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Poor Daddy LONG-LEGS

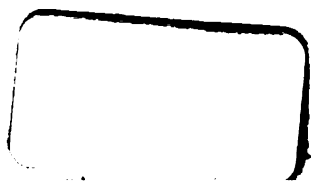
A man in a brown suit and hat is running across the middle of the cover. A spiderweb is positioned above him, with a small spider in the center. Four large dragonflies are scattered around the scene: one in the top left, one in the top right, one in the middle right, and one in the bottom left. The man's hat is flying off his head.

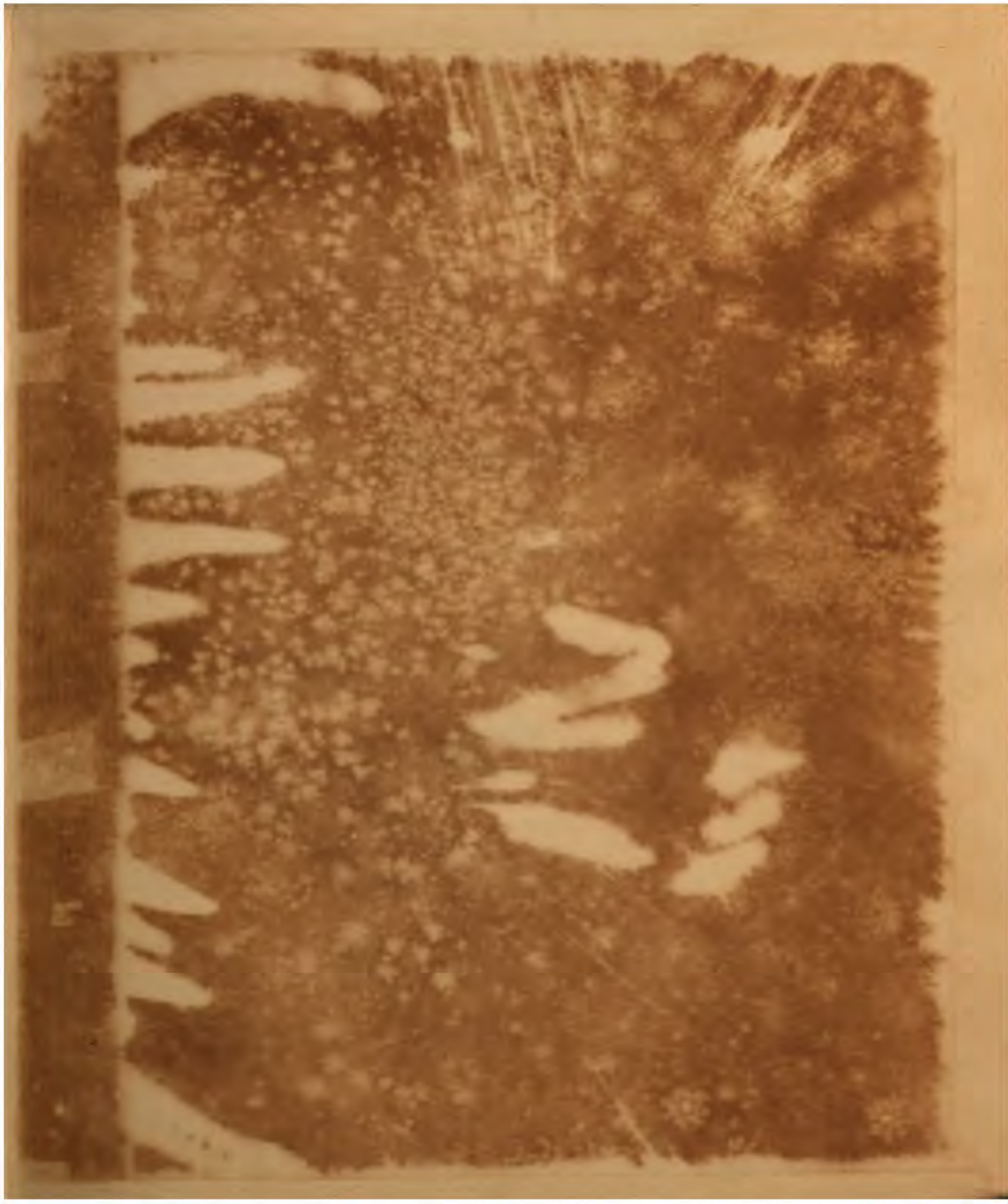
AND OR
A PEEP INTO FAIRYLAND

OTHER STORIES

BY

L.E.C.







POOR DADDY LONG-LEGS

AND

OTHER STORIES





THE PRINCESS AND HER ATTENDANTS.

POOR DADDY LONG-LEGS

AND

OTHER STORIES

BY L. C.

With Illustrations

"Some said, 'Do print it;' others said, 'Not so;'
Some said, 'It might do good;' others said, 'No;'
And so I penned
It down, until at last it came to be,
For length and breadth, the bigness which you see."

BUNYAN.

Dublin:

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LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO., STATIONERS' HALL COURT

1885

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Dedicated
TO MY DAUGHTERS
LENORE AND LOUISE

"SWEETS TO THE SWEET"

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DADDY LONG-LEGS.

ONCE upon a time (all good stories you know begin in this way, and as this is going to be a good story it must begin in the proper way)—well, once upon a time, a great many years ago, before you or I were born, there lived in a certain village a very tall man, who was called by all the little people round him Daddy Long-Legs, and by-and-by the neighbours became so accustomed to hearing the children call him this, that they forgot he ever had any other name, and so, as he was always called Daddy Long-Legs by every one, we may as well call him so too. He was seven feet high, and quite thin ; his legs were so long, and his arms were so long, and his body was so lank, that he really looked like the insect whose name he bore, especially as, when he walked about, he used to twist and twirl his arms in all directions ; indeed I believe he occasionally imagined that they were wings, and that he was flying!—for



this long man was not quite as wise as most of the world, not even as wise as the little folk in the village where he lived. Some people thought his body had grown so much when he was a lad that his wits had had no time to grow ; *I* don't know whether this was the case or not ; and anyhow it does not make much difference now, does it ? Well !—one cold night in winter, when all the children were snugly tucked up in their warm beds (and very glad to be there, for the snow was lying thickly on the ground,



and every now and then more flakes dropped down silently and softly from the dark sky), Daddy Long-Legs sat dozing over a bright wood fire in his little cottage. The door was shut and locked, the one little window was closed and the shutter fastened, and poor Daddy was taking a little sleep over the cheery fire before going to his bed in the

corner of the room. Suddenly he started with a shiver and a feeling of a biting cold blast in the room ; he opened his eyes, and there, opposite him, sitting on a three-legged wooden stool, was a little old man ; very old, very ugly, and covered with snow, which the fire was gradually melting, causing him to look even wetter and drearier than before. Daddy stared at him ; then he rubbed his eyes and stared harder ; finally he said, in rather a shaky voice—for it must be confessed he was just a little frightened—“ Who are you ? ”

The old man nodded and nodded, but said never a word.

"Where did you come from?" whispered Daddy.

"Fairy-Land," squeaked the little man, in a strange high voice.

"Where?"

"Fairy-Land," he repeated, rather pettishly this time, for he did not like having to say the same thing twice.

"I don't believe you," said Daddy; "there's no such place."

"You are very rude—you know nothing about it—you know nothing about anything," squeaked the little man, frowning violently.

"You shouldn't tell fibs, I know that," snapped Daddy; "and besides, fairies are supposed to be pretty, and you——"

"Hold your tongue, you great lumbering lout," shouted the little man very angrily, rising as he spoke, and shaking off the last few snow-flakes as he did so, for they had nearly all melted with the heat of the fire. "Unbeliever that you are, you shall see; come along, come along."

And in some odd, unaccountable way, Daddy felt obliged to get up and follow. He did not want to leave his nice bright fire and his comfortable bed, but he could not help himself. He had to go, just as he was, without even a hat on his poor bare head, out into the cold night; and it seemed to him singular—to say the least of it—that the door opened of itself, and shut behind them quite silently.

Down through the empty street the pair went, and very odd they looked—one so tall, the other so small; but there was no one there to see them, so it didn't much signify how they looked, and moreover they went so quickly, it was more like a gust of wind passing by than two men. Out of the village, across the deserted snow-covered fields, on they went; on to the foot of a high hill, up which Daddy had gone many a time, little

thinking that he should one day, or rather one night, go *inside* it. But go inside it he did ; for the old man walked through the side as though it were an open door, and Daddy followed him.

It was very dark outside in the night, but it was quite light inside the hill, as bright as if a thousand lamps were lighted ; but



there was not one to be seen, no, nor even a candle. Daddy thought it was all very wonderful ; and though he felt frightened enough, yet he was obliged to do exactly as his little guide wished, for the very good reason that he could not help himself. He had lost all power of will ; and though he could not help thinking he ought to be able to

crush that little man, in point of fact he wasn't able so much as to put out a hand to stop him.

On they went, down ever so many flights of steps and along numberless passages, all equally lighted, the little old man never even turning his head to look after Daddy, but gliding on without pause or falter until he arrived at a glass door. Against this he tapped twice, and immediately it flew open, and he and Daddy passed through into a most wonderful hall.

The floor was all shining as if it were made of chased silver ; the walls

were of crystal, cut like the drops of a glass chandelier, so that they showed every hue, and flashed light and colour in all directions.

The ceiling looked as if it were made of the sky—dark, blue, fathomless; and thickly strewn over it were diamond stars, so bright, so luminous, that they served to render the whole hall as brilliant as though the sun, moon, and stars were all shining and sparkling together in it. And it was the largest room Daddy had ever seen; or any one else, as far as that goes. There were fountains of coloured gems tossing jets of melted rainbow; there were trees and flowers more lovely than could be imagined; pictures, gleaming statues, vases of most exquisite beauty, chairs and couches of gold and ivory draped in lustrous silks and richest velvets. Down the centre was a long table covered with the daintiest dishes, splendid fruit, and the most perfect glass and china. All that a much more enlarged mind than poor Daddy possessed could conceive was there, and more than that.

Perfect beauty reigned everywhere, but perfect silence as well. There was not a soul to be seen.

Certainly this *is* Fairy-Land, thought Daddy, as he looked over the whole scene; and even as the thought entered his mind, the old man turned for the first time and said triumphantly, "Now!"

Daddy blushed; he knew quite well what the other meant, and immediately began to apologise. "I beg your pardon, Sir, I am sure——"

"There! there, that will do, don't bother; you are *only* a man!"

The tone of this last sentence somehow made Daddy feel very hot and angry; for after all he was young, and though he had not much brains he had plenty of feeling, and it annoyed him to be made so little of. However, he thought it best to say nothing, and the other went on, "This

is a part of my Palace. I am King Irascible, and the reason I have brought you here is this—I and my two brothers, Kings Sobersides and Flatterer, are all in love with the same lady, the Princess Honoria, daughter of a neighbouring king, and she has sworn to give her hand to whichever of us shall show her the tallest man. Why she hit upon such an idea I can't say, the whims of females are not to be accounted for; however, at twelve o'clock to-night we are all to meet here with our findings, and the hand of the Princess is to reward the winner. I flatter myself *I* have succeeded pretty well." With that he contemplated the tall proportions of the man beside him, and nodded his head several times in a satisfied way. With the last nod an invisible clock began to strike XII., and at the same moment various crystal doors opened, and processions of diminutive people, gorgeously dressed, walked in and up to the upper end of the hall, where, on a raised dais, was a golden chair inlaid with rare jewels and cushioned with sapphire velvet.

"Make way for the Princess," was heard on all sides, and little men with white wands kept running about pushing the people into their places. Presently all were settled, and then there sounded a blast of trumpets—another—and another; then faint cheers, growing louder and nearer each moment; finally a great hush.

