth to give his life."
That night, indeed, the Brownies' feet
Went pattering through the silent street,
Unnoticed by the men in blue
Who searching glances ever threw
As here and there with solemn round
They guarded people sleeping sound.



Said one: "This town is counted slow,
And fun is poked at it, we know,
About how gravely people move,
And how they never leave one groove.
But we, who have no ax to grind
Or boon to ask, can speak our mind;
And folk there are within our reach
Now fast asleep, that well could teach
The stirring, grasping populace
Of many a more ambitious place,

THE BROWNIES IN JULY.

The honest way to sell and buy,
The way to live, and way to die,
And other friendly hints
supply."



The Hall was reached in half an hour,
As one might judge who knows their power,

THE BROWNIES IN JULY.



And how they laugh at bolt and bar,
At heavy staples driven far,
And locks that few can comprehend,
With combinations without end.
As through the ancient rooms they passed
On many things their eyes were cast
That brought a smile, a frown, or sigh,
According to what drew the eye.

Said one: "The rust is working well
To make away with sword and shell
And musket. They will hardly last
Until another century 's past."

Another answered: "Well, who cares
How soon the rust eats such affairs?
The blunderbuss, head-cleaving blade,
Horse-pistol, shell, and hand-grenade
But call to mind the trying days
When people saw their hamlets blaze,
And saw the hireling Hessians stride
Upon the land with pomp and pride.
But other steel and other lead
Than they had brought they found to dread;



And many mounds soon rose to show
That many came, who failed to go."
From place to place the Brownies went:
At this they paused, by that they bent
To study out the writing old
That something of its history told.
Around the inkstand, strange to view,
The Brownies stood, a wondering crew,



THE BROWNIES IN JULY.



Commenting on the
fateful drops
It once gave out to knock
the props
Away forever from
a throne
That it was thought could
stand alone.
The Brownies tried
to imitate

The manner of the statesmen great,
Who by that self-same desk of oak
Once stood for hours, and firmly spoke
Of taxes, duties, slights, and harms,
And stirred the people up to arms,
Oft asking in a stinging vein
If they would wear a bond or chain,

Or were prepared at once to fling
Defiance at the tyrant king!
Around themselves the flags they wrapped
That o'er the Continentals flapped,
When through their ranks, on hill and vale,

The whistling bullets swept like hail.
Said one: "By weapons hacked and worn
And battle-flags blood-stained and torn,
That find a place on every wall,
'T is plain as A B C to all
No easy task they undertake
Who aim established laws to break,
To right their wrongs like men begin,



And independence strive
to win."

To reach a sofa long
and wide

The Brownies ran from
every side,

Each striving to be first to treat
Himself to such a famous seat.



Said one: "Upon this sofa strong
That here you see has rested long
And been well tried by moth and rat,
The Father of His Country sat,
And called to mind the hopes and fears
And hardships of those trying years
When in his army, staunch and true,
There was not one whole coat or shoe.
No pride in grand parade or show
They took at such a time, we know.
To march around the streets in rags
With naked feet on snowy flags,
Gave little pleasure to the band
Who had their country's life in hand.
The loud hurrahs from those around
At such a scene would empty sound.
A tattered force he had to lead
O'er icy stream and marshy mead,
But well he knew, that hero bold,
Beneath each coat of ragged fold
A heart was beating true and tried
As was the weapon at his side."



THE BROWNIES IN JULY.

Another said: "This still is found
Where too much wrangling does abound;
While those at home dispute and spout
About their orders and their doubt,
Those in the field who face the foe
Are standing barefoot in the snow.
Such was the fate of England's host
Upon the cold Crimean coast,
While vessels lay at anchor near,
With full supplies for half a year,
Awaiting orders from some Brown,
Or Smith, or Jones, in London Town."



Thus Brownies talked,
as talk they will,
And passed opinions
freely still,
But all the while
enjoying well
Each show that to
their notice fell.

Around the bell that loudly rang
When independence was its clang,
The Brownies stood; nay, some were bold
To climb upon the relic old,
And mourned to see the fissure wide
That time had opened in its side.
Said one: "They rang the bell too hard,
Or else it tumbled in the yard
From belfry beams, and struck a stone,
That cracked it thus, and changed its tone.



It now sounds like
an earthen pot,
But what of that?
It matters not.

It did its duty
on that day,
And to its credit,
let me
say,

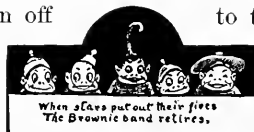
That there was meaning in its ring
That well might stun a listening king.

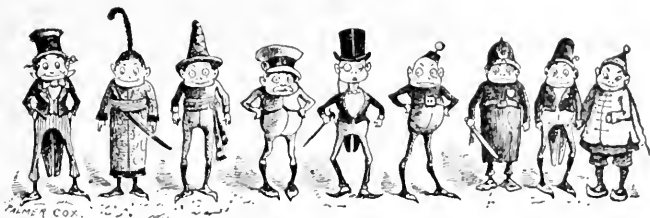
THE BROWNIES IN JULY.

Now let it rest, for sword or gun
Can ne'er undo what has been done."
So many Brownies had a mind
Upon that bell a place to find;
They started it upon the go
Till, swaying wildly to and fro,
It caused a panic and a scare
That soon disturbed the bravest there.
Some to the chain above held fast;
Some flat upon the bell were cast,
 With arms and legs extended wide,
 And with it sailed from side to side;
 While clanging loud with heavy stroke
 The restless clapper silence broke.
 Alarmed lest such a fearful din
 Would bring the wondering people in,
 The Brownies tried in every way
 To choke it off without delay.
 At risk of limb, and life as well,
 Some bravely hung below the bell,
 As back and forth it rocked and swung,
 And did their best to hold its tongue;
 And glad enough were Brownies bold
 When they at length the bell controlled,
 So all were free to gain the street,
And hasten off to their retreat.



Be sober
active
vigilant
and brave
No quicker
to defend
than swift
to save.





THE BROWNIES IN AUGUST.



When

August took its place in line,
The Brownies met at day's decline.
Said one: "At length we stand beside
A stream that is the nation's pride.
No longer river finds its way
Around the world, to gulf or bay;
And, since our pleasures first began,
No better journey can we plan
Than one upon the river bright
That rolls before us here to-night."
Another said: "I well agree
With what you say; and trust to me
To be the pilot for the band,
To take the lead and give command.
I know the river well, my friends,—
Just where it starts and where it ends.
Each bend and bar from first to last
Is in my mind established fast.



Like the ocean's
ebb and
flow
Still the clays
will come
and go.



The trip will take a week or more ;
We 'll hide by day along the shore,
And when returns the evening gloom,
Our journey to the sea resume.
We well might visit every State
That lies within this Union great,
Then spread abroad the truthful tales
Of mountains high or lovely vales,
And wonders that one may behold
In wells of oil, or mines of gold ;
But, for the present, we will keep
Our journey to the briny deep,
And trust that later on we may
To other States a visit pay."

Another said :

"The scheme is fair,
And for the trip
we 'll now prepare.
No one need view
with jealous eye
Our course as here
and there we hie,
Nor think their loyal State we slight
Because 't is small, or far from sight ;
For well we know attractions fine—
From building stone to towering pine,
From fishing-port to marble mart,
From vine-clad fields to coldest part.
From center town to border land—
Await the coming of the band."

