The LAUGHING LION

And Other Stories

ADELAIDE PEARSON

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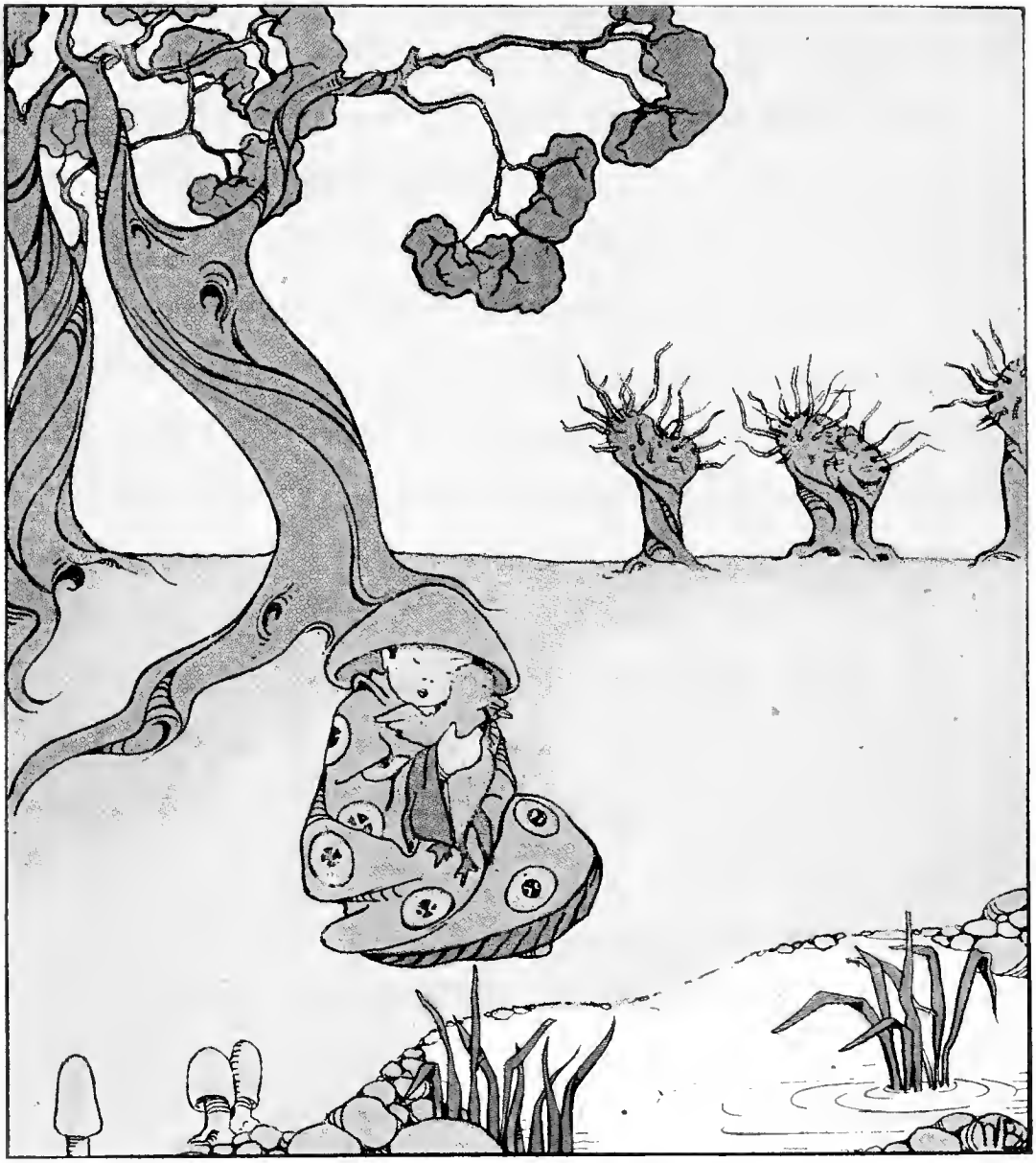
AND
OTHER STORIES



Chang and His Duckling.

The Laughing Lion

and Other Stories

BY

ADELAIDE PEARSON

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
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TO

MY MOTHER

AND TO ALL MOTHERS WHO, LIKE HER,
SEEK TO OPEN FOR THEIR CHILDREN
THE WINDOWS OF APPRECIA-
TION ON THE WORLD
OF BEAUTY

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INTRODUCTION

These stories are real stories; told, not written; told to children who come to the Children's Art Centre, 36 Rutland Street, Boston, and find there things of beauty, gathered by love for their delight. It is difficult to avoid being lectured in Boston. Education makes of young lives a dreary waste, and Beauty, a Cinderella among her instructive sisters, save as she may "teach something," shyly hides her head. The Children's Art Centre is what its name implies—there Beauty may whisper her message—there the child may listen to her undistracted by the voice of the interpreter. Her message is different to each little visitor; but always it is a message of beauty, told in its own way

to each child, according to his or her willingness to listen, to feel, and, above all else, to love. Every object exhibited is believed to be worthy of such love, but where the choice is wide certain smaller objects may well escape the notice of the children. It is about some of these smaller, less obvious things that these tales were told. They have been asked for again and again, and in response to a demand which it is impossible for Miss Pearson to supply, they are now printed, so that other children in other places (not yet other *Art Centres*, alas, for thus far there is one only!) may hear and enjoy them. Miss Bromhall, Curator of the Children's Art Centre, has made a portrait of the object which inspired the story, and likewise has illumined each tale with an appropriate illustration. They are tales of lovely things; love made them. Our children at the Art Centre de-

lighted in them; they share them with you, now; for you, too, will love them.

FitzRoy Carrington.

South End House,
Boston, Mass.
August 26, 1921.

I. THE LAUGHING LION

THE LAUGHING LION

YEARS and years ago, way off in China, in the heathen old land of China, there reigned an Emperor who had only one little boy. His brother, the Prince, a very ambitious man, was most anxious to have a little boy too. And what was his rage when one day he had a little girl! Now, away off there in China, all those hundreds of years ago, they didn't think much of little girl babies, and they generally threw them away, or drowned them like kittens.

But the nurses of this little Princess said, "Oh, our Lord, she is a very beautiful baby. She is a very healthy baby. Some day she will doubtless be Empress."

And so the Emperor's ambitious brother did not make away with his little daughter, but said, offhand, "Very well, you may put the Royal mark upon her."

Because, you must know, all of the Royal children of that far off Kingdom were marked with a little secret mark, so that, no matter what happened to them, they always would know that they were Royal children.

So the little Princess grew up to be a very lovely child; but not paid much attention to by anybody. In fact, for a Princess, she ran rather wild, and was great friends with all of the animals in the Royal Menagerie. One day, when she was about three years old, she was looking at some goldfish in a tiny pool, and reaching down her little hand into the water trying to touch them. Nearby was a poor woman weeding.

Now, this poor woman was the wife of a very rough and cruel camel-driver. This camel-driver had been away for three whole years on a long trip with his caravan. After he left, his wife had a little girl, and this little girl baby her mother loved most dearly; but she knew that when her cruel husband came home he would probably throw it away. She had just heard that her husband might be expected back the next day.

During these years she had supported herself and her little daughter by doing menial work about the Palace, and on this sad day which she feared would be the last day of life for her little girl, she was weeding the flower bed in the Royal Garden. A thought suddenly struck her when she beheld the little Princess so happy, so sweet, so very clean and round, playing with the goldfish. The little Princess

didn't look a bit more beautiful to the poor weeding woman than her own rather miserable little girl. So she conceived the rather naughty idea of changing the babies.

"How do you do, little Royal One," she said to the little Princess. "Would you not like to play with the pretty fishes?"

The little Princess thought this a pretty good idea, and held up one little white-stockinged foot preparatory to stepping into the water.

"Wait a minute, my beautiful one," said the weeding woman. "You will spoil your lovely clothes if you get them wet. Let me help you take them off." And she took off all of the little Princess's clothes.

Who so happy now as the Royal Baby. She wallowed and flopped in the water and tried to catch the goldfish and cried and shrieked aloud with joy. The weed-

She took off all of the little Princess's clothes

ing woman had hastened behind a bush, and was dressing her own little girl in the Princess's clothing. When this was accomplished, she left her little girl in a far corner of the garden and returned to the pool where she had left the Princess, who, by this time, was rather chilly and had come out of the water and was hunting for her clothes.

"Where are my clothes?" she said to the weeding woman. "Somebody has taken my clothes," and she looked about quite agitated.

The weeding woman also pretended to look about, and then said, "Somebody must have stolen them. You will catch cold out here in the air. Here, let me put you in the back of my coat and keep you warm while I take you home." So she put the little Princess in the big pocket at the back of her coat where she usually carried

her own little girl, and bore her off down the hill, away from the Palace to the poor house of the camel-driver.

And sure enough, that night the wicked camel-driver came home; and he *was* mad when he found a little girl baby in the house. And he raged about, and talked a lot to everybody in the village about his wife who kept a silly girl baby alive; and said *he* wouldn't bring up anything like that. And the more he talked, the madder he got, until finally he went off home and seized the little Princess and threw her across the front of his saddle and away he rode upon a big mule.

Then gallop, gallop, gallop, he went; outside the town and across the hills, until he got well off into the jungle. Then he took the little Princess by the foot and he threw her far, far, far! And he rode off home very much pleased with himself, be-

cause he had proved who was boss in his house. A very disagreeable man, that camel-driver.

Now what has happened to the little Princess? Did she fall upon a rock and break her dear little neck? She did not. She fell upon a nice, leafy, bouncey bush, and she rolled most gently off the bush on to something very soft and warm and woolly. And this soft, warm, woolly thing made a funny little purr-purr noise, a little grunt that made the Princess know that she had fallen right on a lion puppy.

Now the little Princess, having been great friends with all the animals in her uncle's menagerie, knew all about lion puppies. And she knew just where to tickle him behind the ears so he would like it. And she tickled this puppy behind his ear, and he said, "Oh, grrrgrrgr, do that some more." So she did. Then she did it

some more. She did it to the other ear too, and the lion puppy *was* pleased and he said, "Oh, grrgrrgr, I do like you," and he lapped her with his pink, pink tongue. And, by and by, these two babies, the baby Princess and the baby lion, went happily to sleep together under the thick, bouncey bush.

Now, far off, over the hills, comes mother lion, leaping and leaping! Suddenly, sniff, sniff, sniff—she smells humans! There must be humans about, and she has left her baby under a bush, and she leaps and bounds; and leaps and bounds; and jumps upon the bush; and slides down; and there is her baby perfectly safe. And she is so pleased that she gives him one great big lion-mother kiss, which is a big sloppy lick from a big lion tongue. It was such a very big lion kiss that it slopped all over the lion puppy,

who was rather small, and lapped all over the little Princess too; and then, when it was too late, she found the little Princess. Oh! how she would have liked to eat that nice, soft, tender baby human! But she couldn't. Couldn't because it wasn't considered polite among Royal Lions to eat anybody you had just kissed.

And so, as long as she couldn't eat her, she adopted the little Princess, and she brought her up along with her own puppy. And the little Princess grew strong and sturdy and brave out there in the green woods, sleeping under bushes, getting plenty of nice, strong lion's milk to drink, and playing with her big brother lion.

Everything went well for two or three years, when one unhappy day, the keepers of the King's menagerie came with great nets, and they caught the Princess's brother lion, and carried him away roar-

ing and snarling and tearing at the ropes; carried him away to the King's garden and shut him up in a great big cage. But even there he didn't keep still. He went on roaring and grabbing at the bars of the cage and carrying on. And the keepers were so scared for fear that he might get out that they all climbed trees.

Where was the little Princess meanwhile? Was she sitting under a bush, mourning for her lost brother? She was not. She was not that kind of a child. She had followed along after the keepers as fast as her little-girl legs would carry her, and arrived at the menagerie about the time that the keepers climbed the trees. When these keepers looked down from the tree tops at this roaring, raging lion which they had shut up in the cage, what was their surprise to see a very small, very di-

lapidated little girl, boldly walking up to this lion and talking to him.

"What on earth are you doing?" said the Princess to her brother.

But he went right on roaring.

"For goodness sake, keep still!" she said, "and tell me what the trouble is. Stop ramping around like that. Sit down and behave and tell me what the trouble is."

And the lion sat down. He said "Trouble! I should think there was trouble. How would you like to be hauled away in a net and beaten and poked as I have been and then shut up in this horrid cage?" And he gave another slap at the bars and suddenly began to roar again.

"Keep still!" said the little Princess very firmly. "I don't think there's any need of your carrying on like that. This

isn't a bad sort of place at all. I seem to remember it. I believe we'll like it when we get used to it."

The keepers, by this time, had come down out of the trees, and one of them went and got a great hunk of meat on the end of a long pitchfork and fed it to the lion, who, with a most ungracious roar, grabbed it off the pitchfork with one swat of his big paw. The little Princess promptly reproved him for his bad manners, and squeezing through the bars of the cage, which she could easily do, being rather a small child still, for human babies do not grow as fast as lion babies, she fell to, at the other end of the meat, chewing away at that end while the lion chewed at the other.

This agitated the keepers quite a lot, for they didn't think it seemly or safe to

bite a lion's food at the same time that the lion was biting it. So they managed to get the little Princess out of the cage, and the head-keeper took her home to his wife and said to her:

"Here, wife, just wash this child up and dress her decently, will you please?"

But the keeper's wife was very mad. She said it wasn't any of her business to be washing stray children. She said, what was he picking up stray children for, anyhow. Whose child was it? She would like to know. Anyway, he should take that child to its own home to be washed.

But the keeper said, "Woman, you don't know what you are talking about. To be sure, women very seldom do. That is a very valuable child. She can tame lions. I need her in my business; and if my business doesn't improve soon, you

know very well we're going to come short on a lot of things." For, after all, he thought it wiser to explain a little.

So the lion-keeper's wife washed the little Princess very carelessly, never looking at her at all, and talking all the time to the neighbors about what an abused woman she was. And she combed the little Princess's hair, jerk, jerk, jerk, jerk. But the little Princess was very plucky and didn't cry, although I must say she probably wanted to, as you may imagine. And the lion-keeper's wife braided the little Princess's hair, so tight, so tight, that her poor little eyebrows were pulled right up.