Up through the long room came a lady, taller than any one else excepting Daddy (who was hiding nervously behind a crystal pillar). She was robed in silvered satin encrusted with rubies; a train of turquoise blue, embroidered with seed pearls, was fastened to the shoulders with large single diamonds; diamonds and rubies sparkled on head, neck, and arms; and yet, with all this magnificence, Daddy's eyes, after the first quick glance, went up to her face, and rested there.

Of all the wonderful and beautiful things around, this face was the most wonderful and the most beautiful, and he did not feel surprised the three kings were all in love with her.

She walked composedly to the gold chair and took her seat, her train-bearers, six lovely girls, standing on either side of her, and then she spoke.

"Have their Majesties arrived?"

Out stepped King Irascible, followed by Daddy Long-Legs, and both bowed to the ground.

"Ahem! a tall man, certainly a very tall man! I admire you immensely," she continued, turning to Daddy with a beautiful smile; and the poor foolish fellow yielded up his heart to her at once.

"O, madam," he said, "you are too good."

"You see, Sir," she replied, "I have had the great misfortune to be born taller than any one else in these lands, and I get so tired of looking down upon everyone, that I determined I *would* see some one I could look *up* to before settling myself for life; and so, as these three beings were all fighting for my favour, I let it be understood that I would marry whichever of them should bring me the tallest man to be my slave and train-bearer—perhaps even my friend," she said in a lower, softer key, glancing again at Daddy.



"When I'm your husband, I'll take care you don't look down on me," snapped King Irascible.

"Why! do you intend to go on stilts?" said she.

"Yes, if I like, and make you feel them too," he growled.

"First catch your bird," said the Princess calmly.

At this moment a door opened, and another little old man, not unlike King Irascible, but something taller, and with a smoother and more bland countenance, entered, made his way up to the Princess, and bowed low.

"Most lovely and gracious lady, your servant has found a man taller than all others, and craves permission to present him to you."



"Produce him, King Flatterer. We have already a tall and proper man before us. I scarce think you will show me a taller."

King Flatterer turned and beckoned, and up through the hall strode a tall, bulky personage. Large-headed, large bodied, large limbed, he was as fat as Daddy was thin, and rejoiced in the nickname of "Bolster."

"A very fine man indeed," said the Princess, "but hardly taller than the other, I fancy; let them be measured."

Measured they accordingly were, and both were precisely seven feet high, neither more nor less.

"Most Divine Princess——" began King Flatterer.

"Fiddlesticks!" interrupted the Princess.

"There's some mistake," snarled King Irascible. "Measure them again; I'm sure it will turn out that I have won."

"I'll turn you out if you interfere," retorted the Princess.

"Ugh!" growled King Irascible; but he didn't venture to say any more, for he knew the Princess was, comparatively, strong-bodied as well as strong-minded.

"We must wait for King Sobersides," observed Her Royal Highness, "and here he comes."

Up walked another little old man, exceedingly like the other two kings, but with a long-drawn face, and a slow, melancholy gait. He gave Daddy the impression of having been nursed on very flat beer instead of wholesome sweet milk. Immediately behind him came a man, tall, broad, red-nosed, red-haired, decidedly ugly; and, being given to drink more punch than he ought, he was generally called "Toddy."



King Sobersides bowed sadly. "Royal lady, I have sought to do your bidding in procuring for your august inspection the most—h'm—elevated mortal that is to be found. Here is the individual. I opine he can scarcely be matched."

"Measure him," said the Princess curtly. She didn't like the look of Toddy, and also King Sobersides' face made her feel dull.

They measured him ; they measured the others again. They were all seven feet high, neither more nor less.

King Sobersides sighed profoundly several times in succession, which made the Princess feel angry ; she therefore rose up and lifted her hand, and instantly there was a perfect silence.

"Kings, Lords, and Ladies, I promised my hand to that Sovereign who should be able to show me the tallest man. There is no tallest man here. They are all three equal ; therefore my promise is null and void. I now solemnly declare, in the presence of you all, that I will give my hand to whichever of these six persons before me, the three kings and their three tall men, shall pay me the greatest compliment, giving five minutes for consideration. Do I say well ?" A murmur of applause ran through the assembly, and the Princess resumed her seat.

For three hundred seconds a profound silence reigned, even King Sobersides suppressed his sighs and King Irascible his growls, and then the latter came forward and said—

"It is not in my nature to make pretty speeches and pay empty compliments, and I feel sure, Madam, *you* are *above* listening to them."

"Ha! ha!" laughed she, "there's a good deal in that ; nevertheless I am *not* above listening to them, and liking them too."

Then King Flatterer advanced and spoke. "Bestow upon me the light of your countenance, sweetest lady, and all other lights will become dark ; only smile upon me once, and my whole life will be flooded with sunshine."

"Shut your eyes," said the Princess.

He did so, and she smiled graciously upon him, but he didn't see it.

"Do you feel happy?" said she, as he opened them.

"Not yet, Divine Princess."

"Then I'm afraid you tell fibs ;" and she beckoned King Sobersides forward.

He bowed, he sighed. "My life is wasting away in sighs for your sweet sake." ("Small size," muttered the Princess.) "Neither Fairy-Land nor any other land can produce for me a second Honoria."

"Stuff," said the Princess, and gave herself a shake, for she felt gloomy.

Then Bolster turned to her and said, "You are the very fairest and daintiest lady I ever set eyes on, but I doubt you'd always be as soft as my feather bed ;" and he shook his fat head slowly and sadly, as he thought of his comfortable couch so far away.

"I'll drink your health as soon as I get something to drink it in, and I'll go on drinking it as long as you like ; I couldn't say more than that, I'm sure," said Toddy.

Then Daddy advanced shyly, and, hesitating for a moment, took the Princess's hand, and bowed over it till his lips touched the soft, white, jewelled fingers. "Madam, I love you," he said simply.

The Princess smiled, and, placing her other hand in his, said—

"Sir, I thank you ; *you* have paid me the greatest—the only great—compliment worth having, and I bestow on you my hand and all my possessions. Let us adjourn to the banquet, and celebrate our wedding with merriment and festivity.

Down the room they went, he in his every-day working clothes, she in her glistening satin and jewels ; down towards the seats of honour at the richly-spread table ; but, alas ! Daddy in his great elation forgot to

look at anything but his bride, and suddenly he struck sharply against a crystal pillar and fell heavily to the ground.

Rising hastily and looking round, he saw before him a little old-fashioned grate with a few grey ashes lying in it, a dark, dingy room with a gleam of daylight creeping through a crevice in a wooden shutter, and a three-legged stool lying on the floor. He stared amazed, he rubbed his eyes, he pinched himself—it was his own ugly little cottage he saw. His

bride, the banquet, the wonderful hall, the kings, the company, were gone—vanished—and he was alone in his dingy home, cold and comfortless.

While he was still staring round him, the door was shaken sharply; he opened it mechanically, to find a neighbour's wife with a fresh egg in her hand, a little present for Daddy's breakfast. He looked at the woman blankly, saying in a kind of unconscious voice, "Where is the banquet? where is the Princess?"

"What is it you say?" asked Mrs. Grey.

"Where is my bride, the Princess?"

The woman felt frightened, and hurried away to tell the neighbours that poor Daddy had gone quite crazed, and was talking utter nonsense. Soon the little boys and girls came crowding round the cottage to look at "Mad Daddy," and they all began to talk at once and ask him all sorts of questions, till at last he felt so worried, he said if they would but be silent he would tell them of all the wonders he had seen and heard during the night; and this he accordingly did, as accurately as he could. But



they only laughed and jeered the more, and called him "King Daddy," and asked him where his crown was, and when he was going again to his Palace and his Princess. Poor Daddy got more and more angry; all he could say they would not believe him, till at last he hunted them out of the house, saying he would go that very night to the mountain and would mark the way, and then, when he was quite sure of it, he would lead them all to this Fairy-Land and show them its glories.

Late that night, in the bitter cold, with the snow falling thicker and faster each minute, Daddy slipped out through the silent, sleeping town, over the snow-clad deserted fields, on, on, up to the high hill; and the snow fell faster and faster, and the wind began to howl in a horrible, weird way, and every few minutes blew with doubled force, and with each gust thick masses of snow drifted and lay together.



In the morning, when the village children looked out of their windows and doors, they saw that there had been a great snow-storm, and in the grey, leaden-hued sky there was every sign of more snow, and even as they looked it began to fall again, and no one could go outside his house neither that day nor the next. Then there came a change, and a cold, pale

sun stole out and tried to look a little bright and cheerful, but it was very hard work, and in spite of its efforts it was a very melancholy-faced sun that glanced down on the white world, and slowly, slowly melted the snow into tears for very sorrow. By-and-by people began to venture out of their houses and look about them, and some of the bigger children contrived to get over to Daddy's cottage to ask him if he had seen any more of his beautiful Princess. But Daddy wasn't there. The cottage was empty, the hearth desolate. He never was there again; and though he was sought for in all directions, no one could find any trace of him; and the little folks began to think that perhaps there really was a Fairy-Land after all, and that Daddy had gone back to it and to all the beauties he had described to them. But some of the older children were frightened when they remembered how they had jeered the poor half-witted fellow, and how he had declared he would go out that night and mark the way; and they knew if he had wandered on to the hill in that terrible snow-storm, it was little marvel his cottage was empty for ever after.

In the bright, glad spring-time, when many a pretty blossom was pushing its fair little head up through the ground and lifting its delicate face to the tender blue sky, a great many of the village children went out for a day's pleasuring on to the hill. There, in a deep hollow, they came upon a tall skeleton form lying with a few rotten rags about its bleaching bones—just enough to show that it was the remains of the poor lost Daddy they had found.

It was a very sad pleasure-party that returned that day to the village to tell what they had discovered, and I think none of them ever again

mocked and jeered any poor soul who was more foolish than they were; and I know when they grew up and had little children of their own, they told them the story of poor Daddy Long-Legs—how he must have dreamed about the beautiful Fairy Hall, and how they, in the plenitude of their sense, as they thought it, had scorned and mocked the poor silly fellow, and so had driven him out in that terrible night to his death in the cruel snow.





THE CASTLE BY THE SEA.

WHEN I was a little girl, I lived in a large house near the sea ; it was not very much of a sea, to be sure, being rather an inlet of a bay, but it had its waves, and sometimes very big and dashing ones they were, breaking madly over the low sea-wall, and doing a great deal of damage to the roadway, which ran beside the wall. But as a rule it was a calm and placid sea, and the tide, when it went out, left a long, wide stretch of sand exposed, and in this sand cockles innumerable

might be found by the patient seekers. It was a great delight to me, when I was allowed to pin up my already short frock, to remove my stockings and boots, and, armed with a razor shell and a basket, to join in the search for the shell-fish which in those days I thought so excellent. How one's tastes change! I don't think any persuasion now-a-days would induce me to eat a raw cockle; and in that old, bygone time, not one, but thirty or more, would be swallowed by my eager greed with unspeakable satisfaction! I was a lonely little girl enough, for though I had brothers, — they were nearly always at school; I had no sister, and my mother was too great an invalid to attend much to her solitary daughter: so I grew accustomed to make my own little plays and games, and to entertain myself by myself; for my governess was a foreigner, and her tastes and mine were naturally very different.



Our gate-lodge was about half-a-mile from the shore, and between the two, but much nearer to the latter, was a large demesne surrounding a grand old castle of imposing architecture, and with great castellated

stone towers and turrets, on the highest of which a lofty flag-staff raised its bare pole high into the air. The grey stone of the castle stood out in fine relief against a thick background of old elm trees, whose dark silence was perpetually broken and enlivened by the chattering and cawing of innumerable rooks, who had reared for themselves a great colony amidst the dark foliage of the ancient trees. I don't know that I should have taken very particular notice of the castle and its surroundings, had I had childish playmates and merry games to amuse me; but being, as I was, always either quite alone or with those who were many years my seniors, I grew into a habit of making mountains out of molehills, of weaving all sorts of romances out of cobwebs, and of building beautiful castles in the air even out of the commonest materials.