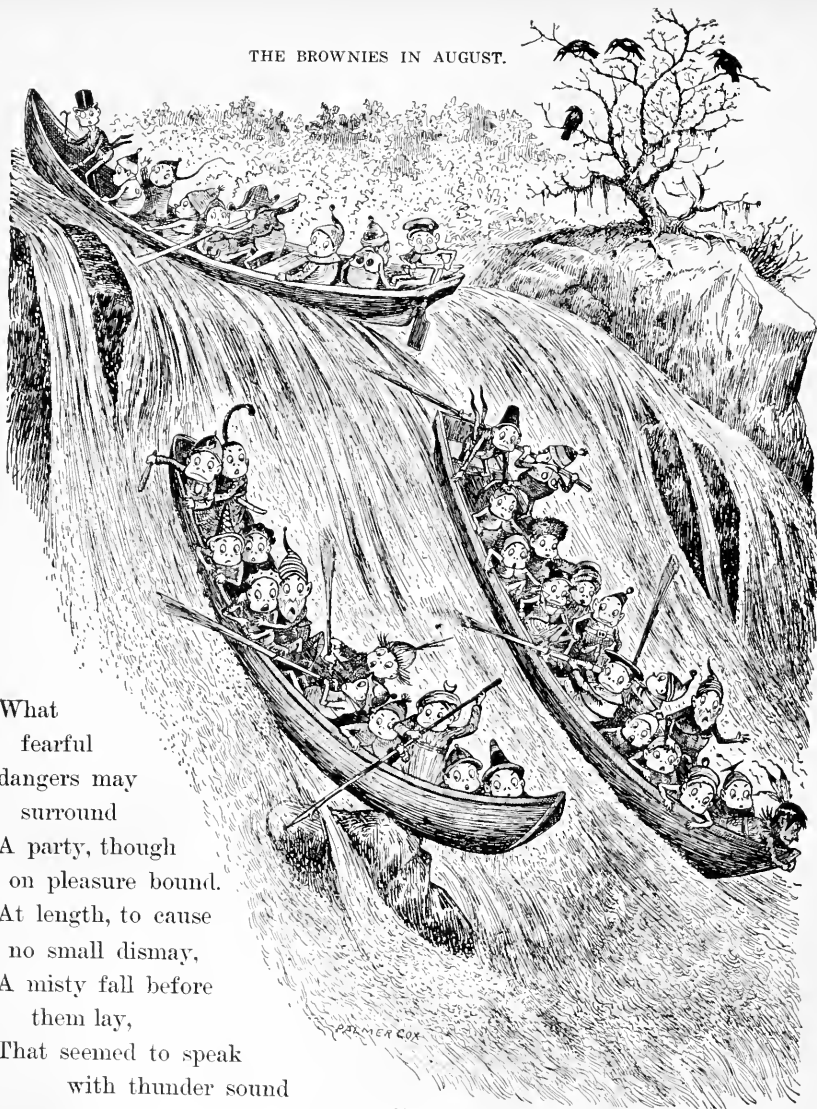


Why need I use my valued space
To tell of smiles that lit each face,
Or eyes that rolled with knowing squint
To see how others took the hint.
No longer talk was needed there
To make the Brownies soon repair
To where some boats could be secured
That by the river's bank were moored.
The pleasing sight should be allowed
To all mankind, when Brownies crowd
 Into a boat, with jam and din,
 All anxious to be counted in.
The Brownies, as you know, are not
Inclined to grumble at their lot,
Or whine because some are not blessed
With comforts granted to the rest.
'T is pleasant drifting with the tide,
Or down a stream to smoothly glide,
But such mild currents often tend
To rougher waters at the end;
And Brownies found in their descent
Some rapids that great mischief meant;
Where boats careened in every case,
And made a deck-load out of place.
Indeed, the pilot's craft was caught
Upon a snag, and quick as thought
Was overturned until the keel
Did to the moon its shape reveal!
The Brownies all, from stem to stern,
Were forced to cling for life, and learn



The day
will come
in spite
of boats
When you'll
be missing
from your
post.

THE BROWNIES IN AUGUST.



What
fearful
dangers may
surround
A party, though
on pleasure bound.
At length, to cause
no small dismay,
A misty fall before
them lay,
That seemed to speak
with thunder sound

Of nothing else than Brownies drowned.
 One cried: "'T is strange that no one knew
 About these falls, now plain in view,
 Though tumbling here with stunning din
 Since first the world began to spin."
 Another said: "My friend, too late
 About our ignorance you prate.
 Did we of dangers earlier know,
 We might avoid much pain and woe.
 'T is useless now to bend and strain
 In hope a friendly shore to gain.
 Let each one his position keep,
 And take the chances of the leap."

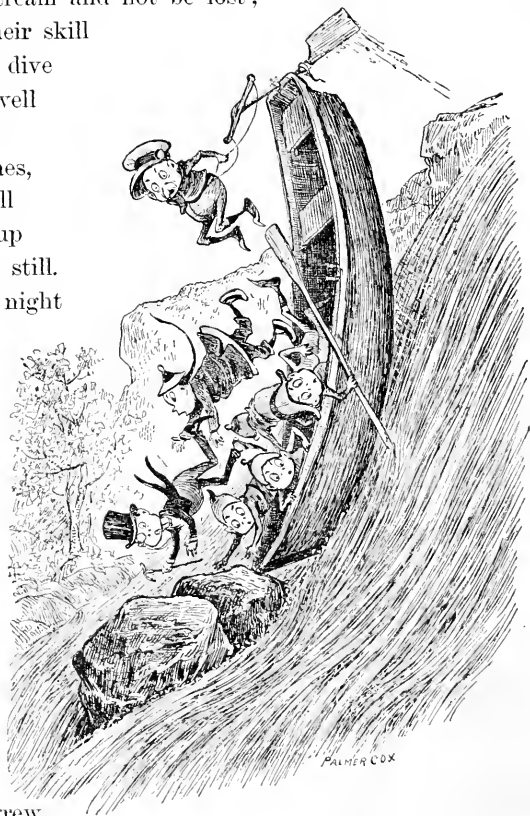
The fleet of boats, with even bow,
 Seemed sweeping to their ruin now;
 Already eyes strained out to see
 How deep the fearful plunge would be.
 One boat was caught just at the bend,
 Or spring, and turning end for end
 With all its crew, stern foremost sped,
 When most they wished to look ahead.
 The scene below the falls was wild:
 The crews were all together piled,
 Some Brownies clinging to an oar,
 Some to a trembling friend, and more
 Advising how they should proceed
 And courage show in time of need.
 But water may be deep and rough,
 And, like a kettle, boil enough



Turn early
 wisdom's
 leaf
 for life at
 best is
 brief

To please the spryest speckled trout
That ever threw a tail about,
And yet lack force to quite subdue
Or overwhelm a Brownie crew.
The Brownies can be roughly tossed
Into a stream and not be lost ;

For through their skill
to swim and dive
They manage well
to keep alive
Till succor comes,
as sure it will
If friends are up
and paddling still.
Thus night by night
the Brownies
passed
Through trials
strange, until
at last
They reached
the southern mild,
Where sweet
the white
magnolia
smiled,
Where
sugar-cane
and cotton grew,





And graceful palms attention drew.
The Brownies viewed the land with pride,
Saw fine plantations, every side,
That spoke of peace and patient toil,
And rich returns from fertile soil.
At times they went on land to try
The tempting fruit that caught the eye,

And found the kind both good and fair
That ripens in the southern air.