By this time the lion had gotten homesick again, and begun to misbehave. So the lion-keeper came and got the little Princess and took her out to the garden.

"Hi, hi," said the little Princess. "What

are you doing? I thought I told you to behave. Do you call this behaving?"

The lion began to calm down when suddenly he caught sight of his little sister all clean and combed, and dressed in a green and orange robe. "For goodness sakes," said he, "What has happened to you? Why, you're perfectly lovely. And your hair all shines. My, my, but it shines! Why can't my hair shine too? I want to be beautiful like you are. Oh! go on, be nice and make me beautiful like you are."

"Well, you wouldn't like it," said the little Princess. "It's a very painful process. Personally, I shouldn't think it worth it."

"But you have no idea how lovely you are. I believe that if I were beautiful like that I should probably behave better."

"Well, it's worth trying," said the little

Princess. "I'll go and get the thing that they did my hair with. You won't like it, though. You won't indeed."

So she went back to the lion-keeper's house and she got the big ivory comb and came trotting back to the garden to the place where her foster brother was kept. She took the big comb and she stuck it into his long yellow mane and gave a big pull.

"Grrrgrrr, grrrr," said the lion, drawing back. "Do you have to do it that way?"

"I told you you wouldn't like it," said the little Princess. "I didn't like it myself." And she gave another good pull with the comb.

"Grrrrgrrrr," said the lion, worse than ever, and he put his paw up to his head most rueful-like.

"Well," said the little Princess, "I don't want to comb your old hair. It's nothing to me if your hair *never* gets combed. You

would have it. And now you don't like it. I knew you wouldn't anyhow. *I* didn't cry, however."

The lion looked at her rather doubtfully, and in his secret soul wondered whether that were the whole truth or not. The little Princess started to go away with the comb.

"No, no," said the lion. "Come back, come back! I really want to be beautiful. Don't go away."

So the little Princess came back and combed and combed right lustily until finally, not without more tears on the lion's part, all the snarls came out of his beautiful golden mane, and the little Princess stood back to admire her handiwork.

"Oh!" she cried, clasping her hands. "You *are* beautiful. I think you must be even more beautiful than I am."

"I want to see myself," said the lion. "I just want to see myself so beautiful," and he looked very complacent.

So he went over to the little pool where the drinking water was, and looked into its smooth surface. Of course, when he looked down all his hair fell forward about his face. Imagine his disgust. He backed hastily away from the pool. He looked at the little Princess most reproachfully, and he said:

"Oh! How could you? How could you hurt me so much and make me look so perfectly horrid? I never saw a lion look as horrid as I do. I wouldn't have believed it of you." And he began to cry like anything and rub his paw up over his eye and mess his hair up worse than ever.

The little Princess was almost equally sad, because she really had tried, and she was pretty tired with the bath and her own

hair combing, and combing the lion's hair and everything, and she put her arms up about him and they just sobbed together. Finally, she mopped her eyes off and said:

"Very likely, I didn't do it right. I will observe the lion-keeper's wife tonight, and tomorrow morning early I will come to you again. Meanwhile, you had better be good and don't go carrying on, and don't cry and feel badly, because we are going to be very happy in this garden. We'll have plenty to eat, and we'll be together to play, and tomorrow I will make you beautiful."

That night the lion-keeper's wife was going to a party, and she did her hair up in very great state, and you may well believe that the little Princess observed every detail of the operation. She saw that the lion-keeper's wife put a lot of sticky stuff on her hair and combed it out

in great loops that shone and stayed in place; and then, after that, sprinkled gold-dust on the gooey hair.

Early the next morning the little Princess arose and carried the big bowl of sticky stuff and the big ivory comb and the bottle of gold-dust out to the menagerie; and even before breakfast she began to make the lion beautiful. But it was a long job, because what with their crying the day before, and what with the lion's not sleeping very well and scrubbing around a good deal at night, he had messed his mane up. So it was well on into the morning before everything was well done. After the snarls had all been taken out, the little Princess combed lots and lots of the sticky stuff into her brother's hair and combed it up back from his face in great loops and curls. When that satisfied her, she sprin-

kled the gold-dust on it; and oh, she did admire the result!

"Now," said she, "Don't go looking in that drinking pool and spoil all I have done. When I was coming down here I passed a summer house in the garden, with beautiful shiny, shiny walls; so shiny that I thought I saw another little girl, I could see myself so plainly in them. Now, come along with me." And she took him firmly by the ear and led him along the garden paths towards the summer house.

When she got to the door of the summer house she said, "Now, shut your eyes, don't open them until I tell you to." And the lion screwed his eyes tight together because he was really rather nervous about the result of all these things that the Princess had been doing to his hair.

Finally they arrived in front of the

great lacquered panel in the wall. Lacquer is a sort of very, very shiny varnish, and is as good as a looking glass to see yourself in.

"Now," said the little Princess triumphantly, "Sit down! Now, open your eyes."

The lion did, and he saw himself in the wall. And he was beautiful. His hair stood out away from his face in great curls, and the gold-dust powder gleamed and sparkled upon it. Oh, he *was* pleased! He threw up one paw and he laughed and laughed and laughed from joy, because he was so beautiful.

Now, behind a great colored jar in the summer house, who should be hiding but the little Emperor. He was only two or three years older than the Princess, and he was a very lonely little boy, because he had no one to play with, and because he was an Emperor, and couldn't play any-

how. This had gone on too long, until really the child was not well. He never smiled. The whole court was worried about him. And this day he had been wandering alone in the Palace Gardens when he saw the rather alarming sight of a very large yellow lion with his hair combed in the most eccentric, but beautiful, fashion, being led down the path by the ear, by a fat little girl in a green and orange robe. So he had hidden behind the great jar to see what would happen next. And when the lion laughed, the little Emperor, for the first time in years, laughed himself; and he laughed and laughed, and the little Princess saw him and she laughed, and the lion looked around and looked back at himself in the wall, and they all three laughed until they absolutely cried.

The courtiers and doctors who had been

watching the little Emperor from afar were enormously pleased, of course. Still, when the Emperor demanded that the little girl and the big lion should always play with him, they didn't like the idea very well; but they finally decided, as indeed they had to, to let the Emperor have his way. So they took the little Princess off to make her fit for Royal Society. And they gave her a bath all in cologne, and, while they were wiping her off, what did they find? They found the Royal Mark! And they knew that this child must be the little Princess who had disappeared so mysteriously some years before. And they dressed her up very, very beautifully. They combed her hair until it shone, made great loops of its long, thick blackness over her ears, and placed flowers in the loops, and put many jeweled pins in the

back of her hair, as is the fashion in far-off China for little girls of high degree. And they dressed her in beautiful embroidered robes with the five-toed dragon of China wrought upon the back; such robes as only Royalty may wear. And every day she played with the little Emperor; and her brother, the lion, his hair always shining and always curled, played with the two children and made happiness for them.

Years later, when our little Princess, married to the young Emperor, had become the great Empress Han Wu, she instituted many good things, but the best thing she did was to try to make the children happy. Children had been rather put aside; especially, as she knew all too well, little girls. So everyone who made children happier received a Royal Gift. All the greatest artists in the Kingdom were

gathered together to make a fitting gift to those who brought happiness to children. And they decided that a portrait of the laughing lion who had brought happiness to a little sad Emperor and a little lost Princess would be the best thing. And so they made a tiny, tiny statue of the lion laughing, and these little statues have been treasured and saved for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years,—over a thousand years; in point of fact, something over twelve hundred years.

Now, why have they been saved all these years? It isn't because they are expensive. Because they are not made of gold, or of silver, or even of nickel. They are made of bronze, which is about the same stuff that one-cent pieces are made of. The reason they have been saved all these years cannot, then, be because they

are expensive. No. It is because they are beautiful. And beauty will always last, and will always be treasured when things which we sometimes think are more worth while have been destroyed.

II. THE REPENTANT PEACOCK

THE REPENTANT PEACOCK

THE whole court was plunged into mourning because the baby Prince was sick. Just what was the matter with him no one seemed to know. The wise doctors had been called and had felt his pulse and tried to look at his little tongue, but they could not make up their minds. The Baby could not eat and he could not sleep; his little eyes were dull and he took no interest in life. All this made everyone very sad because he was a very sweet Baby Prince and the whole world loved him.

The doctors thought if he could be interested, and if he could sleep, and if he could drink some milk, that he would get well; but, alas, no one could manage this!

The actors acted their best plays and cut up their funniest antics for him; and the baby was frightfully bored. The greatest musicians played upon their stringed instruments and their long, silver flutes, and sang their sweetest songs; the Baby yawned. Nothing interested him, poor little thing! The great dancers, hundreds and hundreds of them in wonderful clothes of every color, danced and pirouetted before him; but he did not care for them either, and just hid his face in his nurse's shoulder. No one could think of anything more to do; and the Baby seemed to be fading away. So his old nurse took him out into the garden.

All nature loved the sweet little Prince, so the flowers lavished their choicest perfumes that the very air he breathed might show their encompassing affection. Lovely butterflies of every hue fluttered about

the heated brow of the beloved little sufferer, striving with their delicate wings to brush away the pain and the fever. And indeed the Baby did seem to breathe a little easier. So the chatterbox of a squirrel, always the gossip of the garden, joyfully leaped from bough to bough carrying the glad tidings everywhere, and soon the branches rustled and the gravel of the paths scrunched, and all the birds and the animals, and even the insects of the Imperial Gardens, who all loved the little Prince, gathered to help on his cure. The birds sang their sweetest and the air was filled with silver-toned chirpings, and bubbling songs.

Behind a large bush stalked a Peacock, proudest of birds because once, when his great tail was spread its widest, he had heard the Emperor say, "If I am the greatest among men, this is surely the King of

all the Birds." So up and down the path he strutted, thinking to himself, "Mm, hum, let them try all they want to. Bye and bye, when they see that they really are no good, *I* will go in and fix things up." So when there was a pause, and the Baby just sat in his nurse's arms, the Peacock stepped out from behind his bush, fixed his little black eyes, with their yellow rims, on the Baby and, with a sudden, horrible squawk, spread out his great purple and blue and green and yellow shining tail.

And the Baby was scared almost to death! He did not care for it at all. The loud noise frightened him, and the Peacock's whole state of mind worried him. Who was so surprised as the Peacock; because he had expected that everything would immediately become all right when he, the King of Birds, took the matter in

He did not care for it at all

hand. I can also state that the Peacock was very mad; and thought to himself, "Royal or not Royal, this is one of the stupidest babies I have ever seen," and he stalked off behind another bush; and kept thinking what a misunderstood bird he was; and getting madder and madder.

Just then, the great elephant came along and held out his big gray trunk, and the nurse put the little Baby to be cradled in the curve of it, for the elephant said, "I will try to rock his little Royal Highness to sleep."

And so, ve-ry carefully, ve-ry gently, he rocked to and fro, to and fro, on his sturdy legs, as the elephants do in the park. You have all seen them. Slowly, slowly, to and fro, he rocked. Out from under the trees and down from the branches dropped great parti-colored snakes, seated themselves on their curled up tails and raised

their heads high in the air; and to and fro they waved their long, supple heads and necks, hiss-ssing and hiss-ssing a soothing slumber-song. Sleepier and sleepier and sleepier grew the little Prince, until, bye and bye the Baby laid his soft little cheek against the elephant's hard gray trunk and went sound asleep!

Everything became perfectly quiet; even the leaves on the trees did not rustle any more, the birds and the bugs and all the little beasts, and all the big beasts kept per-fectly still; just as if they all realized that dear little Baby had at last gone to sleep. Even when they became very much cramped, not one of them would move, or do anything to waken the Baby, because they loved their little Prince more than they did their own comfort.

Bye and bye, the Baby stirred, and

opened his velvet eyes, and the leaves began to clap their soft, soft green hands, and the flowers shed their cool perfumed petals down about the Baby so that their fresh softness might caress his cheek. And the squirrel dashed about telling everybody, as if everybody didn't know it already, that the Baby had wakened again.

Down on the low bough of the tree came the big, green and blue and yellow parrots; and they danced solemnly from one foot to the other foot waving their beaks to and fro. The Baby looked at them and almost smiled. The little tiny brown wren, a dull-looking little bird, came down and sang a song, pouring out a perfect flood of lovely silver music.

The Peacock, behind his bush, looked out and was madder than ever. "The idea, not to know that *I* am the King of Birds. And that silly little brown thing

making its silly little noise. What is that compared to my ringing voice and my gorgeous tail?"

You see, the Peacock was very much interested in his own voice and his own fine tail, while the others were just interested in helping the Baby.

Just then, a kitten came along—a gray one—and the Peacock pecked furiously at him and said, "Now, I suppose you will be putting in yourself next." And the kitten quickly, quickly—as kittens will—ran around and dashed over to the next path, and began to chase his tail and roll over and over in the sunshine, just as all kittens do.

The Baby gave a little crow and held out his little hand, and they took the kitty up and put the kitty in the little Prince's arms, and kitty, although he wanted to go off and play, snuggled down, quiet, quiet,

and did not try to go away when the Baby squeezed him pretty hard, as babies will with kittens.

The Peacock was *furious;* well, you can imagine how furious he was!

Just then, over the grass among the trees, in and out of green shade and splashes of yellow sunshine came stalking the great tiger. And the tiger, seeing the Baby look at him, began to pretend that he was a kitten; and he, too, chased his tail and rolled over and over, until the Baby laughed; laughed out loud!

That was a triumph, and the tiger, lying on his back with his four big paws, the claws all hidden, waving in the air, and his furry yellow stomach showing in the sunshine, was perfectly contented with his success. But the Baby wanted more. So they put the Baby down and let him sit right on that tiger. Although the tiger

was, of course, frightfully uncomfortable, he would not have moved for anything, because this was almost the first thing his beloved Prince had wanted to do for a long time. The Peacock, peering at the scene from behind his bush, began to wonder; began to wonder whether the tiger realized how silly he looked; and began to feel the least bit uncomfortable because he himself had thought so much about the way he was looking.

Now came the lion strutting along, shaking out his silky mane; and seeing how perfectly wretched was his one-time rival, the tiger, he went to the rescue by bending over his head, and shaking his long hair at the Baby. This, of course, delighted the Baby, and you can guess what he did, because all babies, Royal or otherwise, do the same thing when they can get their busy little hands into hair.