Naturally, then, this grand old castle, with its always bare flag-staff, its silent avenues and neglected gardens, became to me "a perpetual feast" as regards invention. For as long as I could remember, no one had ever lived there; no smoke was ever seen to creep and curl from the great stacks of stone chimneys; no hand ever opened the shuttered windows, or unbarred the great oaken hall-door; and yet the castle was no ruin—far from it. Handsome, strong, and apparently untouched by either time or weather, it stood; even the paint and varnish on windows and doors did not seem to crack or blister, and in fact the castle always looked as if the inhabitants had only left it a day or two ago, whereas I was told they had shut it up and departed at the time of my birth, just ten years before.

But if the castle looked in good order, not so the gardens; a tangled wilderness of flowers, grass, roses, weeds, and briars mingled together in the wildest confusion; it was even in places difficult to

distinguish where the paths had been, and I had many a time to wade waist-deep through greenery to reach a sort of summer-house or bower, in which I loved to spend my play-time, either with a story-book or my little dog, or, more often still, merely occupied in dreaming wonderful day-dreams about the castle and its contents. Oh, how I *did* wish I could get inside that great door, and wander at will through the deserted rooms and galleries! If I could only have found out who held the keys, I would have begged and prayed that person to take me in and show me the mansion; but I could not discover who was the possessor. No one seemed to know, and, what to me was far more odd, no one seemed to care.

My nurse had once told me briefly, two or three years ago, before I had been promoted regularly to the schoolroom, that there had been great trouble in the family just at the time of my birth, and that Lord Careysville, the owner, had shut up and locked every room, and had departed with his family from the spot, vowing never more to see it. She would not tell me what the trouble was, and this bald statement only whetted my childish curiosity, and made me more eager than ever to get inside what had gradually become, to my mind, a regular enchanted castle!

One sunny summer's day, I ran down alone to the shore, with my little basket as usual, to collect seaweeds or shells, or anything else that I considered curious or pretty, and on my way, I determined to go in through the near gate of the castle demesne, down the elm avenue at the far side of the building, and so on to the sea-shore. This, of course, added to my walk, but I had plenty of time before me, it being a half-holiday, and, as usual, a kind of fascination drew me inside the big gates. I ought to say that the two lodges of the demesne were

inhabited, and the good-natured occupants were always ready to let me through, and, indeed, to chat away as long as my impatience allowed me to linger near them. On this particular day, judge of my surprise to find the gates wide open, and a whole army of labourers busy with spades, scythes, hoes, rakes, and what not, cleaning and trimming the long-neglected avenues and side paths. Not waiting to investigate the reason of such a surprising innovation, I ran hurriedly past the workmen, and up the terraced walks, to the castle itself, with a kind of vague half hope that perhaps—perhaps the great, ponderous oaken door might at last be open, and that I could realise my heart's desire, and get inside the wondrous mansion.

Surely it *was*.

"No, no, it's impossible; I must be dreaming," I said to myself.

But I wasn't dreaming; for, oh! hurrah! it *was* open—wide, wide open, and not a soul to be seen to forbid my entrance.

With my heart beating wildly, and my cheeks burning, I flew rather than ran up the wide marble steps, across the inlaid, mosaic floor of a small ante-room, into a large, lofty, oak-panelled hall, with great stained-glass windows, through which the sun cast all sorts of wondrous coloured lights on furniture, pictures, and statues. It was a handsome, nay, a splendid room, no doubt; but I was dimly conscious of a slight shock to my romantic visions. There was nothing wonderful in it; I had seen just as handsome rooms before, and with a much slower movement I opened one of the doors nearest me, and entered what I took to be the library.

It also was oak-panelled, with oak book-shelves, and legions of books in all kinds of colours and bindings. Through this room I

wandered into a billiard-room; from it into what I supposed must be a smoking room; out again into the great hall; then into a suite of three large drawing-rooms, handsomely furnished, the end one opening into a large conservatory, in which marble statues presented a curiously cold and sad appearance, amongst large and small pots and tubs, in which the flowers, plants, and palms were all quite withered and dead, while spiders had spun innumerable webs from the dead stems round and over the dusty forms of the once white statues.

With an ever-growing disappointment, I left these rooms and was back in the hall, whence I slowly ascended a flight of very wide, handsomely-carpeted stairs, that at the first landing broke off to right and to left, both flights meeting again in the gallery that went round three sides of the hall, and from which doors opened into various bed and dressing-rooms. I looked at them all; then at the far end of the gallery I opened a door, to find myself in a long, lofty corridor, lighted from the roof, on one side of which hung many pictures and portraits, and on the other was a row of doors leading into more bedrooms. I could distinctly hear the voices of men and women below me, but I could see no one, so I concluded that there were rooms beneath this gallery, where probably cleaning, etc., was going on.

By this time I was a completely disenchanted child; all my romance was gone; there was nothing wonderful in the house—nothing in the least supernatural—nothing, in fact, that was much superior to my own large and comfortable home. The tears of utter disappointment were welling up into my eyes as I opened the very last door in the gallery, and went slowly into what had evidently been “my lady’s boudoir.” It was a smallish, oval room, with a wide bow window, which, like all

the other windows in the usually shut-up house, was wide open, and evidently a sort of hasty cleaning had gone on, as there was no great amount of dust lying on tables or chairs, and my footsteps on the carpet did not produce clouds of grey particles, as had been the case in most of the rooms I had previously entered. Still wrapped in my great disappointment, I was slowly quitting this apartment also, when my eye was caught by a portrait, over the door, of a delightful-looking boy. Crisp, curly, bright brown hair waved over a fair, open forehead; great orange-brown eyes, with black lashes, and somewhat strongly-marked dark brows, illumined a most attractive face; while rosy, slightly parted lips seemed to be smiling straight down at me. His right hand rested on the head of a noble-looking deer-hound, while his left held towards the dog, as if showing it to him, a large, oval, medallion picture, evidently a portrait.

The artist must have been a very superior one, for even to my childish eyes the picture had a most vivid life; while the dog seemed to be actually slowly wagging its tail, as its large dark eyes gazed into the medallion. Delighted with the handsome boy and grand dog, I exclaimed, "Why! 'tis Prince Charming himself;" and, drawing nearer, I looked closely into the picture to see——

Heavens! what did I see? Impossible! For the second time that day I asked myself if I were dreaming, and *this* time with a distinct sensation of fear!

Again I stared at the picture—at the medallion; and then, seizing a chair, I placed it before the empty fire-place, and stood on it, in order to gaze into the mirror over the mantel-shelf.

What did I see there?

A delicate, pale, oval face, with long masses of wavy, curly, light gold hair; darkish eyebrows, slightly arched; two great, solemn blue-black eyes, with long dark fringes; and a small, sensitive, tremulous mouth, with an expression of grave melancholy that even to myself seemed unusual in a child.

Down I got from the chair, and crept back to the picture of the boy, staring at the medallion he was holding to show the dog.

Again what did I see?

A little girl, pale-skinned, oval-faced, with great, sad, blue-black eyes; with a tender, tremulous mouth, and clouds of waving, curling, golden hair.

That was what the portrait represented—that was what the mirror portrayed. There could be no sort of doubt; it was I, Ethel Courtenaye—I myself—just as I stood there that day; and the great tawny eyes of the boy in the picture seemed to smile at me, and the half-opened, merry lips absolutely appeared to *say*, “Yes, yes, it *is* you!”

Even as I stood gazing, awe-struck, half terrified, half interested, I heard a loud clang, and almost immediately afterwards many voices talking outside the castle. I rushed to the window, to see a troop of girls, women, and men going away from the house, and in an instant realised that the great clang meant that the hall-door was shut, and that I had been fastened in alone in that great, lonely dwelling.



With a wild cry I leant over the window-sill, flinging my arms out into the empty air.

But the chattering men and maidens did not heed me, and in another moment or so they were out of sight and out of hearing.

Oh, horror! Here was I alone—alone in that great house shut up—no one knowing where I was; and in the very room with me was—a *thing*—a ghost—of my own self!

I was here in the flesh, alive, suffering, shivering with terror: I was there in the picture, calm, silent, impassive; and the cold stillness of the pictured Me seemed only to increase the miserable, nervous terror of the real Me!

With a loud, piteous scream, I rushed half blindly towards the door, and was suddenly stopped and caught by two strong arms that encircled my poor little quivering frame, and at the same instant a voice asked—“What is the matter, dear?”

With a thrill and a throb of unutterable relief, I looked up and saw—Prince Charming himself!—older, taller, no doubt, but still the same wonderful, handsome, attractive boy I had called by that fairy-tale name. “Oh!” I cried, half gasping, half sobbing, “I feared I was shut up here alone.”

“Why,” said he, staring wonderingly at me, as he sank into a chair—“why, ’tis verily my great-aunt come to life again! Ethel Careysville has resumed life and childhood together.”

So strangely he spoke, so wonderingly he looked, that I hastily drew myself from the protecting arms I had been so thankful to feel a few moments ago; and making a demure little curtsy, I said, “No, sir, I am not a great-aunt, nor yet Ethel Careysville; I am only little

Ethel Courtenaye, of the Grange, and"—half sobbing—"I got shut in here by accident a little while ago."

"Well, to be sure!" said the youth, laughing merrily, "this *is* a curious coincidence. *She* is Ethel" (nodding at the medallion), "and *he* is Guy" (waving his hand towards the picture boy), "and here are you—Ethel, and here am I—Guy. *They* were brother and sister; and didn't you say your name was Courtenaye? Why, we must be cousins! My great-aunt married your grandfather. Don't be frightened, little Ethel," he continued; and he put his arm again round me, for I was still trembling perceptibly with the childish anguish of those previous moments. "I do think you are my own little cousin, and, my dear, you are so wonderfully like my great-aunt, whose portrait you see in that picture, that I consider you ought to make friends with me at once; for she, you know, dearly loved her only brother Guy, and he was my grandfather, and I am his namesake."

"And you are exactly like him," I exclaimed, "and he looks so nice, I *do* think I shall like you;" and then a little shyly I added, "I called him Prince Charming the first moment I saw him."

"Did you?" exclaimed the young man. "How strange, and"—colouring a little—"how glad I am! Do you know, the moment I saw that picture, about an hour ago, I called the little girl in the medallion 'My Queen,' she seemed so sweet, so true, so gracious, and I came back now on purpose to look at her again before I left the castle for the night. And oh," he added, "how glad I am I came; for otherwise I should not have found *you*, and you would have been frightened for several hours, you poor little soul! because my people were not coming back till sundown, to close the windows and make all safe for the night." And with

tender, kindly fingers he stroked my hair, and petted my hands, and comforted and soothed me with a manly gentleness that even to this day I cannot forget.

All in a moment, I suddenly became aware that I was not at all sure of who my young companion actually was; so, shrinking away from his arms, I said, "You told me just now your name was Guy. Are you Lord Careysville's son?"

"I *am* Lord Careysville," he answered gravely. "My father died abroad six months ago, my mother more than two years since; I am an orphan, without either brother or sister; I am quite alone in the world, little Ethel."

He spoke so sadly, he looked so sadly, that my heart was instantly wrung to see how, all in a moment, the merry brightness of my Prince Charming was gone; my glad-eyed, laughing-lipped boy had all at once become a grave and sad young man; and, holding out my two hands towards him, I exclaimed—"No father, no mother, no brother or sister! Oh, I *am* sorry! Oh, I wish you would let me help you; oh, I wish you would have *me* for your sister!"

He caught my hands, and held them; the tears welled in his rich brown eyes, and, bending forward, he kissed my lips, saying tenderly, "My little Queen, do you know what you have done? You have turned my sorrowful home-coming into a happy one; you have greeted me on the threshold of my new life with sympathy. 'The darkest cloud has a silver lining,' and, please God, my dark clouds have passed, and His silver lining will grow and increase, till all my life shines with the glow of a glad and thankful heart."