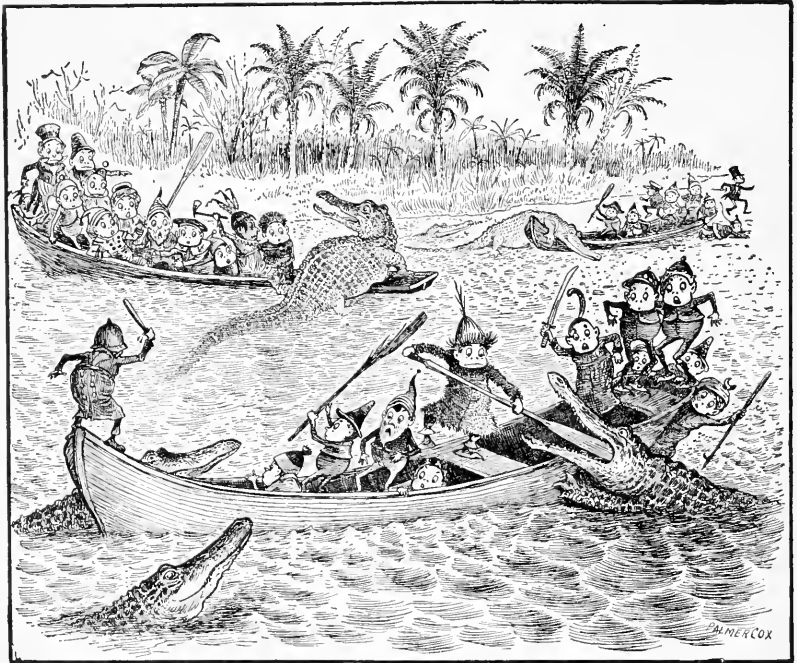
One said: "The people of this clime
Were brave throughout a troublous time;
Now enterprise and thrift, as well,
On every side their story tell."

Another said: "Sometime we may
In sugar-mills our skill display,
Or in the fields of cotton show
How much about the plant we know;

But now our duty is to steer
Ahead, nor heed attractions here."

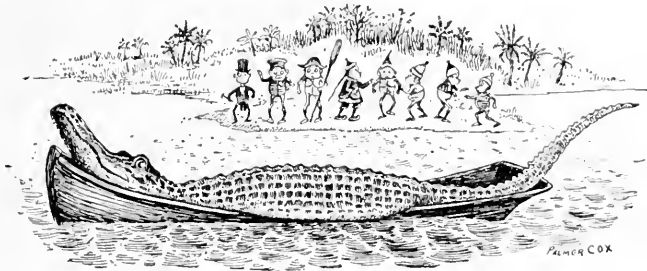


At times, some laid aside the oar
And ran for miles along the shore,
And to some noted station got
Ere those in boats could sight the spot.



Once while they in a bayou lay,
To hide from humankind away,
Some alligators at the side
To interview the Brownies tried,
And only through their mystic skill
Were they preserved to charm us still.
Some fought, and some jumped fore and aft,
And more were glad to quit the craft
To take their chances on the land

And leave the reptiles in command.
Thus off the Brownies were delayed
As to the gulf their trip they made,
But, nothing daunted, still intact,
With every member free to act,
They drifted on from night to night
To reach the point, with spirits light,
Where pours the river's waters free
From many mouths into the sea.



At length the Brownies looked ahead,
And saw the Crescent City spread
In grandeur by the widening stream.
They saw the domes and steeples gleam
That marked the site of church and hall,
Then caught a glimpse of shipping tall
Where ocean waves and river blend,
And knew their journey at an end.





The moment
passing by
so free
Is the one
for you
and me.

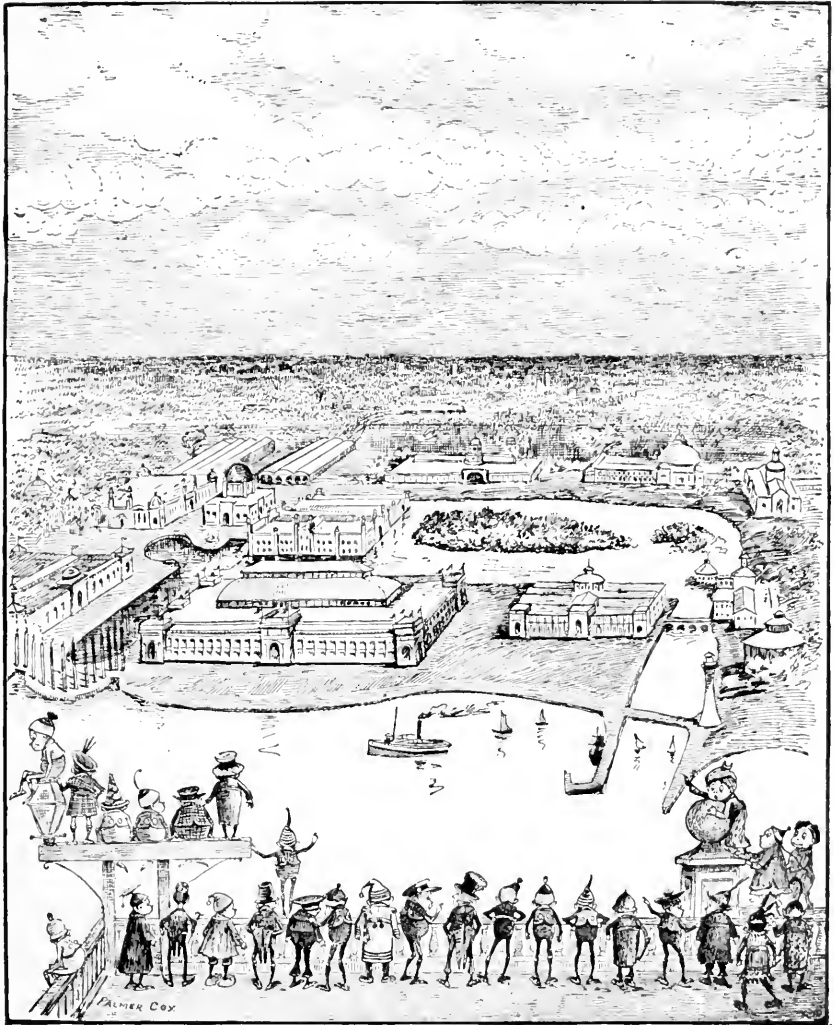
THE BROWNIES IN SEPTEMBER.



SILVER crescent in the sky,
September's moon was sailing high,
In eighteen hundred and ninety-two,
When Brownies met to carry through
An enterprise they had in view.
Said one: "We soon, as you 're aware,
Will have the great Columbian Fair,



THE BROWNIES IN SEPTEMBER.



THE BROWNIES IN SEPTEMBER.



When banners will
to winds be spread,
And speeches made,
a poem be read,
And voices mingle,
rich and strong,
In rendering anthems
loud and long."



In all seasons
cold or hot
Of well doing
weary not

Another said :

"Then I 'm afraid,
Unless we give
some mystic aid

In pushing workers
who are slow,
They 'll not be ready
for the show."

A third remarked :

"No better way
Can we our loyalty
display
Than here to lend
a helping hand
In finishing these
buildings grand
That ornament this
spacious ground.

'T will to the country's
good redound,
And spare the blush that
else might speak



THE BROWNIES IN SEPTEMBER.

