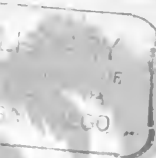




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THE KING OF
THE GOLDEN
RIVER

JOHN RUSKIN



Herbert



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ANNE MERRIMAN Peck

"COME, GLUCK, MY BOY," SAID THE VOICE OUT OF THE POT, "I'M ALL RIGHT; POUR ME OUT."

—*The King of the Golden River.*

THE KING OF THE GOLDEN RIVER

By JOHN RUSKIN

•
and Other Stories



Illustrated BY
J. WATSON DAVIS

GROSSET & DUNLAP

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NOTE

THE KING OF THE GOLDEN RIVER was written in 1841, at the request of a very young lady, and solely for her amusement, without any idea of publication. It has since remained in the possession of a friend, to whose suggestion, and the passive assent of the Author, the Publishers are indebted for the opportunity of printing it.

The Illustrations, by Mr. J. Watson Davis, will, it is hoped, be found to embody the Author's ideas with characteristic spirit.

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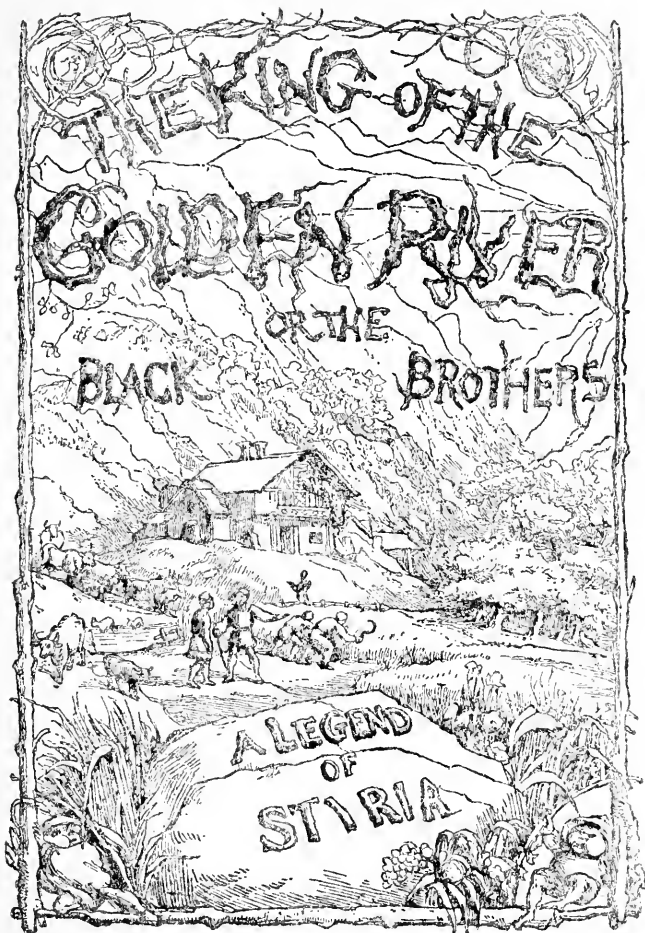
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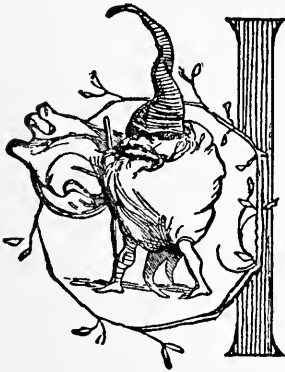
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THE KING OF THE GOLDEN RIVER;
OR,
THE BLACK BROTHERS.

CHAPTER I.

HOW THE AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM OF THE BLACK BROTHERS WAS INTERFERED WITH BY SOUTH-WEST WIND, ESQUIRE.



IN a secluded and mountainous part of Stiria there was, in old time, a valley of the most surprising and luxuriant fertility. It was surrounded, on all sides, by steep and rocky mountains, rising into peaks, which were always covered with snow, and from which a number of torrents descended in constant cataracts. One of these fell westward, over the face of a crag so high, that,

1

when the sun had set to everything else, and all below was darkness, his beams still shone full upon this waterfall, so that it looked like a shower of gold. It was, therefore, called by the people of the neighborhood, the Golden River. It was strange that none of these streams fell into the valley itself. They all descended on the other side of the mountains, and wound away through broad plains and by populous cities. But the clouds were drawn so constantly to the snowy hills, and rested so softly in the circular hollow, that in time of drought and heat, when all the country round was burnt up, there was still rain in the little valley; and its crops were so heavy, and its hay so high, and its apples so red, and its grapes so blue, and its wine so rich, and its honey so sweet, that it was a marvel to every one who beheld it, and was commonly called the Treasure Valley.

The whole of this little valley belonged to three brothers, called Schwartz, Hans, and Gluck. Schwartz and Hans, the two elder brothers, were very ugly men, with overhanging eyebrows and small dull eyes, which were

always half shut, so that you couldn't see into *them*, and always fancied they saw very far into *you*. They lived by farming the Treasure Valley, and very good farmers they were. They killed everything that did not pay for its eating. They shot the blackbirds, because they pecked the fruit; and killed the hedgehogs, lest they should suck the cows; they poisoned the crickets for eating the crumbs in the kitchen; and smothered the cicadas, which used to sing all summer in the lime trees. They worked their servants without any wages, till they would not work any more, and then quarreled with them, and turned them out of doors without paying them. It would have been very odd, if with such a farm, and such a system of farming, they hadn't got very rich; and very rich they *did* get. They generally contrived to keep their corn by them till it was very dear, and then sell it for twice its value; they had heaps of gold lying about on their floors, yet it was never known that they had given so much as a penny or a crust in charity; they never went to mass; grumbled perpetually

at paying tithes ; and were, in a word, of so cruel and grinding a temper, as to receive from all those with whom they had any dealings, the nickname of the "Black Brothers."

The youngest brother, Gluck, was as completely opposed, in both appearance and character, to his seniors as could possibly be imagined or desired. He was not above twelve years old, fair, blue-eyed, and kind in temper to every living thing. He did not, of course, agree particularly well with his brothers, or rather, they did not agree with *him*. He was usually appointed to the honorable office of turnspit, when there was anything to roast, which was not often ; for, to do the brothers justice, they were hardly less sparing upon themselves than upon other people. At other times he used to clean the shoes, floors, and sometimes the plates, occasionally getting what was left on them, by way of encouragement, and a wholesale quantity of dry blows, by way of education.

Things went on in this manner for a long time. At last came a very wet summer, and everything went wrong in the country around. The

hay had hardly been got in, when the haystacks were floated bodily down to the sea by an inundation; the vines were cut to pieces with the hail; the corn was all killed by a black blight; only in the Treasure Valley, as usual, all was safe. As it had rain when there was rain nowhere else, so it had sun when there was sun nowhere else. Everybody came to buy corn at the farm, and went away pouring maledictions on the Black Brothers. They asked what they liked, and got it, except from the poor people, who could only beg, and several of whom were starved at their very door, without the slightest regard or notice.

It was drawing towards winter, and very cold weather, when one day the two elder brothers had gone out, with their usual warning to little Gluck, who was left to mind the roast, that he was to let nobody in, and give nothing out. Gluck sat down quite close to the fire, for it was raining very hard, and the kitchen walls were by no means dry or comfortable-looking. He turned and turned, and the roast got nice and brown. "What a pity," thought Gluck,

“my brothers never ask anybody to dinner. I’m sure, when they’ve got such a nice piece of mutton as this, and nobody else has got so much as a piece of dry bread, it would do their hearts good to have somebody to eat it with them.”

Just as he spoke, there came a double knock at the house door, yet heavy and dull, as though the knocker had been tied up—more like a puff than a knock.

“It must be the wind,” said Gluck; “nobody else would venture to knock double knocks at our door.”

No; it wasn’t the wind: there it came again very hard, and what was particularly astounding, the knocker seemed to be in a hurry, and not to be in the least afraid of the consequences. Gluck went to the window, opened it, and put his head out to see who it was.

It was the most extraordinary looking little gentleman he had ever seen in his life. He had a very large nose, slightly brass-colored; his cheeks were very round, and very red, and might have warranted a supposition that he had been blowing a refractory fire for the last eight



As Gluck looked out of the window, he saw the most extraordinary looking little gentleman he had ever seen in his life.—Page 6.

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and forty hours ; his eyes twinkled merrily through long silky eyelashes, his mustaches curled twice round like a corkscrew on each side of his mouth, and his hair, of a curious mixed pepper-and-salt color, descended far over his shoulders. He was about four feet six in height, and wore a conical pointed cap of nearly the same altitude, decorated with a black feather some three feet long. His doublet was prolonged behind into something resembling a violent exaggeration of what is now termed a "swallow tail," but was much obscured by the swelling folds of an enormous black, glossy-looking cloak, which must have been very much too long in calm weather, as the wind, whistling round the old house, carried it clear out from the wearer's shoulders to about four times his own length.

Gluck was so perfectly paralyzed by the singular appearance of his visitor, that he remained fixed without uttering a word, until the old gentleman, having performed another, and a more energetic concerto on the knocker, turned round to look after his fly-away cloak. In so

doing he caught sight of Gluck's little yellow head jammed in the window, with its mouth and eyes very wide open indeed.

"Hollo!" said the little gentleman, "that's not the way to answer the door: I'm wet, let me in."

To do the little gentleman justice, he *was* wet. His feather hung down between his legs like a beaten puppy's tail, dripping like an umbrella; and from the ends of his mustaches the water was running into his waistcoat pockets, and out again like a mill stream.

"I beg pardon, sir," said Gluck, "I'm very sorry, but I really can't."

"Can't what?" said the old gentleman.

"I can't let you in, sir,—I can't, indeed; my brothers would beat me to death, sir, if I thought of such a thing. What do you want, sir?"

"Want?" said the old gentleman, petulantly. "I want fire, and shelter; and there's your great fire there blazing, crackling, and dancing on the walls, with nobody to feel it. Let me in, I say; I only want to warm myself."

Gluck had had his head, by this time, so long out of the window, that he began to feel it was really unpleasantly cold, and when he turned, and saw the beautiful fire rustling and roaring, and throwing long bright tongues up the chimney, as if it were licking its chops at the savory smell of the leg of mutton, his heart melted within him that it should be burning away for nothing. "He does look *very* wet," said little Gluck; "I'll just let him in for a quarter of an hour." Round he went to the door, and opened it; and as the little gentleman walked in, there came a gust of wind through the house, that made the old chimneys totter.

"That's a good boy," said the little gentleman. "Never mind your brothers. I'll talk to them."

"Pray, sir, don't do any such thing," said Gluck. "I can't let you stay till they come; they'd be the death of me."

"Dear me," said the old gentleman, "I'm very sorry to hear that. How long may I stay?"

"Only till the mutton's done, sir," replied Gluck, "and it's very brown."

Then the old gentleman walked into the

kitchen and sat himself down on the hob, with the top of his cap accommodated up the chimney, for it was a great deal too high for the roof.

“You’ll soon dry there, sir,” said Gluck, and sat down again to turn the mutton. But the old gentleman did *not* dry there, but went on drip, drip, dripping among the cinders, and the fire fizzed, and sputtered, and began to look very black, and uncomfortable: never was such a cloak; every fold in it ran like a gutter.

“I beg pardon, sir,” said Gluck at length, after watching the water spreading in long, quicksilver-like streams over the floor for a quarter of an hour; “mayn’t I take your cloak?”

“No, thank you,” said the old gentleman.

“Your cap, sir?”

“I am all right, thank you,” said the old gentleman rather gruffly.

“But,—sir,—I’m very sorry,” said Gluck, hesitatingly; “but—really, sir,—you’re—putting the fire out.”

“It’ll take longer to do the mutton, then,” replied his visitor drily.

Gluck was very much puzzled by the behavior



"That mutton looks very nice," said the old gentleman. "Can't you give me a little bit?"—Page 11.

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of his guest; it was such a strange mixture of coolness and humility. He turned away at the string meditatively for another five minutes.

“That mutton looks very nice,” said the old gentleman at length. “Can’t you give me a little bit?”

“Impossible, sir,” said Gluck.

“I’m very hungry,” continued the old gentleman: “I’ve had nothing to eat yesterday, nor to-day. They surely couldn’t miss a bit from the knuckle!”

He spoke in so very melancholy a tone, that it quite melted Gluck’s heart. “They promised me one slice to-day, sir,” said he; “I can give you that, but not a bit more.”

“That’s a good boy,” said the old gentleman again.

Then Gluck warmed a plate, and sharpened a knife. “I don’t care if I do get beaten for it,” thought he. Just as he had cut a large slice out of the mutton, there came a tremendous rap at the door. The old gentleman jumped off the hob, as if it had suddenly become inconveniently warm. Gluck fitted the slice into the mutton

again, with desperate efforts at exactitude, and ran to open the door.

“What did you keep us waiting in the rain for?” said Schwartz, as he walked in throwing his umbrella in Gluck’s face. “Aye! what for, indeed, you little vagabond?” said Hans, administering an educational box on the ear, as he followed his brother into the kitchen.

“Bless my soul!” said Schwartz when he opened the door.

“Amen,” said the little gentleman, who had taken his cap off, and was standing in the middle of the kitchen, bowing with the utmost possible velocity.

“Who’s that?” said Schwartz, catching up a rolling-pin, and turning to Gluck with a fierce frown.

“I don’t know, indeed, brother,” said Gluck in great terror.

“How did he get in?” roared Schwartz.

“My dear brother,” said Gluck, deprecatingly, “he was so *very* wet!”

The rolling-pin was descending on Gluck’s head; but, at the instant, the old gentleman in-

terposed his conical cap, on which it crashed with a shock that shook the water out of it all over the room. What was very odd, the rolling-pin no sooner touched the cap, than it flew out of Schwartz's hand, spinning like a straw in a high wind, and fell into the corner at the further end of the room.

"Who are you, sir?" demanded Schwartz, turning upon him.

"What's your business?" snarled Hans.

"I'm a poor old man, sir," the little gentleman began very modestly, "and I saw your fire through the window, and begged shelter for a quarter of an hour."

"Have the goodness to walk out again, then," said Schwartz. "We've quite enough water in our kitchen, without making it a drying house."

"It is a cold day to turn an old man out in, sir; look at my gray hairs." They hung down to his shoulders, as I told you before.

"Aye!" said Hans, "there are enough of them to keep you warm. Walk!"

"I'm very, very hungry, sir; couldn't you spare me a bit of bread before I go?"

“Bread, indeed!” said Schwartz; “do you suppose we’ve nothing to do with our bread, but to give it to such red-nosed fellows as you?”

“Why don’t you sell your feather?” said Hans, sneeringly. “Out with you.”

“A little bit,” said the old gentleman.

“Be off!” said Schwartz.

“Pray, gentlemen.”

“Off, and be hanged!” cried Hans, seizing him by the collar. But he had no sooner touched the old gentleman’s collar, than away he went after the rolling-pin, spinning round and round, till he fell into the corner on the top of it. Then Schwartz was very angry, and ran at the old gentleman to turn him out; but he also had hardly touched him, when away he went after Hans and the rolling-pin, and hit his head against the wall as he tumbled into the corner. And so there they lay, all three.

Then the old gentleman spun himself round with velocity in the opposite direction; continued to spin until his long cloak was all wound neatly about him; clapped his cap on his head, very much on one side (for it could

not stand upright without going through the ceiling), gave an additional twist to his corkscrew mustaches, and replied with perfect coolness: "Gentlemen, I wish you a very good morning. At twelve o'clock to-night I'll call again; after such a refusal of hospitality as I have just experienced, you will not be surprised if that visit is the last I ever pay you."

"If ever I catch you here again," muttered Schwartz, coming, half frightened, out of the corner—but, before he could finish his sentence, the old gentleman had shut the house door behind him with a great bang: and there drove past the window, at the same instant, a wreath of ragged cloud, that whirled and rolled away down the valley in all manner of shapes; turning over and over in the air; and melting away at last in a gush of rain.

"A very pretty business, indeed, Mr. Gluck!" said Schwartz. "Dish the mutton, sir. If ever I catch you at such a trick again—bless me, why the mutton's been cut!"

"You promised me one slice, brother, you know," said Gluck.

“ Oh ! and you were cutting it hot, I suppose, and going to catch all the gravy. It'll be long before I promise you such a thing again. Leave the room, sir ; and have the kindness to wait in the coal-cellar till I call you.”

Gluck left the room melancholy enough. The brothers ate as much mutton as they could, locked the rest in the cupboard, and proceeded to get very drunk after dinner.

Such a night as it was ! Howling wind, and rushing rain, without intermission. The brothers had just sense enough left to put up all the shutters, and double bar the door, before they went to bed. They usually slept in the same room. As the clock struck twelve, they were both awakened by a tremendous crash. Their door burst open with a violence that shook the house from top to bottom.

“ What's that ? ” cried Schwartz, starting up in his bed.

“ Only I,” said the little gentleman.

The two brothers sat up on their bolster, and stared into the darkness. The room was full of water, and by a misty moonbeam, which



As the clock struck twelve, the brothers were awakened by a tremendous crash. "What's that?" cried Schwartz, starting up in his bed. "Only I," said the little gentleman.—Page 16.

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found its way through a hole in the shutter, they could see in the midst of it, an enormous foam globe, spinning round, and bobbing up and down like a cork, on which, as on a most luxurious cushion, reclined the little old gentleman, cap and all. There was plenty of room for it now, for the roof was off.

“Sorry to incommode you,” said their visitor, ironically. “I’m afraid your beds are dampish; perhaps you had better go to your brother’s room: I’ve left the ceiling on there.”

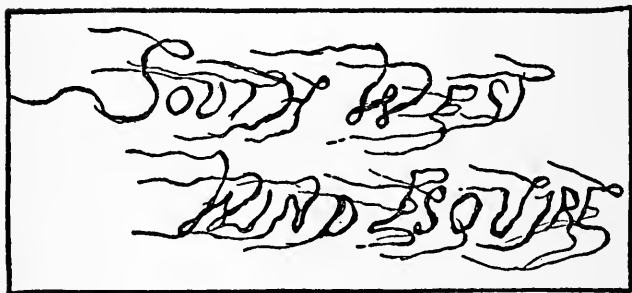
They required no second admonition, but rushed into Gluck’s room, wet through, and in an agony of terror.