As he spoke the last words, he rose from the chair in which he had

been sitting, and, still holding my left hand in his right, he drew me from the room, along the great corridor, round the hall gallery, down the wide stairs, through hall and ante-hall, out of the great oaken door, into the sweet, pure air without.

Half-frightened, but wholly fascinated, I accompanied him, as silent as he himself was; but as we went down the elm avenue, I at last ventured to say, "Will you tell me where we are going?"

He looked down at me with a half smile, as he answered, "We are going to the sea-shore, to pick cockles, shells, seaweed, anything; you are not afraid of my company, are you? I want to be a boy again; it seems such years since I have been a boy, and yet I am only eighteen. Come, little Ethel, can you run?"

"Yes, that I can," I answered, and we did run.

A tall, handsome young man of eighteen, an Oxford student, and the fourteenth Baron Careysville, and a small, fragile little girl of ten; what a curious and incongruous contrast! and yet, I'll venture to say, in those two hours spent on the sea-shore, Ethel Courtenaye of the Grange was not the more childish of the two.

My Prince Charming had come back—mirth, merriment, gentle fun, shone in every movement, word, and deed.

Never had I been so happy; never before had the time flown on such rapid wings, and it was with a heart-pang of unmistakable dismay and regret that I heard the church clock strike six, and knew I must hasten home to avoid a scolding.

"Oh, I am late," I exclaimed, "I must go home this instant, Mademoiselle does not like my keeping her waiting for tea. Oh, good-bye, and I *do* thank you. I have been *so* happy."

"I am coming too," he said. "I am going to the Grange with you ; it is an experiment, to be sure"—laughing awkwardly—"but I hope, oh, I hope your people will see me, and that the old feud between our families may be allowed to die out."

"The feud!" I answered; "I did not know there was anything wrong; but"—and I caught his hand impetuously—"if there has been, I don't care, whatever happens, for ever and always you are 'my Prince Charming.'"

Well, I brought him home, and I told my little story, and Guy, Lord Careysville's bonny face and manner at once won the hearts of my father and mother, who forthwith agreed that the old dead times should be buried with those that were gone, and that the houses of Careysville and Courtenaye should meet as friends, neighbours, and relations, as they ought to do.

I heard the story of the feud later on, and, briefly, it was this:—George, thirteenth Baron of Careysville (Guy's father), had been violently in love with an exceedingly beautiful girl called Katherine Nelson, daughter of a clergyman of good family. Whether she had encouraged his attentions, or more probably had simply accepted them in a genial girlish way, as she accepted others, I cannot certainly say; but, at all events, he had imagined he was sure to win her, and, feeling so sure, had gone off suddenly abroad on a business expedition, without proposing in form. He expected to be absent only a couple of months, but, owing to various circumstances, over a year had elapsed before he reached home again, to find that his idolized Katherine had been married a fortnight before to Hugh Courtenaye of the Grange. In the bitterness of his disappointment and anger, George, Lord Careysville, went off straight

to Lady Mary Manners, who had on sundry previous occasions showed a readiness to receive his attentions, and in six weeks the pair were married.

But Lady Mary knew of her husband's previous attachment, and never could get over her jealousy of Mrs. Courtenaye; and, being a woman of violent temper, the result grew naturally to be that the old intimacy between the connections of Castle and Grange waned and waned. And the year I was born, Lady Careysville's jealous temper, overcoming all other feelings, induced her to go up to the Grange, and to abuse my mother with such vicious bitterness as quite to upset her health, and so to be the cause of a premature confinement, which endangered her life for many days.

I believe Lord Careysville never forgave his wife; he waited on at the castle till the doctor said Mrs. Courtenaye would live, though never again to be a robust or healthy woman; and he then shut and locked every room, and took his wife and two sons abroad, vowing never to return while Lady Careysville lived. Her second son died abroad, and shortly before my narrative opens, George, the thirteenth baron, had also died, some eighteen months after his wife, and Guy, the heir, came home to live at his ancestral castle.

Many merry, happy days I had after that home-coming. Guy spent two or three years at Oxford University, but though he took brilliant places in the examinations, he never grew too old or too fine to neglect his little girl cousin; and as time passed on, though my old romance had quite died away, and I associated no more fantastic marvels with that Castle by the Sea, another romance, stranger, sweeter far, gradually crept in; the days became more lovely, the nights more

heavenly fair, the lapping tides and the crested waves alike murmured gentle tales or passionate ones to my fascinated ears—



“ Love took up the glass of time,
And turned it in his glowing hands,
Every moment, lightly shaken,
Ran itself in golden sands.”

Oh, beautiful world ! Oh,
enchancing Castle by the Sea !
Life was Love, and Love was
Life—for Prince Charming had
held my hands in his, whisper-
ing, “ Oh, sweet ! oh, love ! be
mine, my Queen ! ” And birds
and blossoms and all glad things
seemed to echo my low reply—

“ Thy Queen, Prince Charming ? Oh, better still ! thy Wife—my
Husband.”




THE ARM-CHAIR'S STORY



THE ARM-CHAIR.



THE ARM-CHAIR'S STORY.

“T'S easy work talking, and precious easy to go in for abuse, and that sort of thing ; but abuse alone does not carry much weight with it, when it comes from a useless, inexperienced thing like you. You are very fine to look at, no doubt ; but what do *you* know of life ? Made by machinery, and sold at a bazaar, or some such shabby place, what opportunities have you had for learning a thing or two ? Oh, it's very fine to say *I'm* a dilapidated, stuffy old thing. It's lucky I *am* stuffy, or very uncomfortable I should be ; and as to dilapidated ! Forty-seven years' good service would naturally rub a bit of leather off here and there, and scratch some lines on my mahogany. But what of that ? Seven-and-forty years ! Heigh-ho ! I was smart and bright enough then.”

The speaker was an old-fashioned, red leather Arm-Chair, drawn up near a quaint old fire-place in a large oak-panelled dining-room ;

and its observations were addressed to a scarlet Cushion, with gold-embroidered sides, that had been brought that very afternoon and laid in the Arm-Chair. The room was large and lofty, and the flames of a good wood fire lighted up the sombre shades of the rich Turkey carpet, danced merrily over massive carved sideboards, and played at hide-and-seek in the folds of the heavy crimson velvet curtains that shrouded windows and alcove.

Everything betokened wealth and comfort; and certainly, by contrast with the rest of the room and furniture, the old red leather Chair *had* a somewhat worn and shabby appearance. The Cushion lying upon it had a curiously pert expression; its red velvet sides were so very plump and bright, the gold-braid embroidery dazzling in its newness, and the tassels at each corner fell stiffly, as if bristling with a sense of injury at their contact with the worn leather of the old Chair. On one side of the wide fire-place was the portrait of a handsome fair-haired gentleman; on the other side hung a painting of a girl, a child—brown-haired, brown-eyed, beautiful; but with the saddest expression that ever looked out of a frame on to the world around. And this portrait, though full of artistic genius, and full also of intense life, was unfinished.

“Heigh-ho!” again said the old Chair; and so deep was the sigh, that its seat heaved slightly, raising the Cushion with the movement.

“I’ll thank you to stay quiet,” angrily exclaimed that gaudy article. “It’s bad enough for me to be obliged to stay here, without being worried by your groans. A nice day I have had altogether; knocked about from one hand to another: examined, and pinched, and squeezed—

then disposed of in a miserable raffle, as if I were not handsome enough to be bought in a proper way; and now, at last, tossed down on the very shabbiest piece of furniture I ever saw."

"*You* ever saw!" said the Chair; "and who are you, I should like to know? By your own account, no one considers you of much value, and I can tell you *I* don't covet your neighbourhood. When I think of the people who have sat where you are, I only wish I could sigh strongly enough to toss you off on to the floor. That's where you ought to be, with some over-fed, asthmatical lap-dog lying upon you."



"What an irritable old thing you are, to be sure," said the Cushion. "As you *can't* knock me over, you might as well be a little more civil. We have got to stay together all night, at all events, so there is no use grumbling or quarrelling. Suppose, as I have had no experiences, you give me the benefit of some of yours! I'm not above listening to you, you see, though the back of you is above me. Forty-seven years old! Gracious! what an age! *I* was only finished a few days ago. It's no wonder you are a bit grey in places, you poor old chair."

"What a chatterbox you are," interrupted the Chair crossly. "What

matters a few grey patches? I should like to know what *you* will be like in forty-seven years."

"Now, don't lose your temper again, old fellow," said the Cushion. "It would be much nicer of you to turn your old toes comfortably towards that jolly fire, and beguile some of the hours by telling me your history. I daresay, now, you know all about that gentleman and that little girl up there" (nodding a tassel towards the two pictures). "She looks as if she were listening to us. Is she, I wonder?"

"Not she, indeed, poor little soul," answered the Chair. "Her life was too short and sad for her to wish to come back to it. I knew her well, and many's the time she sat where you are, with her dainty silken head lying against me. She was a little bit of a thing, you see, and her head did not reach to the top of my back. Poor, pretty little soul! Hers was but a short life, and had a sad ending to it."

For some moments there was silence in the room, except for the occasional fall of a cinder, or a crackle from the burning wood; while the Cushion stared up at the pictured face, and the Chair mused on bygone days; and then the Cushion said quickly, "Tell me all about her, there's a good creature."

"Oh! I'm a 'good creature' now, am I? A while ago I was a dilapidated, stuffy old thing. It's wonderful how amiable a body becomes when it wants anything. Well, well! The hours do hang a little heavily, and I may as well talk a bit of old times as sit here thinking over them. So if you will keep quiet, and not interrupt me with your saucy remarks, I'll tell you all about her. But just move a little bit to the right, please, for you are lying on the weakest part of my spring, and if it were to go altogether, I'd never have breath enough to get

through my story. There, that's better, thank you," as the Cushion, with some difficulty, pushed itself a little to the other side. "Now I'm ready; are you?"

"All right," answered the Cushion; "go on."

Forty-seven years ago—and Christmas Eve. Such an evening! Snow lying thickly on hills and roads and fields. Trees and hedges masses of white, and from the grey and starless sky the flakes falling thick and fast; everything outside cold, white, and cheerless; everything inside—such a contrast! A glorious fire, heaped with coal and yule logs; soft carpets, heavy curtains, brilliant lights sparkling and shimmering on a snowy table-cloth, with its dainty appointments of silver and crystal. Wreaths of holly and ivy, with their dark, glossy leaves and vivid berries, twined with the mystic mistletoe round sideboards and mantel-piece; while, chiefest ornament of all, a fair, gracious lady stood with her two snowy hands clasped round a gentleman's arm, gazing upon—me. I had just arrived straight from an upholsterer's shop miles away, fresh, bright, perfectly new. I had been selected as a Christmas gift by the gentleman for his wife, who was just then in very delicate health, and who required every luxury in the way of comfortable couch and easy chair.

"Do you like it, Ethel, my darling?" said Sir Arthur Lloyd, my new master; "and will you be able to come to dinner and sit in it this very night?"

"Oh yes, indeed, Arthur," she answered. "It is perfect; and so comfortable."