Of shame on fair
Columbia's cheek."
This was enough to
start the band,
And soon the work
was closely scanned,
To see where they
could lay a floor,
Put in a sash,
or hang a door,
Or even on
the rafters strong
Make bold to help
the work along.
Now columns tall
they climbed to get
A closer look
at what was set
Upon the top, with
wings outspread,
A staff in hand,
or wreath on head.
On counting them
the Brownies found
Just thirteen columns
standing round.
Said one: "No doubt
the sculptor meant
The early States
to represent,



THE BROWNIES IN SEPTEMBER.



And give a lesson gratis here,
As well as ornament the pier."
The Woman's Building drew their eyes,
But they beheld the same with sighs,
Because the topmost tile was laid,
And left no chance for Brownie aid.
But other buildings of the Fair
Could take some touches here and there;

So off the Brownies

ran for tools,

For paint-pots, hammers,

saws, and rules,

That weary workmen

quickly threw

Aside when evening

whistles blew.

Said one: "The brush

is suited well

For Brownie hands,

the truth to tell;

As for myself,

no more I ask

Than elbow-room

at such a task,

And I'll not be the last to mount

A ladder, and to some account.

For I will never be behind

In spreading paint, keep that in mind.

It may be red, or green, or blue,

Or yellow, or another hue.



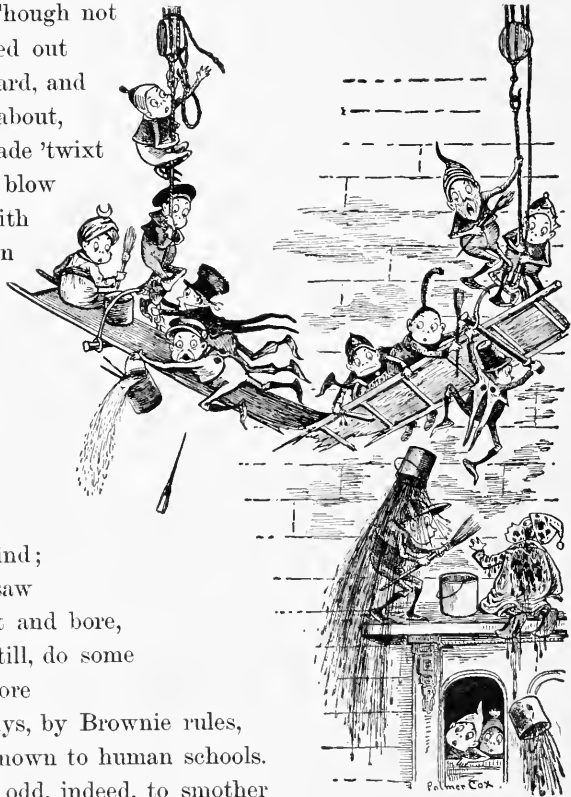
It matters not, my work shall go
As fast as any one's, I know."
Another said: "Our skill we 'll try
Upon this dome-capped building nigh.
Some others here a stir can make
With brushes, or I much mistake,
And honors will not all descend
On one alone, you may depend.
Each Brownie here must do his part;
No shrinking hand or timid heart
Will serve as an excuse to-night,
Or make a member's labor light."



Then work began without delay,
Though plenty there had more to say,
And could have talked and argued still
About their gifts or special skill;
But Brownies, when there 's work to do,
That must ere dawn be hurried through,
Are eager to improve each hour
And work with all their skill and power.
Each took the tool that suited best
His turn of mind, for all were blessed
With skill that made them handle well
Whatever to their portion fell;
Then climbing here and mounting there,
Each loyal Brownie did his share,
All clearly showing from the start
They had the nation's good at heart.
Some, spreading brown paint, moved ahead,
More followed with a coat of red;

Then quickly, ere the first had dried,
Still other colors were applied.

Said one: "Though not
 apprenticed out
To masters hard, and
 knocked about,
To learn a trade 'twixt
 kick and blow
That often with
 instruction
 go,
We 're not
 so far
 behind
 mankind
At putting
 things
 in shape,
 they 'll find;
For we can saw
 and paint and bore,
And, better still, do some
 things more
In mystic ways, by Brownie rules,
That are unknown to human schools.
It may seem odd, indeed, to smother
One coat so quickly with another,
But we from men no lessons take,
Nor ask advice; but simply make
Our time and task on hand agree,



THE BROWNIES IN SEPTEMBER.

And keep from complications free.
The morning sun might raise his head
Before one half our paint was spread,
If we should work as if afraid
Of new departures in the trade.
The paint is there, it matters not
If mixed on wall, or mixed in pot,
And what the Brownies spread about
Will last until the wood gives out.”
Some sad mishaps disturbed a few,
And gave their clothes a foreign hue;
Before the task was well in hand
They formed a queer, bespattered band—
Some red as robins when they tune
Their voices sweet in sunny June;
Some green as Erin's banner old
When on St. Patrick's day unrolled;
More, like canaries from the Isles,
Awakened many jokes and smiles.

The coat that Joseph left behind,
When to the pit he was consigned,
Showed not more colors to the sun
Than Brownie garb when they
were done.

Though hurried greatly at the last,
As morning light was creeping fast,
The very vane that told the way
The wind was blowing, night and day,
Received a touch from Brownies bold
Until it looked like burnished gold.



Turn your back
on those
who
aim
To destroy
your health
and
name.



THE BROWNIES IN SEPTEMBER.

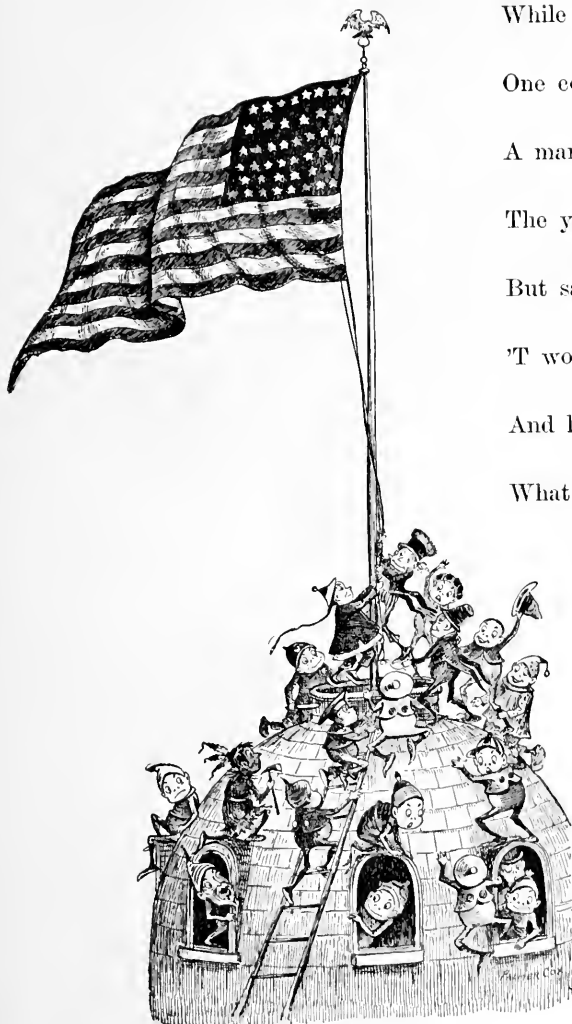
The Brownies made themselves at home ;
They clambered over roof and dome,
They set the glass and tacked the slate
And tin on towers tall and straight,
And nailed the ornaments in place
That to the buildings added grace.
The highest point or peak about
The structure grand they hunted out ;
'T was there they wished their skill to show,
'T was there they plied the willing blow,
And swung their flimsy scaffolds light,
Regardless of the giddy height.
No brains of weak, unhealthy tone
To dizzy grow the Brownies own ;
While hands have strength, and toes are sure,
The head has faith and feels secure.
So up they go and never reel,
Although the clouds around them wheel.