He seized it and he pulled that lion's hair so hard that the tears came right into the lion's eyes; but, of course, he did not growl and he did not try to get away.

The big brown bear who had been trotting up and down, up and down, frightfully worried for fear he could not do anything for his Prince, now that it was time for him to go in, went over, and the nurse picked the Baby up and sat him on the bear's soft, shaggy, brown, furry back, and gently, gently, the big bear scuffled down the path.

The Peacock behind the bush suddenly realized how horrid he had been. The lion, the King of Beasts, had let the Baby pull his hair and had made himself as nothing, so long as the Prince was satisfied; and the Peacock, from being very haughty and mad became very, very sorry because he had acted so selfishly. He put

his head back and hid his eyes in the feathers of his back, and folded his tail tight, and cried and cried and cried; he was so ashamed of himself.

Meanwhile, the big bear, carrying the Baby along, stopped when he saw a little calf, and the Baby saw the calf too, and the little calf danced for the little Prince. He danced in the funny way calves do, hopping up on all four legs at once, stiffening his tail and coming down with a bump, and then doing it all over again. And the Baby *did* laugh. Just then the calf's mother, a lovely red cow, came along and called her baby to dinner, and the little Prince acted as if he, too, would like some of the cow's warm milk. So they fetched a golden cup and filled it full of the rich, creamy milk, and the Baby drank it all. The little calf was ever so happy

to give his milk to his Prince, even if his own supper was rather meagre in consequence.

Now there was real joy throughout the garden, for the Baby really was well. He had slept, and he had laughed, and he had eaten, and it is the mission of babies to do very little more than that, you know, even if they are Royal babies.

As they started in a procession for the palace, they passed close by the poor, unhappy Peacock, and the Baby's eye was caught by the gleam of the sun on the iridescent feathers of the Peacock's neck. He held out his little hand, so the bear went very close beside the Peacock, and the Baby stroked the lovely curve of the Peacock's neck. Just think how that Peacock felt! He did not dare to uncover his eyes; he just stood there and trembled

with joy. Joy to think that at last he, too, could give some pleasure to the poor little Prince.

And the Wise Men who were observing all these things, when they were making memorials of this happy recovery of the Royal Baby Prince, decided to make little bronze statues of the Peacock; not the Peacock, King of Birds, but the Peacock of soft curves and shiny neck, who has at last forgotten his own glories in the desire to serve a little sick Baby.

III. HASTEEN SAVES THE JEWELS OF THE KING

HASTEEN SAVES THE JEWELS OF THE KING

HASTEEN is (as nearly as could be ascertained from the Century Dictionary) the Hindu word for elephant. This story about a little carved ivory box was an order from a small boy who had been reading a book about police-dogs and said that was the only kind of story that was interesting. He expressed absolute disbelief in the possibility of connecting the little box with any "real story," but was willing to try anything once, apparently, for he came the next week to the story-telling and so greatly approved of "Hasteen" that when the children were discussing what they should have for the

second story he volunteered, "What's the matter with having this one again?"

A hot, thick jungle! Awfully hot it is there; and muggy and moist and damp. Under the trees the water stands in pools, and the air is heavy with strange scents, and with the buzz of myriads of mosquitoes, and the whir of the wings of hundreds of strange insects.

Suddenly a crashing! crashing! crashing! And through the hot, thick jungle stamps and tramps and pushes a big herd of elephants. They are led by a big, shifty-looking old fellow with wicked little red eyes, who, when he has all the rest of the elephants started down a sort of road in the forest, manages to get out of the way somehow, and the great herd of wild, free elephants, bellowing and tramping and plunging, suddenly find

themselves securely shut in a great enclosure of huge logs strongly fastened together. At first the elephants are very mad, and rage about trying to break down the fence; and they beat one another, as well as the barrier, with their trunks, pushing and pulling and carrying on; that is, all except one large elephant who stands near the middle as still as she can, swaying slowly on her four big legs, and fighting off the blows and pushings of the frightened and ugly elephants. She is shielding her tiny little two days' old baby. He is rather a naughty baby and keeps trying to get out from under his protecting mother. Her four legs are as big and round as great tree trunks, and her huge body is high up over her baby; but he, silly little fellow, tries to get out every now and then, and has to be softly spanked by his anxious mother. For an

elephant-baby he is really very charming. He is only about three feet high and he is covered with soft hair, showing that some time he will be a very beautiful elephant.

When the herd of wild elephants was sorted by the King's men, the baby elephant was found, and his mother chained up with the others. They put big chains around their legs, you know, and fasten them to forest trees or some other very strong object until they have them tamed.

When the King got back to his pink-walled palace he found, to his great joy, that a baby Prince had been born while he had been out hunting elephants. Then, indeed, were there great rejoicings; parades of the army, games of every sort, fireworks, feastings, decorations; relations from far and near came to the celebration, bearing gifts to the little baby Prince, who was given the name of Selim. Rama Dhu,

Hasteen would squirt water all over the laughing Prince

the head elephant keeper, brought as his gift, the tiny new baby elephant, now named Hasteen, who had already been taught to lift his little trunk in salute.

As Prince Selim grew up Hasteen was his almost constant companion. He learned to mount the baby Prince when they were both hardly two years old; to curl up his trunk as a step so that Selim could scramble up to Hasteen's broad back. Together these two went swimming in the great marble pool, and Hasteen would squirt the water all over himself and over the laughing Prince. Wonderful water games they had, as they grew older; they played ball together for hours at a time. Selim would throw the ball and Hasteen would bat it with his long trunk. So they would have it, to and fro, until both became very expert.

After Selim was seven years old he

often accompanied his father on hunting expeditions. They went far into the jungle by night, the King on his elephant, Prince Selim on Hasteen. Quantities of men with torches, and drums, and trumpets, and long sticks spread out, drove the wild animals out from the forest into the bright moonlight where the King could shoot them. Selim became very expert in throwing the spear, and shooting with the bow and arrow. Rabbits would run out and deer of various sorts; wolves and hyenas; panthers, tigers, and even lions.

Once, when they were standing in the shadow waiting for the great drive to begin, a leopard leaped from the high branch of a tree straight at Prince Selim on Hasteen's back. Now all that ball practice served them well, for Hasteen swung his trunk like a baseball bat, gave one mighty swat, and biff!—that leopard was entirely

bashed up against a giant tree trunk. If he had been a ball, it would have been a home run. The King had been breathless with fright when he first saw the leopard and realized the danger his son and heir was in. His relief and excited appreciation of Hasteen's agility with his trunk may well be imagined.

During the summer months, the whole court moved from the lowlands by the jungle up to the white summer palace among the hills near the mighty snow-capped mountains. Elephants were usually not taken to this palace, but when Selim was two years old he pined so for Hasteen that he could neither eat nor sleep, and Hasteen, already one of the most beautiful elephants in the Royal Herd, also could not eat nor sleep. So hastily the Royal Prince's elephant was brought to the summer palace, and from

that time, boy and beast were not separated again.

One night, when Selim was about ten years old, he returned very late from the hunting of mountain goats. The Prince could throw a javelin and shoot big arrows with surprising accuracy now. One reason for this was that Hasteen always held himself so steadily when the moment to shoot came. From being so much together Hasteen and the Prince had come to understand each other and almost talked, as one may say, together. Hasteen knew ever so many words and could follow a conversation, and he made little groans and breathings and movements which Selim could understand perfectly. On this night that I spoke of, it was very warm and Selim could not sleep, so he had permission to go hunting or stay out riding.

When they had finally returned to the palace, Selim sat for a while high up on Hasteen's back where there was a breeze. Hasteen was now a very, very big elephant; almost twelve feet tall, with mighty tusks twice as long as Selim was high, of the most beautiful ivory. No scars marred his body. His skin was clear from much scrubbing. His toe-nails were polished to a glittering brightness. His harness and trappings were of the finest leather studded with golden and jeweled bosses, like the bronze bosses on ancient shields. His saddle cloth was of richest velvet, thick and silken, embroidered with pearls and heavy with gold thread.

Prince Selim rode in the square box-like *hoodah* which had been built for him as soon as Hasteen grew up. You know the sort of saddle; you have all seen it in the circus on the elephants. This warm

night the Prince did not want to go in to bed. He was just thinking of suggesting to Hasteen that they have a nice "shower bath" in the great marble swimming pool when, suddenly, Hasteen made the sign which meant, "Look out! Keep still! Something here which will bear inspecting."

Cautiously Selim peered over the edge of the *hoodah.* A faint whistle was heard, then an answering note followed. It might have been birds, but it did not sound like any birds that either Hasteen or Selim had ever heard before. Still, anyone except an intelligent animal like Hasteen would never have suspected anything wrong.

"What is it?" whispered the Prince.

"Look out!" came the warning signal from the wise animal. "Keep quiet! Danger here!"

Soon, slithering through the shadows of the palace wall slunk a dim shape. It looked to Selim like one of the palace guards, Gafir, who was much trusted by the King. A shuffling sound was heard off towards the drive! And under the bushes, along the gravel, came another strange shape crawling from shadow to shadow. Gafir went over to the second man and they began to whisper together. The angle of the palace wall in which they stood seemed to have some sort of an echo, so clearly could Selim hear every word they said. Perhaps, though, it was the excitement, for the first words of Gafir's were, "It is all arranged, horses and relays all the way to the coast for us four. Get you the 'Jabel Kalin' and its fellows, and we start from the Temple wall an hour before dawn."

"The 'Jabel Kalin,' " whispered Selim

breathlessly. Hasteen did not respond.

"I cannot go," groaned the other man, "my leg is broken, I fear. I will take your place here, and go you to the hiding-place which is under the great stone which marks the boundary of the King's Hunting Park. My brother awaits me twelve paces from the outer gate. He will show you the place and help roll away the great stone."

Gafir started to go away and then came back. "Here, come to my room and lie down until one of us comes to help you. I will give you water and bandages and let us hope you can ride when the time comes, for ride or die you must ere dawn," and away they scuffled through the darkness.

Now, "Jabel Kalin" was the name of the chiefest and most brilliant jewel of all the King's treasure. It shone on his forehead in the front of his turban of finest muslin on all great occasions. Ordinarily,

it was packed away in his strong box. Selim knew that something had gone wrong in the palace, but that "Jabel Kalin" was missing he had not surmised. Naturally, he was very much thrilled by discovering the thief; and trembling with excitement he leaned down and whispered:

"I say, Hasteen, did you hear that? Shall we notify the court? or shall we go for it? Oh! Let's go for it!"

Of course they would. They were neither of them very old and they felt that if Gafir were a traitor, whom could they trust? So go for it they did. Hasteen, as soon as he got away from the palace, hurried along as fast as his four broad stumps of legs would go, through the town, across the fields, through the jungle paths, and up the mountain: up and up until no more were there trees nor

bushes, and high up stood the big rock that marked the boundary of the King's Hunting Park.

Of course, Hasteen was stronger than any number of men and, putting his forehead against the great rock, he easily rolled it over, and there, sure enough, under the stone, was something wrapped in a dirty turban cloth. He picked it out with his trunk and handed it to Selim who, after unrolling the cloth, gave a glad shout:

"We've got it, Hasteen! It is indeed 'Jabel Kalin,' as well as many other jewels," and he placed the package in the front of his cloak.

Just then, there were sounds of men coming up the slope, and Hasteen started back towards the palace, but not so quickly but that he was discovered by the thieves. They hastened up, saw that the stone had

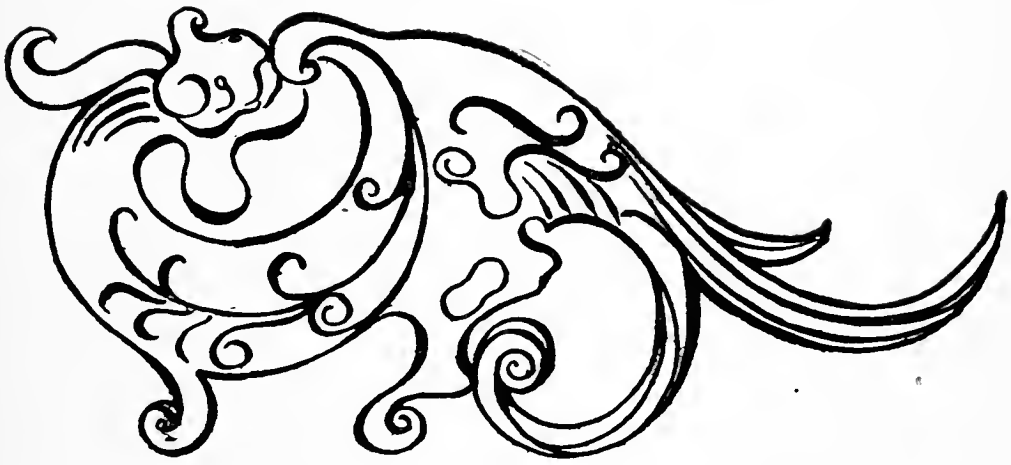
been rolled away and the jewels taken. They shouted. "Aha! Some one on an elephant. Take this then!" And together they started the great stone rolling down the slope after Hasteen and Selim. It bounded along and hit a twisted tree whose roots were insecurely fastened in the soil. That joined the stone in its downward path, and in an instant an avalanche was formed; masses of rocks, earth and bushes hurling themselves down the mountain-side.

Hasteen heard it on his trail and ran harder and harder. His clever brain was working behind his keen little eyes, for he knew that he could not get away from the avalanche. He was determined, however, to kill this frightful thing which was pursuing his beloved Prince Selim. So, as he ran, he curled up his trunk, seized Selim by the girdle and lifted him out of

the *hoodah*, and deposited him gently in a little hollow. Then turned quickly and charged up the slope towards the avalanche. Just before he reached it he firmly planted himself on his great legs and bent his great faithful head to receive the brunt of the attack. The avalanche hit him and crushed him to pulp in an instant, but—it parted into two streams which came together again farther down the mountain, but avoided Selim, leaving him quite untouched and unharmed, cowering in the hollow, fainting with horror, and clasping to his bosom the Jewels of the King. In the morning he was found by the agonized searchers from the palace, a white-faced, limp little boy clasping to his bosom untold wealth, but grief-stricken by the loss of his friend Hasteen.