“You’ll find my card on the kitchen table,” the old gentleman called after them. “Remember, the *last* visit.”

“Pray Heaven it may!” said Schwartz, shuddering. And the foam globe disappeared.

Dawn came at last, and the two brothers looked out of Gluck’s little window in the morning. The Treasure Valley was one mass of ruin and desolation. The inundation had swept away trees, crops, and cattle, and left in

their stead, a waste of red sand, and gray mud. The two brothers crept shivering and horror-struck into the kitchen. The water had gutted the whole first floor ; corn, money, almost every movable thing had been swept away, and there was left only a small white card on the kitchen table. On it, in large, breezy, long-legged letters, were engraved the words :—



CHAPTER II.

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE THREE BROTHERS
AFTER THE VISIT OF SOUTH-WEST WIND, ESQUIRE;
AND HOW LITTLE GLUCK HAD AN INTERVIEW
WITH THE KING OF THE GOLDEN RIVER.



OUTH-WEST WIND, Esquire, was as good as his word. After the momentous visit above related, he entered the Treasure Valley no more; and, what was worse, he had so much influence with his relations, the West Winds in general, and used it so effectually, that they all adopted a similar line of conduct. So no rain fell in the valley from one year's end to another. Though everything remained green and flourishing in the plains below, the inheritance of the Three Brothers was a desert. What had once been the richest soil in the kingdom, became a shifting heap of red sand; and the brothers, unable longer to contend with the adverse skies, abandoned their valueless patrimony in despair, to seek some means of gaining a livelihood among the cities and people of the plains. All their money was gone, and they had nothing left but

some curious old-fashioned pieces of gold plate, the last remnants of their ill-gotten wealth.

“Suppose we turn goldsmiths?” said Schwartz to Hans, as they entered the large city. “It is a good knave’s trade ; we can put a great deal of copper into the gold, without any one’s finding it out.”

The thought was agreed to be a very good one ; they hired a furnace, and turned goldsmiths. But two slight circumstances affected their trade : the first, that people did not approve of the coppered gold ; the second, that the two elder brothers, whenever they had sold anything, used to leave little Gluck to mind the furnace, and go and drink out the money in the ale-house next door. So they melted all their gold, without making money enough to buy more, and were at last reduced to one large drinking mug, which an uncle of his had given to little Gluck, and which he was very fond of, and would not have parted with for the world ; though he never drank anything out of it but milk and water. The mug was a very odd mug to look at. The handle was formed of two wreaths of flowing-

golden hair, so finely spun that it looked more like silk than metal, and these wreaths descended into, and mixed with, a beard and whiskers of the same exquisite workmanship, which surrounded and decorated a very fierce little face, of the reddest gold imaginable, right in the front of the mug, with a pair of eyes in it which seemed to command its whole circumference. It was impossible to drink out of the mug without being subjected to an intense gaze out of the side of these eyes ; and Schwartz positively averred, that once, after emptying it, full of Rhenish seventeen times, he had seen them wink ! When it came to the mug's turn to be made into spoons, it half broke poor little Gluck's heart ; but the brothers only laughed at him, tossed the mug into the melting-pot, and staggered out to the ale-house : leaving him, as usual, to pour the gold into bars, when it was all ready.

When they were gone, Gluck took a farewell look at his old friend in the melting-pot. The flowing hair was all gone ; nothing remained but the red nose, and the sparkling eyes, which looked more malicious than ever. "And no

wonder," thought Gluck, "after being treated in that way." He sauntered disconsolately to the window, and sat himself down to catch the fresh evening air, and escape the hot breath of the furnace. Now this window commanded a direct view of the range of mountains, which, as I told you before, overhung the Treasure Valley, and more especially of the peak from which fell the Golden River. It was just at the close of the day, and, when Gluck sat down at the window, he saw the rocks of the mountain tops, all crimson, and purple with the sunset; and there were bright tongues of fiery cloud burning and quivering about them; and the river, brighter than all, fell, in a waving column of pure gold, from precipice to precipice, with the double arch of a broad purple rainbow stretched across it, flushing and fading alternately in the wreaths of spray.

"Ah!" said Gluck aloud, after he had looked at it for a while, "if that river were really all gold, what a nice thing it would be."

"No, it wouldn't, Gluck," said a clear metallic voice, close at his ear.

“Bless me, what’s that?” exclaimed Gluck, jumping up. There was nobody there. He looked round the room, and under the table, and a great many times behind him, but there was certainly nobody there, and he sat down again at the window. This time he didn’t speak, but he couldn’t help thinking again that it would be very convenient if the river were really all gold.

“Not at all, my boy,” said the same voice, louder than before.

“Bless me!” said Gluck again, “what is that?” He looked again into all the corners, and cupboards, and then began turning round, and round, as fast as he could in the middle of the room, thinking there was somebody behind him, when the same voice struck again on his ear. It was singing now very merrily, “Lala-lira-la;” no words, only a soft running effervescent melody, something like that of a kettle on the boil. Gluck looked out of the window. No, it was certainly in the house. Up-stairs, and down-stairs. No, it was certainly in that very room, coming in quicker time, and clearer notes, every

moment. "Lala-lira-la." All at once it struck Gluck that it sounded louder near the furnace. He ran to the opening, and looked in: yes, he saw right, it seemed to be coming, not only out of the furnace, but out of the pot. He uncovered it, and ran back in a great fright, for the pot was certainly singing! He stood in the farthest corner of the room, with his hands up, and his mouth open, for a minute or two, when the singing stopped, and the voice became clear, and pronounciative.

"Hollo!" said the voice.

Gluck made no answer.

"Hollo! Gluck, my boy," said the pot again.

Gluck summoned all his energies, walked straight up to the crucible, drew it out of the furnace, and looked in. The gold was all melted, and its surface as smooth and polished as a river; but instead of reflecting little Gluck's head, as he looked in, he saw meeting his glance from beneath the gold, the red nose, and sharp eyes of his old friend of the mug, a thousand times redder, and sharper than ever he had seen them in his life.

“Come, Gluck, my boy,” said the voice out of the pot again, “I’m all right ; pour me out.”

But Gluck was too much astonished to do anything of the kind.

“Pour me out, I say,” said the voice rather gruffly.

Still Gluck couldn’t move.

“*Will* you pour me out?” said the voice passionately, “I’m too hot.”

By a violent effort, Gluck recovered the use of his limbs, took hold of the crucible, and sloped it, so as to pour out the gold. But instead of a liquid stream, there came out, first, a pair of pretty little yellow legs, then some coat tails, then a pair of arms stuck a-kimbo, and, finally, the well-known head of his friend the mug ; all which articles, uniting as they rolled out, stood up energetically on the floor, in the shape of a little golden dwarf, about a foot and a half high.

“That’s right!” said the dwarf, stretching out first his legs, and then his arms, and then shaking his head up and down, and as far round as it would go, for five minutes, with-

out stopping ; apparently with the view of ascertaining if he were quite correctly put together, while Gluck stood contemplating him in speechless amazement. He was dressed in a slashed doublet of spun gold, so fine in its texture, that the prismatic colors gleamed over it, as if on a surface of mother of pearl ; and, over this brilliant doublet, his hair and beard fell full half way to the ground, in waving curls, so exquisitely delicate, that Gluck could hardly tell where they ended ; they seemed to melt into air. The features of the face, however, were by no means finished with the same delicacy ; they were rather coarse, slightly inclining to coppery in complexion, and indicative, in expression, of a very pertinacious and intractable disposition in their small proprietor. When the dwarf had finished his self-examination, he turned his small sharp eyes full on Gluck, and stared at him deliberately for a minute or two. “ No, it wouldn't, Gluck, my boy,” said the little man.

This was certainly rather an abrupt, and unconnected mode of commencing conversation.

It might indeed be supposed to refer to the course of Gluck's thoughts, which had first produced the dwarf's observations out of the pot; but whatever it referred to, Gluck had no inclination to dispute the dictum.

"Wouldn't it, sir?" said Gluck, very mildly, and submissively indeed.

"No," said the dwarf, conclusively. "No, it wouldn't." And with that the dwarf pulled his cap hard over his brows, and took two turns, of three feet long, up and down the room, lifting his legs up very high, and setting them down very hard. This pause gave time for Gluck to collect his thoughts a little, and, seeing no great reason to view his diminutive visitor with dread, and feeling his curiosity overcome his amazement, he ventured on a question of peculiar delicacy.

"Pray, sir," said Gluck, rather hesitatingly, "were you my mug?"

On which the little man turned sharp round, walked straight up to Gluck, and drew himself up to his full height. "I," said the little man, "am the King of the Golden River." Where-

upon he turned about again, and took two more turns, some six feet long, in order to allow time for the consternation which this announcement produced in his auditor to evaporate. After which, he again walked up to Gluck and stood still, as if expecting some comment on his communication.

Gluck determined to say something at all events. "I hope your Majesty is very well," said Gluck.

"Listen!" said the little man, deigning no reply to this polite inquiry, "I am the King of what you mortals call the Golden River. The shape you saw me in, was owing to the malice of a stronger king, from whose enchantments you have this instant freed me. What I have seen of you, and your conduct to your wicked brothers, renders me willing to serve you; therefore, attend to what I tell you. Whoever shall climb to the top of that mountain from which you see the Golden River issue, and shall cast into the stream at its source, three drops of holy water, for him, and for him only, the river shall turn to gold. But no one failing

in his first, can succeed in his second attempt ; and if any one shall cast unholy water into the river, it will overwhelm him, and he will become a black stone." So saying, the King of the Golden River turned away and deliberately walked into the center of the hottest flame of the furnace. His figure became red, white, transparent, dazzling—a blaze of intense light—rose, trembled, and disappeared. The King of the Golden River had evaporated.

"Oh!" cried poor Gluck, running to look up the chimney after him ; "Oh, dear, dear, dear me ! My mug ! my mug ! my mug !"

CHAPTER III.

HOW MR. HANS SET OFF ON AN EXPEDITION TO THE GOLDEN RIVER, AND HOW HE PROSPERED THEREIN.



THE King of the Golden River had hardly made the extraordinary exit related in the last chapter, before Hans and Schwartz came roaring into the house, very savagely drunk. The discovery of the total loss of their last piece of plate had the effect of sobering them just enough to enable them to stand over Gluck, beating him very steadily for a quarter of an hour; at the expiration of which period they dropped into a couple of chairs, and requested to know what he had got to say for himself. Gluck told them his story, of which, of course, they did not believe a word. They beat him again, till their arms were tired, and staggered to bed. In the morning, however, the steadiness with which he adhered to his story obtained him some degree of credence; the immediate consequence of which was, that the two

brothers, after wrangling a long time on the knotty question, which of them should try his fortune first, drew their swords and began fighting. The noise of the fray alarmed the neighbors, who, finding they could not pacify the combatants, sent for the constable.

Hans, on hearing this, contrived to escape, and hid himself; but Schwartz was taken before the magistrate, fined for breaking the peace, and, having drunk out his last penny the evening before, was thrown into prison till he should pay.

When Hans heard this, he was much delighted, and determined to set out immediately for the Golden River. How to get the holy water, was the question. He went to the priest, but the priest could not give any holy water to so abandoned a character. So Hans went to vesper in the evening for the first time in his life, and, under pretense of crossing himself, stole a cupful, and returned home in triumph.

Next morning he got up before the sun rose, put the holy water into a strong flask, and two bottles of wine and some meat in a basket, slung

them over his back, took his alpine staff in his hand, and set off for the mountains.

On his way out of the town he had to pass the prison, and as he looked in at the windows, whom should he see but Schwartz himself peeping out of the bars, and looking very disconsolate.

“Good morning, brother,” said Hans; “have you any message for the King of the Golden River?”

Schwartz gnashed his teeth with rage, and shook the bars with all his strength; but Hans only laughed at him, and advising him to make himself comfortable till he came back again, shouldered his basket, shook the bottle of holy water in Schwartz’s face till it frothed again, and marched off in the highest spirits in the world.

It was, indeed, a morning that might have made any one happy, even with no Golden River to seek for. Level lines of dewy mist lay stretched along the valley, out of which rose the massive mountains—their lower cliffs in pale gray shadow, hardly distinguishable

from the floating vapor, but gradually ascending till they caught the sunlight, which ran in sharp touches of ruddy color, along the angular crags, and pierced, in long level rays, through their fringes of spear-like pine. Far above, shot up red splintered masses of castellated rock, jagged and shivered into myriads of fantastic forms, with here and there a streak of sunlit snow, traced down their chasms like a line of forked lightning; and, far beyond, and far above all these, fainter than the morning cloud, but purer and changeless, slept, in the blue sky, the utmost peaks of the eternal snow.

The Golden River, which sprang from one of the lower and snowless elevations, was now nearly in shadow; all but the uppermost jets of spray, which rose like slow smoke above the undulating line of the cataract, and floated away in feeble wreaths upon the morning wind.

On this object, and on this alone, Hans' eyes and thoughts were fixed; forgetting the distance he had to traverse, he set off at an imprudent rate of walking, which greatly ex-

hausted him before he had scaled the first range of the green and low hills. He was, moreover, surprised, on surmounting them, to find that a large glacier, of whose existence, notwithstanding his previous knowledge of the mountains, he had been absolutely ignorant, lay between him and the source of the Golden River. He entered on it with the boldness of a practised mountaineer; yet he thought he had never traversed so strange or so dangerous a glacier in his life. The ice was excessively slippery, and out of all its chasms came wild sounds of gushing water; not monotonous or low, but changeful and loud, rising occasionally into drifting passages of wild melody, then breaking off into short melancholy tones, or sudden shrieks, resembling those of human voices in distress or pain. The ice was broken into thousands of confused shapes, but none, Hans thought, like the ordinary forms of splintered ice. There seemed a curious *expression* about all their outlines—a perpetual resemblance to living features, distorted and scornful. Myriads of deceitful shadows, and lurid lights, played and floated

about and through the pale blue pinnacles, dazzling and confusing the sight of the traveler ; while his ears grew dull and his head giddy with the constant gush and roar of the concealed waters. These painful circumstances increased upon him as he advanced ; the ice crashed and yawned into fresh chasms at his feet, tottering spires nodded around him, and fell thundering across his path ; and though he had repeatedly faced these dangers on the most terrific glaciers, and in the wildest weather, it was with a new and oppressive feeling of panic terror that he leaped the last chasm, and flung himself, exhausted and shuddering, on the firm turf of the mountain.

He had been compelled to abandon his basket of food, which became a perilous incumbrance on the glacier, and had now no means of refreshing himself but by breaking off and eating some of the pieces of ice. This, however, relieved his thirst ; an hour's repose recruited his hardy frame, and with the indomitable spirit of avarice, he resumed his laborious journey.

His way now lay straight up a ridge of bare

red rocks, without a blade of grass to ease the foot, or a projecting angle to afford an inch of shade from the south sun. It was past noon, and the rays beat intensely upon the steep path, while the whole atmosphere was motionless, and penetrated with heat. Intense thirst was soon added to the bodily fatigue with which Hans was now afflicted ; glance after glance he cast on the flask of water which hung at his belt. " Three drops are enough," at last thought he ; " I may, at least, cool my lips with it."

He opened the flask, and was raising it to his lips, when his eye fell on an object lying on the rock beside him ; he thought it moved. It was a small dog, apparently in the last agony of death from thirst. Its tongue was out, its jaws dry, its limbs extended lifelessly, and a swarm of black ants were crawling about its lips and throat. Its eye moved to the bottle which Hans held in his hand. He raised it, drank, spurned the animal with his foot, and passed on. And he did not know how it was, but he thought that a strange shadow had suddenly come across the blue sky.

The path became steeper and more rugged every moment ; and the high hill air, instead of refreshing him, seemed to throw his blood into a fever. The noise of the hill cataracts sounded like mockery in his ears ; they were all distant, and his thirst increased every moment. Another hour passed, and he again looked down to the flask at his side ; it was half empty ; but there was much more than three drops in it. He stopped to open it, and again, as he did so, something moved in the path above him. It was a fair child, stretched nearly lifeless on the rock, its breast heaving with thirst, its eyes closed, and its lips parched and burning. Hans eyed it deliberately, drank, and passed on. And a dark gray cloud came over the sun, and long, snake-like shadows crept up along the mountain sides. Hans struggled on. The sun was sinking, but its descent seemed to bring no coolness ; the leaden weight of the dead air pressed upon his brow and heart, but the goal was near. He saw the cataract of the Golden River springing from the hillside, scarcely five hundred feet above him. He paused for a

moment to breathe, and sprang on to complete his task.

At this instant a faint cry fell on his ear. He turned, and saw a gray-haired old man extended on the rocks. His eyes were sunk, his features deadly pale, and gathered into an expression of despair. "Water!" he stretched his arms to Hans, and cried feebly, "water! I am dying."

"I have none," replied Hans; "thou hast had thy share of life." He strode over the prostrate body, and darted on. And a flash of blue lightning rose out of the East, shaped like a sword; it shook thrice over the whole heaven, and left it dark with one heavy, impenetrable shade. The sun was setting; it plunged toward the horizon like a red-hot ball.

The roar of the Golden River rose on Hans' ear. He stood at the brink of the chasm through which it ran. Its waves were filled with the red glory of the sunset: they shook their crests like tongues of fire, and flashes of bloody light gleamed along their foam. Their sound came mightier and mightier on his

senses; his brain grew giddy with the prolonged thunder. Shuddering he drew the flask from his girdle, and hurled it into the center of the torrent. As he did so, an icy chill shot through his limbs: he staggered, shrieked, and fell. The waters closed over his cry. And the moaning of the river rose wildly into the night, as it gushed over

THE BLACK STONE.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW MR. SCHWARTZ SET OFF ON AN EXPEDITION
TO THE GOLDEN RIVER, AND HOW HE PROSPERED
THEREIN.