No wonder, then, the work that night
With magic speed was set aright
No wonder, then, the workmen stared
When to their stations they repaired.
They found their work had jumped ahead
While they were fast asleep in bed !
They would have struck for higher pay
If they had longer time to stay.
Now from some place, where, as they thought,
Such things were kept, the Brownies brought
A brand-new flag, with stripes of white
Alternate set with crimson bright ;



In torrid
climes, or
Russian
snow
The days
and nights
no halting
know.

THE BROWNIES IN SEPTEMBER.



While many stars,
 in order due,
One corner filled
 on field of blue.
A mammoth flag,—
 I cannot name
The yards of bunting
 in the same;
But safe it is
 for me to say
'T would draw the eye
 ten miles away,
And let one know,
 beyond a doubt,
What nation hung
 the emblem out.
It mattered not
 how large
 of size,
The Brownie band
 had found
 a prize;
And now it did
 their fancy
 please
To give the symbol
 to the breeze.
The wind that from
 the lake
 was strong

THE BROWNIES IN SEPTEMBER.

Played freely with the colors long,
And wrapped the Brownies in its fold;
But still they worked nor lost their hold,
While up it ran; 'mid joyful cries,
Above the grounds it proudly flies!
Said one: "We 'll leave it floating there,
Through blizzard, storm, or milder air,
To let the folks who reach these shores,
From every nation out of doors,
Learn how it feels to draw at last
One breath of freedom from the blast;
Here they may hear our eagle scream,
Learn liberty is not a dream,
And stand beside this inland sea,
Beneath the banner of the free!
As centuries shall roll away
The people will all honor pay
With special zeal to Ninety-two,
And tell the great exploit anew
When, in despite of plot or plea,
Columbus steered his vessels three
To find the unknown region here,
Respected now both far and near."



This day
but once
you can
enjoy
Take heed
how you
the time
employ.





THE BROWNIES IN OCTOBER.



WHEN trees were bending with their loads,
Around the farmers' snug abodes,
And limbs were stooping from the top,
And groaning for a friendly prop
So they might last until the day
When burdens would be borne away,
The Brownie band, at day's decline,
Assembled in an orchard fine.

Said one: "This season of the year
Is to the Brownie's heart most dear,
Because it brings to us a chance
Some person's harvest to advance;

To climb the trees and shake each bough
Is work that must engage us now
Till everything is safe and sound;
And when the morning comes around,
How will the farmer stand and stare
To find his fruit all gathered there!
A task he thought he 'd have to do
Himself before the week was through."



The passing
moments
short
appear
But constant
ticking
makes the
year.

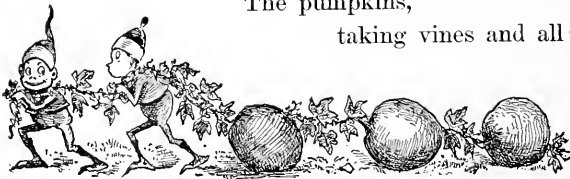
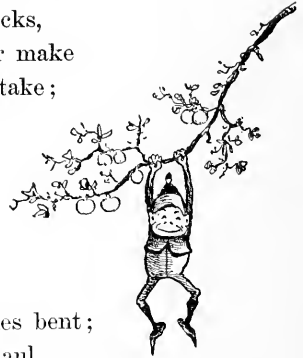




Another said: "The truth to tell,
The task is one that suits us well.
There will be work enough for all;
The grounds are large, the trees are tall,
And many bushels must be drawn
Away before the morn shall dawn."
A third remarked: "And not alone
To fruited trees must care be shown;
October brings the ripened hue
To squashes and great pumpkins too;
And nothing shall the Brownies leave
That should attention now receive.

We 'll not transport upon our backs
The heavy baskets and the sacks,
But get some teams to lighter make
The work that now we undertake;
For well you know our task
 must close
Before the sun his visage
 shows."

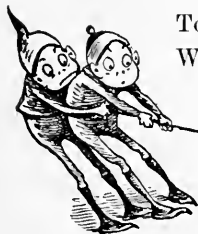
Then up the trees some
 Brownies went
To shake the limbs with apples bent;
And more began at once to haul
 The pumpkins,
 taking vines and all;



While others hurried off with speed
To find strong teams
to serve their need.



They were not long—for Brownies smart
At such a time display their art;
To be of service they can teach
Whatever comes within their reach—



They harnessed up the goats and pigs,
And fastened them to various rigs

So each might do

a proper share

Of all that was
progressing there.
Though goats are
seldom taught
to haul,
Like horses taken
from the stall,





They did their duty
in the main,
And answered well
the guiding rein.
It needs some training,
as a rule,
To make a beast keep
calm and cool,

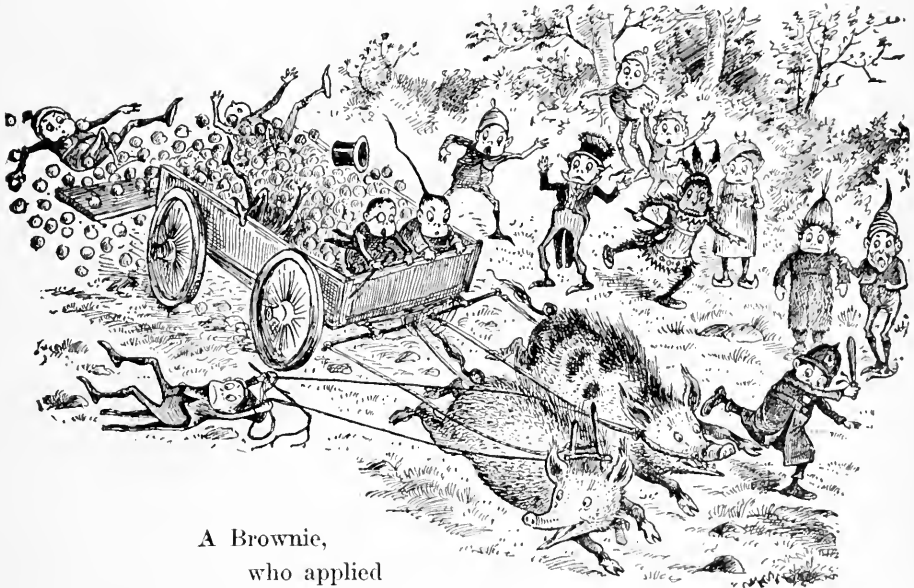
And draw a heavy load along
Without some frisky action wrong;
And one could hardly think to see
The Brownies' teams work patiently
Who had no training on the road
Or "breaking-in" to bear a load.

But it must be
a creature rare—
Not worthy of
a farmer's care—
That Brownies cannot
soon subdue
When they have work
to carry through.
But pigs, at times,
as people know,
Are obstinate
and loath to go

The way the driver may require,
But turn about with great desire
To take the road that shortest lies
Between them and their quiet sties.



So now and then some trouble rose
When neither curbing bit nor blows
Could proud and frisky spirits bind,
Or serve to change the stubborn mind;
Then broken wagons might be seen,
And scattered loads upon the green,
And Brownies with all strength employed
A dire collision to avoid.



A Brownie,
who applied
the switch,
Was roughly tumbled in the ditch;
And one, who roughly used his toe,
Was dragged for fifty yards, or so.