Great were the rejoicings at the court over the finding of Selim, and great was

the mourning for Hasteen, the Faithful. All that could be found of him was a fragment of one great white ivory tusk and the mangled pulp of the great dead body. The King had the ivory cut into thin slabs, and from it he had his most skillful artisan make an ivory box in which he kept "Jabel Kalin," and his other jewels, so that Hasteen, even in death, might still guard the Jewels of the King.



IV. THE SADDLER'S SON AND THE DRAGON

THE SADDLER'S SON AND THE DRAGON

ONCE upon a time, in the Land of Far Away, in the Time of Long Ago, there reigned a wise King. He ruled his kingdom well, but his people never could seem to get on because they were always fighting someone; and the reason why they were always in fights and squabbles with their neighbors was on account of the Dragon.

Now, the Dragon inhabited a cave near the top of a mountain, and he was a very voracious dragon. That is the proper word to use about dragons. It means he had a large appetite. It was also a true word. He had. And his appetite im-

pelled him to go about marauding, and killing and eating the tenderest humans he could find. As these were usually beautiful and attractive youths and maidens, the people of all that countryside had acquired the pleasant habit of feeding him with the youths and maidens of some other nation. So some city was always going out and stealing people from other towns and cities to feed the Dragon. Which, naturally, created a certain amount of hard feeling between these communities.

The Dragon was a sure enough dragon. He was enormously big. He was also surpassingly beautiful, of a lovely shade of pale green; and he had large paws that he stamped with; and when he stamped, his wicked claws struck sparks from the mountain; and out from his nostrils poured steam and poisonous gases, so that anyone passing near him, when he blew

on them, immediately was scorched and shriveled and ready to be eaten. His eyes shot flames. In books, they would be called "baleful" eyes. And he had a most frightfully agile tail with a sting and a spear in the end of it. So that, if he did not get a chance to blow poisonous gases at you, he would smack you sidewise with his lovely long green tail, and quite scrunch all your bones; or he would stick its spearlike end right through you, and hold you in front of his mouth until he had blown enough steam on you to have you cooked to a turn. He was, you see, very well adapted to being a dragon on the mountain.

Now this wise King I was telling you about, knew that these things were going on all the time, and that his nicest young people were being consumed by the Dragon, and he decided that it simply

could not go on. What between fighting one another to get food for the Dragon, and harassing the Dragon himself just to prove how smart they were, the King could see all his people continually quarreling among themselves, and civilization getting in a very bad way indeed. Civilization means having a good time without annoying other people about it, and being able to run around and do what you want to. At least, that is part of what it means. Why, the finest young men in that kingdom, when they became Knights, used sometimes to go up to the mountain and assail the Dragon just to prove how brave they were! If a Knight managed to get away, after having in some way or other given the Dragon a swat with a sword, or a successful poke with a spear, he was considered a great hero. They frequently did not get away, however. All this was, of

course, very bad for the Dragon's disposition, which got more and more irritable.

The King announced that this sort of thing had been going on long enough. After thinking it over, he decided that the Dragon must learn to eat like other people and not eat the people themselves. That was all very well, but how were they going to communicate this idea to the Dragon? He had developed such a suspicious disposition that no one could go near enough to talk to him; at least, not very safely. A good many messengers were sent to the Dragon; but he acted very dragon-ish, he —well—he *carried on*. That is the only word you could use. He just carried on. He stamped and he snorted, and he flicked his beautiful long tail about, and the messengers whom he did not succeed in eating, he scared nearly out of their wits. The whole court was in great despair over this

because the King was very firm that someone must tell the Dragon that on the very next Sunday he had to reform and eat roast lamb and currant jelly instead of shredded humans.

Now, the most unconsidered person at the court was the little ten year old son of the Royal Saddler, the man who made the saddles for all the horses in the King's army. He was a little person of no importance; but every one knew him; he was so brave and so generous and so pretty, and he rode his pony so well, and threw his little spear so straight, and was always willing to do the little errands about the place and, above all, he could play ball. If he had lived in America, he would certainly have been a National Hero. He could throw a ball so far and so straight that no one in the court could compete with him.

He could make some one way off hear what he said

Now, he was very fond of playing about in his father's workshop; most small boys are. And he had discovered that, by rolling up one corner of a big piece of leather and shouting through it, he could make some one way, way, way off, hear what he said. You see, his invention was really a megaphone, only they did not know it there. They called it something quite different, a really very terrifying name. It sounded something like when you sneeze when you have tonsilitis. I won't tell you what it was because I should not like to have you repeating it. The King was delighted with this invention of the Saddler's Son, and they took it out on to the mountain next to the Dragon's mountain and they roared through it all these reformatory ideas of the King.

At first, the Dragon was not at all pleased, and carried on; but gradually he

came to see reason and he consented to try it for once. "Anything once" was his motto. So the next Sunday, bright and early, while the Dragon was still having his heathen Sunday-morning nap, they sneaked up to the door of his cave and they left some lovely roast lamb and a lot of currant jelly, and mashed potatoes, and green peas, and corn fritters—oh, a lovely dinner!

When the Dragon came out, however, he looked at it with a good deal of suspicion. It looked sort of messy to him and he roared at the King and his court, who had gathered on the next hilltop with telescopes, that he did not think he was going to like the new arrangement; and he flopped one horny paw right into the currant jelly, thinking, on account of the red color, that it was a piece of meat. Of course, the jelly all slumped together and

the Dragon was rather scared. He backed, and blew steam and poison out of his nose, and fired sparks out of his eyes, and looked as ferocious as he possibly could, and that was very ferocious indeed, because, you know, Dragons are just naturally ferocious. He picked up the paw that had gone into the jelly and he licked it, ruefullike.

Oh! what a change now came over the Dragon. "My! my!" he roared, "I like that, it's good! Send slaves with barrels of it."

But the King, through the megaphone, roared back, "No, you must eat your bread and vegetables and meat first. You cannot have a barrel of jelly until you have eaten your dinner. It will give you a stomach ache; and you have got an awful lot of stomach, at least two yards of it, and you would hate all that collywobble."

The Dragon thought there might be something in that and, without more ado, he proceeded to eat all the other good things provided. To his tremendous astonishment he really liked them; and he said so loudly and clearly, and he stopped pouring the poison out of his nose. He was looking around, actually looking around to find a napkin to wipe the gravy off his whiskers. You see, he was a very hopeful Dragon. It was almost worth while trying to tame him.

So every day some town carried up to the Dragon a nice dinner; and on Sunday he had jelly, but not on every day, because, with the amount of jelly that the Dragon wanted, the supply would not have held out. Gradually, he looked forward to having his dinner brought to him and wondered what it would taste like. Because, you know, our food has so many

different tastes, and just raw humans spitted on the end of the Dragon's green tail always tasted the same. I think myself the Dragon had probably gotten fearfully sick and tired of this diet, and that is why he was willing to change.

As I say, from looking forward to having his dinner brought to him, he began to like to talk to all sorts of people, until finally he became so very sociable that, if some one were not there in the cave visiting with him most of the time, he became very, very lonely. Everybody admired the Dragon. You could not help it; that is, if you had seen him; he was such a lovely color, and he lay around in such pretty curves. The King was his most enthusiastic admirer, and kept saying, "Oh, if I could but have some jewels the color of the Dragon!" But nobody knew anything about such jewels. All the arti-

sans of the court, the painters and the dyers, the jewelers and the makers of chinaware, all tried to reproduce the lovely green color of the beautiful and much admired Dragon. But to no avail.

The Saddler's little Son was a great favorite with the Dragon. He used to go up the mountain and talk to him day after day. You see things were nice and peaceful at the court. Then suddenly all this was changed; and everyone was plunged into gloom. For the little Princess, Sunbeam, the King's only child, had disappeared! The only thing anyone could think of was that the Dragon had had a relapse and eaten her. When they accused the Dragon of doing this, though, his poor heart nearly broke. He just laid his tail limp over the edge of a precipice and he put his head down on his front paws, and he—shed a tear. He was very

much surprised at the tear. It came out very hard; and it was a round, hard thing, and hurt his eye when it came out, because Dragons are not supposed to cry, and they are not made so they can do it easily.

The Dragon said he was misunderstood. The Dragon said he never would think of eating a Princess. In the first place, he liked the Princess alive. He liked to see her playing about, and he liked the King, and did not want to make him unhappy; and, in the next place, he much preferred the food he was getting now to even the tenderest Princess, whether cooked whole or eaten raw.

Well, it was a nine days' wonder, anyway. No one could understand anything about it; and, bye and bye, they all gave it up and decided that someone must have stolen the Royal child. But the King's

gloom did not lift. You see, it was *his* little girl who was lost. The court redoubled its efforts to find him a green gem the color of the Dragon,—anything to distract his mind from the loss of his dear little Princess Sunbeam!

The Saddler's Son, in conversation with the Dragon, asked him if he did not think that even a little boy might find a green jewel for his King.

The Dragon, after deep thought, said to him, "Go to the Lake of Lagremamonte. I have a hunch you could find something there. I have not anything much to give you for help except this tear of mine. You may take that. Put it in your bag, it might come in handy."

So the Saddler's Son took the Dragon's tear and bravely set forth on his quest. As he strode blithely through the forest he

saw a bent and withered old woman seated by the roadside.

"Where are you going, my son," said the old woman.

"I seek the Lake of Lagremamonte," said the Saddler's Son. "Know you in which direction it lies?"

And the old woman said, "Go to the next field and there you will see a herd of wild mountain ponies. Catch the one with the yellow mane and the three white hairs in its tail. Mount it and ride forth, and I am sure that you will be successful. Only mind that nothing happens to the white hairs in the pony's tail."

The Saddler's Son did as he was directed,—leaped on the back of the yellow-maned pony, who immediately started on a mad gallop, over mountains, across fields; through forests, around lakes;

swimming rivers, and leaping through the clouds on the mountain tops, for days and days, it seemed to him. Perhaps it was because he was a little boy that it seemed long to him. Perhaps it really was for days and days that they traveled.

As he rode and rode, clutching the long, yellow mane of the mountain pony, he found that the middle of the mane had been braided,—a long, long, long braid all curled up like a lassoo, a cowboy's rope. This yellow braid interested him very much; and, just so he should not lose the pony, he took the end of the long, yellow braid and tied it firmly to his belt. Bye and bye, the pony began to lag a little. It was getting tired. So they stopped at the tent of some Arabs in the desert and begged for food. Arabs are always most hospitable people, you know, and they sponged off the pony and wiped out its

mouth and gave it water to drink; and they gave the Saddler's Son cold milk and a flat piece of fresh bread—Arab bread, baked on stones.

When he and the pony were rested and fed, he asked the Arabs if they knew where the Lake of Lagremamonte was.

"It lies behind the mountain, yonder; but go not near, for it is inhabited by a most horrible giant."

The Saddler's Son thought to himself that no giant could possibly be as fearsome as his dear old friend, the Dragon. He was not as timid as most small boys would have been, so he and the pony started on running and running across the desert and through the forest.

Bye and bye, a red deer ran out in front of them and ran along just ahead of them. Suddenly, crash! and the deer disappeared over the edge of a precipice. The pony

stopped just in time; but the Saddler's Son was thrown from its back and fell over the precipice, seizing in his flight a handful of pink blossoms.

At the bottom of the precipice lay a round lake just the color of the Dragon! And all about it rose smooth precipices. No grass! No paths! Shiny and smooth the rocks rose right from the water. There was no beach and no shore. There was no living thing down near the lake. Swimming for its life and trying to find a landing was the poor red deer. The Saddler's Son did not reach the water. He was swinging to and fro like a clock pendulum on the end of the forest pony's yellow braid.

He was just trying to climb up the braid when the water began to heave and bubble, and right out of the middle of the green Lake of Lagremamonte rose a most

FEARFUL MONSTER. He was enormously big. His skin was brick-colored. He had one horrible bright blue eye sticking out from the middle of his forehead. His mouth was wide, with large purple lips and horrible long yellow fangs of teeth; and his ears were so big, and stuck out and hung down so far that they made a regular ruffle of bright red flesh around his huge brick-colored and purple face. Long, hairy arms bulging with great muscles he had; and his hands were as big as big could be, with queer skin between the fingers, so the fingers were not really separate. He seized that red deer with one of his huge paws and scrunched it up. Every bone was broken. You knew it by the awful sound it made. And then he ate it in two large gulps,—the whole deer. That will give you some idea how big and horrible he was.

Then his one eye lit upon the Saddler's Son swinging at the end of the mountain pony's yellow braid; but it did not see him long. For the Saddler's Son, dropping his pink flowers in his excitement, thrust his hand into his pocket, pulled out the only weapon he could reach, the Dragon's tear, and lammed it straight at the Monster, hitting him full in his one eye.

Now, if this tear had hurt the Dragon when it came out of the Dragon's eye, believe me, it hurt the eye of the Monster when it went in a great deal more. For it began to sizzle and boil; and it screwed and dug its way right into the back of the Monster's eye, until the horrible creature was entirely blind. Roaring and beating the air, he started for the Saddler's Son, but the Saddler's Son got himself out of the way, swinging to and fro at the end of

the mountain pony's yellow braid, and the Monster bumped himself against the smooth precipice. Still more enraged, he felt around for some weapon, the Saddler's Son meantime climbing hand over hand up the mountain pony's yellow braid, to safety. But there was nothing along the smooth sides of the Lake of Lagremamonte which the Monster could use to throw at the Saddler's Son. Reaching down his great webbed paw he seized a handful of the green waters of the lake, squeezed the wet out of them, so that they became quite solid, and threw the lump of lovely green, transparent stone upon the bank where he thought the Saddler's Son was standing.

The Saddler's Son recognized that this was what he had been waiting for, because here was a bit of stone from which jewels could be made that were just the color of

his friend, the Dragon. So he jeered and shouted at the Monster, and the giant seized more handfuls of the lake water, squeezed the wet out of them, and hurled them up onto the banks, in the form of beautiful bits of jade-stone. In one of these handfuls, he gathered up the little pink flowers the Saddler's Son had dropped into the water.

Meanwhile, the Dragon's tear was sizzling and burning into the head of the Monster, whose writhings and rushings in the green waters of the Lake of Lagremamonte became weaker and weaker until finally, with many chokes and gurgles, he sank beneath the surface and has never since been seen.