And so saying, she quitted his arm and sat down in me. Black velvet robes contrasted with my crimson, and the fairest head in Christen-

dom laid its silken braids against my back. Don't say chairs haven't feelings. When that sweet body rested in me, I felt disposed to close my two arms round her, and keep her in my embrace for ever. Alas! she never sat in me again. No Christmas Eve saw her at dinner, neither that night, nor ever. Half-an-hour before the dinner-bell rang, she was taken ill; and before the early dawn came peeping greyly down on the white world, a new life had come into being, and a precious soul had gone home to God. Sir Arthur Lloyd was a widower, with a baby daughter for his only comfort. I can tell nothing of his grief, or of the funeral arrangements, for early that day I was carried out of the dining-room, and hurriedly placed in an empty and darkened bedroom. Frequent steps passed the door for some days, and then there came a time of utter silence—long, dark, dismal. For how long it lasted I could not tell; I had no means of counting time; the room was always dark, and no one ever came near it for years. Many a time I wished myself back in the luxurious dining-room, or even in the upholsterer's shop; but I had to content myself with wishing, until, one blessed day, unwonted noises broke the silence; bustle and activity took possession of the deserted corridors; doors and windows were thrown open, and upon my dreary gloom there burst the glorious sunshine of a fair June day. Light flooded the darkness, soft breezes lightened the heaviness, sweet scents of lime blossoms and new-made hay perfumed the dusty and mouldy atmosphere. The master was coming home, and not alone. He was bringing a new wife with him, as well as the little daughter left motherless six and a-half years ago! This I gathered from the conversation of two maids, who, with brushes and rubbers, were busy clearing away the accumulated dust of years.

“Where shall we put the chair, Mary?” said one of the girls,

laying a grimy hand on my arm. "Mrs. Moon, the housekeeper, said the master couldn't abear the sight of it since the night his first lady died, poor thing."

"Oh, that's years ago, Sarah, and Sir Arthur has taken a new wife now, he won't mind the chair; but perhaps we had better put it in the little Miss's room, it can't be out of place there. Give us a hand with it, Sarah."

Busy and bustling were the days that followed; activity reigned everywhere. As for me, I was deposited in a small, nicely-furnished apartment on the same landing as the room in which I had been shut away so long. Well I remember my changed surroundings; and I fancy I can see again that cosy little room, with its light-hued walls, muslin window draperies, and general air of dainty freshness; but even as I think, all the beauty is shaded, and the sweet freshness sullied by the sorrow that swamped all fairness, and turned the loveliest life into saddest ruin. Oh, my little fair-haired darling! Oh, my sweet, rose-lipped lassie! When I remember what I heard, and what I saw, is it a wonder my crimson turned to grey, and my crisp freshness to limp decay? Alas, alas! Ah, my bright, fresh cushion-friend, you may thank your stars, or your bright gilt tassels, that you have no bitter memories to tarnish your glittering gaudiness.

Here the old Chair lapsed into silence, and for some moments the only sound that broke the stillness of the room was the gentle creaking of the weak spring, as the poor old seat sighed and sighed again.

At last the Cushion lost all patience, and with a hasty jerk, ejaculated, "Good gracious, you poor asthmatical old thing, what's the matter? Is

your breath too bad to continue? Because, if not, I'd be obliged if you'd hurry on a bit, otherwise I shall turn my attention to Nod-land."

"Oh, I'm going on," said the Chair sadly; "but old times come back with such a gush of freshness, that I could almost imagine it was but *yesterday* the tragedy happened."

"If you were I," murmured the Cushion, "and could look at yourself, you would not for a moment imagine it was only yesterday." ("Such a ghastly, grey old concern as it is," it muttered to itself.)

"Well," resumed the Chair, apparently heedless of this last remark. "Well, to continue."

On that bright spring day I told you of, I was placed in a charming room, daintily furnished; and on the evening of the day following, there sat in me the prettiest, dearest little maiden that ever lived in this old world of ours—my first poor mistress's little daughter—the baby legacy she left to her husband's love, when she herself went to heaven. Many and many were the times the dear girl leant her silken head against me, as she nestled in my lap, holding her doll, or, more often, her kitten in her hands; and many were the innocent talks she held with her pets, unconscious of the fact that I was listening to all her little heart-secrets. For the first days of the home-coming the little maid seemed blithe and merry, and bursts of laughter would intersperse her chats to the kitten; but by degrees, by slow, almost imperceptible degrees, the bright childish peals grew less frequent, and then there came times when little sighs, and sometimes sobs, made me ache to listen to. One night, when Ethel lay asleep in her little muslin-shaded bed in the adjoining room, the two maids I mentioned before

came into the sitting-room, and in hushed whispers they talked together. "I don't like it, Sarah, the way the poor lamb is going on. It's not that my lady is unkind to Miss Ethel, but she neglects her, and, worse still, she pushes her out of her father's heart, and even out of his memory at times. The child is fretting and pining, that's what ails her, and it is pitiful to see her, poor little soul."

"Yes, indeed, Mary. I never see a young lady change so in such a short time—the bright, merry little beauty she was six months ago, when they all came home; and now she is that thin and pale and weak-looking, and no heart for play or anything, poor dear! Couldn't you tell Mrs. Moon to speak to Sir Arthur, Mary? She's been housekeeper here these many years, and need not be afraid to tell him the child wants doctoring and looking after."

"So I will, Sarah, so I will; and a good thought too. I'll talk to her this night as ever was. She speaks so warm of the first lady, she ought to have a feeling for the poor lady's bairn. Come along, Sarah, there's no time like the present." And they both went off.

The very next day, Sir Arthur Lloyd came into the room, and without even observing me, he sat down right upon me, and called his daughter to him.

"Ethel, my dear, Mrs. Moon tells me you are not very well, and she thinks you require change of air, or some strengthening tonic. Do you feel ill, my child?"

"Oh, papa," she said, flinging herself into his arms—and so light was she, I scarcely felt the additional weight at all—"oh, papa, I don't think I am ill; but I am not happy, dear. I used to be with you always—your dear little companion and pet—and now I never seem

even to see you. You are always away, or busy, or occupied with Lady Lloyd, and your poor Ethel is lonely and sad."

"But, my dearest child, I can't well help it at present. You see, my wife is a stranger, and I must show her the country, and make her known to all the county people. Then, by-and-by, dear, I shall have more liberty to spend with you. I'll tell you what it is, Ethel, you want sea air. I'll arrange for you and your maid to go to Scarborough for a month, and there you will get well and strong in no time."

"No, no, papa," said the little girl, "it is not sea air I want; it is you, it is you! Oh, papa, I was always with you till the new mamma came, and she does not love me, papa; she does not like me to be near you, and she sends me away; and oh!"—here the poor child burst into sobs—"papa, papa, I have nobody but you, and you don't want me now as you used to do." And light as was the poor little soul, I could feel my whole frame-work shaking and vibrating with her sobs.

Well, after a bit she grew calmer; her papa kissed and petted her, and assured her he loved her as dearly and closely as ever; and by-and-by she smiled again, and the two went off together, hand-in-hand, to go and look at a family of little pigs that had lately arrived in the farm-yard. Her bright, merry laugh, as she frolicked off with her dearly-loved father, did my heart good to hear. Oh, you may sneer, Master Cushion, but I *have* a heart, such as it is; it is not pretty to look at, I dare say, but it can feel, I can tell you!

"Pretty to look at!" laughed the Cushion (and a very curious noise it made when laughing); "I should think not, indeed; it's made of musty

old horse-hair, and rusty, cracked springs, and, indeed, it passes me to understand how it can feel anything at all."

"You shut up—or *I* will," angrily said the Chair. "I'm as good as you any day. What is *your* heart made of, I should like to know? Down, out of a goose. OUT OF A GOOSE! Do you hear? Ha, ha! Don't *you* talk of hearts, indeed;" and it kept creaking on to itself—but just loud enough for the Cushion to hear—"Out of a goose—a goose—a goose!"

Here the Cushion jerked itself with difficulty right on to the Chair's weakest spring, and settled itself with a sort of solid determination there.

"Oh, oh! my dear Master Cushion," croaked the poor Chair. "Oh, kindly move back again. I can't go on with my story while you put me to such pain. Ugh!"

"Will you hold your ancient tongue about the goose if I move?" asked the Cushion.

"Yes; oh, dear me, yes. I'll not allude to it again, I promise. Ugh!" gasped the suffering Chair.

So the Cushion edged itself cautiously to the side, and as the poor Chair heaved a great gasp of relief, the Cushion said—

"Go on with your story, old slow-coach. At this rate of telling, it won't be finished before morning."

"I'm going on," said the Chair. "Where was I? Oh, I remember. The child had just gone off with her father, as merry as a cricket, to see—to see—the little—pigs—the little—pigs——little——pi—g—s."

Here a sudden silence ensued. The Chair had fallen asleep.

"Bother the little pigs," snapped the Cushion. "Wake up, can't you. Wake up, I say! Oh, hurrah! here's a fine long needle some

one has left in me ; that will rouse the old thing, I think. Here goes," and here the Cushion ran about two inches of fine steel right into the seat of the Chair. With a violent jerk, and a creaking groan, the old creature waked up, and hastily resumed the interrupted tale.

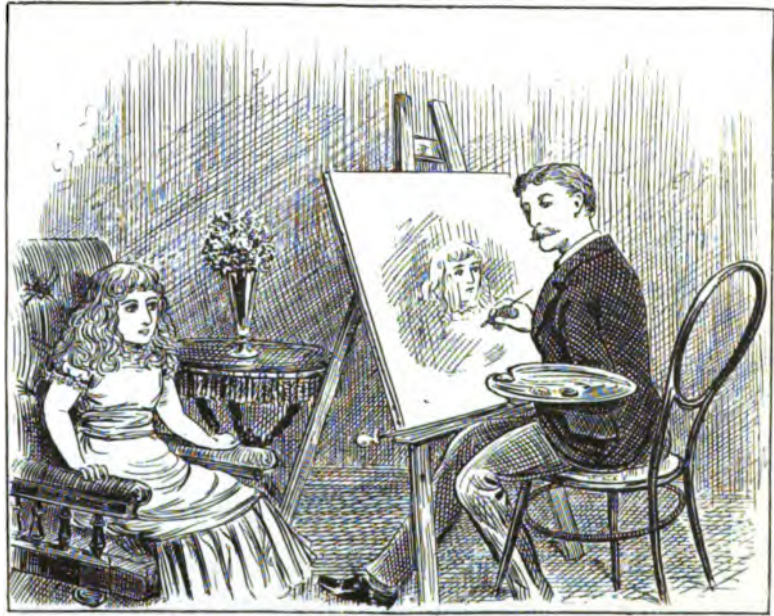
Well, for a few days little Ethel was quite cheery and merry, and like her own bright self again, and as she laid her little head against me, while fondling her kitten, I could hear her whisper—"My papa loves me, Kitty, my papa loves me." And Kitty would purr away loudly, quite as if she understood the little lady. Ah, happy few days! How quickly they passed, and how slowly but surely gloom settled again round and upon the little girl.

By-and-by there came a day when merry peals rang out from the old church bells, and tenants and labourers came eagerly up to the castle to wish Sir Arthur joy—for a son and heir was born ; a future little baronet had come into the world, and Ethel was no longer a great heiress. But her sweet, gentle heart only thought of the little brother that God had sent to her, and of the happy days they two would have together when he grew a little older ; and she whispered to her kitty, as she rubbed her soft cheek against my arm, upon which Kitty was seated, "Won't it be nice, pussy? A dear little brother to play with and love. He is so pretty, Kitty, and so white and small ; much prettier than my new wax doll ; and his little fingers can open and shut, and hold on to my hand. Oh, Kitty, I love him."

Dear, tender little heart, how it was blighted. As my lady grew stronger, she became more and more jealous of Ethel, and would not allow the little girl near the baby. The poor child was always sent away

when her step-mother caught sight of her. The child's starved heart had nothing but cold words and neglect to live upon; for even Sir Arthur himself was taken up day and night with his wife and baby son. But I must hurry on to the bitter, bitter end, and so I will skip over a period of two years, and resume my story when baby Guy was a handsome, sturdy little fellow of two years and two months old, and his half-sister was rather over nine years. It was then that the artist, who painted

yonder picture, came to take a likeness of the precious heir, and while at the castle, Sir Arthur thought he might as well paint the little girl also. The picture was painted in Ethel's own room, and it was in me she sat while the artist worked. The boy's picture was finished, and I heard



was a great success, but the little girl's still required a good deal of work, which, alas! it never got. One day she was sitting where you are now, Cushion, a little to one side, with her head leaning against my back, and her sweet, sad eyes fixed on the painter, when she suddenly started and exclaimed, "Guy wants me!" Without another word, she sprang to the ground, caught up her hat that was lying on the floor, and rushed from the room. A few minutes later, a shrill, wild scream was

borne on the breeze through the open window. Again and again it rang. A child's cry of awful horror! But before the third cry had echoed through the room, the painter had flung down his brushes and was gone.