And thus, in philosophic
strain,
A comrade did the case
explain :
“ This fact is known the world
around
Where'er the human race
is found—

If gentle treatment won't prevail,
'T is not much use to strike or rail ;
They little gain who strive to win
By beating precepts through the skin.
Thus parents, fired by anger's spark,
May hit the child, yet miss

the mark :

For kind reproof
and gentle hand
Will more respect and
love command.

Now, kindness works as well,
you 'll find,

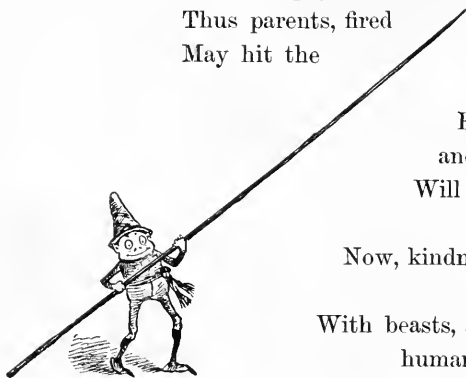
With beasts, as with the
human kind,

So lay aside both whip
and thong,

And keep your feet where
they belong.”

A busy scene the orchard
showed,

Ere every tree had lost its load ;



THE BROWNIES IN OCTOBER.



Some towered tall, while limbs but few
All at the topmost portion grew.

The bark was smooth,
the trunks were
straight;
And, though the
Brownies' skill
was great,
Oft to the ground
they 'd slip
and slide
And tumble down
on every side,
Before a saving grasp was laid
Upon a branch to render aid.



They labored
hard
through all
the hours;
The apples
rattled down
in showers;

There were mishaps, you may believe.
A few did stunning falls receive
As they performed some daring feat
Or some one shook them from a seat,
Or where a branch, they thought was stout
And trusty, with a snap gave out.
But Brownies think this only fun,
When there is work that must be done;
And those who rose, though lame and sore,
Would soon be at the top once more.

THE BROWNIES IN OCTOBER.



When early dawn came creeping there,
It showed the trees all standing bare.
The goats were free
to come and go;
The pigs were
rooting to and fro;



The baskets, bags, and wagons, too,
Were each in place as good as new.
But not a Brownie was in sight,
For all had vanished with the night.





In all nations
east or west,
Honest dealing
pays the best

THE BROWNIES IN

NOVEMBER.



month is dear to grave and gay,
Because it brings Thanksgiving Day,
When those who have been scattered wide
Assemble at the fireside
To render thanks for being blessed,
And have a dinner of the best."
Thus spoke a little Brownie spry
As that great day was drawing nigh.

Another said: "And, truth to tell,
We might enjoy a feast as well.
Although no pumpkins on the vine
For us like burnished gold may shine,
Or turkeys gather at our call,
To feed and fatten through the fall,
Be sure we have a way to find
A dinner, if we 're so inclined;
We 'll not go hungry, never fear;
There 's not a pantry, far or near,



THE BROWNIES IN NOVEMBER.

But we can reach and take a share
Of things that are provided there.
Nought will be missed, and that 's where we
Excel the human kind, you see.
We magnify whate'er we choose,
And thus the people nothing lose.
Now into separate bands divide,
And travel through the country wide!
Let some a southern course pursue,
And some the North Star keep in view;



While others travel west and east
To gather something for our feast.
But let the work be understood
That we may have all that is good,
Not overmuch of any dish,
But such assortment as we wish.
Let those who to the north proceed,
Procure the poultry we will need;
Let those who turn their faces west,
Bring pies and puddings of the best;
The southern band can put in place
The fruit that should our table grace;
While those who on their errand run,



As if to meet the rising sun,
Can, as their part, if nought prevents,
Bring coffee, tea, and condiments,
That nothing may be wanting there
To make our feast a grand affair."

Then all the band, without delay,
Toward every point was on the way.
The poultry that can find repose,
Safe from the fox and kindred foes,
By roosting on a friendly bough,
Cannot escape the Brownies now.
Said one, whose part it was to bear
A brace of

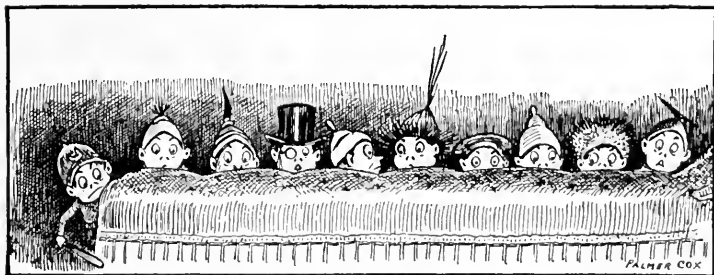
turkeys, as
his share :



"That fowl has surely little wit
Who on a cherry-tree will sit:
Its branch can be cut off with ease,
And while it dreams of corn and peas,
The bird is carried from the spot
A mile or two, and knows it not.
We 'll not disturb the people here
With fluttering sounds, or screams of fear,
But quietly along the road
We 'll bear the roost with all its load,

THE BROWNIES IN NOVEMBER.

And thus perform our part assigned
Without awaking thoughts unkind."
'T is little use to tell a wife
To guard the pantry as her life;
Or tell the maid whose wits are slow
She must be watchful, or must go;
Because the Brownies have a way
To carry on their work or play,
And what they want they soon receive
Without so much as "by your leave."
But where they visit, there they bless:
The household treasures grow no less,
And happy is the home whose floor
The Brownie band has scampered o'er.
All harmful things will ever flee
From little ones who bend the knee
Beside the bed where Brownies creep,
Or play their pranks while people sleep
When one is thinking least about
The band, they 're passing in and out,
Or scanning with a watchful eye



THE BROWNIES IN NOVEMBER.

Each motion made by people nigh,
A little noise, and, like a flash,
In wild alarm, away they dash!
A sneeze, a sudden word, or cough,
And quick as lightning they are off!
Perhaps to venture back no more
Until a month has
circled o'er.



In time the rich supplies
were found,
And carried to the
trysting-ground:
The poultry was not
lacking there

That fattened in the northern air,
While others proved the fertile West
Was rich in pastry of the best.
The South soon yielded fruitage fine,
From orchard, grove, and clinging vine:
The orange, apple, luscious grape,
And nuts of every size and shape.
And quickly from the eastern land
Returned the nimble-footed band
Who, through some art or method strange,
To more than one large kitchen range
Without delay did entrance gain,
And, as it happened, not in vain.



THE BROWNIES IN NOVEMBER.

It does n't take the Brownies long
To cook a fowl, if nothing 's wrong,
Because there is no bickering there
Concerning "overdone" or "rare."
If wood is scarce, or slow to burn,
The smoke will cook it to a turn ;
Whatever piece the carvers send,
They do not whiningly contend
For leg, or neck, or wing that flaps,—
Whatever fills the hungry gaps
Will do; and thus, not hard to please,
The Brownies pass their lives in ease.



That night the feast was truly grand :
Enough for all was there at hand ;
And some who thought that they were through,
Would start again on something new ;
And the right ear of many a cook
Glowed warm that night as they partook
Of pies and cakes of every style,
And freely praised her skill the while.
It mattered not if tea was cold,

THE BROWNIES IN NOVEMBER.



THE BROWNIES IN NOVEMBER.