The Saddler's Son took off his beautiful red leather cape and spread it out on the ground and gathered into it all the lovely lumps of jade-stone which the Monster

had made by squeezing the wet out of the pale green waters of the Lake of Lagrema-monte; and he started home, plodding along beside the pony who was laden with the jade.

When they got to the Arabs' tents and told them of their adventures, the Arabs were indeed surprised. They offered the Saddler's Son two sturdy mules with baskets on their backs to carry his jade-stones, so that he might once more ride the pony. Thus, proudly leading his two mules, and riding on the wild mountain pony with the yellow mane, the Saddler's Son came home in triumph, not forgetting first, besides thanking the Arabs, to present them with one of the jade-stones—that one that had the little pink flowers pressed into its side. And for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years the Arabs kept that stone in their family. They used

it to hold down the corner of their best rug when they had company, until finally they gave it away to someone who had been very kind to them, and it came here to America; and it is in one of the cases of the Children's Art Centre in Boston now at this minute. But now let us return to the adventures of the Saddler's Son.

You may imagine the relief at the court when this load of jade-stones was presented to the King. The Saddler's Son went home, and his father was very much pleased with him, of course. The little boy thought that, as a souvenir of his adventures at the Lake of Lagremamonte, he would cut off the long yellow braid from the yellow mane of the wild mountain pony and keep it.

What was his surprise, as soon as he had cut it off, to have the pony turn to him and say, "Oh! I *am* glad you have done

that at last! I was afraid you were not going to. If you had not, and I had had to die of old age among those mountain ponies, it would have been—well, I don't know what it would have been; but I do not think anyone else would have liked it either. Now, if you want to know why, I can't tell you; but to-night, in the middle of the night, if you can keep awake and get out of the house without anyone knowing anything about it, and get out to where I am, and pull the three white hairs out of my tail and bury them under an oak tree, without anybody knowing anything about it but just you and me, you will see something that will surprise you!"

Of course, the Saddler's Son wanted to do this, but he was pretty tired, and he was a little boy. So, for several nights, he awoke just too late, or he didn't wake up until morning; and the pony began to

look very reproachfully at him, so he made a noble resolve. He just would not go to sleep; and, being a child of a good deal of determination, as you may see from his other adventures, he did not go to sleep.

A few minutes before midnight he climbed cautiously out of the window of his room and slid down the yellow braid that he had cut from the wild mountain pony, one end of which he had tied to his bedpost; and, in this way, came to the yard where the pony stayed. The pony itself was asleep now. Very cautiously he pulled out the three white hairs from the pony's tail. Then, taking the pony by its yellow mane, he led it over to an oak tree; and there he dug a hole and buried the three white hairs. As he was stamping down the earth over them he heard a little noise and looked about, and what do you think he saw?

There, in the moonlight at the edge of the black shade of the oak tree stood—the little lost Princess Sunbeam!

The old woman whom the Saddler's Son had met when starting out on his adventures was really a wicked witch and the mother of the Monster of the Lake of Lagremamonte. It was she who had stolen the little Princess and changed her by magic into a yellow forest pony. When her son died she had exploded with a loud bang! and the dust of her had been blown away.

You may imagine the King's joy at having his darling little daughter back again; and how proud and fond they all were of the Saddler's Son, whom the King educated in the most expensive manner. And to whom he gave, as a great mark of Royal favor, a little statue of the Dragon on the Mountain, carved by a great sculptor from

one of the pieces of jade-stone. And that little statue of the Dragon on the Mountain, carved hundreds and hundreds of years ago in the Land of Far Away, of the Time of Long Long Ago, is in the Children's Art Centre in Boston, in one of the cases, and you may find it if you ever go to Boston.

V. THE KING'S CAT

THE KING'S CAT

YOU must imagine a great, flat, empty land; fields and fields of different shapes, with rows of bushes instead of fences. Once in a while there is a wind-mill (a sort of tower with big arms that go round and round when the wind blows on them). And there are little huts, small and mean, where the farmers live. And far away on a hill is a great castle. And down near the huts is a big stone church with high towers. It is night time; and moonlight; and quiet! Then, in that midnight hour of long-ago the bells from the big church rang the hour. There was a sudden screech, and flying through the air came a witch on the

back of a black cat. The cat's eyes gleamed like fire. Its fur snapped off sparks—just like black cats in winter, you know; and with a bounce it landed under the old tree that the lightning had torn open, near the shadow of the tree in a big circle where the grass didn't grow.

"Sisters, are you there?" the old witch hissed. There was no answer. Very soon, —whish-shshshsh!—and another came.—Another big black cat with another old witch on its back.

"Sisters, are you there?"

"Sh-sh-shshshshshsh."

Another and another came, until there were eleven witches sitting in a circle, each with her fiery-eyed black cat behind her. Then it was quiet again, until far away came a swishing noise—like a big rocket. There was a spark-spluttering streak through the air; and—flop!—into the

A tre-mendous big black cat and, on its back, the queerest little old woman

middle of the circle landed a tre-mendous big black cat and, on its back, the queer-est little old woman you ever saw. She had a high, peaked black hat and a flying cape; her face was ugly and queer; her chin stuck out and her nose stuck out, and nose and chin were close together. You just knew she wasn't a nice person by the way she looked. In a cracked, queer voice she said:

"Children, are you there?"

"Mother, we await you," chanted the witches in chorus.

"The hour is come to dance! to dance! to dance! to dance!"

Then, to the strangest music you could imagine, these funny, twisted, evil crea-tures danced wildly, oh, so wildly, round and about, across and along,—all the fierce black cats growling and yelling a strange dance song! And this was the

music, the strange dance music to which they danced.

"Grrr—Grrr—Yee-Ow! Yee-Ow!
Grrr—Grrr—Yee-Ow! Yee-Ow!"

At last, tired out, the witches sat down to rest in the magic-burned ring under the blasted oak tree. Then the oldest witch, the Witches' Grand-Dam, asked,

"What news? What plans? My children dear,
What evil deeds can we do this year?"

And they planned all sorts of wickedness, while their black cats growled approval. Finally one said that as Pierre, the Road-Mender, had a little son, they could do him a great deal of harm. He must be punished because he planted and tended bright flowers and sweet good herbs for the fairies, but never put out food and drink for the witches. Of course the fairies would look after the little Pierrot so the witches couldn't kill him; but

some sort of spell could be laid on the baby so he would never be any pleasure to his father and mother.

The witches began to dance again, and while they danced they sang a wicked curse on Pierre, the Road-Mender; on Marie, his wife; but most of all they cursed the Baby Pierrot. While they danced wildly, wildly, to and fro—across and along the moonlit fields and up and down the little hills, they gathered each one some evil, magic herb, while the black cats sitting on the edge of the great circle yelled and growled their awful dance song.

"Grrr—Grrr—Yee-Ow! Yee-Ow!
Grrr—Grrr—Yee-Ow! Yee-Ow!"

When each witch had her charm plant, they gathered once more in the circle and each one threw her charm into the middle of the space before the Witches' Grand-

Dam, and yelled a sudden curse, as she sank down tired out. The black cats all spit on the pile of herbs; then each witch pulled three long hairs from her head, and the Witches' Grand-Dam twisted them together with frightful curses and tied all the magic herbs into a little bundle.

Suddenly, "Ding - Dong! Dong! Dong!" the church bells rang matins and the witches jumped hastily on their cats and scooted off through the air. The Witches' Grand-Dam carried the charmed bundle with her and flew low down over the hut of Pierre, the Road-Mender; and down, down the chimney she dropped the magic which she hoped would work such unhappiness.

But if witches can be busy, fairies are not idle. The day Pierrot was born a tiny, white, fluffy kitten was found on the doorstep.

"Want me to drown it for you?" asked a passing herdsman of Pierre, who answered,

"No little new-born thing shall suffer from me this day. In the name of my son, little kitty, you shall live with us as long as you wish." And he took the kitty into the house and gave it some nice, warm milk.

Now Pierre didn't realize that Mimi (that was the kitty's name) was really a fairy nurse for the little Pierrot. Of course fairies can't personally look after all the babies they like, so they usually take some specially knowing and beautiful beastie and put it on guard. When Pierrot grew bigger, his father found a beautiful white goat tied to the gate post and Pierre was never able to discover the owner. We can guess that the fairies put it there. Little Pierrot and little Mimi

grew fat and strong and big on the nice milk that the goat gave.

Then came Midsummer's Day and down the chimney came tumbling the witches' horrid bundle of wicked wishes and evil herbs. Plop! It fell in the fire. Whoo-oo-oooo! Whish-sch-sch-sh! A black, ugly smoke puffed out, filling the little room, making the Road-Mender and his wife choke and cough. But even before the smoke had rolled as far as the cradle, Mimi had sprung up from her snug rest before the fire and jumped up on Pierrot, laying her soft, fluffy cheek against his, so no witch's spell could get to his round little nose or rosebud mouth. There was a flutter up and down, to and fro through the air; and before Pierre had stopped coughing, the evil smoke had all gathered itself together and flown up the chimney. You couldn't have seen them,

but a whole flock of little fairies with their delicate wings had hastened to fan away all harm from their darling Pierrot. So the witches' curse came to nothing but smoke; and that was sent back up the chimney to lose itself in the air.

A year passed. Mimi was a big, white cat now, and she and the goat and the baby Pierrot were great friends. When the time came round for the witches to have their dance on Midsummer Eve, Mimi grew very nervous and finally decided to find out what new wickedness those horrid creatures might try to work. So she sneaked out at night-fall and hid herself in a hole, away up on the old tree under which the witches had their meeting. Then when midnight came and the fields were all lighted by moonlight, through the air from every direction came flying the witches.

They came, one by one, each hissing, "Sisters, are you there?" and being answered by the "Shh! Shhh!" of the others.

Then the midnight bell sounded from the church and the Witches' Grand-Dam came as before; and, as before, the witches danced and danced and danced,—across and long,—up and down, and in and out, —while their black cats sitting in the circle yelled, howled and shrieked their horrid dance song. When they came to rest, the Witches' Grand-Dam once more asked,—

"What news? What plans? My children dear,
What evil deeds can we do this year?"

"The Road-Mender's son for all our skill,
Through Mimi's might has known no ill."

Well, the Witches' Grand-Dam was pretty angry, as you can imagine.

"Who is this Mimi?" she asked. And it was explained to her that Mimi was a fairy

cat who guarded the little Pierrot. Hissing with rage, she issued orders.

"Seek out Mimi, pluck out nine hairs from the nine principal parts of her,—her paws, her head, her ears, her tail, her mouth—wrap these in three wrappings of the fly-blown leaves of the hexenspeise and feed the bundle to the goat which gives milk for that baby."

The witches danced again, and they finally disappeared when the church bells rang for matins. Mimi went home very badly scared. She talked it all over with the goat and they decided to be very watchful and try to get ahead of the witches. Every now and then Mimi would feel the witches trying to pull out the nine hairs from her nine principal parts, but she always woke up in time to stop their really getting them.

Almost another year had gone by when Mimi, stretched out in her sleep, was awakened, alas, too late, by the little tweaks and hurts in the nine principal parts of her, which told her the spirits of evil had finally had their way—which generally happens if we don't watch them carefully. She ran off to the goat, who promised to be very careful. But it wasn't long before the faithful creature realized that there was a strange little lump in the grass she was eating. She quickly spit it out into a rat hole (so the witches wouldn't see her) but try as she would, she could not help swallowing some of the juice.

That night, after a supper of good warm milk, little Pierrot, now nearly three years old, slept soundly for a few hours; and then, while all the rest of the house was asleep, he rolled out of bed at midnight,

the hour when witches' spells always work. Dressed only in his little night-shirt, he wandered off across the fields followed by the very much distressed Mimi. Mimi did not dare to leave Pierrot, to go back and call for help, but kept hoping that someone would find the little fellow and take him home. All the rest of the night Pierrot wandered on, scrambling through the bushes and playing with his own moon-shadow. When daylight came, he was a pretty sleepy little boy and he lay down under a thick bush on a bed of leaves and went sound asleep with Mimi clasped close in his arms to keep him warm.

When he awoke that evening, he was, quite naturally, very hungry. A big dog came along and Mimi said to him,

"This fairy's god-child here, Pierrot,
Must have some food to make him grow."

So the dog ran off to his home and got

a big lump of bread and brought it to Pierrot, who by this time was wading around in a brook playing with the pollywogs and really having a wonderful time. He ate some of the bread but found it rather dry. So Mimi, hearing a buzzy, buzzy noise, went to the beehive and said to the busy, busy bees,

"This fairy's god-child here, Pierrot,
Must have some food to make him grow."

And the bees very gladly gave of their honey to make the dry bread taste good to the little Pierrot.

They went on all that night and slept during the day; and always somebody provided something good for little Pierrot to eat. In the morning Mimi appealed to the fat robins, bustling about catching the early worms,

"This fairy's god-child here, Pierrot,
Must have some food to make him grow."

The robins looked Pierrot over and quite agreed with Mimi. So they went off, hundreds of them, and came back each with a bunch of cherries in his bill. A big yellow cat, passing by that evening, was appealed to as usual by Mimi, and the cat ran off home and—what do you think?—came back with a big piece of gingerbread! Because she said the little boy in her house liked gingerbread better than real bread. I guess she thought Pierrot was a real boy all right, the way he ate that gingerbread!

On they wandered every night, along and along,—the little three-year-old boy in his tattered night-shirt, and the big, worried white cat. They met a brown goat browsing by the edge of the wood.

"This fairy's god-child here, Pierrot,
Must have some food to make him grow."

"Certainly," said the goat. "Come and have plenty of my nice warm milk because

I know, having heard many wise people say so, that nothing makes children grow better than good milk."

One morning they squeezed through a hedge and there they were in a beautiful garden. Sitting on a lovely chair in the garden was the Queen. They knew she was the Queen not only because she was dressed in beautiful silks and satins and had a crown upon her head, but because she was eating bread and honey, and even Pierrot knew,—

"The queen was in the garden eating bread and honey."

Mimi stepped forward and bowed a most beautiful bow, which little Pierrot copied as well as he could. Mimi nudged him and said,

"Tell her about it. Humans won't be able to understand me."