FOR Little Gluck waited very anxiously alone in the house, for Hans' return. Finding he did not come back, he was terribly frightened, and went and told Schwartz in the prison, all that had happened. Then Schwartz was very much pleased, and said that Hans must certainly have been turned into a black stone, and he should have all the gold to himself. But Gluck was very sorry, and cried all night. When he got up in the morning, there was no bread in the house, nor any money, so Gluck went, and hired himself to another goldsmith, and he worked so hard, and so neatly, and so long every day, that he soon got money enough together to pay his brother's fine, and he went, and gave it all to Schwartz, and Schwartz got out of prison. Then Schwartz was quite pleased, and said he should have some of the

gold of the river. But Gluck only begged he would go and see what had become of Hans.

Now when Schwartz had heard that Hans had stolen the holy water, he thought to himself that such a proceeding might not be considered altogether correct by the King of the Golden River, and determined to manage matters better. So he took some more of Gluck's money, and went to a bad priest, who gave him some holy water very readily for it. Then Schwartz was sure it was all quite right. So Schwartz got up early in the morning before the sun rose, and took some bread and wine, in a basket, and put his holy water in a flask, and set off for the mountains. Like his brother he was much surprised at the sight of the glacier, and had great difficulty in crossing it, even after leaving his basket behind him. The day was cloudless, but not bright: there was a heavy purple haze hanging over the sky, and the hills looked lowering and gloomy. And as Schwartz climbed the steep rock path, the thirst came upon him, as it had upon his brother, until he lifted his flask to his lips to drink. Then he saw the

fair child lying near him on the rocks, and it cried to him, and moaned for water.

“Water indeed,” said Schwartz; “I haven’t half enough for myself,” and passed on. And as he went he thought the sunbeams grew more dim, and he saw a low bank of black cloud rising out of the West; and when he had climbed for another hour the thirst overcame him again, and he would have drunk. Then he saw the old man lying before him on the path, and heard him cry out for water. “Water, indeed,” said Schwartz, “I haven’t half enough for myself,” and on he went.

Then again the light seemed to fade from before his eyes, and he looked up, and, behold, a mist, of the color of blood, had come over the sun; and the bank of black cloud had risen very high, and its edges were tossing and tumbling like the waves of the angry sea. And they cast long shadows, which flickered over Schwartz’s path.

Then Schwartz climbed for another hour, and again his thirst returned; and as he lifted his flask to his lips, he thought he saw his brother



Schwartz saw an old man lying before him on the path and heard him cry out for water.—Page 42. *The King of the Golden River.*



Hans lying exhausted on the path before him, and, as he gazed, the figure stretched its arms to him, and cried for water. "Ha, ha," laughed Schwartz, "are you there? remember the prison bars, my boy. Water, indeed! do you suppose I carried it all the way up here for *you*?" And he strode over the figure; yet, as he passed, he thought he saw a strange expression of mockery about its lips. And, when he had gone a few yards farther, he looked back; but the figure was not there.

And a sudden horror came over Schwartz, he knew not why; but the thirst for gold prevailed over his fear, and he rushed on. And the bank of black cloud rose to the zenith, and out of it came bursts of spiry lightning, and waves of darkness seemed to heave and float between their flashes, over the whole heavens. And the sky where the sun was setting was all level, and like a lake of blood; and a strong wind came out of that sky, tearing its crimson clouds into fragments, and scattering them far into the darkness. And when Schwartz stood by the brink of the Golden River, its waves were black, like

thunder clouds, but their foam was like fire; and the roar of the waters below, and the thunder above met, as he cast the flask into the stream. And, as he did so, the lightning glared in his eyes, and the earth gave way beneath him, and the waters closed over his cry. And the moaning of the river rose wildly into the night, as it gushed over the

TWO BLACK STONES.

CHAPTER V.

HOW LITTLE GLUCK SET OFF ON AN EXPEDITION TO THE GOLDEN RIVER, AND HOW HE PROSPERED THEREIN; WITH OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST.



WHEN Gluck found that Schwartz did not come back, he was very sorry, and did not know what to do. He had no money, and was obliged to go and hire himself again to the goldsmith, who worked him very hard and gave him very little money. So, after a month or two, Gluck grew tired, and made up his mind to go and try his fortune with the Golden River. "The little king looked very kind," thought he. "I don't think he will turn me into a black stone." So he went to the priest, and the priest gave him some holy water as soon as he asked for it. Then Gluck took some bread in his basket, and the bottle of water, and set off very early for the mountains.

If the glacier had occasioned a great deal of fatigue to his brothers, it was twenty times worse for him, who was neither so strong nor

so practised on the mountains. He had several very bad falls, lost his basket and bread, and was very much frightened at the strange noises under the ice. He lay a long time to rest on the grass, after he had got over, and began to climb the hill just in the hottest part of the day. When he had climbed for an hour, he got dreadfully thirsty, and was going to drink like his brothers, when he saw an old man coming down the path above him, looking very feeble, and leaning on a staff. "My son," said the old man, "I am faint with thirst, give me some of that water." Then Gluck looked at him, and when he saw that he was pale and weary, he gave him the water; "Only pray don't drink it all," said Gluck. But the old man drank a great deal, and gave him back the bottle two-thirds empty. Then he bade him good speed, and Gluck went on again merrily. And the path became easier to his feet, and two or three blades of grass appeared upon it, and some grasshoppers began singing on the bank beside it; and Gluck thought he had never heard such merry singing.

Then he went on for another hour, and the thirst increased on him so that he thought he should be forced to drink. But, as he raised the flask, he saw a little child lying panting by the road-side, and it cried out piteously for water. Then Gluck struggled with himself, and determined to bear the thirst a little longer; and he put the bottle to the child's lips, and it drank it all but a few drops. Then it smiled on him, and got up, and ran down the hill; and Gluck looked after it, till it became as small as a little star, and then turned and began climbing again. And then there were all kinds of sweet flowers growing on the rocks, bright green moss, with pale pink starry flowers, and soft belled gentians, more blue than the sky at its deepest, and pure white transparent lilies. And crimson and purple butterflies darted hither and thither, and the sky sent down such pure light, that Gluck had never felt so happy in his life.

Yet, when he had climbed for another hour, his thirst became intolerable again; and, when he looked at his bottle, he saw that there were only five or six drops left in it, and he could not

venture to drink. And, as he was hanging the flask to his belt again, he saw a little dog lying on the rocks, gasping for breath—just as Hans had seen it on the day of his ascent. And Gluck stopped and looked at it, and then at the Golden River, not five hundred yards above him ; and he thought of the dwarf's words, "that no one could succeed, except in his first attempt ;" and he tried to pass the dog, but it whined piteously, and Gluck stopped again. "Poor beastie," said Gluck, "it'll be dead when I come down again, if I don't help it." Then he looked closer and closer at it, and its eyes turned on him so mournfully, that he could not stand it. "Confound the King and his gold too," said Gluck ; and he opened the flask, and poured all the water into the dog's mouth.

The dog sprang up and stood on its hind legs. Its tail disappeared, its ears became long, longer, silky, golden ; its nose became very red, its eyes became very twinkling ; in three seconds the dog was gone, and before Gluck stood his old acquaintance, the King of the Golden River.

"Thank you," said the monarch ; "but don't

be frightened, it's all right ;” for Gluck showed manifest symptoms of consternation at this unlooked-for reply to his last observation. “ Why didn't you come before,” continued the dwarf, “ instead of sending me those rascally brothers of yours, for me to have the trouble of turning into stones? Very hard stones they make too.”

“ Oh dear me !” said Gluck, “ have you really been so cruel ?”

“ Cruel !” said the dwarf, “ they poured unholy water into my stream : do you suppose I'm going to allow that ?”

“ Why,” said Gluck, “ I am sure, sir—your Majesty, I mean—they got the water out of the church font.”

“ Very probably,” replied the dwarf ; “ but,” and his countenance grew stern as he spoke, “ the water which has been refused to the cry of the weary and dying, is unholy, though it had been blessed by every saint in heaven ; and the water which is found in the vessel of mercy is holy, though it had been defiled with corpses.”

So saying, the dwarf stooped and plucked a

lily that grew at his feet. On its white leaves there hung three drops of clear dew. And the dwarf shook them into the flask which Gluck held in his hand. "Cast these into the river," he said, "and descend on the other side of the mountains into the Treasure Valley. And so good speed."

As he spoke, the figure of the dwarf became indistinct. The playing colors of his robe formed themselves into a prismatic mist of dewy light: he stood for an instant veiled with them as with the belt of a broad rainbow. The colors grew faint, the mist rose into the air; the monarch had evaporated.

And Gluck climbed to the brink of the Golden River, and its waves were as clear as crystal and as brilliant as the sun. And, when he cast the three drops of dew into the stream, there opened where they fell, a small circular whirlpool, into which the waters descended with a musical noise.

Gluck stood watching it for some time, very much disappointed because not only the river was not turned into gold, but its waters seemed

much diminished in quantity. Yet he obeyed his friend the dwarf, and descended the other side of the mountains, towards the Treasure Valley ; and, as he went, he thought he heard the noise of water working its way under the ground. And, when he came in sight of the Treasure Valley, behold, a river, like the Golden River, was springing from a new cleft of the rocks above it, and was flowing in innumerable streams among the dry heaps of red sand.

And as Gluck gazed, fresh grass sprang beside the new streams, and creeping plants grew, and climbed among the moistening soil. Young flowers opened suddenly along the river sides, as stars leap out when twilight is deepening, and thickets of myrtle, and tendrils of vine, cast lengthening shadows over the valley as they grew. And thus the Treasure Valley became a garden again, and the inheritance, which had been lost by cruelty, was regained by love.

And Gluck went, and dwelt in the valley, and the poor were never driven from his door: so that his barns became full of corn, and his house of treasure. And, for him, the river had

according to the dwarf's promise, become a River of Gold.

And, to this day, the inhabitants of the valley point out the place where the three drops of holy dew were cast into the stream, and trace the course of the Golden River under the ground, until it emerges in the Treasure Valley. And at the top of the cataract of the Golden River are still to be seen two BLACK STONES, round which the waters howl mournfully every day at sunset ; and these stones are still called by the people of the valley

THE BLACK BROTHERS.

THE BLUE DWARFS:

AN ADVENTURE IN THÜRINGEN.

“And then on the top of the Caldron Low
There was no one left but me.”

MARY HOWITT.



LIKED the blue dwarfs the best
—far, far the best of anything,”
said Olive.

“The blue dwarfs!” repeated
Rex. “What *do* you mean? Why can’t you
say what you mean plainly? Girls have such
a stupid way of talking!”

“What can be plainer than *the blue dwarfs?*”
said Olive rather snappishly, though, it must be
allowed, with some reason. “We were talking
about the things we liked best at the china
place. *You* said the stags’ heads and the ink-
stands, and *I* say the blue dwarfs.”

“But I didn’t see any dwarfs,” persisted Rex.

“Well, I can’t help it if you didn’t. You
had just as much chance of seeing them as I had

They were in a corner by themselves—little figures about two inches high, all with blue coats on. There were about twelve of them, all different, but all little dwarfs or gnomes. One was sitting on a barrel, one was turning head-over-heels, one was cuddling his knees—all funny ways like that. Oh, they were lovely!”

“I wish I had seen them better,” said Rex regretfully. “I do remember seeing a tray full of little blue-looking dolls, but I didn’t notice what they were.”

Olive did not at once answer. Her eyes were fixed on something she saw passing before the window. It was a very, very little man. He was not exactly hump-backed, but his figure was somewhat deformed, and he was so small that but for the sight of his rather wizened old face one could hardly have believed he was a full-grown man. His eyes were bright and beady-looking, like those of a good-natured little weasel, if there be such a thing, and his face lighted up with a smile as he caught sight of the two, to him, strange-looking children at the open window of the little village inn.

“Guten Tag,” he said, nodding to them; and “Guten Tag,” replied the children, as they had learnt to do by this time to everybody they met. For in these remote villages it would be thought the greatest breach of courtesy to pass any one without this friendly greeting.

Rex drew a long breath when the dwarf had passed.

“Olive——” he began, but Olive interrupted him.

“Rex,” she said eagerly, “that’s *exactly* like them—like the blue dwarfs, I mean. Only, of course, their faces were prettier—nice little china faces, rather crumply looking, but quite nice; and then their coats were such a pretty nice blue. I think,” she went on consideringly—“I think, if I had that little man and washed his face *very* well, and got him a bright blue coat, he would look just like one of the blue dwarfs grown big.”

Rex looked at Olive with a queer expression.

“Olive,” he said in rather an awe-struck tone; “Olive, do you think perhaps they’re *real*? Do you think perhaps somewhere in this country

—in those queer dark woods, perhaps—that there are real blue dwarfs, and that somebody must have seen them and made the little china ones like them? Perhaps,” and his voice dropped and grew still more solemn; “*perhaps*, Olive, that little man’s one of them, and they may have to take off their blue coats when they’re walking about. Do you know, I think it’s a little, just a very little, frightening? Don’t you, Olive?”

“No, of course I don’t,” said Olive, and, to do her justice, her rather sharp answer was meant as much to reassure her little brother as to express any feeling of impatience. Rex was quite a little fellow, only eight, and Olive, who was nearly twelve, remembered that when she was as little as that, she used sometimes to feel frightened about things which she now couldn’t see anything the least frightening in. And she remembered how once or twice some of her big cousins had laughed at her, and amused themselves by telling her all sorts of nonsense, which still seemed terrible to her when she was alone in her room in the dark at night. “Of

course there's nothing frightening in it," she said. "It would be rather a funny idea, I think. Of course it can't be, you know, Rex. There are no dwarfs, and gnomes, and fairies now."

"But that little man was a dwarf," said Rex

"Yes, but a dwarf needn't be a fairy sort of person," explained Olive. "He's just a common little man, only he's never grown as big as other people. Perhaps he had a bad fall when he was a baby—that might stop his growing.

"Would it?" said Rex. "I didn't know that. I hope I hadn't a bad fall when I was a baby. Everybody says I'm very small for my age." And Rex looked with concern at his short but sturdy legs.

Olive laughed outright.

"Oh, Rex, what a funny boy you are! No, certainly, you are not a dwarf. You're as straight and strong as you can be."

"Well, but," said Rex, returning to the first subject, "I do think it's very queer about that little dwarf man coming up the street just as you were telling me about the blue dwarfs. And he *did* look at us in a funny way, Olive, what

ever you say, just as if he had heard what we were talking about."

"All the people look at us in a funny way here," said Olive. "We must look very queer to them. Your sailor suit, Rex, and my 'Bolero' hat must look to them quite as queer as the women's purple skirts, with bright green aprons, look to us."

"Or the bullock-carts," said Rex. "Do you remember how queer we thought them at first? *Now* we've got quite used to seeing queer things, haven't we, Olive? Oh! now do look there—at the top of the street—there, Olive, did you *ever* see such a load as that woman is carrying in the basket on her back? Why, it's as big as a house!"

He seemed to have forgotten about the dwarfs, and Olive was rather glad of it. These two children were traveling with their uncle and aunt in a rather out-of-the-way part of Germany. Out-of-the-way, that is to say, to most of the regular summer tourists from other countries, who prefer going where they are more sure of finding the comforts and luxuries they

are accustomed to at home. But it was by no means out-of-the-way in the sense of being dull or deserted. It is a very busy part of the world indeed. You would be amazed if I were to tell you some of the beautiful things that are made in these bare homely little German cottages. For all about in the neighborhood there are great manufactories and warehouses for china and glass, and many other things; and some parts of the work are done by the people at home in their own houses. The morning of the day of which I am telling you had been spent by the children and their friends in visiting a very large china manufactory, and their heads were full of the pretty and wonderful things they had seen.

And now they were within the best parlor of the village inn while their uncle arranged about a carriage to take them all on to the small town where they were to stay a few days. Their aunt was tired, and was resting a little on the sofa, and they had planted themselves on the broad window-sill, and were looking out with amusement at all that passed.

“What have you two been chattering about all this time?” said their aunt, suddenly looking up. “I think I must have been asleep a little, but I have heard your voices going on like two birds twittering.”

“Have we disturbed you, Auntie?” asked Olive, with concern.

“Oh no, not a bit; but come here and tell me what you have been talking about.”

Instantly Rex’s mind went back to the dwarfs.

“Auntie,” he said seriously, “perhaps you can tell me better than Olive can. Are there really countries of dwarfs, and are they a kind of fairies, Auntie?”

Auntie looked rather puzzled.

“Dwarfs, Rex?” she said; “countries of dwarfs? How do you mean?”

Olive hastened to explain. Auntie was very much amused.

“Certainly,” she said, “we have already seen so many strange things in our travels that it is better not to be too sure what we may not see. But any way, Rex, you may be quite easy in your mind, that if ever you come across any of

the dwarfs, you will find them very good-natured and amiable, only you must be very respectful—always say ‘Sir,’ or ‘My lord,’ or something like that to them, and bow a great deal. And you must never seem to think anything they do the least odd, not even if they propose to you to walk on your head, or to eat roast fire-cones for dinner, for instance.”

Auntie was quite young—not so very much older than Olive—and very merry. Olive’s rather “grown-up” tones and manners used sometimes to tempt her to make fun of the little girl, which, to tell the truth, Olive did not always take quite in good part. And it must for Olive be allowed, that Auntie did sometimes allow her spirits and love of fun to run away with her a little too far, just like pretty unruly ponies, excited by the fresh air and sunshine, who toss their heads and gallop off. It is great fun at first and very nice to see, but one is sometimes afraid they may do some mischief on the way—without meaning it, of course; and besides, it is not always so easy to pull them up as it was to start them.

Just as Auntie finished speaking the door opened and their uncle came in. He was Auntie's elder brother—a good deal older—and very kind and sensible. At once all thoughts of the dwarfs or what Auntie had been saying danced out of Rex's curly head. Like a true boy he flew off to his uncle, besieging him with questions as to what sort of a carriage they were to go on in—*was* it an ox-cart; oh, mightn't they for *once* go in an ox-cart? and might he—oh, might he sit beside the driver in front?