Or coffee weak, or butter old,
Or bread was close allied to dough,
No Brownie told another so.
Time slips along, howe'er we try
To check the hours passing by;
And even Brownies cannot stay
The moments as they flit away;
And though the nights were growing long,
Some birds commenced their morning song
Before the lively band was through,
And from the banquet-ground withdrew.
It is not often Brownies take
Upon themselves to boil and bake,
Or gather up with wondrous haste
Supplies to satisfy their taste;
But, when they do, 't is safe to say
There 's not much left to throw away.



Though boiling soup may spatter round
Before the waiting plate is found,
And some may even get a burn
Who think for soup it is their turn,



Each day
adopt the
plan
To right
what wrongs
you can

They linger round the table still
Till every one has had his fill.
But let it be a feast or ride,
Or swim, or sail on waters wide,
That interests the Brownie kind,
They always keep the fact in mind
That they must not allow the sun
To show his face ere they are done
And safely stowed away from sight,
In waiting for another night.
So, while some tasted bread and pie
And cakes that well might please the eye,
And poured the tea and coffee hot
In cupfuls from the boiling pot,
Or gnawed the apples till they wore
An inroad to the seedy core,
And to the bones gave greatest care
While still a shred of meat was there,
Till there was nothing, high or low,
Would yield fair picking for a crow—
Some found a chance to turn their eyes
Where signs of day began to rise.

Between the bites of that rich feast
They cast quick glances to the east,
To notice when the stars grew pale,
Or hid beneath an azure veil;
And, though reluctant to withdraw,
Those watchful Brownies danger saw,
And urged their friends to quit the ground
While they were sly to move around,



Or else the sun would on them fall,
And make examples of them all.
In spite of hints or warning cries,
Some lingered at the cakes and pies,
Still counting on the speed they 'd make
When they at last the road would take.

Then when the plates were clean, and they
No longer on the spot could stay,
They crossed the country in a hurry,
They passed the houses with a flurry,
As when the leaves all laid in dust
Are taken with a sudden gust.
In vain the watch-dog rolled his eye
To note the objects fleeing by :
Before a second glance he threw,
The lively band was out of view
Around a bend, to forests wide,
Where every one could safely hide.





THE BROWNIES IN DECEMBER.



fields were lying brown and bare,
The signs of snow were in the air,
And in the leafless forest dear
No more the songsters charmed the ear,
When cunning Brownies met and planned
A task well suited for the band.
Said one: "The glorious day is near
That is to young and old so dear,
Because it calls those truths to mind
The most important to mankind,
And brings to every generous heart
The wish to take an active part
In cheering up the homes of ail
With presents, howsoever small."
Another said: "Through all the year
No better season can appear
Than this for Brownies to combine,
And in some noble action shine.



Both youth
and age
from day
to day
Have on the
stage
a part to
play.

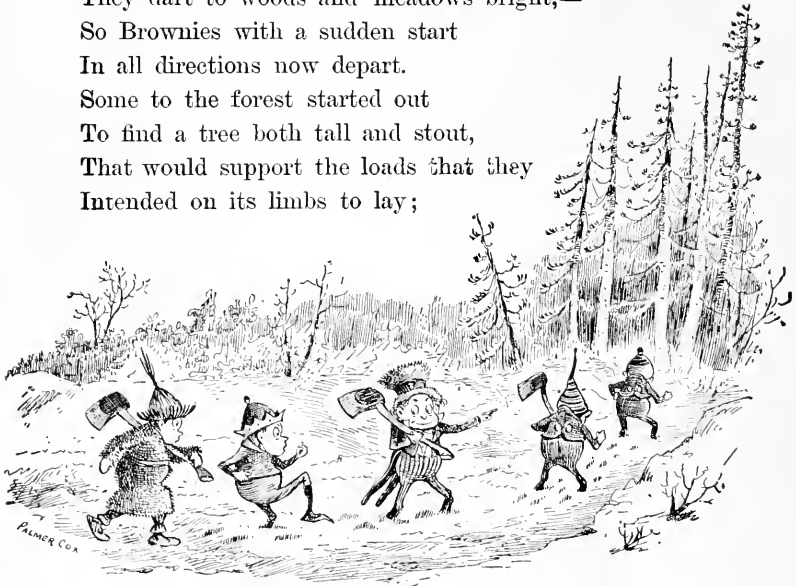
The field is wide, as all can see ;
 No neutral arms need folded be.
 Ah me! the poor, infirm, and old,
 Perhaps lack food, perhaps are cold ;
 And those to whom the world grows dark,
 While lingers still the vital spark,
 With many other people brought
 To misery's cup, may well be taught
 That goodness, let what may be said
 In contradiction, is not dead.
 But to a Children's Home, near by,
 We will to-night our thoughts apply,
 And in no weak or sparing way
 Our mystic powers at once display ;
 For not alone the Christmas tree
 We will supply with labor free,
 But ere we leave it standing there,
 It shall the choicest presents bear
 That can the sparkling eyes invite,
 Or fill the heart with pure delight."

To learn the task that must be done—
 Though full of danger or of fun—
 Is all the Brownies care to know.
 At once a willingness they show
 To carry out the scheme as planned
 With every means at their command.
 As when the sun through orchard trees
 Looks down upon the waiting bees,
 And tells them foliage now is dry,
 And all the blossoms open lie,—



To some
 The clays drag
 slowly by
 To more like
 homing birds
 they fly

And quickly spreading in their flight,
They dart to woods and meadows bright,—
So Brownies with a sudden start
In all directions now depart.
Some to the forest started out
To find a tree both tall and stout,
That would support the loads that they
Intended on its limbs to lay;



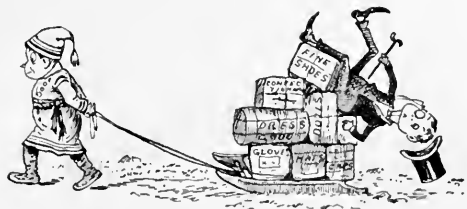
While others traveled to the town
With lengthy lists all jotted down,
Determined to ransack the place
Before they homeward turned a face,
However well the doors were barred
Or large the "No Admittance" card.
And well they carried out their plan,
As here and there they freely ran
From candy shops, and places where
They sought one certain sort of ware,





To larger shops where they
could find
All merchandise of
every kind.
Up-stairs and down, as
business led,
The busy Brownies
quickly sped.
Said one, while they were
on the race

To find some goods to suit the case:
“We have n't time such things to make
As we require, so we must take
What other hands than ours have made
To meet the great demands of trade:
But well we know that nothing 's lost,
However much the things may cost;
For greater good will surely flow
Through what we take and what bestow,
Than people think who are content
To count their profits cent by cent.



More ways than one may blessings fall
On worthy heads both great and small;



The loss that causes tears and sighs
May prove a blessing in disguise.
We better know where everything
Will greatest good and pleasure bring
Than those who daily tax the brain
At bargaining for private gain.
We Brownies neither buy nor sell,
But give and take, yet prosper well,
And muse how little people know
Where next our handiwork will show.”



In time the scattered Brownies met
Those who had gone the gifts to get,
And those whose task it was to fell
A Christmas tree to hold them well.
Rewarded with a prize, ere long
Returned, well pleased, the axmen strong;
The tree was promptly hoisted there,
And firmly fixed with greatest care,
Until it stood as when it strove
To overlook the silent grove.
Then work was found for every hand:
The ladders soon were in demand,

And whatsoever would unite
With something else to build a height
On which to climb and reach around
Till every branch its burden found.
Said one: “My friends, we seldom find
A task so pleasing to the mind;
When work for children ’s under way,
How does the hand its skill display!