I heard all the miserable story afterwards, through the talk and gossip of servants, and this is what had happened. It seems the nurse had taken her little charge, Master Guy, out for his usual airing in his perambulator, and had wheeled him down into the cool shade of some large trees growing beside a lake not far from the house. While here, the under-gardener (who, it turned out, was paying attentions to the nurse, or rather to her money, of which she had a goodish sum laid by) came up and beguiled the woman off to chat, out of sight of the child, leaving him in his little carriage at the edge of the lake, well sheltered from the sun by the overhanging branches. Some time probably elapsed, the nurse too absorbed in her pleasure to take notice of how the minutes flew by, when the child must have grown tired of the silence and stupidity of his position, and so endeavoured to undo the straps and get out of his perambulator. In doing this, his weight, thrown on one side of the frail little carriage, tilted it over, and both fell into the lake. At the same instant, Ethel must have rushed up to the spot, and, seeing what was happening, screamed wildly for help—those screams that reached me in her room—those screams that, alas! reached her father's ears as he sat in the terrace room with Lady Lloyd by his side. "Papa! papa!" "It is Ethel's voice," exclaimed the baronet, springing up; but Lady Lloyd caught his arm, saying, "No, no, it is not; it is that child at the steward's lodge, it is always screaming." Again came that wild, piteous cry, shrill and sharp—"Papa!" "It *is* Ethel," he said, "there is something amiss; let me go, Amy, for mercy's sake." "No," she gasped,

clinging fast to his arm with unexpected strength, "you shall not go; there is nothing wrong with the child; there never is," she muttered bitterly. "But you are always considering her, even before me, your wife, and I can't bear it!"—and here she burst into tears.

Oh, precious moments! Oh, wasted moments! He listened to her, he did not go; but tried to soothe and comfort her; and for her, what thoughts passed through her mind in those minutes? God only knows. Did she feel and know it *was* Ethel's voice—Ethel in sore need and danger? Did she feign the jealousy and force the tears in order to keep the father from his child? Who can tell?

But the artist had no woman's wiles to check him, and he ran madly to where the screams came from, to see the terrible



picture of the fair, delicate girl striving with all her young strength to extricate the baby lad from the little carriage that had fallen sideways with him—*under* the water. She had sprung into the lake herself, and its waters were splashing up to, and indeed above her waist; while her feeble hands, endued with the strength of despair, were tearing at the obstinate leather straps that held the bonny boy a prisoner.

With a few frantic bounds the artist was beside her; in another instant, perambulator and child were lifted on to the land, and the little girl was helped out. By this time the nurse and gardener (who at length had heard the screams) hurried up, and the man fled off to call Sir Arthur, who, with Lady Lloyd, was quickly at the lake.

"She has murdered my baby," cried Lady Lloyd. "The miserable, horrid child has killed my son. She pushed him into the lake. I know it. She was always jealous of him, my baby heir."

Thus, and worse, spoke the distracted mother, while messengers were despatched for the doctors, and every effort was made to revive the child.

Ethel stood as if stunned; drenched and pallid, and shivering from head to foot, till suddenly her father's wild eyes fell on her. He had heard his wife's words; he saw the child silent, pale, dripping, with terror in her eyes, and slowly from his lips came the cruel words—

"You, who have tried to murder your own brother, how dare you stand there to look at your horrible deed? Go out of my sight."

The poor pretty little mouth quivered; the white lips tried to speak; in vain—no words would come. Without one denial she moved a step—two—and then fell prone and silent into the long grass.

Then with angry, rapid words, the painter told the whole story: how the child had known, by some strange intuition of love, that the boy was in danger; how she had fled from the painting-room, exclaiming, "Guy wants me!" how he heard her wild screams, and rushed to the spot, to find the brave child, heedless of her own danger, standing in the lake, and, with hands torn and bleeding, striving with frantic force to release her brother, whose nurse was nowhere in sight, and only

appeared later, with the gardener, when the child's wild cries for help had at last reached their occupied attention ; and how the woman's first words were, "Oh, my God ! he must have tried to get out of the perambulator, and tumbled it over in the effort ; *for he has done the same before.*"

Hearing this, Sir Arthur snatched his little daughter to his heart, with wild words of sorrow and regret, and prayers for pardon.

Oh, miserable father ! his prayers fell on deaf ears, his passionate kisses on lips that felt nothing. Little Ethel was insensible, and in the same condition she remained when they carried her upstairs, and laid her in me. Yes ! in me they placed the little senseless form ; against my fading leather they laid the little soft brown head ; for the last time, ah, me ! for the last time, I held my little darling in my silent embrace, while doctors, and nurse, and father alike strove to bring her back to sense and life. And a faint colour did steal back to the waxen face, and the fringed lids did open once more to life ; but, ah ! not to sense. Little Ethel knew no one—knew nothing. Her unseeing eyes gazed blankly into space, her trembling lips muttered over and over again the same piteous words, "I killed him, they said ; *I killed him.*"

Oh, miserable father ! your repentance, your prayers, your tender, passionate caresses are all too late. The little heart you stabbed will beat no more for you in this world ; the eyes that shrank from your angry gaze will never again smile and melt with love as they meet your own ; the sweet, childish voice will never more bless your aching ears with its tender tones, its sweet "Papa, papa, my own papa, I only want you."

Oh, thrice miserable father ! In the heat of a moment's thoughtlessness, in the mistaken anger of a horrible and unjust accusation, you broke your little daughter's heart—and your own.

The months and years of thoughtless neglect had told on the sensitive little frame, and she was in no fit state of health to encounter the horror of that scene at the lake. Add to this the over-exertion her delicate strength had suffered, combined with the drenching, and think, if you can, what it was to her when Lady Lloyd accused her of killing her own beloved brother, and her father—her idolised father—addressed those awful words to her. Who can wonder body and mind gave way together !

The Chair gave a great sigh, and paused awhile ; then said, very slowly and solemnly—

“ Boys flying kites draw back their white-winged birds,
You can't do this way, when you're flying words.
Cautious with fire is good advice, we know ;
Cautious with words is ten times doubly so.
Thoughts unexpressed may sometimes fall back dead ;
But God Himself can't kill them when they're said.”

There was a long silence. The Cushion had forgotten to be either restless or flippant, and it was in quite a gentle tone that it at last inquired, “ And what was the end ? ”

“ She died,” answered the Chair. “ They carried her into her room, and put her to bed, and I saw the doctors and nurses, and her father, going in and out for two or three days. Then there came a hush ; there were no more goings to and fro, until one morning they bore her out in her little flower-covered coffin, into the sweet sunshine, to lay her beside her mother under the marble cross in the old churchyard. I saw Sir Arthur that day ; he was shrunk and bent, his erect carriage, his proud, fearless way of holding up his head, were gone, and, I think, gone for ever.”

"And the boy, the little son," asked the Cushion, "did *he* recover?"

"No," said the Chair, "the doctors could do nothing; they said if he had been one minute less under water he would probably have been saved. One minute less—think of it; and if my lady had let Sir Arthur go when they heard the first cry for help, in all probability he would have been in time, as the terrace room was nearer the lake than the child's room where the artist was sitting, and was, moreover, on the ground floor, and opened straight on to the terrace, and the cries must have reached Sir Arthur and Lady Lloyd first of all."

"Does *she* know what the doctors said?" whispered the Cushion.

"Yes; there was an inquest on the boy, and every particular came out."

"And you believe she knew it was Ethel calling, and, thinking only of harm to her, kept him back on purpose? Oh, unfortunate mother! She must for ever feel she killed her own child, as well as——"

"Hush!" interrupted the Chair. "God knows. It is not for us to judge. If she did this thing, surely her punishment is almost heavier than she can bear."

"What became of Sir Arthur and Lady Lloyd?" asked the Cushion, after a pause.

"They shut up the house and went away immediately after the double funeral. Sir Arthur came back occasionally, but my lady never. He ordered me to be put back into this room, and each time he came he would sit for hours just where you are, Cushion, and stare up at the portrait of his lost daughter. It is a year ago now since he last came, and I heard him mutter as he leant back in me, with one hand pressed to his heart, and his sad eyes fixed on the picture, 'Will you come to

meet me in the Better Land? will you forgive me then, little daughter? Your earthly father turned traitor, but your Heavenly Father became your Everlasting Comforter. He wiped all tears from your sweet eyes. Oh, little Ethel! I have carried a dagger in my heart for all this time—night and day. I sleep and wake with the echo of those words in my ears, “You, who have tried to murder your brother, how dare you stand there and look at your horrible deed? Go out of my sight.” Go out of my sight,’ he repeated, moaning. ‘And she went—oh, God help me!—she went. Until seventy times seven,’ he whispered presently; and then, with a heart-broken sigh, he got up and went away.

“He left the castle next day to return to Lady Lloyd, and lately I heard the servants say he had died abroad, and that the new heir is coming home.”

“I suppose it’s true,” said the Cushion, “or why should I have been brought here; and, moreover, a quantity of other new things came at the same time as I did. Poor Sir Arthur, I can’t help pitying him greatly, and that poor pretty little girl.”

“She is better off,” said the Chair. “She had too tender and sensitive a nature for the wear and tear of life. She would have suffered too much had she lived. I expect God knew that, and so He took her back to her mother.”

“And to Himself,” whispered the Cushion.

“Yes,” answered the Chair, reverently. “And now Sir Arthur is with them, and all dark things are made clear.”

“I am much obliged for your story, Mr. Chair,” said the Cushion politely, “and I’m very sorry I was hasty and disagreeable, and said nasty things of your faded look and old horsehair stuffing. You have

seen great sorrow, and you have a good heart. I respect and admire you, and I'll never again try to hurt your poor weak spring."

"Thank you," answered the Chair. "I hope they will let you remain in me, for I find you warm and comfortable to my old frame; and now that you are so civil and nice-spoken, it is quite a pleasure to chat with you. But I declare the dawn begins to peep in through the shutters; let us both try to get a nap before the housemaids come in to dust us and push us about."