Pierrot had a cunning little habit of

singing almost everything he had to say, so now he threw up his golden head and stood straight and strong in his little tattered night-shirt and sang Mimi's song:—

"A fairy's god-child, I, Pierrot,
Must have some food to make me grow."

The Queen and all her ladies were naturally very much delighted, and Pierrot and Mimi were taken into the palace and washed and fed and dressed. Pierrot had some lovely silk clothes and Mimi a pink and blue bow on her neck. There they lived, great favorites with everybody, and the Queen taking care of them. Pierrot was educated and cared for with the Royal Children; but Mimi saw to it that he never forgot the real home. Pierrot was firmly decided to go and find his father and mother once more when he was big enough.

Years passed, and Pierrot was quite a big boy, about eight years old. He stud-

ied and ate and rode pony-back with the Royal Children, but his happiest moments were spent with Mimi. He was a great pet of the Queen's and whenever there was a party Pierrot always had to go down to the parlor and sing for the company.

One day, they were all out in the forest when the Royal Hunt came by. There were hunting dogs barking and baying; and horns blowing; and servants dressed in green clothes running about everywhere; and bold knights on horseback galloping along, with spears. A frightened rabbit ran out near Pierrot, who grabbed him up and hugged him close in spite of the dogs and the servants. Because all of this grand array of horses and knights and dogs and horns seemed to be just on purpose to hurt this little bunny. The King was rather cross, but Pierrot

sang so sweetly a little prayer for the little beast that the King finally laughed and went away, promising to kill only wicked animals and not hurt bunnies and squirrels.

"You have done very well," said Mimi. And as she didn't praise him very often, Pierrot went to sleep pretty well pleased with himself.

One night Mimi could not sleep. She was restless, and even Pierrot was awakened hearing the dogs in the courtyard below growling and whining uneasily. Pierrot slipped out of bed to see what was happening and he smelled smoke. He went to open the door and found it was locked. He had never been locked in before. Who could have done it now? The smoke got stronger and stronger, and Pierrot looked out the window once more; but it was so high he couldn't jump down

even to get away from the fire. Then he remembered that nearby slept the Royal Children. He wondered if they had been awakened and tried once more to get the door open. He beat upon it and shouted, to try to attract the attention of the guard; but no one answered. He clasped Mimi close in his arms, a very much frightened little boy, looking out the window and wishing very much someone would come and save him and the Royal Children. As he looked out, he realized that Mimi could walk along the narrow ledge that went from window to window even if a human being couldn't.

"Will you go along here and wake the Royal Children, Mimi, and take this strong string with you?" asked Pierrot, putting Mimi on the narrow ledge of stone.

So Mimi very, very cautiously, a little

unsteadily because it was dangerous, crept along the side of the palace to the window of the Royal Children and went in. Meantime, Pierrot was making a long stout rope by tearing up the sheets and tying them together,—even taking the long velvet curtains from the window. He hung it out the window to see how long it was, but it didn't anywhere near reach the ground. So he tied it to the other end of the string which Mimi had carried to the Prince's room. When the Prince hung out of his window and told Pierrot that his doors were all locked too, Pierrot was all ready, and said,

"Pull on the string, my Prince, there is a strong rope you can fasten to the window casing and slide down safely to the ground, if you tie your curtains on to it too. It isn't quite long enough now."

In a very few minutes, the Prince had

pulled in the rope and had made it long enough and hung it out the window. Down he slid to safety; and his two little sisters also. Pierrot was so relieved, he almost cried.

"How are you going to get down?" shouted the Prince. Sure enough, nobody had thought about that. Pierrot had put everything possible into the rope that was now tied to the Prince's window. They couldn't find any of the guards anywhere. While they heard hammering at the outside gate, the fire had actually come into the room where poor Pierrot was. There seemed to be nothing but death for little Pierrot! Meanwhile, where was Mimi?

"Mimi, Mimi," called Pierrot. And out of the Prince's window peered a very scared, white kitty's face, whiskers quivering, ears twitching, eyes big and black with fear. And then it disappeared again.

Poor Pierrot! Then he gathered himself together and sang to keep his courage up:

"Mimi, Mimi,
I cannot see
A way to flee
For you or me."

So Mimi, seeing that Pierrot was brave enough to sing, plucked up a little courage herself and crawled back along the wall to Pierrot, still with the string tied about her neck.

"The Prince tied the rope of sheets and velvet to a poker and wedged it under the window," said Mimi. "I have loosened that. Pull you strongly on the string and I will go back and kick it some more."

So Mimi crawled back and Pierrot pulled and pulled. Suddenly he fell backwards, the rope gave way so quickly. Was it broken? No! Pierrot even had the poker tied to the end of it. So he

wedged it under his window and got out on the window sill and shut the window behind him, the flames were so hot and fierce in the room. He was just going to slide down when he remembered Mimi. He called and called. Finally a very much frightened pussy looked out cautiously from the Prince's window.

"No, no, Pierrot,
I fear to fall,
I cannot crawl."

And Mimi looked very wild. But fairies are not meant to be burned. When Pierrot saw how frightened his dear nurse was, he forgot to be afraid himself and smiled and beckoned and sang again and again.

"Come, Mimi, Here!
Don't look so queer.
There's naught to fear,
So come, my dear."

He had to sing it quite a number of times before little Mimi picked up enough courage to crawl along the ledge. Slowly and cautiously she came, stopping and trembling every now and then, and every time she stopped Pierrot sang his little courage-song again. Although by now his little hands and the back of his neck were blistered by heat. Finally Mimi reached him, and sticking her firmly at his neck Pierrot slid down to the Prince and Princesses in safety.

Just then the hammering on the gates was getting fiercer and fiercer and the gates broke down. In swept the King with a band of soldiers. There had been traitors in the palace who wished to kill the little Prince and Princesses. They had drugged the guards so that they all slept instead of guarding the Royal Children. The King had been away fighting some

war. He generally was. If he had stayed home and tended to the business of his own kingdom, things certainly would have gone better. The next day, in the course of the inquiry which the King was holding, the heroism of Mimi and Pierrot was explained by the Prince.

"Who is this child and whose is the wondrous cat?" asked the King.

The Queen told the story of the arrival of the little Pierrot in his little torn nightie with his beautiful cat; and explained that Pierrot was the singing boy who entertained their guests when they had company. So the King called Pierrot to come before him. They dressed Pierrot in very lovely clothes of silk and satin, put some cold cream on his poor blistered hands, curled his hair and made him look perfectly lovely. And Mimi had a fresh hair ribbon.

They went into the great room of the Palace, with the wonderful pictures all around the walls and the big golden throne at one end. There were beautiful statues standing at intervals about, and great silken banners hung from the ceiling. The whole court had gathered, hundreds of gentlemen and ladies in beautiful silks and satins, glittering with jewels. The trumpets blew a long blast and little Pierrot came in at one end of the hall and walked down toward the King, Mimi walking beside him waving her beautiful long tail. Pierrot kneeled respectfully before the throne but the Prince jumped up and took him by the hand and led him to the King.

"Tell us who you really are," said the King. "There seems to be a good deal of uncertainty about you."

Pierrot looked down at Mimi and

picked her up and held her in his arms, and lifting his head and looking the King bravely in the face he sang,

"A Road-Mender's son am I, Pierrot,
By witches' spell compelled to go,
Cross-country wandering.
Mimi, my kitty, white as snow,
All fairy lore does make me know
When she seems purring."

"I owe you much, O Road-Mender's son, Pierrot," said the King. "Ask for some worthy thing from me, for you or for your father, and as I love my son you shall have what you wish."

Pierrot thought a while, patting Mimi on the head, and then said:

"Truly I have done nothing to deserve reward; but as your Majesty loves your own children, think how my parents mourn for me. I would like to find them and help my father to a better job than

that of road-mender. He is very good and nice."

"Well said," said the King. "So would I wish my son to choose. I will send Heralds through the land and we shall soon find your father. Have you anything special in your mind for him?"

"Yes," said Pierrot. "Jacques, the forester, is dead and his hut on the edge of the forest is empty. Could my father have Jacques's job? Then he would be able to protect my friends, the little forest folk, and I could see him and my mother every day. But I would like always to live with my Prince."

"Well said, well said!" cried the King. And all the court joined in a chorus of approval.

"And your beautiful cat shall live always wherever she wishes. She shall have

painted upon her side the Royal Mark; and she shall be known as the King's Cat. In every room of every palace and of every house, there shall be kept a soft velvet cushion for her to sleep on, and everybody in the kingdom shall treat her lovingly."

And everything happened just as the King had said. Pierre, dressed in the green livery of a King's forester, lived to a ripe old age, respected by everyone and beloved by all the tiny beasts of the forest. Marie was always the happiest of women because her husband and little boy were so nice. And as for the love everyone had for Mimi—you may guess it when I tell you that even to this day in that fair land of France, they make lovely little images of the beautiful fairy-cat with the King's Mark on her side. I know, because when I was there I got one of those little images.

VI. ALI MAHMOUD FINDS TREASURE

ALI MAHMOUD FINDS TREASURE

FAR, far away, in the queer old land of Egypt, there lived, with his young father and mother, a lad named Ali Mahmoud. He was born in a tiny little house made of sunbaked bricks. It had only one room, but Ali's mother kept that one room beautifully clean. The little house stood on the banks of the river Nile, and Ali passed there his babyhood very happily with his sturdy young father and his beautiful mother.

Then a terrible affliction fell on the happy family. Nebi, the father, became blind! At first, they could not believe it, but gradually the terrible truth became real to them. Ali's beautiful mother

wrapped her head in a yellow scarf, and, day after day, morning after morning, she went out to the fields to earn, by weeding and hoeing the crops, enough money (or enough vegetables or grain) to keep her poor blind husband and little boy alive. When Ali was five years old he, too, had to go to work. At first, he had a job driving round and round and round on the hard-trodden path the blind-folded oxen who turned the great spiked wooden wheels of the *sakieh* which hauled bucket after bucket of water up from the muddy river to pour over the fields and garden. For in Egypt where Ali lived it hardly ever rains. A funny place, Egypt! Instead of the water coming down from the sky, every once in so often, the river rises up and flows all over the land so the trees and plants and flowers can grow.

At first, Ali was rather afraid of the

oxen. Not that they were very big oxen, indeed, they were rather little oxen, with humps on their necks; but, of course, they were a great deal bigger than five-year-old Ali. But his mother was so surprised that her little boy could ever be afraid of any animal that Ali never dared to be afraid again.

As he got older, Ali worked at various things. Sometimes he was watchman for the ripening crops, driving away thievish birds or beasts, or even people. He would stand up on the little platform in a corner of the field or orchard or vineyard, whatever it happened to be, flourishing a great stick or beating upon a queer little drum, or even sometimes trying to play upon a reed flute as the older boys did. He earned by all these exertions about five cents a day, and it was a good long day's work, too, believe me! For he had to go

before sunrise, and didn't get home again until dark. But no one earned very much there on the banks of the river Nile, and a very proud little boy was Ali whenever he could put a little fistful of clinking coins into his blind father's hand.

Once, when he was watching a big vineyard with some older boys, he saw that the boys all took big bunches of grapes home with them at night. So, knowing how much his father would enjoy the fresh fruit after the heat of the day, Ali also slipped a great bunch of juicy grapes into the front of his loose flowing robe. There in Egypt, they do not wear pants and shirts as little boys do here. They wear a long sort of blue nightgown and a little cap on their heads—a round cap, no visor. When Ali got home that night and fished the grapes out of the front of his robe and gave them to his mother, she was surprised, and said,

"Oh! Did the owner of the vineyard give you these grapes, Ali, to bring to me?"

Ali began to feel a little uncomfortable, but he was a truthful child and had to admit that he had just taken them.

Dear me! His mother *did* feel badly! However, she said it was not all done, anyhow, and she made Ali take the grapes and one of his precious copper coins to the owner of the vineyard and explain that he had taken them without permission and that his mother had sent him back, because his mother could not have a thief in her family. You can imagine how badly this made Ali feel. You would not like doing it yourself, and it was a lesson the little boy never forgot, so perhaps it was not really so bad, after all.

Now, mostly, when people think about Egypt, they do not think of little boys in blue gowns with caps on their heads, but

they think of the wise, strange old people who used to live in that mysterious country—people like Moses and Joseph and all those Bible people who used to be in Egypt when Pharaoh was the King; or they think of the people who built pyramids and those wonderful great temples, and, more interesting still, perhaps, the tombs—places where the Egyptians put their dead instead of burying them; and they put all sorts of interesting and artistic and beautiful things there also, so that the dead person might enjoy himself in spite of being dead. They were all heathen, you know, those old Egyptians and believed all sorts of strange things.

Near Ali's home there were lots of these tombs, and many people for many hundreds of years had come from far away lands to study them and the customs and arts of the old Egypt. People that go dig-

ging around tombs and things of that sort are called "explorers."

Now, just about this time, when Ali was nine years old, that is, there was a very kind Explorer Man with a long beard who was working near by. Nebi, Ali's father, helped haul on the ropes and do things like that which did not need eyes, and Ali, too, earned his nice little wages carrying buckets of dirt out from the place where they were digging to find treasures of art or of history.

The Explorer Man was very anxiously hunting for just one thing, which, after long study, he had decided must be buried in a tomb in that vicinity. He wanted to find a complete list of the Kings of Egypt. One reason why he wanted this list was so that people could study the Bible more intelligently: and then, of course, another reason was because it would make him

very famous if he could find it. Because, for many hundreds of years, explorer people had been hunting for that list.

He had used up about all his money, this Explorer Man, and he thought he would not have enough to go much farther, but he could not stop. Then, one sad day, he was taken with a violent fever, and all of the men who were working for him became alarmed. They were afraid it was catching and that they would get the fever, too. So they went away, leaving the poor Explorer Man there all alone.

When Ali told his mother about it, she was very angry and said, "No manly man would go off and leave a sick person alone."

So Ali said, "I did not leave him, mother, I only came to tell you about it." He thought she meant that he was not manly—he was 9 years old—but she really

had not. "I thought you would want to bring him here so we could take care of him," continued the little boy. "He is a very nice Explorer Man, and kind."

Ali's mother thought that a pretty good idea; so she and Nebi and Ali went to the Explorer Man's tent and brought him down to their cool little house on the banks of the muddy River Nile, and nursed him through the weeks of fever and delirium.