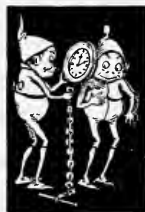
Then every sound to music turns,
 And every thought with kindness burns
 Delightful task! to thus befriend
 The orphans as the year we end.
 I would not miss this night of toil
 For greatest sport, or sweetest spoil
 That in a pantry can be stored
 To grace some rich man's dainty board.
 I fancy I can see the eyes
 Of children widen with surprise,
 And see the smiles extend so wide
 From cheek to cheek when this is spied,
 And they learn not a single tot
 In all the place has been forgot.
 For boys—the guns, the skates and bats;
 For girls—the doll and rubber cats,
 The books, the toys and fancy things
 That Christmas to the market brings;
 And candy, colored red in streaks,
 To sweeten all their teeth for weeks.”
 But battles are not always won
 By those who have the fight begun;
 And though our good intentions may
 Be such as no one should gainsay,
 We may by trials be distressed,
 As if our cause was not the best.
 So Brownies did not pass the night
 Without mishaps that caused them fright:
 Some ladders of the greatest length
 Were lacking in the proper strength



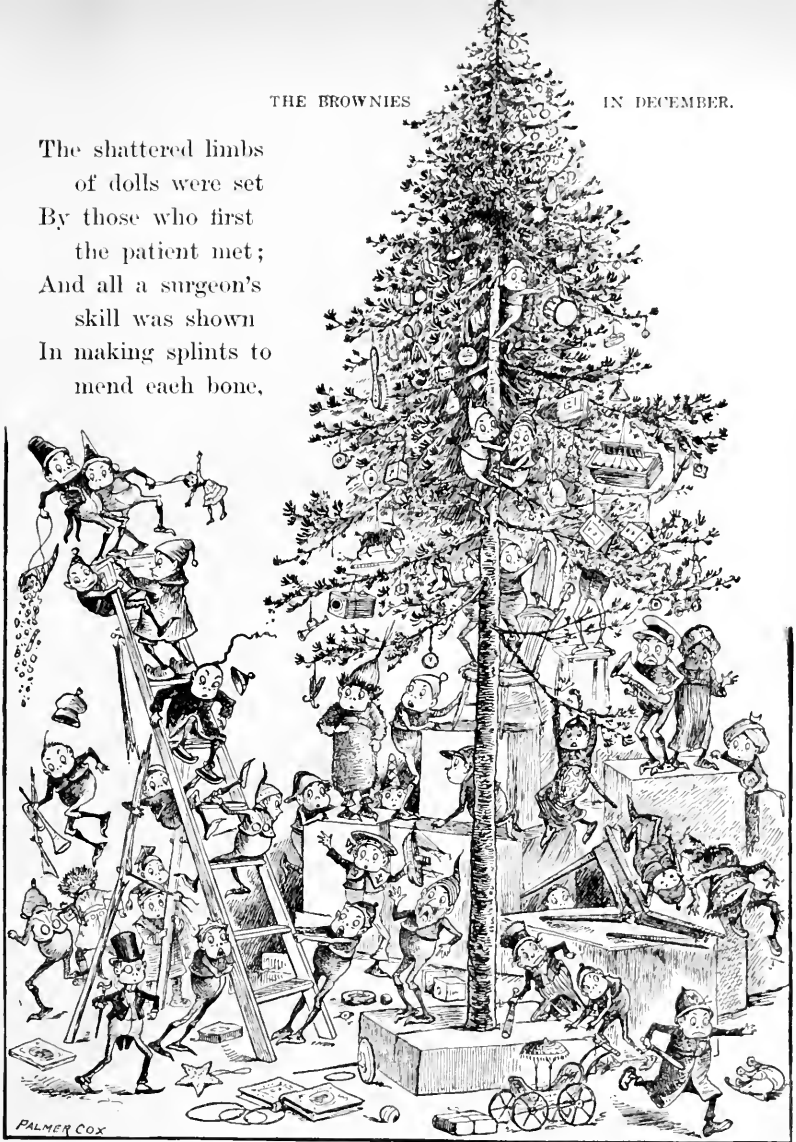


To bear the crowd that clambered high,
 Their gifts upon a branch to tie;
 Or down would come some rude affair
 On which they stood to do their share;
 And round the floor the presents rolled
 That at the time they chanced to hold.
 Some toys received distressing whacks,
 That gave them broken limbs or backs.
 By coming down from greatest height,
 'Mid candy, horns, and weapons bright,
 Some costly works were shaken loose,
 That were not made for roughest use.
 The bravest hearts were filled with dread,
 As something crashed high overhead;
 And it was dangerous to throw
 A glance above, the cause to know.

Here crashed a doll, in spite of care,
 And there a goat or cotton hare;
 Down whirling through the branches fell
 The felt-made elephant as well,
 With wiggling trunk, a glassy stare,
 And sawdust spouting from a tear,
 To roll about, as if in pain
 Upon some sun-dried Asian plain.
 But then the Brownies' skill sublime
 Stood them in hand at such a time:
 A tap, a twist, a shake or two,
 And broken things were good as new.
 The watch its ticking would resume,
 Though wheels had scattered round the room;



The shattered limbs
of dolls were set
By those who first
the patient met;
And all a surgeon's
skill was shown
In making splints to
mend each bone,



Till on the tree they took their place,
Without a limp or loss of grace.
At times misunderstandings rose,
And comrades almost came to blows,
When some an injury received,
Or were at rash remark aggrieved ;
But calmer friends would claim the floor,
And words like these would peace restore :
“ Be careful of your hand, my friend,
And let it not in wrath descend ;
For oftentimes a hasty blow
Has caused the striker lifelong woe,
And broken friendship’s silver chain,
To mend which many strive in vain.”
Like cunning squirrels when they try
To hide away a good supply
Of nuts, to serve for winter’s store
When generous autumn is no more,
Some active Brownies, spurning all
The chairs and ladders, dared to crawl
From limb to limb, with actions bold
And hands that seldom lost their hold,
Till to the brittle top
they passed,
And tied the Christmas
presents fast.
So work went on, as it
must go
When Brownies all united
throw



THE BROWNIES IN DECEMBER.



Their daring skill and
mystic power

Into the labor of
the hour.

'T is hard to tell or
paint aright

Their acts that long
December night



Upon your guard
he found
For safan is
unbound.

Upon one page, however wide,
So pen and pencil must subside.
But those who know the Brownie band
May well believe no idle hand
Was resting there, that had a chance
The undertaking to advance.

One, running out one time to spy
If signs of day were in the sky,
Mistook the northern lights in play
For early hints of morning gray:
So with the false alarm he ran,
And almost overthrew their plan.



Indeed the work was scarcely more
Than half-way through, when at the door
The rogue appeared with such a shout
That every Brownie faced about.
The tree was nearly overturned
Before his strange mistake was learned;
But neither slip, nor fall, nor break
Can make the Brownie band forsake
A task their willing hands may find,
Till they are satisfied in mind.

THE BROWNIES IN DECEMBER.



So there they climbed about, and tied
The handsome gifts on every side,
And piled some things around the base
That were too large to hang in place.
When every child that slumbered there
Was sure to have its proper share,
Did one remark, with native pride:
"The task has much our patience tried,
But still this thought the heart revives—
We've brightened many children's lives."
And when the work at last was through,
And Brownies from the place withdrew,
They left, indeed, a Christmas tree
That made the children shout with glee.



The days
and nights
keep crowding
so
They really
bore one
don't you
know.

(24)



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