His uncle laughed and replied to his questions, but Olive stayed beside the sofa, staring gravely at her aunt.

“Auntie,” she said, “you're not *in earnest*, are you, about there being really a country of dwarfs?”

Olive was twelve. Perhaps you will think her very silly to have imagined for a moment that her aunt's joke could be anything but a joke, especially as she had been so sensible about not letting Rex get anything into his head which could frighten him. But I am not sure that she was so very silly after all. She had read in her

geography about the Lapps and Finns, the tiny little men of the north, whom one might very well describe as dwarfs; there might be dwarfs in these strange Thüringian forests, which were little spoken of in geography books; Auntie knew more of such things than she did, for she had traveled in this country before. Then with her own eyes Olive had seen a dwarf, and though she had said to Rex that he was just an odd dwarf by himself as it were, not one of a race, how could she tell but what he might be one of a number of such queer little people? And even the blue dwarfs themselves—the little figures in the china manufactory—rather went to prove it than not.

“They may have taken the idea of dwarfs from the real ones, as Rex said,” thought Olive. “Any way I shall look well about me if we go through¹ any of these forests again. They must live in the forests, for Auntie said they eat roast fir-cones for dinner.”

All these thoughts were crowding through her mind as she stared up into Auntie’s face and asked solemnly—

“Auntie, were you in earnest?”

Auntie’s blue eyes sparkled.

“In earnest, Olive?” she said. “Of course! Why shouldn’t I be in earnest? But come, quick, we must get our things together. Your uncle must have got a carriage.”

“Yes,” said he, “I have. *Not* an ox-cart, Rex. I’m sorry for your sake, but for no one else’s; for I don’t think there would be much left of us by the end of the journey if we were to be jogged along the forest roads in an ox-cart. No! I have got quite a respectable vehicle; but we must stop an hour or two on the way, to rest the horses and give them a feed, otherwise we could not get through to-night.”

“Where shall we stop?” said Auntie, as with the bundles of shawls and bags they followed the children’s uncle to the door.

“There is a little place in the forest, where they can look after the horses,” said he; “and I daresay we can get some coffee there for ourselves, if we want it. It is a pretty little nook. I remember it long ago, and I shall be glad to see it again.”

Olive had pricked up her ears. "A little place in the forest!" she said to herself; "that may be near where the dwarfs live: it is most likely not far from here, because of the one we saw." She would have liked to ask her uncle about it, but something in the look of her aunt's eyes kept her from doing so.

"Perhaps she *was* joking," thought Olive to herself. "But perhaps she doesn't know; *she* didn't see the real dwarf. It would be rather nice if I did find them, *then* Auntie couldn't laugh at me any more."

They were soon comfortably settled in the carriage, and set off. The first part of the drive was not particularly interesting; and it was so hot, though already afternoon, that they were all—Olive especially, you may be sure—delighted to exchange the open country for the pleasant shade of a grand pine forest, through which their road now lay.

"Is it a very large forest, Uncle?" said Olive.

"Yes, very large," he replied rather sleepily, to tell the truth; for both he and Auntie had been nodding a little, and Rex had once or twice

been fairly asleep. But Olive's imagination was far too hard at work to let her sleep.

"The largest in Europe?" she went on, without giving much thought to poor Uncle's sleepiness.

"Oh yes, by far," he replied, for he had not heard clearly what she said, and fancied it was "the largest hereabouts."

"Dear me!" thought Olive, looking round her with awe and satisfaction. "If there are dwarfs anywhere, then it must be here."

And she was just beginning another. "And please, Uncle, is——?" when her aunt looked up and said lazily—

"Oh, my dear child, do be quiet! Can't you go to sleep yourself a little? We shall have more than enough of the forest before we are out of it?" Which offended Olive so much that she relapsed into silence.

Auntie was a truer prophet than she knew; for when they got to the little hamlet in the wood, where they were to rest, something proved to be wrong with one of the horse's shoes; so wrong indeed, that after a prolonged examina

tion, at which all the inhabitants turned out to assist, it was decided that the horse must be reshod before he could go any farther; and this made it impossible for the party who had come in the carriage to go any farther either. For the nearest smithy was two miles off; the horse must be led there and back by the driver, which would take at least two, if not three, hours. It was now past six, and they had come barely half way. The driver shook his head, and said he would not like to go on to the town till morning. The horse had pricked his foot; it might cause inflammation to drive him farther without a rest, and the carriage was far too heavy for the other horse alone, which had suddenly struck the children's uncle as a brilliant idea.

"There would be no difficulty about the harnessing, any way," he said to Auntie, laughing; "for all the vehicles hereabouts drawn by one horse have the animal at one side of a pole, instead of between shafts."

But Auntie thought it better to give in.

"It really doesn't much matter," she said,

“we can stay here well enough. There are two bedrooms, and no doubt they can give us something to eat; beer and sausages, and brown bread any way.”

And so it was settled, greatly to Olive's satisfaction; it would give her capital opportunities for a dwarf hunt! though as to this she kept her own counsel.

The landlady of the little post-house where they had stopped was accustomed to occasional visits of this kind from benighted or distressed travelers. She thought nothing of turning her two daughters out of their bedroom, which, it must be owned, was very clean, for Auntie and Olive, and a second room on the ground-floor was prepared for Rex and his uncle. She had coffee ready in five minutes, and promised them a comfortable supper before bedtime. Altogether, everything seemed very satisfactory, and when they felt a little refreshed, Auntie proposed a walk—“a good long walk,” she said, “would do us good. And the landlady says we get out of the forest up there behind the house, where the ground rises, and that there is a

lovely view. It will be rather a climb, but it isn't more than three-quarters of an hour from here, and we have not walked all day."

Uncle thought it a good idea and Rex was ready to start at once ; but Olive looked less pleased.

"Don't you want to come, Olive ?" said Auntie. "Are you tired ? You didn't take a nap like the rest of us."

"I am a little tired," said Olive, which was true in one sense, though not in another, for she was quite fit for a walk. It struck her that her excuse was not quite an honest one, so she added, "If you don't mind, I would rather stay about here. I don't mind being alone, and I have my book. And I do so like the forest."

"Very well," said her uncle ; "only don't lose yourself. She is perfectly safe," he added, turning to her aunt ; "there are neither wolves, nor bears, nor robbers nowadays, in these peaceful forests."

So the three set off, leaving Olive to her own devices. She waited till they were out of sight, then she made her preparations.

"I'd better take my purse," she said to herself, "in case I meet the dwarfs. Auntie told me to be very polite, and perhaps they would like some of these tiny pieces; they just look as if they were meant for them." So she chose out a few one-pfennig copper coins, which are much smaller than our farthings, and one or two silver pieces, worth about twopence-halfpenny each, still smaller. Then she put in her pocket half a slice of the brown bread they had had with their coffee, and arming herself, more for appearance's sake than anything else, with her parasol and the book she had with her in her traveling bag, she set off on her solitary ramble.

It was still hot—though the forest trees made a pleasant shade. Olive walked some way, farther and farther, as far as she could make out, into the heart of the forest, but in her inexperience she took no sort of care to notice the way she went, or to make for herself any kind of landmarks. She just wandered on and on, tempted first by some mysterious little path, and then by another, her mind full of the idea

of the discoveries she was perhaps about to make. Now and then a squirrel darted across from one tree to another, disappearing among the branches almost before Olive could be sure she had seen it, or some wild wood birds, less familiar to the little foreigner, would startle her with a shrill, strange note. There were here and there lovely flowers growing among the moss, and more than once she heard the sound of not far off trickling water. It was all strangely beautiful, and she would greatly have enjoyed and admired it had not her mind been so full of the queer fascinating idea of the blue dwarfs.

At last—she had wandered about for some time—Olive began to feel tired.

“I may as well sit down a little,” she thought; “I have lots of time to get back. This seems the very heart of the forest. They are just as likely to be seen here as anywhere else.”

So Olive ensconced herself in a comfortable corner, her back against the root of a tree, which seemed hollowed out on purpose to serve as an armchair. She thought at first she would read

a little, but the light was already slightly waning, and the tree shadows made it still fainter. Besides, Olive had plenty to think of—she did not require any amusement. Queer little noises now and then made themselves heard—once or twice it really sounded as if small feet were pattering along, or as if shrill little voices were laughing in the distance; and with each sound, Olive's heart beat faster with excitement—not with fear.

“If I sit very still,” she thought, “who knows what I may see? Of course, it would be much nicer and prettier if the dwarfs were quite tiny—not like the little man we saw in the street at that place—I forget the name—for he was not pretty at all—but like the blue dwarfs at the manufactory. But that, I suppose, is impossible, for they would be really like fairies. But they might be something between: not so big as the little man, and yet bigger than the blue dwarfs.”

And then Olive grew a little confused in trying to settle in her mind how big, or how small rather, it was possible or impossible for a nation

of dwarfs to be. She thought it over till she hardly seemed sure what she was trying to decide. She kept saying to herself, "Any way, they could not but be a good deal bigger than my thumb! What does that mean? Perhaps it means more in German measures than in English, perhaps——"

But what was that that suddenly hit her on the nose? Olive looked up, a very little inclined to be offended; it is not a pleasant thing to be hit on the nose; could it be Rex come behind her suddenly, and playing her a trick? Just as she was thinking this, a second smart tap on the nose startled her still more, and this time there was no mistake about it; it came from above, and it was a fir-cone! Had it come of itself? Somehow the words, "Roast fir-cones for dinner," kept running in her head, and she took up the fir-cone in her fingers to examine it, but quickly dropped it again, for it was as hot as a coal.

"It has a very roasty smell," thought Olive; "where can it have come from?"

And hardly had she asked herself the ques

tion, when a sudden noise all round her made her again look up. They were sliding down the branches of the tree in all directions. At first, to her dazzled eyes, they seemed a whole army, but as they touched the ground one by one, and she was able to distinguish them better, she saw that after all there were not so *very* many. One, two, three, she began quickly counting to herself, not aloud, of course—that would not have been polite—one, two, three, up to twelve, then thirteen, fourteen, and so on up to—yes, there were just twenty-four of them.

“Two of each,” said Olive to herself; “a double set of the blue dwarfs.”

For they were the blue dwarfs, and no mistake! Two of each, as Olive had seen at once. And immediately they settled themselves in twos—two squatted on the ground embracing their knees, two strode across a barrel which they had somehow or other brought with them, two began turning head-over-heels, two knelt down with their heads and queer little grinning faces looking over their shoulders, twos and twos



Olive, hearing a noise all around her, looked up, and saw little blue dwarf sliding down the branches of the tree in all directions.—Page 74

The King of the Golden River

of them in every funny position you could imagine, all arranged on the mossy ground in front of where Olive sat, and all dressed in the same bright blue coats as the toy dwarfs at the china manufactory.

Olive sat still and looked at them. Somehow she did not feel surprised.

“How big are they?” she said to herself. “Bigger than my thumb? Oh yes, a good deal. I should think they are about as tall as my arm would be if it was standing on the ground. I should think they would come up above my knee. I should like to stand up and measure, but perhaps it is better for me not to speak to them till they speak to me.”

She had not long to wait. In another moment two little blue figures separated themselves from the crowd, and made their way up to her. But when they were close to her feet they gave a sudden jump in the air, and came down, not on their feet, but on their heads! And then again some of her aunt's words came back to her, “If they should ask you to stand on your head, for instance.”

“Dear me,” thought Olive, “how did Auntie know so much about them? But I do hope they won’t ask me to stand on *my* head.”

Her fears were somewhat relieved when the dwarfs gave another spring and came down this time in a respectable manner on their feet. Then, with a good many bows and flourishes, they began a speech.

“We are afraid,” said the first.

“That the fir-cones,” said the second.

“Were rather underdone,” finished up the first.

Olive really did not know what to say. She was dreadfully afraid that it would seem so very rude of her not even to have *tasted* the cones. But naturally she had not had the slightest idea that they had been intended for her to eat.

“I am very sorry,” she said, “Mr. —, sir! my lord! I beg your pardon. I don’t quite know what I should call you.”

“With all respect,” said the first.

“And considering the circumstances,” went on the second.

Then, just as Olive supposed they were go-

ing to tell her their names, they stopped short and looked at her.

“I beg your pardon,” she began again, after waiting a minute or two to see if they had nothing else to say; “I don’t quite understand.”

“Nor do we,” they replied promptly, speaking for the first time both together.

“Do you mean you don’t know what *my* name is?” said she. “It’s Olive, *Olive!*” for the dwarfs stood staring as if they had not heard her. “OLIVE!” she repeated for the third time.

“Green?” asked the first.

“No!” said Olive. “Of course not! *Green* is a very common name—at least——”

“But you called us, ‘blue,’” said the second; and it really was a relief to hear him finish a sentence comfortably by himself, only Olive felt very puzzled by what he said.

“How do you know?” she said. “How could you tell I called you the blue dwarfs?” and then another thought suddenly struck her. How very odd it was that the dwarf spoke such

good English ! “ I thought you were German,” she said.

“ How very amusing ! ” said the dwarfs, this time again speaking together.

Olive could not see that it was very amusing, but she was afraid of saying so, for fear it should be rude.

“ And about the fir-cones,” went on the first dwarf. “ It is distressing to think they were so underdone. But we have come, all of us,” waving his hand in the direction of the others, “ to invite you to supper in our village. There you will find them done to perfection.”

Olive felt more and more uncomfortable.

“ You are very kind,” she said. “ I should like to come very much if it isn’t too far ; but I am afraid I couldn’t eat any supper. Indeed, I’m not hungry.” And then a bright thought struck her. “ See here,” she went on, drawing the half slice of bread out of her pocket, “ I had to put this in my pocket, for I couldn’t finish it at our afternoon coffee.”

The two dwarfs came close and examined the piece of bread with the greatest attention. They

pinched and smelt it, and one of them put out his queer little pointed tongue and licked it.

“Not good !” he said, looking up at Olive and rolling about his eyes in a very queer way.

“I don’t know,” said Olive ; “I don’t think it can be bad. It is the regular bread of the country. I should have thought you would be accustomed to it, as you live here.”

The two dwarfs took no notice of what she said, but suddenly turned round, and standing with their backs to Olive called out shrilly, “Guten Tag.” Immediately all the other dwarfs replied in the same tone and the same words, and to Olive’s great surprise they all began to move towards her, but without altering their attitudes—those on the barrel rolled towards her without getting off it ; the two who were hugging their knees continued to hug them, while they came on by means of jerking themselves ; the turning head-over-heels ones span along like wheels, and so on till the whole assemblage were at her feet. Then she saw unfolded before her, hanging on the branches of the tree, a large mantle, just the shape of her aunt’s traveling dust-cloak, which

she always spread over Olive in a carriage, only, instead of being drab or fawn-colored, it was, like the dwarfs' jackets, bright blue. And without any one telling her, Olive seemed to know of herself that she was to put it on.

She got up and reached the cloak easily ; it seemed to put itself on, and Olive felt very happy and triumphant as she said to herself, "Now I'm really going to have some adventures."

The dwarfs marched—no ! one cannot call it marching, for they had about a dozen different ways of proceeding—they moved on, and Olive in the middle, her blue cloak floating majestically on her shoulders. No one spoke a word. It grew darker and darker among the trees, but Olive did not feel frightened. On they went, till at last she saw twinkling before them a very small but bright blue light. It looked scarcely larger than the lamp of a glow-worm, but it shone out very distinct in the darkness. Immediately they saw it the dwarfs set up a shout, and as it died away, to Olive's surprise, they began to sing. And what do you think they sang ? Olive at first could hardly believe her

ears as they listened to the thoroughly English song of "Home, sweet Home." And the queerest thing was that they sang it very prettily, and that it sounded exactly like her aunt's voice! And though they were walking close beside her, their voices when they left off singing did not so much seem to stop as to move off, to die away into the distance, which struck Olive as very odd.

They had now arrived at the trunk of a large tree, half way up which hung the little lamp—at least Olive supposed it must be a lamp—from which came the bright blue light.

"Here we are," said one of the dwarfs, she did not see which, "at the entrance to our village." And thereupon all the dwarfs began climbing up the tree, swarming about it like a hive of bees, till they got some way up, when one after another they suddenly disappeared. Olive could see all they did by the blue light. She was beginning to wonder if she would be left standing there alone, when a shout made her look up, and she saw two dwarfs standing on a branch holding a rope ladder, which they

had just thrown down, and making signs to her to mount up by it. It was quite easy ; up went Olive, step by step, and when she reached the place where the two dwarfs were standing, she saw how it was that they had all disappeared. The tree trunk was hollow, and there were steps cut in it like a stair, down which the dwarfs signed to her that she was to go. She did not need to be twice told, so eager was she to see what was to come. The stair was rather difficult for her to get down without falling, for the steps were too small, being intended for the dwarfs, but Olive managed pretty well, only slipping now and then. The stair seemed very long, and as she went farther it grew darker, till at last it was quite dark ; by which time, fortunately, however, she felt herself again on level ground, and after waiting half a minute a door seemed to open, and she found herself standing outside the tree stair, with the prettiest sight before her eyes that she had ever seen or even imagined.

It was the dwarf village ! Rows and rows of tiny houses—none of them more than about

twice as high as Olive herself, for that was quite big enough for a dwarf cottage, each with a sweet little garden in front, like what one sees in English villages, though the houses themselves were like Swiss châteaux. It was not dark down here, there was a soft light about as bright as we have it at summer twilight; and besides this, each little house had a twinkling blue light hanging above the front door, like a sign-post. And at the door of each cottage stood one of the dwarfs, with a little dwarf wife beside him; only, instead of blue, each little woman was dressed in brown, so that they were rather less showy than their husbands. They all began bowing as Olive appeared, and all the little women courtesying, and Olive seemed to understand, without being told, that she was to walk up the village street to see all there was to be seen. So on she marched, her blue cloak floating about her, so that sometimes it reached the roofs of the houses on each side at the same time.