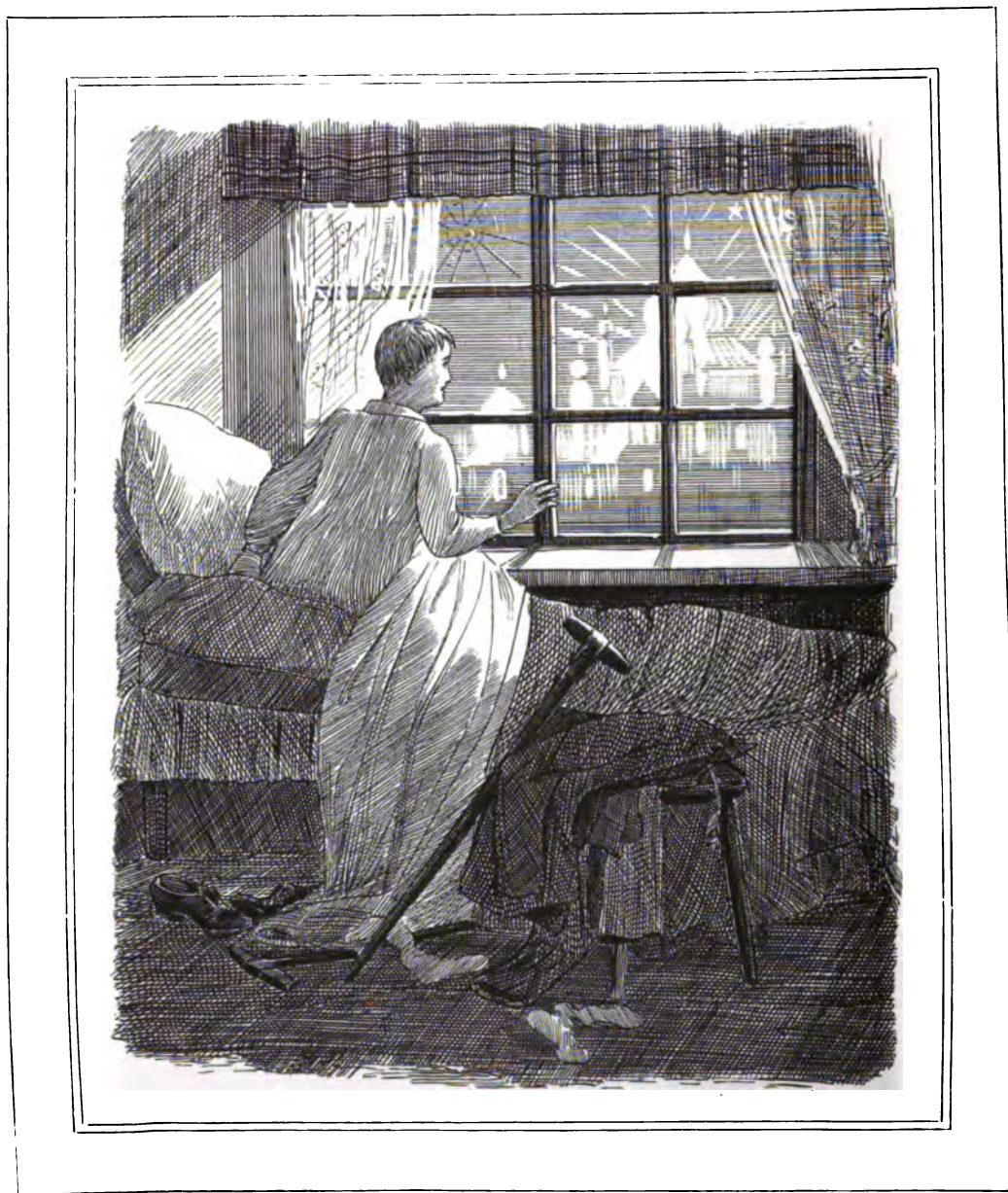
"Good night, then, or rather good morning," said the Cushion. "You ought to sleep well after all this talking."

"Good night," answered the Chair; and in another minute the gilt tassels were slowly bobbing to and fro, and Master Cushion was asleep.

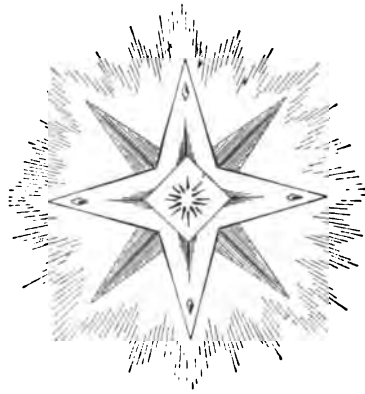
But the old Chair, looking up at the child's picture, whispered, "Little sweetheart, it is all right now, you have found your father again; his sore heart is comforted and healed, for he knows he is forgiven."



THE JEWEL PALACE



"THERE SEEMED TO STAND AN ENORMOUS, GORGEOUS CASTLE."



THE JEWEL PALACE.

“**I** AM so tired of lying here, Maggie; I *do* wish I were you, and could run and play as you do. Oh, it's very hard,” said little Tim Macgregor to his sister, one sunny summer day, when the latter ran into the cottage room, all flushed and breathless with playing and romping.

The speaker was a pale-faced, sickly-looking boy of about nine years of age, with great grey solemn eyes, under which sickness had painted two dark hollows with brushes steeped in pain and sleeplessness. He was lying on a rough couch, drawn as near the open window as the space would allow, and the crutches beside him told that the poor lad was a cripple. For seven years he had been as hardy and merry as anyone could wish, but a fall from a ladder one sad day had injured his spine and hip, and poor Tim would never again in this world be straight or strong. His sister Maggie, who was a year younger, was very good and kind to him, and often left her companions and their

merry play to sit by Tim, and amuse him with chat, and such little games as he was able for.

Mrs. Macgregor was a widow, and, being left in very poor circumstances by her late husband, was obliged to work as a charwoman to support herself and children. She was, consequently, a great deal away from home; and when Maggie was at school, or at play, little

Tim had to spend many weary, lonely hours, only occasionally cheered by the kindly visit of some neighbour.



On his good days he was able to move about the room a little, with the aid of his crutches, but a few steps at a time tired him, and very often for weeks together he was quite unable to stir from his couch. Every evening a labouring man, who lived close by, came into the cottage to carry Tim up to his little bedroom in the roof; and each morning the same kind neighbour brought him down again to the little sitting-room beside the kitchen. The cottage consisted of these two rooms on the ground floor, and above were two bedrooms, only separated from each other by a slight partition, in one of

which Mrs. Macgregor and Maggie slept, and the other belonged to Tim.

It was a poor close little chamber enough, but it had a good-sized window, through which Tim often gazed for many silent, painful hours at the sky and stars, wondering if up in those lovely peaceful regions pain and sorrow existed, and if he should ever put aside his wooden crutches and his couch, and walk and skip and run in the heavenly habitations that, he felt sure, *must* lie somewhere up there behind those glittering constellations.

On this particular day when my story opens, poor Tim had been more than usually suffering and irritable; the hours of his loneliness had seemed terribly long, and when little Maggie burst in, beaming with strong health and youthful energy, the sick boy felt with renewed keenness and regret the fact of his own incapacity, and out came the outspoken moan, "I'm *so* tired of lying here, Maggie; I do wish I were you, and could run and play as you do. Oh, it is very hard!" And so saying, poor Tim broke into a flood of bitter tears. Maggie was very kind and gentle and sympathising, and kissed and petted little Tim, and told him she had come to stay with him now, and would read to him out of her beautiful new fairy-tale book, that kind Miss Graham at the Hall had given her a few days ago; and after a little Tim grew calmer, and consented to listen to the reading; so Maggie fetched from upstairs her book, unfolding its paper wrapping with much pride and delight, and softly rubbed her first finger up and down the smooth, bright red cover, with its gilt embellishments. She settled Tim's pillows more comfortably for him, and then brought a low stool for herself, and, placing this at the head of the couch, she sat down and opened the precious volume.



"Which story shall I read, Tim?" she asked. "There are ever so many in my book."

"Read me out some of the names," he answered, "and then I'll tell you which I'd like."

So she turned to the table of contents, and read—"The Legend

of the Snow Wind," "Little Marjorie's Dream," "The Coral City," "The Star Fairy," and the——

"Stop!" interrupted Tim quickly, "that will do; read me about the Star Fairy. I'm always wishing I could know something about the beautiful stars. I'm quite ready, Maggie; begin, please."

And so Maggie, somewhat slowly, and with a good deal of emphasis on wrong words and many mispronounced ones, proceeded to read the story.

I'm not going to follow her, my little friends, because any of you that likes can buy the story of the Star Fairy, and it had, apparently, no actual bearing on my little history, although, no doubt, it had its influences. Suffice it to say, that Maggie read as well as she could, and Tim listened with rapturous attention, frequently clasping his slender thin fingers, and sighing with excess of satisfaction.

When, by-and-by, Mrs. Macgregor came home, she found her two children happily chatting together, and after supper, their kind neighbour, Patrick Nicholls, came in as usual, and carried Tim up the narrow little wooden stairs to his room. Mrs. Macgregor and Maggie both saw him comfortably settled, kissed him, and said "Good-night;" and then, leaving the window, as usual, with the curtain undrawn, they left him to himself and to sleep.

But Tim could not sleep. He kept thinking of the Star Fairy, and wondering if *he* should ever see her and her beautiful home; and then, as he stared out through his window at the darkening sky, he saw, one by one, the bright clusters of twinkling gold break through the deep blue cloud-curtain, and his heart beat quicker, and his blood ran faster in his veins, as he thought that perhaps—perhaps, some day, *he* might throw

aside his crutches and walk hand-in-hand with the Star Fairy right into those wonderful, sparkling countries. And as he stared at the twinkling sky, one particular star, larger than the rest, began to assume a shape, or rather seemed to Tim to be getting into the form of a great castle or palace!

With a low laugh, he murmured, "I'm dreaming," and, rubbing his eyes, looked again through the transparent windowpanes. Yes! truly it was so!

The great star in front was not only enlarging, but was distinctly shaping itself into the similitude of a great palace. As Tim gazed, it grew larger and larger; and by degrees, just outside his window, there stood, or seemed to stand, an enormous, gorgeous castle, its windows, doors, sides, roofs, all alike glittering and beautiful. Little Tim sprang excitedly up, and seized his crutches (forgetting entirely his scanty night-attire and the fact of his powerlessness); he made straight for the stairs, which he descended with merely a vague, passing wonder at the ease with which he was able to go down them. He crossed the little room below, opened the door, and went noiselessly out into the cool night air.



A narrow roadway and a little bit of grass-common only seemed to separate him from the shining palace, and he hurried on his crutches across both; but only to find that a flat field lay before him, and the longed-for and lovely dwelling seemed to lie on the far side. Across

the field Tim limped and stumbled, and still the enchanted mansion seemed no nearer. On the poor boy went—on—over several fields, across sundry roads, with an intense longing in his heart, and a



strange, resolved patience in his spirit, till at last—oh, happy moment!—he reached the golden, glittering portals. And—the door stood open!

With a low cry, Tim sprang forward, clasping his hands together, and, in doing so, dropped his crutches just outside the entrance door—dropped them quite unconsciously, and unheeded.

Through the porch Tim ran, rather than walked, into a most beautiful hall. *He* could not describe its beauties by-and-by, when he tried to; and if he who saw could not, how can I, who have not seen? But picture to your-

selves all you can imagine that is most fair, and perhaps you may gain a faint idea of what this palace was like.

Its marble floors, its crystal walls, its golden doors, its ceiling of twinkling stars, all combined to produce a picture of great beauty; and yet this hall seemed to be only the ante-room to still more perfect saloons; for, as Tim gazed, amazed and bewildered, a great purple cloud-curtain seemed to drift aside, and out through the opening so revealed flew a number of figures—all alike clothed in white raiment, all alike with soft, transparent, feathery wings, and each and all glittering with crown and

collar of wonderful jewels. Softly they all alighted, just in front of Tim, and one sprang forward whose brows were crowned with turquoise-stones, and his throat and waist collared and girded with the same clear blue, and whose fair hands held a great cluster of star-like forget-me-nots; and he spoke—

“I am the Turquoise Jewel, and my clear blue can still be found on earth, even in the darkest places; so seek for me, little Tim, and forget me not.”

And as the fair creature fluttered and faded into space, a choir of voices seemed to sing, “Blessed are they that have Faith; for they shall abide for ever in the Palace of the King.”

Then out floated another lovely Being, clear-eyed, fair, and beautiful, and the silver-soft radiance of moonlight shimmered in her every movement; and she spoke—

“I am the Pearl Jewel; see round my head and throat the chaplet and collar of lustrous pearls; they are my emblems, and you, little mortal, can win them also, if you try.”

And again the voices rang out in lovely chorus—“Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall gleam as pearls in the Palace of the King.”

Then yet another spirit came towards Tim; his fair white robes were brocaded with rubies, his shoes even were sewn with the precious stones, and on his brow was a glowing coronet of the same; and he clasped his hands together and spoke aloud—

“I am the Ruby Jewel, and my name is Devotion. On earth I was poor and pale and ugly and sick, but I knew how to love. I loved my everlasting Sovereign; all my heart’s best worship I gave to

Him ; and now He has filled me with colour and beauty, and I shine for ever in the Palace of my King."