When he began to get better, the Nile began to go up,—you know the way I told you it did,—and they could not do any digging. So the Explorer Man stayed on at Ali's house and Ali took care of him and ran errands for him, and waited on him. And Ali's mother did not have to go out and work in the fields because the Explorer Man's board money kept them all very nicely. And the Explorer Man naturally liked a nice little boy like Ali to wait on

him; and he took great interest in teaching the child about the old, old days in Ali's old, old country. He even taught him to read the queer picture-writing of the old Egyptians, where stiff little outline pictures of birds and beasts and boats and fishes and all sorts of things, meant words or even sentences; and he told Ali ever so many stories,—the stories of old Egypt, and of the great power of the *magic words* of old Egypt. Some of these stories were old, old, old, oh, ever so old! But Ali loved to listen to them, as many boys and girls like listening to stories. There was one story about a crocodile that he particularly liked. I wonder if, perhaps, you would like to hear it. Would you?

Once upon a time, the Herald of the King heard that there was a traitor. He could hardly believe it, for he loved the King, and all the people loved the King.

Long he studied his book of magic

But he heard that a Certain Man was a traitor to his King. This man went every day to a pool to go in swimming. It was not just a pool by the river. It was a big, marble affair, rather like the Frog Pond on Boston Common. As the Herald did not want to tell the King there was a traitor in the land unless he was sure there was one, he decided to find out by his magic, for he was a great magician,—this Herald of the King,—to find out by magic whether this man were or were not a traitor.

"Bring me my ebony casket adorned with electron, that contains my book of magic," he ordered; and his slaves brought it.

Long he studied his book of magic. Then he modeled a crocodile in wax, and the crocodile was seven inches long. He recited over it that which he had learned

from his book of magic. He said to the waxen crocodile, "When that Certain Man comes to the pool to bathe, then, if in his heart he be a traitor to his King, seize him and drag him to the bottom of the water."

By night, he went and threw into the water the little waxen crocodile.

The next day, the traitor came to the pool to bathe, and up from the clear water of his private, particular white marble bathing pool arose that waxen crocodile, now grown into a beast seven yards long. He seized that traitor and dragged him under the water, and for seven days that traitor was under the water without breathing.

Then the Herald said to his King, "Would it please your Majesty to come to see a marvel that has occurred in the matter of a traitor?"

And the King came to the pool.

The Herald took his ebony casket, adorned with electron, from his slaves behind him, opened it, took out his thick book of magic and read from the magical words of that book. Then he commanded, "Oh, thou that knowest truth and workest justice, bring to the King's feet the traitor from out the water!"

Up from the bottom of that pool rose that crocodile seven yards long, with the traitor in his great jaws. And he brought it, lumbering along, as crocodiles do, waddle, waddle, waddle,—along the marble pavements he brought that corpse and laid it right at the King's feet.

Of course, the King was a King, but he found a seven-yard crocodile lumbering straight for him rather alarming. He maintained his Kingly dignity as well as

he could but still he did step back a few steps and said, "I pray you, oh Herald! this crocodile is a little terrifying."

The Herald spoke a few magical words, touched the crocodile, and made it become small and waxen and only seven inches long. But there was a look in the eye of the creature as he changed that said that just holding a large, juicy traitor in his mouth for seven days had hardly satisfied him when he was seven yards long.

The King noticed this and said to the Herald, "Methinks your crocodile was not satisfied."

So once more the Herald spoke his words of mighty magic, touched the crocodile, the little waxen crocodile, and it became once more large and black and horny. Then, just to prove that he was still King even if he had tried to duck the original

monster of a crocodile, the King said, very magnificently, "Have thou that which is thine," and the crocodile, with a look of sincere satisfaction in his little crocodile eye, seized the body of that large, fat traitor, and plunged to the bottom of the lake.

It is not known further what became of it or what became of the body of that traitor.

Do you not think that this is an amusing story to have lasted for three or four or five or six thousand years?—I do not know how many, but a great many thousand.

Ali Mahmoud had studied the picture-writing of the old Egyptians so much that he could really help his friend, the Explorer Man, when the land should be dried once more and strength had returned to his kind friend's body.

One day, in an interval of rest between difficult studies, the Explorer Man asked, "What is your father doing now?"

"Nothing," said Ali. "He can't; he is perfectly blind, you know. The only work he has ever been able to do is pulling ropes for foreigners or something of that sort, and there is not anything now."

"Have you had a doctor?"

"Doctors cannot do anything when one is blind," said Ali, in a very superior fashion.

"Well, you never can tell," said the Explorer Man. "Ask your father to come here."

When Nebi came, the Explorer Man looked at his eyes and rolled up the lids and asked him a great many questions. Then, one day, he bought a ticket and sent Nebi on the steamer going up the river to the great City of Cairo, with a letter to a

doctor who was a friend of the Explorer Man. And Ali Mahmoud and his mother stayed at home to take care of the Explorer Man. Ali studied and copied the wall-carvings on the old temples, and brought home the drawings to his friend, who was very much delighted with the little boy's progress in knowledge. Together they talked much of those far-off days, and the men and the magics and all, so that they were almost more real to Ali than the poor life around him in the squalid little huts by the banks of the River Nile.

Finally, the land dried up and the Explorer Man gradually regained strength enough so that he could walk comfortably, and they got some workmen and began to work again.

The poor Explorer Man had spent pretty nearly all his money by this time, so it was very important that he should find

his list of names. They dug up a likely place and, sure enough, they found a thing like an old well, only it was square. It was walled up with straight stones, but it was all full of rocks and rubbish. This well the men dug out, and they hauled out the rocks with ropes until finally, with a crash, some of the stones fell in and the Explorer Man leaped down with shouts to see what had been found.

And they didn't find anything! Nothing but a perfectly empty square hole. Even the paintings on the walls had been pretty well scratched off. Somebody else had been there ahead of them, you see. Ali felt frightfully, as you can imagine. The Explorer Man, being grown up, did not show it quite so much, but I do not doubt he felt badly also.

Well, he had money enough to try once more; and once more he was going to try.

He studied the ground over and consulted all the books he had and finally decided that if that list of Kings were really anywhere, it must be buried in a certain spot. There they dug again, and again found a shaft, a square walled-up hole in the ground. The stones were hauled out and the Explorer Man eagerly slid down the rope to see what he had found. He discovered that there was nothing,—nothing but a thick layer of dust, inches of fine dust,—but nothing else. Feeling pretty badly, the Explorer Man scrambled up the rope, and the other workmen followed him. As they were going over the edge, some stones fell down and Ali cried eagerly, "Try digging the floor of this room. It sounds hollow to me."

The men went down there and tried lifting one of the stones of the floor. Sure enough! Below there was another shaft.

It was getting too late to find anything that day, at least, that is what the workmen told the Explorer Man. They all went home for the night. But Ali overheard the men planning to get into that tomb themselves that night, and take away everything of value, before the poor Explorer Man could find anything.

The little boy did not quite dare to speak to his friend of this plot for fear that there should be a fight; and there were ten of the workmen, strong young fellows, and the dear Explorer Man with his long beard was still weak from the severe fever. So, after supper, being very much worried, Ali slipped away and went back to the tomb and slid down into the shaft and began to poke about.

Suddenly a stone gave way and Ali slid swiftly out of the twilight of the shaft into the absolute dark of the room below.

Down he slipped—it seemed to him miles, but, of course, it could not be. He fell on a thick layer of fine, fine dust, which rose up all about him. Choked and stunned he lay for a little, recovering himself. Then he began to feel all about; and what do you think he found? Absolutely nothing but dust! No big coffin, no beads, no boats; none of the things that he had hoped to find. And he couldn't get out, and it was awfully dark and the thieves might arrive at any moment.

Ali almost cried, but he remembered in time that he must not be afraid, and went on feeling about in the dust, sifting out a few tiny objects which he put in his pocket. When he put his hand in his pocket he felt the candle with which he had provided himself. He lighted it and began to look around. Off in one corner he discovered a little hole. He was quite

a little boy, and he managed to wriggle through it. He found himself in another room, away down there under the earth, late, late at night. And in this room, what do you think? There was a big coffin; and there was a table; and the walls were covered with pictures. Imagine his joy!

Then he suddenly remembered that he could not get out, and he really was pretty scared. After all, who wants to spend a night in a tomb with a coffin alongside? To steady his courage, he began to read the picture-writings on the wall by the light of his little candle. He found he could make out quite a lot of it, and was a little consoled when he discovered that he was in the tomb of a very good King, because on one wall it said, "His love was the food of the poor, the blessing of the weak, the

riches of him who had nothing." In another place he learned that this was the tomb of a King-General who had led nine hundred men into the unhealthy country of the South to collect and bring back treasure; and that the King took such excellent care of his soldiers that he brought home safely, not only the gold, but the whole nine hundred men.

There was one sentence, however, which Ali could not seem to read. He could not remember, try as he would, how the words ought to sound. The writing was very big and went all around the room. But it was no use. He just could not get it.

Just then, he heard a noise, and, believe me, he put out his candle quick, quick, as he did not wish to attract attention. He realized that the thieves were really opening the shaft. He heard the stones being hauled up. Bye and bye he heard a dull

thud, or several of them, rather, when the fellows slid down the rope into the tomb chamber. Of course, the men didn't find anything and they were annoyed. They were a rough, outspoken lot of criminals and their remarks were totally unsuited to be repeated in this story, so we shall skip them. When they finally paused for breath, the great dust they kicked up hunting around had come in in clouds through the little hole in the corner and Ali could not stand it another instant. He gave a most tremendous sneeze. My! That was a scared lot of thieves. They thought it was buried Kings sneezing at them. They did not realize that it was only little Ali Mahmoud in his blue gown and red cap.

While they were clasping their hands over their ears Ali sneezed again. That was too much for them. They seized the

rope and scrambled up to the surface and ran away as hard as ever they could—away, away across the Sahara Desert, each one thinking all the others were the ghosts of Egyptian Kings. They may be running still for all I know, unless they died of thirst there in the Sahara Desert. It's quite possible.

Ali in his lonely chamber began to be a little frightened himself, now; because, although the rope was there, he dared not climb it, for fear he might encounter the thieves, and he dared not light the candle, either. To occupy his mind, he first took a drink of water from the little bottle he had with him and then tried and tried to remember the words of the magical picture-writing. Maybe he fell asleep. He never could quite say. Anyhow, suddenly the words came to him and with a great shout he sprang up, his water bottle flying from

his lap and breaking on the coffin of the King, while Ali shouted the words that he had been trying to think of for so long.

And Bang! Rumble! Rumble! Bang! A strange light filled the whole chamber. The blue, transparent spirit of the dead King, dressed in a straight robe heavily embroidered, with a golden girdle, with a jeweled dagger thrust into it and a crown upon his head, rose from—somewhere—to the middle of the room. A strange musical voice, speaking the language of ancient Egypt, half chanted, half said,

"Thanks to you, thanks to you, O little boy! You have released my spirit, bound by envious enemies to my crumbling body. I, too, poor spirit as I am, would have perished had it not been for you, O little boy in strange garments. By saying aloud the magic words my beloved wife caused to be painted about my tomb,

and at the same time offering a sacrifice of pure water poured out on my coffin, you have lifted the spell. To you, my thanks! My thanks! You may ask of me any three things your heart wishes and you will receive them,—them and my thanks, O little boy!"

At first, as you may imagine, Ali was a little, well—surprised at this tall, blue person who talked with him from the middle of the air, but he liked that idea about getting any three things that he wanted. Most of us would. He thought a little and then he said,

"I think that first I should like my friend the Explorer Man to find his list of Kings. Then I wish that my father may receive his sight. And lastly that my mother may never want again."

Ali thought this last a polite way of asking for riches, but the old Egyptian

King-General was a wise old heathen, as you will see. Again he spoke,

"Look once again carefully through the dust at the head of my coffin, under that corner, and your wishes shall be granted."

Puff! A rumbling which grew louder and then died away—a spluttering and flickering of strange lights and the great blue spirit of the old Egyptian King-General vanished, leaving behind only a thick, queer spicy smell. Something like hot mince pie.

Very much excited Ali obediently felt around, expecting,—well, I don't know just what he did expect; but he felt horribly taken in when all he could find was a small round thing, something like a fat lead pencil. He tucked it into his pocket. But he could not find anything else. He felt and he fumbled until he was a very, very dirty little boy but there wasn't any-

thing else there but fine, fine, gritty limestone dust. He decided that he must have dreamed of the spirit of the Egyptian King-General, so taking his courage in his hands he climbed up the rope and went home.

The next morning, he told the Explorer Man and his mother all about his adventures in the tomb. About the thieves who had come and had run away when he sneezed; and about the spirit of the Egyptian King who had given him such high hopes, only to leave him the more disappointed. He pulled from his pocket the little objects of porcelain and green stone, —little things like those in our museums; and the fat lead pencil thing he gave to the Explorer Man. When his friend saw that, he turned perfectly white. His hand trembled, as very, very carefully he opened the end and shook out a roll of

yellowish cloth covered with fine writing. It was the list of the Egyptian Kings! It was what all his life the dear Explorer Man had dreamed of finding. It was going to prove the truth of things which he knew were true, but some people did not believe. It was going to make him a famous man, too, and make it possible for him to go on with his studies.

There were rejoicings in that little house on the bank of the River Nile that day. And when the afternoon boat from Cairo stopped at the little landing steps just down the street, there stepped off a lively young man, who ran gaily to Ali's house. Yes, you have guessed it. It was Nebi, Ali's father. His eyes were entirely well again. It seemed as if there could not possibly be any more happiness than there was right there on the banks of the old Nile that night.

The Explorer Man, feeling that now he would be able to go on being an Explorer Man for many, many years, asked Nebi to work with him every year. So, you see, Nebi had a steady job and his lovely wife, Ali's mother, would never be poor again, for a steady job is a whole heap better than money invested anywhere.

The little boy's father, Nebi, had received his sight, and Ali's friend, the Explorer Man, had what he sought, and Ali's mother would never be poor again, so the old Egyptian King-General made good his word, you see.

But what was the treasure which Ali found? you ask, the name of this story being "Ali Mahmoud finds Treasure." Why, those three things for the three people he loved best, of course. That was better treasure than diamonds and rubies and emeralds for himself. Don't you think so?