Olive felt herself rather clumsy. Her feet, which in general she was accustomed to consider rather neat, and by no means too large for her

age, seemed such great awkward things. If she had put one of them in at the window of a dwarf house, it would have knocked everything out of its place.

“Dear me !” thought Olive, “I had no idea *I* could seem clumsy ! I feel like a great plowman. I wish I were not so big.”

“Yes,” said a voice beside her, “it has its disadvantages ;” and Olive, looking down to see who spoke—she had to look down for everything—caught sight of one of the two dwarfs with whom she had first spoken. She felt a little ruffled. She did not like this trick of the dwarf hearing what she thought before she said it.

“Everything has its disadvantages,” she replied. “Don’t you find yourself very inconveniently small when you are up in *our* world ?”

“Exactly so,” said the dwarf ; but he did not seem the least put out.

“They are certainly very good-tempered,” said Olive to herself. Then suddenly a thought struck her.

“Your village is very neat and pretty,” she

said ; “ though, perhaps—I don’t mean to be rude, not on any account——”

“ No,” interrupted the dwarf ; “ Auntie told you on no account to be rude.”

“ Auntie !” repeated Olive, in astonishment ; “ she is not *your* auntie !”

“ On no account,” said the dwarf, in the same calm tone, but without seeming to take in that Olive meant to reprove him.

“ It’s no use trying to make them understand,” said Olive to herself.

“ Not the least,” said the dwarf ; at which Olive felt so provoked that she could have stamped her feet with irritation. But as *thinking* crossly seemed in this country to be quite as bad as *speaking* crossly, she had to try to swallow down her vexation as well as she could.

“ I was going to say,” she went on quietly, “ that to my taste the village would be prettier if there was a little variety. Not all the houses just the same, you know. And all of *you* are so like each other, and all your little brown wives too. Are there no *children* dwarfs ?”

“ Doubtless. Any quantity,” was the answer.

"Then where are they all?" said Olive. "Are they all asleep?" She put the last question rather sarcastically, but the sarcasm seemed to be lost on the little man.

"Yes, all asleep," he replied; "all asleep, and dreaming. Children are very fond of dreaming," he went on, looking up at Olive with such a queer expression, and such a queer tone in his voice too, that Olive got a queer feeling herself, as if he meant more than his words actually said. Could he mean to hint that *she* was dreaming? But a remark from the dwarf distracted her thoughts.

"Supper is ready," he said. "They are all waiting." And turning round, Olive saw before her a cottage a good deal larger than the others; in fact, it was almost high enough for her, with considerable stooping, to get in at the door. And through the windows she saw a long table neatly covered with a bright blue tablecloth, and spread with numbers of tiny plates, and beside each plate a knife and fork and a little blue glass cup. Two great dishes stood on the table, one at each end. Steam was rising from

each, and a delicious smell came out through the open windows.

"I did not know I was so hungry," thought Olive; "but I do *hope* it isn't fir-cones."

"Yes," said the dwarf; "they'll be better done this time."

Then he gave a sort of sharp, sudden cry or whistle, and immediately all the dwarfs of the village appeared as if by magic, and began hurrying into the house, but as soon as they were in the middle of the passage they fell back at each side, leaving a clear space in the middle.

"For you," said the first dwarf, bowing politely.

"Do you always have supper here altogether like that?" said Olive. "How funny!"

"Not at all," said the dwarf; "it's a table d'hôte. Be so good as to take your place."

Olive bent her head cautiously in preparation for passing through the door, when again the same sharp cry startled her, and lifting her head suddenly she bumped it against the lintel. The pain of the blow was rather severe.

"What did you do that for?" she exclaimed

angrily. "Why did you scream out like that? I——" But she said no more. The cry was repeated, and this time it did its work effectually, for Olive awoke. Awoke—was it waking?—to find herself all in the dark, stiff and cold, and her head aching with the bump she had given it against the old tree-trunk, while farther off now she heard the same hoot or cry of some early astir night-bird, which had sounded before in her dreams.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" she sobbed, "what shall I do? Where am I? How can I ever find my way in the dark? I believe it was all a trick of those nasty blue dwarfs. I don't believe I *was* dreaming. They must be spiteful goblins. I wish I had not gone with them to see their village." And so for some minutes, half asleep and half awake, Olive stayed crouching by the tree, which seemed her only protector. But by degrees, as her senses—her common sense particularly—came back to her, she began to realize that it was worse than useless to sit there crying. Dark as it was, she must try to find her way back to the little inn, where, doubtless, Auntie

and the others were in the greatest distress about her, the thought of which nearly made her burst out crying again ; and poor Olive stumbled up to her feet as best she could, fortunately not forgetting to feel for her book and parasol which were lying beside her, and slowly and tremblingly made her way on a few steps, hoping that perhaps if she could manage to get out of the shadow of the trees it might not be quite so dark farther on. She was not altogether disappointed. It certainly grew a very little less black, but that it was a very dark night there was no denying. And, indeed, though it had not been dark, she would have had the greatest difficulty in finding her way out of the wood, into which she had so thoughtlessly penetrated. Terrifying thoughts, too, began to crowd into her mind, though, as I think I have shown you, she was not at all a timid child. But a forest on a dark night, and so far away from everywhere—it was enough to shake her nerves. She hoped and trusted there was no fear of wolves in summer-time ; but bears !—ah ! as to bears there was no telling. Even the hooting

cries of the birds which she now and then again heard in the distance frightened her, and she felt that a bat flapping against her would send her nearly out of her mind. And after a while she began to lose heart—it was not quite so dark, but she had not the very least idea where she was going. She kept bumping and knocking herself against the trunks ; she was evidently not in a path, but wandering farther and farther among the forest trees. That was about all she could feel sure of, and after two or three more vain efforts Olive fairly gave up, and, sinking down on the ground, again burst into tears.

“If I but had a mariner’s compass,” she thought, her fancy wandering off to all the stories of lost people she had ever heard of. Then she further reflected that a compass would do her very little good if it was too dark to see it, and still more as she had not the slightest idea whether her road lay north, south, east, or west. “If the stars were out!” was her next idea; but then, I am ashamed to say, Olive’s ideas of astronomy were limited. She could have perhaps recognized the Plough and the Pole star,

but she could not remember which way they pointed. Besides, she did not feel quite sure that in Thüringen one would see the same stars as in England or Paris ; and, after all, as there were none visible, it was no good puzzling about it, only if they *had* been there it would not have seemed so lonely. Suddenly—what was that in the distance ? A light, a tiny light, bobbing in and out of sight among the trees ? Could it be a star come out of its way to take pity on her ? Much more likely a Will-o-the-wisp ; for she did not stop to reflect that a dry pine forest in summer-time is not one of Will-o'-the-wisp's favorite playgrounds. It was a light, as to that there was no doubt, and it was coming nearer. Whether she was more frightened or glad Olive scarcely knew. Still, almost anything was better than to sit there to be eaten up by bears, or to die of starvation ; and she eagerly watched the light now steadily approaching her, till it came near enough for her to see that it was a lantern carried by some person not high above the ground. A boy perhaps ; could it be—oh, joyful thought !—could it be Rex ?

But no ; even if they were all looking for her it was not likely that they would let Rex be running about alone to get lost too. Still, it must be a boy, and without waiting to think more Olive called out—

“ Oh, please come and help me ! I’m lost in the wood ! ” she cried, thinking nothing of German or anything but her sore distress.

The lantern moved about undecidedly for a moment or two, then the light flashed towards her and came still nearer.

“ *Ach Gott !* ” exclaimed an unfamiliar voice, and Olive, peering forward, thought for half a second she was again dreaming. He was not, certainly, dressed in blue, and he was a good deal taller than up to her knee ; but still he was—there was no doubt about it—he was a dwarf ! And another gaze at his queer little figure and bright sparkling eyes told Olive that it was the very same little man who had smiled at Rex and her when he saw them leaning out of the inn window that very afternoon.

She didn’t feel frightened ; he looked so good-natured and so sorry for her. And somehow

Olive's faith in the possible existence of a nation of dwarfs had received a shock; she was much more inclined to take things prosaically. But it was very difficult to explain matters. I think the dwarf at the first moment was more inclined to take *her* for something supernatural than she was now to imagine him a brownie or a gnome. For she was a pretty little girl, with a mass of golden fair hair and English blue eyes; and with her hat half fallen off, and her cheeks flushed, she might have sat for a picture of a fairy who had strayed from her home.

Her German seemed all to go out of her head. But she managed to remember the name of the village where they had been that afternoon, and a sudden recollection seemed to come over the dwarf. He poured out a flood of words and exclamations, amidst which all that Olive could understand was the name of the village and the words "*verirrt*," "*armes Kind*," which she knew meant "lost" and "poor child." Then he went on to tell that he too was on his way from the same village to somewhere; that he came by the woods, because it was shorter, and lifting high

his lantern, gave Olive to understand that he could now show her the way.

So off she set under his guidance, and, only fancy! a walk of not more than ten minutes brought them to the little inn! Olive's wanderings and straying had, after all, drawn her very near her friends if she had known it. Poor Auntie and Rex were running about in front of the house in great distress. Uncle and the landlord and the coachman had set off with lanterns, and the landlady was trying to persuade Auntie that there was not *really* anything to be afraid of; neither bears, nor wolves, nor evilly-disposed people about: the little young lady had, doubtless, fallen asleep in the wood with the heat and fatigue of the day; which, as you know, was a very good guess, though the landlady little imagined what queer places and people Olive had been visiting in her sleep.

The dwarf was a well-known person thereabouts, and a very harmless, kindly little man. A present of a couple of marks sent him off to his cottage near by very happy indeed, and

when Uncle returned a few minutes later to see if the wanderer had been heard of, you can imagine how thankful he was to find her. It was not so *very* late after all, not above half-past ten o'clock, but a thunderstorm which came on not long after explained the unusual darkness of the cloud-covered sky.

“*What* a good thing you were safe before the storm came on!” said Auntie, with a shudder at the thought of the dangers her darling had escaped. “I will take care never again to carry my jokes too far,” she resolved, when Olive had confided to her the real motive of her wanderings in the wood. And Olive, for her part, decided that she would be content with fairies and dwarfs in books and fancy, without trying to find them in reality.

“Though all the same,” she said to herself, “I should have liked to taste the roast fir-cones. They did smell so good!” “And, Auntie,” she said aloud, “were you singing in the wood on your way home with Uncle and Rex?”

“Yes,” said Auntie, “they begged me to sing ‘Home, sweet Home.’ Why do you ask me?”

Olive explained. "So it was *your* voice I heard when I thought it was the dwarfs," she said, smiling.

And Auntie gave her still another kiss.

AMELIA AND THE DWARFS.



MY godmother's grandmother knew a good deal about the fairies. *Her* grandmother had seen a fairy rade on a Roodmas Eve, and she herself could remember a copper vessel of a queer shape which had been left by the elves on some occasion at an old farmhouse among the hills. The following story came from her, and where she got it I do not know. She used to say it was a pleasant tale, with a good moral in the inside of it. My godmother often observed that a tale without a moral was like a nut without a kernel, not worth the cracking. (We called fireside stories "cracks" in our part of the country.) This is the tale.

AMELIA.



COUPLE of gentlefolk once lived in a certain part of England. (My godmother never would tell the name either of the place or the people even if she knew it. She said one ought not to expose one's neighbors' failings more than there was due occasion for.) They had an only child, a daughter, whose name was Amelia. They were an easy-going, good-humored couple "rather soft," my godmother said, but she was apt to think anybody "soft" who came from the southern shires, as these people did. Amelia, who had been born farther north, was by no means so. She had a strong, resolute will, and a clever head of her own, though she was but a child. She had a way of her own too, and had it very completely. Perhaps because she was an only child, or perhaps because they were so easy-going, her parents spoiled her. She was, beyond question, the most tiresome little girl in that or any other neighborhood. From her

baby days her father and mother had taken every opportunity of showing her to their friends, and there was not a friend who did not dread the infliction. When the good lady visited her acquaintances, she always took Amelia with her, and if the acquaintances were fortunate enough to see from the windows who was coming, they used to snatch up any delicate knick-knacks, or brittle ornaments lying about, and put them away, crying, "What is to be done? Here comes Amelia!"

When Amelia came in, she would stand and survey the room, whilst her mother saluted her acquaintance; and if anything struck her fancy, she would interrupt the greetings to draw her mother's attention to it, with a twitch of her shawl, "Oh, look, mamma, at that funny bird in the glass case!" or perhaps, "Mamma, mamma! There's a new carpet since we were here last;" for, as her mother said, she was "a very observing child."

Then she would wander round the room, examining and fingering everything, and occasionally coming back with something in her

hand to tread on her mother's dress, and break in upon the ladies' conversation with—"Mamma! mamma! What's the good of keeping this old basin? It's been broken and mended, and some of the pieces are quite loose now. I can feel them:" or—addressing the lady of the house—"That's not a real ottoman in the corner. It's a box covered with chintz. I know, for I've looked."

Then her mamma would say, reprovingly, "My *dear* Amelia!"

And perhaps the lady of the house would beg, "Don't play with that old china, my love; for though it is mended, it is very valuable;" and her mother would add, "My dear Amelia, you must not."

Sometimes the good lady said, "You *must* not." Sometimes she tried—"You must *not*." When both these failed, and Amelia was balancing the china bowl on her finger ends, her mamma would get flurried, and when Amelia flurried her, she always rolled her r's, and emphasized her words, so that it sounded thus:

"My dear-r-r-Ramelia! You MUST NOT."

At which Amelia would not so much as look round, till perhaps the bowl slipped from her fingers, and was smashed into unmendable fragments. Then her mamma would exclaim, "Oh, dear-r-r-r, oh dear-r-Ramelia." and the lady of the house would try to look as if it did not matter, and when Amelia and her mother departed, would pick up the bits, and pour out her complaints to her lady friends, most of whom had suffered many such damages at the hands of this "very observing child."

When the good couple received their friends at home, there was no escaping from Amelia. If it was a dinner party, she came in with the dessert, or perhaps sooner. She would take up her position near some one, generally the person most deeply engaged in conversation, and either lean heavily against him or her, or climb on to his or her knee, without being invited. She would break in upon the most interesting discussion with her own little childish affairs, in the following style—

"I've been out to-day. I walked to the town. I jumped across three brooks. Can you jump?"

Papa gave me sixpence to-day. I am saving up my money to be rich. You may cut me an orange; no, I'll take it to Mr. Brown, he peels it with a spoon and turns the skin back. Mr. Brown! Mr. Brown! Don't talk to mamma, but peel me an orange, please. Mr. Brown! I'm playing with your finger-glass."

And when the finger-glass full of cold water had been upset on to Mr. Brown's shirt-front, Amelia's mamma would cry—"Oh dear, oh dear-r-Ramelia!" and carry her off with the ladies to the drawing-room.

Here she would scramble on to the ladies' knees, or trample out the gathers of their dresses, and fidget with their ornaments, startling some luckless lady by the announcement, "I've got your bracelet undone at last!" who would find one of the divisions broken open by force, Amelia not understanding the working of a clasp.

Or perhaps two young lady friends would get into a quiet corner for a chat. The observing child was sure to spy them, and run on to them, crushing their flowers and ribbons, and

crying—"You two want to talk secrets, I know. I can hear what you say. I'm going to listen, I am. And I shall tell, too." When perhaps a knock at the door announced the nurse to take Miss Amelia to bed, and spread a general rapture of relief.

Then Amelia would run to trample and worry her mother, and after much teasing, and clinging, and complaining, the nurse would be dismissed, and the fond mamma would turn to the lady next to her, and say with a smile—"I suppose I must let her stay up a little. It is such a treat to her, poor child!"

But it was no treat to the visitors.

Besides tormenting her fellow-creatures, Amelia had a trick of teasing animals. She was really fond of dogs, but she was still fonder of doing what she was wanted not to do, and of worrying everything and everybody about her. So she used to tread on the tips of their tails, and pretend to give them biscuit, and then hit them on the nose, besides pulling at those few, long, sensitive hairs which thin-skinned dogs wear on the upper lip.

Now Amelia's mother's acquaintances were so very well-bred and amiable, that they never spoke their minds to either the mother or the daughter about what they endured from the latter's rudeness, wilfulness, and powers of destruction. But this was not the case with the dogs, and they expressed their sentiments by many a growl and snap. At last one day Amelia was tormenting a snow-white bull-dog (who was certainly as well-bred and as amiable as any living creature in the kingdom), and she did not see that even his patience was becoming worn out. His pink nose became crimson with increased irritation, his upper lip twitched over his teeth, behind which he was rolling as many warning Rs as Amelia's mother herself. She finally held out a bun towards him, and just as he was about to take it, she snatched it away and kicked him instead. This fairly exasperated the bull-dog, and as Amelia would not let him bite the bun, he bit Amelia's leg.

Her mamma was so distressed that she fell into hysterics, and hardly knew what she was saying. She said the bull-dog must be shot for

fear he should go mad, and Amelia's wound must be done with a red-hot poker for fear *she* should go mad (with hydrophobia). And as of course she couldn't bear the pain of this, she must have chloroform, and she would most probably die of that; for as one in several thousands dies annually under chloroform, it was evident that her chance of life was very small indeed. So, as the poor lady said, "Whether we shoot Amelia and burn the bull-dog—at least I mean shoot the bull-dog and burn Amelia with a red-hot poker—or leave it alone; and whether Amelia or the bull-dog has chloroform or bears it without—it seems to be death or madness every way!"

And as the doctor did not come fast enough, she ran out without her bonnet to meet **him**, and Amelia's papa, who was very much distressed too, ran after her with her bonnet. Meanwhile the doctor came in by another way, found Amelia sitting on the dining-room floor with the bull-dog, and crying bitterly. She was telling him that they wanted to shoot **him**, but that they should not, for it was all her

fault and not his. But she did not tell him that she was to be burnt with a red-hot poker, for she thought it might hurt his feelings. And then she wept afresh, and kissed the bull-dog, and the bull-dog kissed her with his red tongue, and rubbed his pink nose against her, and beat his own tail much harder on the floor than Amelia had ever hit it. She said the same things to the doctor, but she told him also that she was willing to be burnt without chloroform if it must be done, and if they would spare the bull-dog. And though she looked very white, she meant what she said.