And the others all sang in jubilant chorus, "Oh, blessed are they who love ; for the Lord God shall wipe all tears from their eyes, and they shall glow as rubies in the Palace of the King."

Then from out the throng of shining star-like spirits, flashed one whose robes were fashioned of star-dust, glittering, colour-full, whose brow was surmounted with rays of flashing, full-hued lights, whose every movement showed a rainbow radiance more lovely than words could tell ; and he spoke—

"I am the Diamond Jewel. Oh, little Tim, pure as pearls, clear as crystal, rare as the flawless diamond, and perfect as Heaven itself, is the Truth Spirit. Seek for it, pray for it, and by-and-by who knows but that *your* everlasting robes shall be also glittering with star diamonds, and *your* brow crowned with the jewels of truth."

And the voices sang forth, "Blessed are they who seek Truth and love it ; for they shall be as diamonds in the Palace of the King."

And yet once more there came forth one whose robes were of soft, transparent sea-blue, and her waist girt with great stones of clear sapphire, and her fair hair crowned with them, and out of her lily-hued face two pure blue eyes, like stars of God's own making, looked down straight into Tim's ; and she spoke—

"Oh, little Tim, I was once weak and crooked and crippled like you, and the world was to me a place of sore trouble, need, and suffering. I envied the strong, I repined over my own weakness ; but one day, down through the sunbeams, One came to me who knew all my grief and understood all my trouble, and as one whom his mother comforteth

so He comforted me, and He showed me how to travel along life's journey, and how to gain admittance into the 'Jewel Palace,' and into the presence of the King."

And little Tim, clasping his hands and gazing at the Sapphire Jewel, said, "How? oh, teach me how!"

And the Jewel answered, "You must travel along the road called Patience; it is narrow and long, and often steep and difficult, and many are the rough and stony places that lie in its way. Oh, I was tired often, and sometimes all but hopeless; but at those times I would close my eyes and think, and straight through the strange mists of thought would come into my mind a verse I had heard once in church—'And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up My jewels.' One of the Lord's *jewels*! Oh, what a comfort that was to a helpless, crippled, useless child! and when I opened my eyes, there, beside me in the thorny road, was a beautiful cluster of forget-me-nots. I pulled them, and put them into my bosom, and while they bloomed there I felt and knew that I and my need would never be forgotten; and so, whenever the Patience road grew very hard to follow, I went to seek again at the roadside for the sweet blue star forget-me-nots."



"But," said Tim, very slowly, "if there were none there?"

A radiant smile beamed from the sapphire eyes of the Spirit, as she answered, "None ever sought for Faith and failed to find it; in my need, in my faltering weakness, I prayed for the star flowers, and I *always* found them, Tim."

"But," objected Tim, frowning slightly, with a puzzled expression, "is Faith enough? The other spirits told me that Purity, Love, Truth, were their jewels in the Palace of the King, and *you*, I don't know what *you* are?" And even as the questioning words died on his lips, there burst forth from the spirit through a song of exceeding beauty, "Blessed are the peace-makers, blessed are the comforters; for they shall glow as sapphires in the Palace of the King."



"No, little Tim," answered the Sapphire Jewel, "Faith is not enough, but it comes first. Gather your star Forget-me-nots, and bear them always with you, for they will speak to your heart, and tell you more still is wanted. They will whisper to you that out of true Faith good work *must* come; a pure life, a perfect truth, a devoted love that brings forth fruits of

charity and good living; these are all wanted to fit you for the Palace of the King."

"Then," asked the little boy, "why are you not covered with pearls, and rubies, and diamonds, and other jewels, as well as sapphires; and why are the other spirits not?"

"Oh, little inquiring mortal," interrupted the Sapphire Jewel, "no *creature* is *all* perfect. In the robes of the King alone all excellence, all perfection, all beauty are combined. In His glory all jewels are united;

but we who are His servants rejoice even in possessing a portion of His lustre."

"And what will be my jewel if I walk along the Patience road, and gather the flowers of Faith?" asked Tim anxiously.

And the spirit chorus sang in melodious unison, "Blessed are they who suffer in patient endurance; for they shall gleam as beryls in the Palace of the King."

And as they sang in fuller, louder chorus, the great purple cloud-curtain swept down and hid away the jewel spirits, and floated its soft folds even between the glorious glittering mansion and the little crippled boy, who suddenly found himself *outside* the lovely Jewel Palace; the door shut, and his crutches again in his hands. As he gazed perplexedly at the closed golden door, it grew paler; the whole building began to get dimmer and more indistinct each instant—diminishing, fading, passing—until, all in a moment, Tim was lying in his own poor little room, staring through his open window at the great glittering star, that almost seemed to smile on him as he looked.

When Mrs. Macgregor entered Tim's room in the morning, the little boy was lying fast asleep, one little thin arm flung under his head, and on his delicate face lay the radiance of a lovely smile—so fair a smile, that the mother who saw it suddenly thanked God that some vision of joy had come to her poor crippled boy.

All that morning Tim was very quiet and thoughtful, and when Maggie returned from school in the afternoon, he asked her to pick him a bunch of forget-me-nots, which she very quickly did, as plenty of them grew beside a little streamlet that trickled at the back of Mrs. Macgregor's cottage.

"Put them in a mug for me, Maggie dear," he said; "and then will you bring me some paper and a pencil? for I want to write down something before I forget."

"What do you want to write?" asked Maggie curiously, as she brought the necessary materials; but Tim only smiled at her, and said, "You shall hear some day, Maggie, but not yet; I must see first what good things my star-flowers will help me to win," and his thin fingers lovingly caressed the blue blossoms.

"What do you mean, Tim? I don't see how these blue flowers can bring you any good things; why, they are only common weeds!"

"Common! No, Maggie; God made them, and they are called 'Forget-me-nots.' They mean belief, Maggie—trust—they are the very emblems of Faith."

Maggie was rather puzzled, and a little surprised; and she grew more puzzled and surprised still, as days and weeks went on; and not only she, but her mother and the neighbours also, for Tim was like a different boy—so gentle, so quiet—enduring hours of pain and sleeplessness with a sweet patience that won him the love and tender admiration of all around. The irritable moments came sometimes; a repining word would now and then rise to his lips; but when the bitter spirit came to tempt and try him, he closed his eyes and prayed for the gift of Faith, and truly, as the Sapphire Jewel had told him, he never failed to find it, and with it the will, the power to bring forth the fruits of Faith.

And now I think I can hear some little reader ask, "And what became of Tim? and did he ever read to Maggie the story of his wonderful dream?"

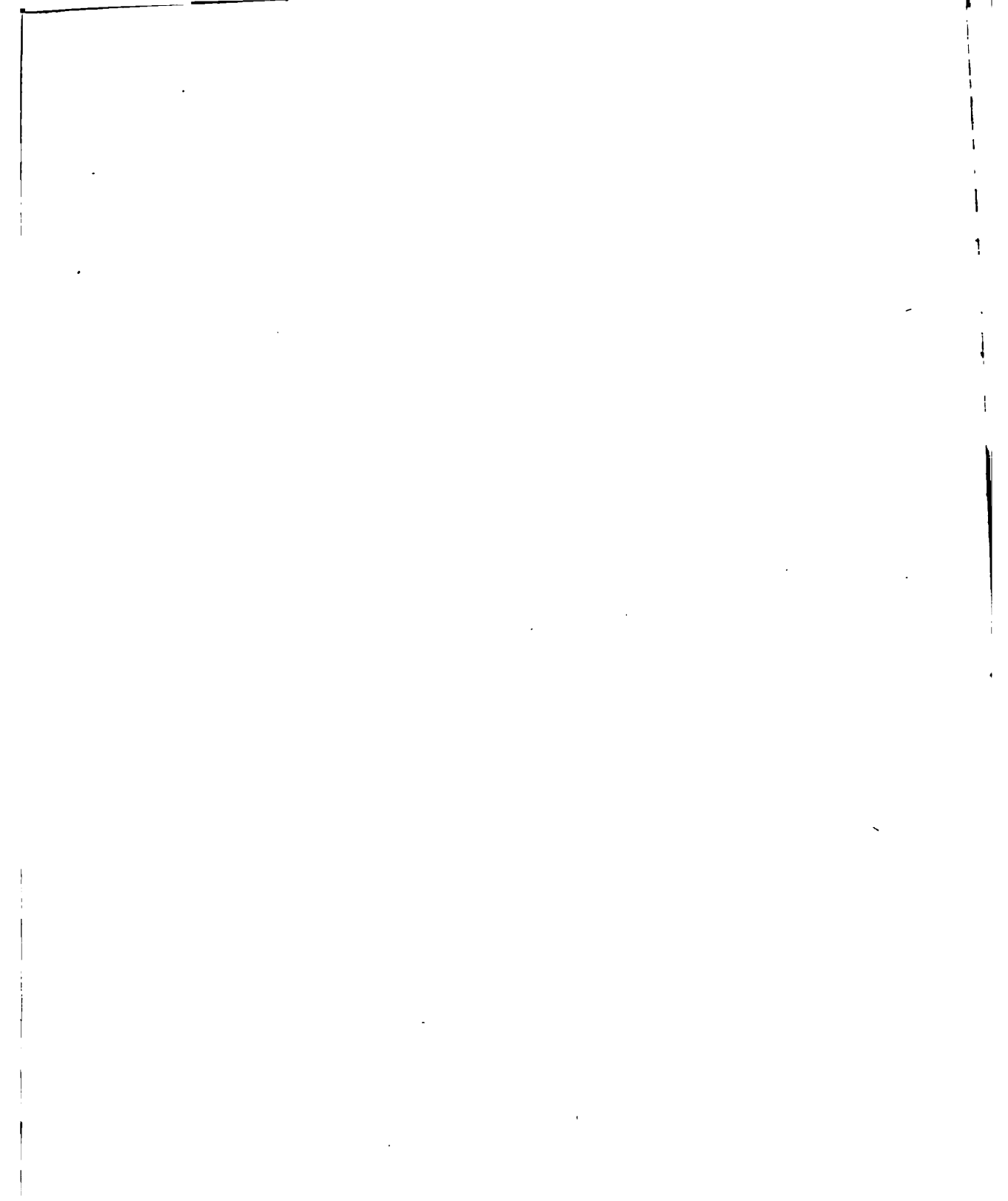
And because I remember how greatly I myself always desired to hear "the very end," I will tell you just what I know about it.

It was only the other day that Tim put his little manuscript into Maggie's hands, with permission to read it.

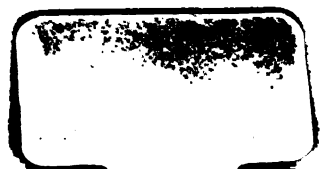
Maggie is growing into a woman now, and a good and useful woman she promises to be, for Tim's example and life have had a great and holy influence upon her; and when she placed the pencilled papers before me, a beautiful smile filled her eyes, that were moist with unshed tears, as she said, "I don't grieve for Tim, ma'am. I am *glad* the Patience road is travelled, the Jewel Palace entered; and I know—I know the Heavenly Voices are singing in glorious welcome—

"Blessed are they who *do* the will of our Father which is in Heaven; for they shall shine as Stars in the Palace of the King."









Poor Daddy LONG-LEGS

A man in a brown suit and top hat is running across the middle of the cover. A spiderweb is positioned above him, with a small spider in the center. Four large dragonflies are scattered around the scene: one in the top left, one in the top right, one in the middle right, and one in the bottom left. The man's right leg is extended forward, and his left leg is bent behind him.

OR

A PEEP INTO FAIRYLAND

AND

OTHER STORIES

BY

L.E.C.