VII. THE ENCHANTED DUCKLING

THE ENCHANTED DUCKLING

GREAT festivities were going on in the home of Quang Su, the potter. Chang Lee's little brother was going away to school, and, as is customary on these occasions, they were having a party with cakes and rice and tea, with candles lighted and long streaming banners of colored paper, which were burned in a sputtering flame to a gray soft ash. Towards nightfall there were preparations for wonderful fireworks.

Chang Lee entered into it all and enjoyed it hugely until some chance remark of one of the guests made him think a little, and he went to his mother and said, "Why cannot I go to school? I am older than my brother."

And his mother, as was her wont when Chang Lee questioned her about things, said, "Oh! you must stay at home with me. I must have some little boy with me."

But Chang Lee insisted, "Why cannot my brother stay with you, and I go to school." And his father, nearby, said, "You are blind, my boy, and blind boys do not go to school."

"Blind," said Chang Lee, "What is blind?"

Chang's mother smoothed his head and said, "Never mind, now, little son." But Chang did mind, so she said, "You cannot see with your eyes, dear boy, only with these," and she picked up and caressed his hand with its long slender fingers.

"Do people have to have eyes to go to school," asked Chang Lee. "I do lots of things here: why can't I in school?"

But it was plain to him from the

attitude of everyone around that being blind was something that shut one out from ordinary life. He could not understand it because he had never thought about it before. He had been born without the use of his shiny black eyes, and had never found out before that he was different from other people. You may imagine that he did not like the feeling very well. Nobody wants to be queer, and Chang went off by himself into a corner to think about it. His puppy came up and thrust a wet, sympathetic nose into the little boy's hand, but Chang did not feel comforted. The festivities went on about him, but he had no part in them and never would have because he was this strange, uncomfortable thing called "blind."

Bye and bye he crept down between the rice fields, down to the river, to hide his

grief among the tall reeds growing there, and to try to realize just what it would all mean, this being "blind." Very much alone he felt; very much alone he probably always would feel. Suddenly he heard a great commotion. A sound of heavy bodies floundering about in the shallow water and of a small body splashing desperately nearer and nearer. Bump! and right against his side came a downy little duckling, and cuddled up to the sad little boy. Chang took it up and held it close to his heart, for it came just at the right moment to make him feel not so much alone; and, in a way, the trembling, hunted little ball of feathers seemed to him somewhat like himself.

Two great dogs burst through the rushes and leaped slavering against the terrified little Chang, who shielded the trembling

duckling with his arms. The dogs jumped and grabbed at Chang's sleeve, but, before they could knock him down, or get at the duckling, they were whistled off by a man who apparently had been watching the scene for some time. He called the dogs to heel and started off muttering to himself, "Spunky child! All white and trembling, but he would not betray the trust the little duckling had in him. Some boy! Wish he were mine," and he turned back to speak to Chang.

First he spoke very gruffly, "That's my duck; my dogs scared it up," but Chang still clung to the duckling and looked in the direction of the harsh voice without offering to relax his hold. Then the man said, "Well, keep it, if you want to; but you will never get on in life if you go picking up lame ducks instead of siding with

strong dogs or powerful men," and he strode away with his gun on his shoulder and his dogs at his heel.

Chang patted and smoothed the feathers of the little duckling until it ceased to tremble. Then he remembered what the man had said, and wanted to see if the duckling really were lame. He set it down and held his sensitive little hand on the duckling's back, while the duckling walked along. But the little bird was not really lame. It only walked a bit crooked on account of three long, rough feathers which grew from the side of its head.

Chang decided to keep that duckling for himself, but he didn't quite dare to tell of it at home. One night, however, his mother heard him putting into his prayers a little prayer to make his duckling walk straight. At first, she thought he meant himself and she was rather sad about it, but when she

found out it really was a duckling, she was gently amused; as is the wont of grown up people with little ones.

Now that his brother was away, Chang played by himself most of the time. He was rather neglected by everyone, and day after day he went down by the river to feed and play with the little lame duckling. Every day he saved some of his rice and took it to his pet. From stroking the duckling, Chang grew to know every feather on it, and those three long, rough ones always made him wonder. One day, while the duckling was swimming about, Chang pulled a handful of clay from the river bank and deftly molded a little figure exactly like his dear, podgy duckling, except that he could not make the three, long, rough feathers. He tried leaves and rice and coarse grasses, but nothing gave just the same effect.

Meanwhile things were not going very well in Chang's family; nor in the whole village, nor countryside, for a great famine lay upon the land. More and more difficult Chang found it to spare even enough rice for his duckling from his own very scanty portion. But it never occurred to him not to do it. So he went hungry himself and got very thin and white; but the little duckling was always fed something. One day, when Chang went down to the river, the duckling seemed to notice how thin and hard the gentle little hand that caressed her had become, for, rolling her little round eyes up at her pale-faced master, she—laid an egg for him!

Chang was delighted when he found the fresh, smooth, warm egg. He took it home to his mother who was feeling rather sick just then. I suppose she was sick because she had been giving the best part of her

food to her husband and children, because that is the way mothers generally act. But Chang was so keen for her to eat the egg his duckling had laid, that she did so, and it seemed to have a magical effect. His mother's eyes grew bright and her cheeks pink and she declared herself entirely well again.

Now, the Mandarin of the village was also sick. He did not have any fresh food either and the doctors declared that he could not get well without it. No vegetables had grown for a long time. The locusts had passed over the land and ruined all the crops. The river fishes had all been killed and eaten and the wild birds were all dead or gone away, except, of course Chang's beloved duckling. The next day the duckling laid another egg for Chang, but the little boy, weak though he was from hunger, would not eat it, and

took it to his mother, who sent it as a present to the Mandarin.

Now, you would think that the Mandarin would have been very much pleased with that present, wouldn't you? Instead of which, he was as mad as fury, and wanted to know where the egg came from, and threatened to kill Chang's father if the duck that laid the egg were not immediately sent to him.

Chang's father went to the little boy and told him of this, and said, "Now bring your duckling here, because I well know that our Mandarin, who has a reputation for keeping his word, especially when it is a cruel word, will do just as he has threatened."

Poor little Chang—he was desolate indeed! He knew he must sacrifice his duckling to save his father; but the duckling loved him and his father never had. How-

ever, his duty had to be done and he went down to the river to get the duckling. He stood there among the withered reeds listening for the last time to the duckling's soft splashings, and again, as on that other day, he made a figure of his beloved one from clay. Once again, the rough feathers bothered him until, thinking it would not make much difference as the duckling was soon to be killed and eaten, he pulled out the three rough feathers from the duckling's neck, weeping and asking pardon and explaining how he wanted as perfect a figure as possible of his dear. As he plucked out the feathers he softly kissed his duckling on the top of its downy head.

Imagine his surprise when he was suddenly left with only the three rough feathers clutched in his little hand. A curious little feeling as of a very soft breeze, or a very large butterfly passing, made

him raise his head. Even while his clever fingers were deftly placing the three rough feathers in the neck of the clay figure of his dear duckling, out of this soft breeze came the sweetest little voice, like the ringing of a silver bell.

"Dear little Chang," said the voice, "I am the Spirit of Love, and you have set me free. The wicked spirits of evil had enclosed me in the body of a little duckling and if that body had been killed, they would have triumphed and all that is good would have vanished for a long time. Only if the three rough feathers were pulled out with love, and placed in a figure of my duck's body could I be free. These feathers were the marks of the strongest of the evil spirits; the Spirit of Envy, which is hearing and thinking evil of people; the Spirit of Lying, which is speaking unkind things of people; the

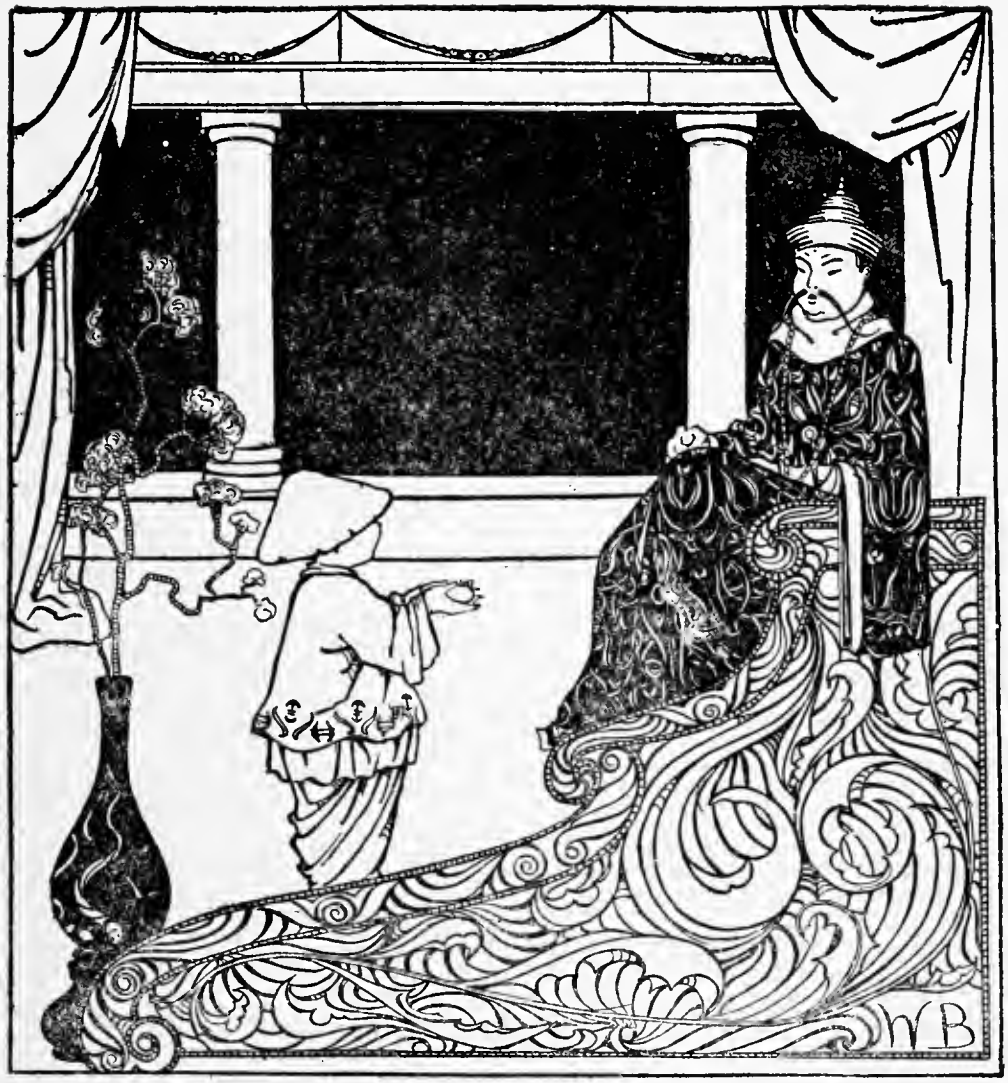
Spirit of Uncharitableness, which is looking for and finding unkindness in everyone and everything. You have freed me from their wicked thrall and never again can they get power over me, for never again shall I be so weak as to doubt the strength of Good, and so let in their wicked spells."

And Chang was left alone by the river side with his little clay duckling, glad that his pet had escaped the wrath of the Mandarin. He went home and told his parents the whole story. His father and mother took him up to the Palace, and there, bowed on their knees, they told the whole story to the Mandarin. Quite naturally, being a very wicked man himself, he decided that they were lying to him. With roars of rage, he shouted for his headsman to come and cut off the heads of Chang Lee's family one by one until

someone should tell him where the live duckling really was.

Chang's father and mother were kneeling with their foreheads on the ground, trembling and praying, and fully expecting that their heads would be cut off at any moment. The headsman was stamping with his feet and flourishing his great axe and, altogether, it was a most fearsome occasion. Of course, Chang could not see any of these things and, being a little boy, he could not believe such terrible things could happen, so he fearlessly stood up before the Mandarin and held out the little clay image of his duckling and explained once more:

"This is the image I made of my duckling. I pulled out these three feathers here from the neck of the live duckling and put them into the neck of this duckling, and my duckling was there no



The clay duckling on the floor before the Mandarin laid an egg

longer," and he laid the clay image down where all could see it.

The Mandarin started to give a great roar and the headsman came nearer and nearer to Chang's kneeling family, when suddenly, there was a sound of tinkling glass and—the clay duckling on the floor before the Mandarin where Chang had placed it, *laid an egg!*

Well, you can imagine the surprise of the Mandarin—of the whole court also. The headsman, paralyzed with astonishment, stood with his axe in the air, and his mouth open. Again there was a sound of tinkling glass. A great roar came from the Mandarin, who suddenly sprang up with shrieks of agony. He had become perfectly blind! As soon as the Mandarin stopped roaring, a little voice like a silver bell came ringing through the air amid the tinkle of glass, and explained

that, until the Mandarin could see a little of the light of brotherhood with the weak, no other light would he ever be able to see.

The Mandarin, thinking to buy off the spirit that had blinded him, said, "Let the boy and his family go free." But still he was blind. Because, you see, he did not do it because he felt friendly with Chang's family, but just because he was afraid for himself.

The rains suddenly began and, with the rain, they could plant more grain there in the village. But, alas, they had eaten all the seed! The Mandarin chuckled because he knew they would have to buy their seed grain from him. He had great storehouses of grain and he intended to charge a good round sum for his seed, when suddenly it occurred to him that that was not exactly a *brotherly* thing to do, to charge those poor people, who already had spent almost

everything they had during the famine, a great sum for their seed. So he ordered a sufficiently large amount to plant every field to be given freely to the owners of the fields. Peals of thunder rang out through the storm while the grain was being distributed; and suddenly, the Mandarin *saw* a streak of lightning! And he knew that the curse of his eye-blindness had been lifted by the Spirit of Love, just as his heart-blindness had been lifted by a little boy.

So the Mandarin adopted Chang and brought him up as his heir, educating him with the most especial care, until Chang learned fully as much as his brother who could see. When Chang grew up and was a Mandarin himself, and ruled over that countryside, he took as his especial mark the figure of the fat little duckling. And one of these little ducklings is in the Chil-

dren's Art Centre, in Boston, and the children in Boston who were the first to listen to this story, have seen the three rough feathers on the duckling's neck.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