But the doctor looked at her leg, and found it was only a snap, and not a deep wound ; and then he looked at the bull-dog, and saw that so far from looking mad, he looked a great deal more sensible than anybody in the house. So he only washed Amelia's leg and bound it up, and she was not burnt with the poker, neither did she get hydrophobia ; but she had got a good lesson on manners, and thenceforward she always behaved with the utmost propriety to

animals, though she tormented her mother's friends as much as ever.

Now although Amelia's mamma's acquaintances were too polite to complain before her face, they made up for it by what they said behind her back. In allusion to the poor lady's ineffectual remonstrances, one gentleman said that the more mischief Amelia did, the dearer she seemed to grow to her mother. And somebody else replied that however dear she might be as a daughter, she was certainly a very *dear* friend, and proposed that they should send in a bill for all the damage she had done in the course of the year, as a round robin to her parents at Christmas. From which it may be seen that Amelia was not popular with her parents' friends, as (to do grown-up people justice) good children almost invariably are.

If she was not a favorite in the drawing-room, she was still less so in the nursery, where, besides all the hardships naturally belonging to attendance on a spoilt child, the poor nurse was kept, as she said, "on the continual go" by Amelia's reckless destruction of her clothes.

It was not fair wear and tear, it was not an occasional fall in the mire, or an accidental rent or two during a game at "Hunt the Hare," but it was constant wilful destruction, which nurse had to repair as best she might. No entreaties would induce Amelia to "take care" of anything. She walked obstinately on the muddy side of the road when nurse pointed out the clean parts, kicking up the dirt with her feet; if she climbed a wall she never tried to free her dress if it had caught; on she rushed, and half a skirt might be left behind for any care she had in the matter. "They must be mended," or, "They must be washed," was all she thought about it.

"You seem to think things clean and mend themselves, Miss Amelia," said poor nurse one day.

"No, I don't," said Amelia, rudely. "I think you do them; what are you here for?"

But though she spoke in this insolent and unladylike fashion, Amelia really did not realize what the tasks were which her carelessness imposed on other people. When every hour of

nurse's day had been spent in struggling to keep her wilful young lady regularly fed, decently dressed, and moderately well-behaved (except, indeed, those hours when her mother was fighting the same battle down-stairs); and when at last, after the hardest struggle of all, she had been got to bed not more than two hours later than her appointed time, even then there was no rest for nurse. Amelia's mamma could at last lean back in her chair and have a quiet chat with her husband, which was not broken in upon every two minutes, and Amelia herself was asleep; but nurse must sit up for hours wearing out her eyes by the light of a tallow candle, in fine-darning great, jagged and most unnecessary holes in Amelia's muslin dresses. Or perhaps she had to wash and iron clothes for Amelia's wear next day. For sometimes she was so very destructive, that towards the end of the week she had used up all her clothes and had no clean ones to fall back upon.

Amelia's meals were another source of trouble. She would not wear a pinafore; if it had been

put on, she would burst the strings, and perhaps in throwing it away knock her plate of mutton broth over the table-cloth and her own dress. Then she fancied first one thing and then another; she did not like this or that; she wanted a bit cut here and there. Her mamma used to begin by saying, "My dear-r-Ramelia, you must not be so wasteful," and she used to end by saying, "The dear child has positively no appetite;" which seemed to be a good reason for not wasting any more food upon her; but with Amelia's mamma it only meant that she might try a little cutlet and tomato sauce when she had half finished her roast beef, and that most of the cutlet and all the mashed potato might be exchanged for plum tart and custard; and that when she had spooned up the custard and played with the paste, and put the plum stones on the tablecloth, she might be tempted with a little Stilton cheese and celery, and exchange that for anything that caught her fancy in dessert dishes.

The nurse used to say, "Many a poor child would thank God for what you waste every

meal time, Miss Amelia," and to quote a certain good old saying, "Waste not want not." But Amelia's mamma allowed her to send away on her plates what would have fed another child day after day.

UNDER THE HAYCOCKS.



IT was summer, and haytime. Amelia had been constantly in the hayfield, and the hay-makers had constantly wished that she had been anywhere else. She mislaid the rakes, nearly killed herself and several other persons with a fork, and overturned one haycock after another as fast as they were made. At tea time it was hoped that she would depart, but she teased her mamma to have the tea brought into the field, and her mamma said, "The poor child must have a treat sometimes," and so it was brought out.

After this she fell off the haycart, and was a good deal shaken, but not hurt. So she was taken indoors, and the haymakers worked hard and cleared the field, all but a few cocks which were left till the morning.

The sun set, the dew fell, the moon rose. It was a lovely night. Amelia peeped from behind the blinds of the drawing-room windows, and saw four haycocks, each with a deep shadow

reposing at its side. The rest of the field was swept clean, and looked pale in the moonshine. It was a lovely night.

“I want to go out,” said Amelia. “They will take away those cocks before I can get at them in the morning, and there will be no more jumping and tumbling. I shall go out and have some fun now.”

“My dear Amelia, you must not,” said her mamma; and her papa added, “I won’t hear of it.” So Amelia went up-stairs to grumble to nurse; but nurse only said, “Now, my dear Miss Amelia, do go quietly to bed, like a dear love. The field is all wet with dew. Besides, it’s a moonlight night, and who knows what’s abroad? You might see the fairies—bless us and sain us!—and what not. There’s been a magpie hopping up and down near the house all day, and that’s a sign of ill luck.”

“I don’t care for magpies,” said Amelia; “I threw a stone at that one to-day.”

And she left the nursery, and swung down-stairs on the rail of the banisters. But she did not go into the drawing-room; she opened

the front door and went out into the moon-shine.

It was a lovely night. But there was something strange about it. Everything looked asleep, and yet seemed not only awake but watching. There was not a sound, and yet the air seemed full of half sounds. The child was quite alone, and yet at every step she fancied some one behind her, on one side of her, somewhere. and found it only a rustling leaf or a passing shadow. She was soon in the hay-field, where it was just the same; so that when she fancied that something green was moving near the first haycock she thought very little of it, till, coming closer, she plainly perceived by the moonlight a tiny man dressed in green, with a tall, pointed hat, and very, very long tips to his shoes, tying his shoestring with his foot on a stubble stalk. He had the most wizened of faces, and when he got angry with his shoe, he pulled so wry a grimace that it was quite laughable. At last he stood up, stepping carefully over the stubble, went up to the first haycock, and drawing out a hollow grass stalk blew upon it till

his cheeks were puffed like footballs. And yet there was no sound, only a half-sound, as of a horn blown in the far distance, or in a dream. Presently the point of a tall hat, and finally just such another little weazened face poked out through the side of the haycock.

“Can we hold revel here to-night?” asked the little green man.

“That indeed you cannot,” answered the other; “we have hardly room to turn round as it is, with all Amelia’s dirty frocks.”

“Ah, bah!” said the dwarf; and he walked on to the next haycock, Amelia cautiously following.

Here he blew again, and a head was put out as before; on which he said—

“Can we hold revel here to-night?”

“How is it possible?” was the reply, “when there is not a place where one can so much as set down an acorn cup, for Amelia’s broken victuals.”

“Fie! fie!” said the dwarf, and went on to the third, where all happened as before; and he asked the old question—

“Can we hold revel here to-night?”

“Can you dance on glass and crockery shreds?” inquired the other. “Amelia’s broken gimcracks are everywhere.”

“Pshaw!” snorted the dwarf, frowning terribly; and when he came to the fourth haycock he blew such an angry blast that the grass stalk split into seven pieces. But he met with no better success than before. Only the point of a hat came through the hay, and a feeble voice piped in tones of depression—“The broken threads would entangle our feet. It’s all Amelia’s fault. If we could only get hold of her!”

“If she’s wise, she’ll keep as far from these haycocks as she can,” snarled the dwarf, angrily; and he shook his fist as much as to say, “If she did come, I should not receive her very pleasantly.”

Now with Amelia, to hear that she had better not do something, was to make her wish at once to do it; and as she was not at all wanting in courage, she pulled the dwarf’s little cloak, just as she would have twitched her mother’s shawl,

and said (with that sort of snarly whine in which spoilt children generally speak), "Why shouldn't I come to the haycocks if I want to? They belong to my papa, and I shall come if I like. But you have no business here."

"Nightshade and hemlock!" ejaculated the little man, "you are not lacking in impudence. Perhaps your Sauciness is not quite aware how things are distributed in this world?" saying which he lifted his pointed shoes and began to dance and sing—

"All under the sun belongs to men,
And all under the moon to the fairies.
So, so, so! Ho, ho, ho!
All under the moon to the fairies."

As he sang "Ho, ho, ho!" the little man turned head over heels; and though by this time Amelia would gladly have got away, she could not, for the dwarf seemed to dance and tumble round her, and always to cut off the chance of escape; whilst numberless voices from all around seemed to join in the chorus, with—

"So, so, so! Ho, ho, ho!
All under the moon to the fairies."

“And now,” said the little man, “to work! And you have plenty of work before you, so trip on, to the first haycock.”

“I shan’t!” said Amelia.

“On with you!” repeated the dwarf.

“I won’t!” said Amelia.

But the little man, who was behind her, pinched her funny-bone with his lean fingers, and, as everybody knows, that is agony; so Amelia ran on, and tried to get away. But when she went too fast, the dwarf trod on her heels with his long-pointed shoe, and if she did not go fast enough, he pinched her funny-bone. So for once in her life she was obliged to do as she was told. As they ran, tall hats and wizened faces were popped out on all sides of the haycocks, like blanched almonds on a tipsy cake; and whenever the dwarf pinched Amelia, or trod on her heels, they cried “Ho, ho, ho!” with such horrible contortions as they laughed, that it was hideous to behold.

“Here is Amelia!” shouted the dwarf when they reached the first haycock.

“Ho, ho, ho!” laughed all the others,

as they poked out here and there from the hay.

“Bring a stock,” said the dwarf; on which the hay was lifted, and out ran six or seven dwarfs, carrying what seemed to Amelia to be a little girl like herself. And when she looked closer, to her horror and surprise the figure was exactly like her—it was her own face, clothes, and everything.

“Shall we kick it into the house?” asked the goblins.

“No,” said the dwarf; “lay it down by the haycock. The father and mother are coming to seek her now.”

When Amelia heard this she began to shriek for help; but she was pushed into the haycock, where her loudest cries sounded like the chirruping of a grasshopper.

It was really a fine sight to see the inside of the cock.

Farmers do not like to see flowers in a hayfield, but the fairies do. They had arranged all the buttercups, etc., in patterns on the haywalls; bunches of meadow-sweet swung from the roof

like censers, and perfumed the air; and the ox-eye daisies which formed the ceiling gave a light like stars. But Amelia cared for none of this. She only struggled to peep through the hay, and she did see her father and mother and nurse come down the lawn, followed by the other servants, looking for her. When they saw the stock they ran to raise it with exclamations of pity and surprise. The stock moaned faintly, and Amelia's mamma wept, and Amelia herself shouted with all her might.

"What's that?" said her mamma. (It is not easy to deceive a mother.)

"Only the grasshoppers, my dear," said papa. "Let us get the poor child home."

The stock moaned again, and the mother said, "Oh dear! oh dear-r-Ramelia!" and followed in tears.

"Rub her eyes," said the dwarf; on which Amelia's eyes were rubbed with some ointment, and when she took a last peep, she could see that the stock was nothing but a hairy imp with a face like the oldest and most grotesque of apes.

"——— and send her below;" said the

dwarf. On which the field opened, and Amelia was pushed under-ground.

She found herself on a sort of open heath, where no houses were to be seen. Of course there was no moonshine, and yet it was neither daylight nor dark. There was as the light of early dawn, and every sound was at once clear and dreamy, like the first sounds of the day coming through the fresh air before sunrise. Beautiful flowers crept over the heath, whose tints were constantly changing in the subdued light; and as the hues changed and blended, the flowers gave forth different perfumes. All would have been charming but that at every few paces the paths were blocked by large clothes-baskets full of dirty frocks. And the frocks were Amelia's. Torn, draggled, wet, covered with sand, mud, and dirt of all kinds, Amelia recognized them.

“You've got to wash them all,” said the dwarf, who was behind her as usual; “that's what you've come down for—not because your society is particularly pleasant. So the sooner you begin the better.”

“I can’t,” said Amelia (she had already learnt that “I won’t” is not an answer for every one); “send them up to nurse, and she’ll do them. It is her business.”

“What nurse can do she has done, and now it’s time for you to begin,” said the dwarf. “Sooner or later the mischief done by spoilt children’s wilful disobedience comes back on their own hands. Up to a certain point we help them, for we love children, and we are wilful ourselves. But there are limits to everything. If you can’t wash your dirty frocks, it is time you learnt to do so, if only that you may know what the trouble is you impose on other people. *She* will teach you.”

The dwarf kicked out his foot in front of him, and pointed with his long toe to a woman who sat by a fire made upon the heath, where a pot was suspended from crossed poles. It was like a bit of a gipsy encampment, and the woman seemed to be a real woman, not a fairy—which was the case, as Amelia afterwards found. She had lived underground for many years, and was the dwarfs’ servant.

And this was how it came about that Amelia had to wash her dirty frocks. Let any little girl try to wash one of her dresses ; not to half wash it, not to leave it stained with dirty water, but to wash it quite clean. Let her then try to starch and iron it—in short, to make it look as if it had come from the laundress—and she will have some idea of what poor Amelia had to learn to do. There was no help for it. When she was working she very seldom saw the dwarfs ; but if she were idle or stubborn, or had any hopes of getting away, one was sure to start up at her elbow and pinch her funny-bone, or poke her in the ribs, till she did her best. Her back ached with stooping over the wash-tub ; her hands and arms grew wrinkled with soaking in hot soapsuds, and sore with rubbing. Whatever she did not know how to do, the woman of the heath taught her. At first, whilst Amelia was sulky, the woman of the heath was sharp and cross ; but when Amelia became willing and obedient, she was good-natured, and even helped her.

The first time that Amelia felt hungry she asked for some food.

“By all means,” said one of the dwarfs; “there is plenty down here which belongs to you;” and he led her away till they came to a place like the first, except that it was covered with plates of broken meats; all the bits of good meat, pie, pudding, bread and butter, etc., that Amelia had wasted beforetime.

“I can’t eat cold scraps like these,” said Amelia turning away.

“Then what did you ask for food for before you were hungry?” screamed the dwarf, and he pinched her and sent her about her business.

After a while she became so famished that she was glad to beg humbly to be allowed to go for food; and she ate a cold chop and the remains of a rice pudding with thankfulness. How delicious they tasted! She was surprised herself at the good things she had rejected. After a time she fancied she would like to warm up some of the cold meat in a pan, which the woman of the heath used to cook her own dinner in, and she asked for leave to do so.

“You may do anything you like to make

yourself comfortable, if you do it yourself," said she; and Amelia, who had been watching her for many times, became quite expert in cooking up the scraps.

As there was no real daylight underground, so also there was no night. When the old woman was tired she lay down and had a nap, and when she thought that Amelia had earned a rest, she allowed her to do the same. It was never cold, and it never rained, so they slept on the heath among the flowers.

They say that "It's a long lane that has no turning," and the hardest tasks come to an end some time, and Amelia's dresses were clean at last; but then a more wearisome work was before her. They had to be mended. Amelia looked at the jagged rents made by the hedges; the great gaping holes in front where she had put her foot through; the torn tucks and gathers. First she wept, then she bitterly regretted that she had so often refused to do her sewing at home that she was very awkward with her needle. Whether she ever would have got through this task alone is doubtful, but she had

by this time become so well-behaved and willing that the old woman was kind to her, and, pitying her blundering attempts, she helped her a great deal; whilst Amelia would cook the old woman's victuals, or repeat stories and pieces of poetry to amuse her.

"How glad I am that I ever learnt anything!" thought the poor child; "everything one learns seems to come in useful some time."

At last the dresses were finished.

"Do you think I shall be allowed to go home now?" Amelia asked of the woman of the heath.

"Not yet," said she; "you have got to mend the broken gimcracks next."

"But when I have done all my tasks," Amelia said; "will they let me go then?"

"That depends," said the woman, and she sat silent over the fire; but Amelia wept so bitterly, that she pitied her and said—"Only dry your eyes, for the fairies hate tears, and I will tell you all I know and do the best for you I can. You see, when you first came you were --excuse me!--such an unlicked cub; such a

peevish, selfish, wilful, useless, and ill-mannered little miss, that neither the fairies nor anybody else were likely to keep you any longer than necessary. But now you are such a willing, handy, and civil little thing, and so pretty and graceful withal, that I think it is very likely that they will want to keep you altogether. I think you had better make up your mind to it. They are kindly little folk, and will make a pet of you in the end."

"Oh, no, no!" moaned poor Amelia; "I want to be with my mother, my poor dear mother! I want to make up for being a bad child so long. Besides, surely that 'stock,' as they called her, will want to come back to her own people."

"As to that," said the woman, "after a time the stock will affect mortal illness, and will then take possession of the first black cat she sees, and in that shape leave the house, and come home. But the figure that is like you will remain lifeless in the bed, and will be duly buried. Then your people, believing you to be dead, will never look for you, and you will

always remain here. However, as this distresses you so, I will give you some advice. Can you dance?"

"Yes," said Amelia; "I did attend pretty well to my dancing lessons. I was considered rather clever about it."

"At any spare moments you find," continued the woman, "dance, dance all your dances, and as well as you can. The dwarfs love dancing."

"And then?" said Amelia.

"Then, perhaps some night they will take you up to dance with them in the meadows above ground."

"But I could not get away. They would tread on my heels—oh! I could never escape them."

"I know that," said the woman; "your only chance is this. If ever, when dancing in the meadows, you can find a four-leaved clover, hold it in your hand and wish to be at home. Then no one can stop you. Meanwhile I advise you to seem happy, that they may think you are content, and have forgotten the world. And dance, above all, dance!"

“And Amelia, not to be behindhand, began then and there to dance some pretty figures on the heath. As she was dancing the dwarf came by.

“Ho, ho!” said he, “you can dance, can you?”

“When I am happy, I can,” said Amelia, performing several graceful movements as she spoke.

“What are you pleased about now?” snapped the dwarf, suspiciously.

“Have I not reason?” said Amelia. “The dresses are washed and mended.”

“Then up with them!” returned the dwarf. On which half a dozen elves popped the whole lot into a big basket and kicked them up into the world, where they found their way to the right wardrobes somehow.

As the woman of the heath had said, Amelia was soon set to a new task. When she bade the old woman farewell, she asked if she could do nothing for her if ever she got at liberty herself.

“Can I do nothing to get you back to your old home?” Amelia cried, for she thought of others now as well as herself.

“No, thank you,” returned the old woman; “I am used to this, and do not care to return. I have been here a long time—how long I do not know; for as there is neither daylight nor dark we have no measure of time—long, I am sure, very long. The light and noise up yonder would now be too much for me. But I wish you well, and above all, remember to dance!”

The new scene of Amelia’s labors was a more rocky part of the heath, where gray granite boulders served for seats and tables, and sometimes for workshops and anvils, as in one place, where a grotesque and grimy old dwarf sat forging rivets to mend china and glass. A fire in a hollow of the boulder served for a forge, and on the flatter part was his anvil. The rocks were covered in all directions with the knick-knacks, ornaments, etc., that Amelia had at various times destroyed.

“If you please, sir,” she said to the dwarf, “I am Amelia.”

The dwarf left off blowing at his forge and looked at her.

“Then I wonder you’re not ashamed of yourself,” said he.

“I am ashamed of myself,” said poor Amelia, “very much ashamed. I should like to mend these things if I can.”

“Well, you can’t say more than that,” said the dwarf, in a mollified tone, for he was a kindly little creature; “bring that china bowl here, and I’ll show you how to set to work.”

Poor Amelia did not get on very fast, but she tried her best. As to the dwarf, it was truly wonderful to see how he worked. Things seemed to mend themselves at his touch, and he was so proud of his skill, and so particular, that he generally did over again the things which Amelia had done after her fashion. The first time he gave her a few minutes in which to rest and amuse herself, she held out her little skirt, and began one of her prettiest dances.

“Rivets and trivets!” shrieked the little man. “How you dance! It is charming! I say it is charming! On with you! Fa, la fa! La, fa la! It gives me the fidgets in my shoe points

to see you!" and forthwith down he jumped, and began capering about.

"I am a good dancer myself," said the little man. Do you know the 'Hop, Skip, and a Jump' dance?"

"I do not think I do," said Amelia.

"It is much admired," said the dwarf, "when I dance it;" and he thereupon tucked up the little leathern apron in which he worked, and performed some curious antics on one leg.

"That is the Hop," he observed, pausing for a moment. "The Skip is thus. You throw out your left leg as high and as far as you can, and as you drop on the toe of your left foot you fling out the right leg in the same manner, and so on. This is the Jump," with which he turned a somersault and disappeared from view. When Amelia next saw him he was sitting cross-legged on his boulder.

"Good, wasn't it?" he said.

"Wonderful!" Amelia replied.

"Now it's your turn again," said the dwarf.

But Amelia cunningly replied—"I'm afraid I must go on with my work."

“Pshaw!” said the little tinker. “Give me your work. I can do more in a minute than you in a month, and better to boot. Now dance again.”

“Do you know this?” said Amelia, and she danced a few paces of a polka mazurka.

“Admirable!” cried the little man. “Stay”—and he drew an old violin from behind the rock; “now dance again, and mark the time well, so that I may catch the measure, and then I will accompany you.”

Which accordingly he did, improvising a very spirited tune, which had, however, the peculiar subdued and weird effect of all the other sounds in this strange region.

“The fiddle came from up yonder,” said the little man. “It was smashed to atoms in the world and thrown away. But ho, ho, ho! There is nothing that I cannot mend, and a mended fiddle is an amended fiddle. It improves the tone. Now teach me that dance, and I will patch up all the rest of the gim-cracks. Is it a bargain?”

“By all means,” said Amelia; and she began

to explain the dance to the best of her ability.

“Charming! charming!” cried the dwarf. “We have no such dance ourselves. We only dance hand in hand, and round and round, when we dance together. Now I will learn the step, and then I will put my arm round your waist and dance with you.”

Amelia looked at the dwarf. He was very smutty, and old, and weazened. Truly, a queer partner! But “handsome is that handsome does;” and he had done her a good turn. So when he had learnt the step, he put his arm round Amelia’s waist, and they danced together. His shoe points were very much in the way, but otherwise he danced very well.

Then he set to work on the broken ornaments, and they were all very soon “as good as new.” But they were not kicked up into the world, for, as the dwarfs said, they would be sure to break on the road. So they kept them and used them; and I fear that no benefit came from the little tinker’s skill to Amelia’s mamma’s acquaintance in this matter.

“Have I any other tasks?” Amelia inquired.

“One more,” said the dwarfs; and she was led farther on to a smooth mossy green, thickly covered with what looked like bits of broken thread. One would think it had been a milliner’s work-room from the first invention of needles and thread.

“What are these?” Amelia asked.

“They are the broken threads of all the conversations you have interrupted,” was the reply; “and pretty dangerous work it is to dance here now, with threads getting round one’s shoe points. Dance a hornpipe in a herring-net, and you’ll know what it is!”

Amelia began to pick up the threads, but it was tedious work. She had cleared a yard or two, and her back was aching terribly, when she heard the fiddle and the mazurka behind her; and looking round she saw the old dwarf, who was playing away, and making the most hideous grimaces as his chin pressed the violin.

“Dance, my lady, dance!” he shouted.

“I do not think I can,” said Amelia; “I am so weary with stooping over my work.”

“Then rest a few minutes,” he answered, “and I will play you a jig. A jig is a beautiful dance, such life, such spirit! So!”

And he played faster and faster, his arm, his face, his fiddle-bow all seemed working together; and as he played, the threads danced themselves into three heaps.

“That is not bad, is it?” said the dwarf; “and now for our own dance,” and he played the mazurka. “Get the measure well into your head. Lâ, la fã lâ! Lâ, la fã lâ! So!”

And throwing away his fiddle, he caught Amelia round the waist, and they danced as before. After which, she had no difficulty in putting the three heaps of thread into a basket.

“Where are these to be kicked to?” asked the young goblins.

“To the four winds of heaven,” said the old dwarf. “There are very few drawing-room conversations worth putting together a second time. They are not like old china bowls.”

BY MOONLIGHT.



THUS Amelia's tasks were ended; but not a word was said of her return home. The dwarfs were now very kind, and made so much of her that it was evident that they meant her to remain with them. Amelia often cooked for them and she danced and played with them, and never showed a sign of discontent; but her heart ached for home, and when she was alone she would bury her face in the flowers and cry for her mother.

One day she overheard the dwarfs in consultation.

"The moon is full to-morrow," said one—"Then I have been a month down here," thought Amelia; "it was full moon that night"—"shall we dance in the Mary Meads?"

"By all means," said the old tinker dwarf; "and we will take Amelia, and dance my dance."

"Is it safe?" said another.

“Look how content she is,” said the old dwarf, “and, oh! how she dances; my feet tickle as the bare thought.”

“The ordinary run of mortals do not see us,” continued the objector; “but she is visible to any one. And there are men and women who wander in the moonlight, and the Mary Meads are near her old home.”

“I will make her a hat of touchwood,” said the old dwarf, “so that even if she is seen it will look like a will-o'-the-wisp bobbing up and down. If she does not come, I will not. I must dance my dance. You do not know what it is! We two alone move together with a grace which even here is remarkable. But when I think that up yonder we shall have attendant shadows echoing our movements, I long for the moment to arrive.”

“So be it,” said the others; and Amelia wore the touchwood hat, and went up with them to the Mary Meads.

Amelia and the dwarf danced the mazurka, and their shadows, now as short as themselves, then long and gigantic, danced beside them.

As the moon went down, and the shadows lengthened, the dwarf was in raptures.

“When one sees how colossal one’s very shadow is,” he remarked, “one knows one’s true worth. You also have a good shadow. We are partners in the dance, and I think we will be partners for life. But I have not fully considered the matter, so this is not to be regarded as a formal proposal.” And he continued to dance, singing, “Lâ, la fã, lâ lâ, la fã lâ.” It was highly admired.

The Mary Meads lay a little below the house where Amelia’s parents lived, and once during the night her father, who was watching by the sick bed of the stock, looked out of the window.

“How lovely the moonlight is!” he murmured; “but, dear me! there is a will-o’-the-wisp yonder. I had no idea the Mary Meads were so damp.” Then he pulled the blind down and went back into the room.

As for poor Amelia, she found no four-leaved clover, and at cockcrow they all went underground.

“ We will dance on Hunch Hill to-morrow,” said the dwarfs.

All went as before ; not a clover plant of any kind did Amelia see, and at cockcrow the revel broke up.

On the following night they danced in the hay-field.

The old stubble was now almost hidden by green clover. There was a grand fairy dance—a round dance, which does not mean, as with us, a dance for two partners, but a dance where all join hands and dance round and round in a circle with appropriate antics. Round they went, faster and faster, the pointed shoes now meeting in the center like the spokes of a wheel, now kicked out behind like spikes, and then scamper, caper, hurry ! They seemed to fly, when suddenly the ring broke at one corner, and nothing being stronger than its weakest point, the whole circle were sent flying over the field.

“ Ho, ho, ho ! ” laughed the dwarfs, for they are good-humored little folk, and do not mind a tumble.

“Ha, ha, ha!” laughed Amelia, for she had fallen with her fingers on a four-leaved clover.

She put it behind her back, for the old tinker dwarf was coming up to her, wiping the mud from his face with his leathern apron.

“Now for our dance!” he shrieked. “And I have made up my mind—partners now and partners always. You are incomparable. For three hundred years I have not met with your equal.”

But Amelia held the four-leaved clover above her head, and cried from her very heart—“I want to go home!”

The dwarf gave a hideous yell of disappointment, and at this instant the stock came stumbling head over heels into the midst, crying—“Oh! the pills, the powders, and the draughts! oh, the lotions and embrocations! oh, the blisters, the poultices, and the plasters! men may well be so short lived!”

And Amelia found herself in bed in her own home.

AT HOME AGAIN.



BY the side of Amelia's bed stood a little table, on which were so many big bottles of medicine, that Amelia smiled to think of all the stock must have had to swallow during the month past. There was an open Bible on it too, in which Amelia's mother was reading, whilst tears trickled slowly down her pale cheeks. The poor lady looked so thin and ill, so worn with sorrow and watching, that Amelia's heart smote her, as if some one had given her a sharp blow.

“Mamma, mamma! Mother, my dear, dear mother!”

The tender, humble, loving tone of voice was so unlike Amelia's old imperious snarl, that her mother hardly recognized it; and when she saw Amelia's eyes full of intelligence instead of the delirium of fever, and that (though older and thinner and rather pale) she looked wonderfully well, the poor worn-out lady could hardly restrain herself from falling into hysterics for very joy.

“Dear mamma, I want to tell you all about it,” said Amelia, kissing the kind hand that stroked her brow.

But it appeared that the doctor had forbidden conversation; and though Amelia knew it would do her no harm, she yielded to her mother’s wish and lay still and silent.

“Now, my love, it is time to take your medicine.”

But Amelia pleaded—“Oh, mamma, indeed I don’t want any medicine. I am quite well, and would like to get up.”

“Ah, my dear child!” cried her mother, “what I have suffered in inducing you to take your medicine, and yet see what good it has done you.”

“I hope you will never suffer any more from my wilfulness,” said Amelia; and she swallowed two tablespoonfuls of a mixture labeled, “To be well shaken before taken,” without even a wry face.

Presently the doctor came.

“You’re not so very angry at the sight of me to-day my little lady, eh?” he said.

“I have not seen you for a long time,” said Amelia; “but I know you have been here, attending a stock who looked like me. If your eyes had been touched with fairy ointment, however, you would have been aware that it was a fairy imp, and a very ugly one, covered with hair. I have been living in terror lest it should go back underground in the shape of a black cat. However, thanks to the four-leaved clover, and the old woman of the heath, I am at home again.”

On hearing this rhodomontade, Amelia’s mother burst into tears, for she thought the poor child was still raving with fever. But the doctor smiled pleasantly, and said—“Aye, aye, to be sure,” with a little nod, as one should say, “We know all about it;” and laid two fingers in a casual manner on Amelia’s wrist.

“But she is wonderfully better, madam,” he said afterwards to her mamma; “the brain has been severely tried, but she is marvelously improved: in fact, it is an effort of nature, a most favorable effort, and we can but assist the rally; we will change the medicine.” Which he did,

and very wisely assisted nature with a bottle of pure water flavored with tincture of roses.

“And it was so very kind of him to give me his directions in poetry,” said Amelia’s mamma; “for I told him my memory, which is never good, seemed going completely, from anxiety, and if I had done anything wrong just now, I should never have forgiven myself. And I always found poetry easier to remember than prose,”—which puzzled everybody, the doctor included, till it appeared that she had ingeniously discovered a rhyme in his orders.

“To be kept cool and quiet,
With light nourishing diet.”

Under which treatment Amelia was soon pronounced to be well.

She made another attempt to relate her adventures, but she found that not even the nurse would believe in them.

“Why you told me yourself I might meet with the fairies,” said Amelia, reproachfully.

“So I did, my dear,” nurse replied, “and they say that it’s that put it into your head. And

I'm sure what you say about the dwarfs and all is as good as a printed book, though you can't think that ever I would have let any dirty clothes store up like that, let alone your frocks, my dear. But for pity sake, Miss Amelia, don't go on about it to your mother, for she thinks you'll never get your senses right again, and she has fretted enough about you, poor lady ; and nursed you night and day till she is nigh worn out. And anybody can see you've been ill, miss, you've grown so, and look paler and older like. Well, to be sure, as you say, if you'd been washing and working for a month in a place without a bit of sun, or a bed to lie on, and scraps to eat, it would be enough to do it ; and many's the poor child that has to, and gets worn and old before her time. But, my dear, whatever you think, give in to your mother ; you'll never repent giving in to your mother, my dear, the longest day you live."

So Amelia kept her own counsel. But she had one confidant.

When her parents brought the stock home on the night of Amelia's visit to the haycocks, the

bull-dog's conduct had been most strange. His usual good-humor appeared to have been exchanged for incomprehensible fury, and he was with difficulty prevented from flying at the stock, who on her part showed an anger and dislike, fully equal to his.

Finally the bull-dog had been confined in the stable, where he remained the whole month, uttering from time to time such howls, with his snub nose in the air, that poor nurse quite gave up hope of Amelia's recovery.

"For indeed, my dear, they do say that a howling dog is a sign of death, and it was more than I could abear."

But the day after Amelia's return, as nurse was leaving the room with a tray which had carried some of the light nourishing diet ordered by the doctor, she was knocked down, tray and all, by the bull-dog who came tearing into the room, dragging a chain and dirty rope after him, and nearly choked by the desperate efforts which had finally effected his escape from the stable. And he jumped straight on to the end of Amelia's bed, where he lay, *thudding* with his

tail, and giving short whines of ecstasy. And as Amelia begged that he might be left, and as it was evident that he would bite any one who tried to take him away, he became established as chief nurse. When Amelia's meals were brought to the bedside on a tray, he kept a fixed eye on the plates, as if to see if her appetite were improving. And he would even take a snack himself, with an air of great affability.

And when Amelia told him her story, she could see by his eyes, and his nose, and his ears, and his tail, and the way he growled whenever the stock was mentioned, that he knew all about it. As, on the other hand, he had no difficulty in conveying to her by sympathetic whines the sentiment "Of course I would have helped you if I could; but they tied me up, and this disgusting old rope has taken me a month to worry through."

So, in spite of the past, Amelia grew up good and gentle, unselfish and considerate for others. She was unusually clever, as those who have been with the "Little People" are said always to be.

And she became so popular with her mother's acquaintances that they said—"We will no longer call her Amelia, for it was a name we learnt to dislike, but we will call her Amy, that is to say, 'Beloved.'"

* * * * *

"And did my godmother's grandmother believe that Amelia had really been with the fairies, or did she think it was all fever ravings?"

"That, indeed, she never said, but she always observed that it was a pleasant tale with a good moral, which was surely enough for anybody."

BENJY IN BEASTLAND.

A BAD BOY.



BENJY was a bad boy. His name was Benjamin, but he was always called Benjy. He looked like something ending in *jy* or *gy*, or rather *dgy*, such as *podgy*. Indeed he was *podgy*, and moreover *smudgy*, having that cloudy, slovenly look (like a slate *smudged* instead of washed) which is characteristic of people whose morning toilet is not so thorough as it should be.

Boys are very nice creatures. Far be it from us to think, with some people, that they are nuisances to be endured as best may be till they develop into men. An intelligent and modest boy is one of the most charming of companions. As to an obliging boy (that somewhat rare but not extinct animal), there is hardly a limit to his powers of usefulness; or anything—from emigrating to a desert island to cleaning the kitchen

clock—that one would not feel justified in undertaking with his assistance, and free access to his pocket stores.

Then boys' wholesale powers of accumulation and destruction render their dens convenient storehouses of generally useless and particularly useful lumber. If you want string or wire, or bottles or flower-pots, or a bird-cage, or an odd glove or shoe, or anything of any kind to patch up something of a similar kind, or missing property of your own or another's—go to a boy's room! There one finds abundance of everything, from cobbler's wax to the carmine from one's own water-color box.

(One is apt to recognize old acquaintances, and one occasionally reclaims their company!)

All things are in a more or less serviceable condition, and at the same time sufficiently damaged to warrant appropriation to the needs of the moment. One suffers much loss at boys' hands from time to time, and it is trying to have dainty feminine bowers despoiled of their treasures; but there are occasions when one spoils the spoiler!

Then what admirable field naturalists' boys can make! They are none the worse for nocturnal moth hunts, or for wading up a stream for a *Batrachosperma*, or for standing in a pond pressing recruits for the fresh-water aquarium. A "collection" more or less is as nothing in the vast chaos of their possessions, though some scrupulous sister might be worried to find "a place for it." And Fortune (capricious dame!) is certainly fond of boys, and guides some young "harum-scarum" to a *habitat* that has eluded the spectacles of science. And their cuttings always grow!

Then as to boys' fun; within certain limits, there is no rough-and-ready wit to be compared with it.

Thus it is a pity that some boys bring a delightful class into disrepute—boys who are neither intelligent, modest, obliging, nor blest with cultivated tastes—boys who kick animals, tease children, sneer at feminine society, and shirk any company that is better than their own—boys, in short, like Benjy, who at one period of his career did all this, and who had a taste

for low company, too, and something about his general appearance which made you think how good for him it would be if he could be well scrubbed with hot water and soft soap both inside and out.

But Benjy's worst fault, *the* vice of his character, was cruelty to animals. He was not merely cruel with the thoughtless cruelty of childhood, nor with the cruelty which is a secondary part of sport, nor with the occasional cruelty of selfishness or ill-temper. But he had that taste for torture, that pleasure in other creatures' pain, which does seem to be born with some boys. It is incomprehensible by those who have never felt the hateful temptation, and it certainly seems more like a fiendish characteristic than a human infirmity.

Benjy was one of three children, and the only boy. He had two little sisters, but they were younger than himself, and he held them in supreme contempt. They were nice, merry little things, and many boys (between teasing, petting, patronizing, and making them useful) would have found them companionable enough,

at any rate for the holidays. But Benjy, as I have said, liked low company, and a boy with a taste for low company seldom cares for the society of his sisters. Benjy thought games stupid; he never touched his garden (though his sisters kept it religiously in order during his absence at school); and as to natural history or reading, or any civilizing pursuit, such matters were not at all in Benjy's line.

But he was proud of being patronized by Tom, the coachman's scapegrace son—a coarse, cruel, and uneducated lad, whose ideas of "fun" Benjy unfortunately made his own. With him he went to see pigs killed, helped to drown supernumerary pups and kittens, and became learned in dog-fights, cock-fights, rat-hunting, cat-hunting and so forth.

Benjy's father was an invalid, and he had no brothers, so that he was without due control and companionship. His own lack of nice pursuits made the excitement of cruelty an acceptable amusement for his idleness, and he would have thought it unmanly to be more scrupulous and tender-hearted than the coachman's son.

The society of this youth did not tend to improve Benjy's manners, and indeed he was very awkward in the drawing-room. But he was talkative enough in the stable, and rather a hero amongst the village boys who stoned frogs by the riverside, in the sweet days of early summer.

Truly Benjy had little in common with those fair, gray-eyed, demure little maidens, his sisters. As one of them pathetically said, "Benjy does not care for us, you know, because we are only girls, so we have taken Nox for our brother."

NOX.



NOX, so called because he was (as poets say) "as black as night," was a big, curly dog, partly retriever and partly of Newfoundland breed.

He was altogether black, except his paws, which were brown, and for a gray spot under his tail. Now as the gray-eyed, gentle little sisters elected him for their brother in the room of Benjy it is but fair to compare the two together.

Benjy, to look at, was smudgy and slovenly, and not at all handsome, for he hated tubs, and brushes, and soap and cold water, and he liked to lie late in the morning, and then was apt to shuffle on his clothes and come down after very imperfect ablutions, having forgotten to brush his teeth, and with his hair still in dusky "cockatoos" from tossing about in bed.

Nox rose early, delighted in cold water, and had teeth like ivory and hair as glossy as a raven's wing; his face beamed with intelligence and trustfulness, and his clear brown eyes looked straight into yours when you spoke to

him, as if he would say, "Let my eyes speak for me, if you please; I have not the pleasure of understanding your language."

Benjy's waistcoat and shirt-front were untidy and spotted with dirt.

The covering of Nox's broad chest was always glossy and in good order.

Benjy came into the drawing-room with muddy boots and dirty hands.

Nox, if he had been out in the mud, would lie down on his return and lick his broad, soft, brown paws, like a cat, till they were clean.

It has been said that Benjy did not care for the society of girls; but when Nox was petted by his lady-sisters, he put his big head on their shoulders, and licked their faces with his big red tongue (which was his way of kissing). And he would put up his brown feet in the most insinuating manner, and shake paws over and over again, pressing tightly with his strong toes, but never hurting the little girls' hands.

Benjy destroyed lives with much wanton cruelty.

Nox had saved lives at the risk of his own.

The ruling idea of his life, and what he evidently considered his most important pursuit, in fact, his duty, or vocation, must be described at some length.

Near the dog's home ran a broad deep river. Here one could bathe and swim most delightfully. Here also many an unfortunate animal found a watery grave. There was one place from which (the water being deep and the bank convenient at this spot) the poor wretches were generally thrown. A good deal of refuse and worn-out articles of various sorts also got flung in here, for at this point the river skirted the back part of the town.

Hither at early morning Nox would come, in conformity with his own peculiar code of duty, which may be summed up in these words: "*Whatever does not properly or naturally belong to the water should be fetched out.*"

Now near the River Seine, in Paris, there is a building called the *Morgue*, where the bodies of the drowned are laid out for recognition by their friends. There was no such institution in the town where Nox lived, so he established a

Morgue for himself. Not far from the spot I have mentioned, an old willow tree spread its branches widely over the bank, and here and there stretched a long arm, and touched the river with its pointed fingers. Under the shadow of this tree was the Morgue, and here Nox brought the bodies he rescued from the river and laid them down.

I use the word bodies in its most scientific sense, for it was not alone the bodies of men or animals that Nox felt himself bound to reclaim. He would strive desperately for the rescue of an old riding boot, the rung of a chair, a worn-out hearth-brush, or anything obviously out of place in the deep waters. Whatever the prize might be, when he had successfully brought it ashore, he would toss his noble head, arch his neck, paw with his forefeet, and twist and stick out his curly back, as much as to say, "Will no one pat me as I deserve?" Though he held his prize with all the delicacy of his retriever instincts, he could seldom resist the temptation to give it one proud shake, after which he would hurry with it to the willow tree, as if

conscious that it was high time it should be properly attended to.

There the mother whose child had fallen into the river, and the mother whose child had thrown her broom into the water, might come to reclaim their property, with equal chance of success.

Now it is hardly needful to say that between Benjy and Nox there was very little in common. And if there were two things about Nox which Benjy disliked more than others, they were his talent for rescue and the institution of the Morgue.

There was a reason for this. Benjy had more than once been concerned in the death of animals belonging to other people, and the owners had made an inconvenient fuss and inquiry. In such circumstances Benjy and Tom were accustomed to fasten a stone to the corpse and drop it into the river, and thus, as they hoped, get rid of all testimony to the true reason of the missing favorite's disappearance.

But of all the fallacies which shadow the half-truths of popular proverbs, none is greater

than that of the saying, "Dead men tell no tales." For, to begin with, the dead body is generally the first witness to a murder, and that despite the most careful hiding. And so the stones which had been tied with hurried or nervous fingers were apt to come off, and then the body of Neighbor Goodman's spaniel, or old Lady Dumble's Angola cat, would float on the river, and tell their own true and terrible tale.

But even then the current might have favored Benjy, and carried the corpses away, had it not been for Nox's early rounds whilst Benjy was still in bed, and for that hateful and too notorious Morgue.

MISTER ROUGH.



MISTER ROUGH was another dog belonging to Benjy's father, and commonly regarded as the property of Benjy himself. He was a wiry-haired terrier, with clipped ears and tail, and a chain collar that jingled as he trotted about on his bent legs. He was of a grizzled brown color excepting his shirt-front, which was white, and his toe-tips, which were like the light-colored toes of woolen socks. His eyes had been scratched by cats—though not quite out—his lean little body bore marks of all kinds of rough usage, and his bark was hoarse from a long imprisonment in a damp out-house in winter. Much training (to encounter rats and cats), hard usage, short commons, and a general preponderance of kicks over halfpence in his career had shortened his temper and his bark, and caused both to be exhibited more often than would probably have been the case in happier circumstances. He had been characterized as “rough, tough, gruff, and up to snuff,” and the description fitted well.

If Benjy had a kind feeling for any animal, it was for Mister Rough, though it might more truly be called admiration. And yet he treated him worse than Nox, to whom he bore an unmitigated dislike. But Nox was a large dog and could not be ill-treated with impunity. So Benjy feared him and hated him doubly.

Next to an animal too strong to be ill-used at all Benjy disliked an animal too weak to be ill-used much or long. Now as to this veteran Mister Rough, there was no saying what he had not borne, and would not bear. He seemed to absorb the nine lives of every cat he killed into his own constitution, and only to grow leaner, tougher, more scarred, more grizzled, and more "game" as time went on.

And so there grew up in Benjy an admiration for his powers of endurance which almost amounted to regard.

MORE MISCHIEF.



ENJY had got a bad fit on him. He was in a mood for mischief. Perhaps he was not well; he certainly was intolerable to all about him.

He even ventured to play a trick on Nox. Thus:

Nox was a luxurious, comfort-loving old fellow, and after a good deal of exercise in the fresh air he thoroughly enjoyed the drowsy effect of a plentiful meal, a warm room, and a comfortable hearthrug.

If anything in the events of the day had disturbed his composure, or affected his feelings, how he talked it all over to himself, with curious, expressive little noises, marvelously like human speech, till by degrees the remarks came few and far between, the velvety eyelids closed, and with one expressive grunt Nox was asleep! But in a few moments, though the handsome black body was at rest on the crimson sheepskin that was so becoming to his beauty, his—whatever you please to allow him in the shape of an “inner consciousness”—was in the land of

dreams. He was talking once more, this time with short, muffled barks and whines, and twitching violently with his legs. Perhaps he fancied himself accomplishing a rescue. But a whistle from his master would pierce his dream, and quiet without awaking him.

In his most luxurious moments he would roll on to his back, and stretching his neck and his four legs to their uttermost, would abandon himself to sleep and enjoyment.

It was one of these occasions which Benjy chose for teasing poor Nox. As he sat near him he kept lightly pricking his sensitive lips with a fine needle. Nox would half wake, shake his head, rub his lips with his paw in great disgust, and finally drop off again. When he was fairly asleep, Benjy recommenced, for he did dearly love to tease and torment, and this evening he was in a restless, mischievous mood. At last one prick was a little too severe; Nox jumped up with a start, and the needle went deeply in, the top breaking off with the jerk, but the remainder was fast in the flesh, where his little sisters discovered it.

Oh ! how they wept for the sufferings of their pet ! *They* were not afraid of Nox, and had no scruple in handling the powerful mouth whose sharp white teeth had so often pretended to bite their hands, with a pretense as gentle as if they had been made of eggshell. At last the braver of the two held his lips and extracted the needle, whilst the other wiped the tears from her sister's eyes that she might see what she was about. Nox himself sat still and moaned faintly, and wagged his tail very feebly ; but when the operation was over he fairly knocked the little sisters down in his gratitude, and licked their faces till he was out of breath.

Then he talked to himself for a full half-hour about the injury, and who could have been the culprit.

And then he fell asleep and dreamed of his enemy, and growled at him.

But Benjy went out and threw a stick at Mister Rough. And when Mister Rough caught it he swung him by it violently round and round. But Mister Rough's teeth were beginning to be the worse for wear, and at the fifth

round he lost his hold for the first time in his career.

Then Benjy would have caught him to punish him, but either unnerved by his failure, or suspicious of the wicked look in Benjy's eye, Mister Rough for the first time "feared his fate," and took to his heels.

Benjy could not find him, but he found Tom, who was chasing a Scotch terrier with stones. So Benjy joined the sport, which would have been very good fun, but that one of the stones perversely hit the poor beast on the head, and put an end to the chase.

And that night a neighbor's dog was lost, and there was another corpse in the river.

FROM THE MORGUE TO THE MOON.



BENJY went to bed, but he could not sleep. He wished he had not put that dog in the river—it would get him into a scrape. He had been flogged for Mr. Goodman's spaniel, and though Mister Rough had been flogged for Lady Dumble's cat, Benjy knew on whose shoulders the flogging should by rights have descended. Then Nox seemed all right, in spite of the needle, and would no doubt pursue his officious charities with sunrise. Benjy could not trust himself to get up early in the morning, but he could go out that night, and he would—with a hayfork—and get the body out of the water, and hide or bury it.

When Benjy came to the river-side a sort of fascination drew him to the Morgue. What if the body were already there! But it was not. There were only a kitten, part of an old basket, and the roller of a jack-towel. And when Benjy looked up into the willow, the moon was looking down at him through the forked limbs

of the tree, and it looked so large and so near, that Benjy thought that if he were sitting upon a certain branch he could touch it with his hand.

Then he bethought him of a book which had been his mother's and now belonged to his sisters, in which it was amusingly pretended that dogs went to the moon after their existence on earth was over. The book had a frontispiece representing the dogs sitting in the moon and relating their former experiences.

"It would be odd if the one we killed last night were up there now," said Benjy to himself. And he fancied that as he said it the man in the moon winked at him.

"I wonder if it is really true," said Benjy, aloud.

"Not exactly," said the man in the moon, "but something like it. This is Beastland. Won't you come up?"

"Well, I never did!" cried Benjy, whose English was not of the most refined order.

"Oh, yes, you have," said the man in the

moon, waggishly. "Now, are you coming up? But perhaps you can't climb."

"Can't I?" said Benjy, and in three minutes he was on the branch, and close to the moon. The higher he climbed the larger the moon looked, till it was like the biggest disk of light ever thrown by a magic lantern, and when he was fairly seated on the branch close by, he could see nothing but a blaze of white light all round him.

"Walk boldly in," he heard the man in the moon say. "Put out your feet, and don't be afraid; it's not so bright inside." So Benjy put his feet down, and dropped, and thought he was certainly falling into the river. But he only fell upon his feet, and found himself in Beastland. It was an odd place, truly!

As Cerberus guarded the entrance to Pluto's domains, so there sat at the going in to Beastland a black dog—the very black dog who gets on to sulky children's backs. And on the back of the black dog sat a crow—the crow that people pluck when they quarrel; and though it has been plucked so often it has never been

plucked bare, but is in very good feather yet, unfortunately. And in a field behind was an Irish bull, a mad bull, but quite harmless. The old cow was there too, but not the tune she died of, for being still popular on earth, it could not be spared. Near these the nightmare was grazing, and in a corner of the field was the mare's nest, on which sat a round-robin, hatching plots.

And about the mare's nest flew a tell-tale-tit—the little bird who tells tales and carries news. And it has neither rest nor nest of its own, for gossips are always gadding, and mischief is always being made. And in a cat's cradle swung from the sky slept the cat who washes the dishes, with a clean dishcloth under her head, ready to go down by the first sunbeam to her work. Whilst the bee that gets into Scotchmen's bonnets went buzzing restlessly up and down with nothing to do, for all the lunatics in North Britain happened to be asleep that evening. And on the head of the right nail hung a fancy portrait of the cat who "does it," when careless or dishonest servants waste and destroy things. I need

hardly say that the cat could not be there herself, because (like Mrs. Gamp's friend, Mrs. Harris) "there ain't no such a person."

Benjy stared about him for a bit, and then he began to feel uncomfortable.

"Where is the man in the moon?" he inquired.

"Gone to Norwich," said the tell-tale-tit.

"And have you anything to say against that?" asked the crow. "Caw, caw, caw! pluck me, if you dare!"

"It's very odd," thought Benjy; "but I'll go on."

The black dog growled, but let him pass; the bee buzzed about, and the cat in the cradle swung and slept serenely through it all.

"I should get on quicker if I rode instead of walking," thought Benjy; so he went up to the nightmare and asked if she would carry him a few miles.

"You must be the victim of a very singular delusion," said the nightmare, coolly. "It is for me to be carried by you, not for you to ride on me," and as Benjy looked, her nose grew

longer, and longer and her eyes were so hideous, they took Benjy's breath away ; and he fled as fast as his legs would carry him. And so he got deep, deep into Beastland.

Oh ! it was a beautiful place. There were many more beasts than there are in the Zoölogical Gardens ; and they were all free. They did not devour each other, for a peculiar kind of short grass grew all over Beastland, which was eaten by all alike.

If by chance there were any quarreling, or symptoms of misbehavior, the man in the moon would cry "Manners !" and all was quiet at once.

Talking of manners, the civility of the beasts in Beastland was most conspicuous. They came in crowds and welcomed Benjy, each after his own fashion. The cats rubbed their heads against his legs and held their tails erect, as if they were presenting arms. The dogs wagged theirs, and barked and capered round him ; except one French poodle, who "sat up" during the whole visit, as an act of politeness. The little birds sang and chirruped. The pigeons

sat on his shoulders and cooed ; two little swallows clung to the eaves of his hat, and twitched their tails and said "Kiwit ! kiwit !" A peacock with a spread tail went before him ; and a flock of rose-colored cockatoos brought up the rear. Presently a wise and solemn old elephant came and knelt before Benjy ; and Benjy got on to his back and rode in triumph, the other beasts following.

"Let us show him the lions !" cried all the beasts, and on they went.

But when Benjy found that they meant real lions—like the lions in a menagerie but not in cages—he was frightened, and would not go on. And he explained that by the "lions" of a place *he* meant the "sights" that are exhibited to strangers, whether natural curiosities or local manufactures. When the beasts understood this, they were most anxious to show him "lions" of his own kind.

So the wise-eyed beavers, whose black faces were as glossy as that of Nox, took him to their lodges, and showed him how they fell or collect wood "up stream" with their sharp teeth, and

so float it down to the spot where they have decided to build, as the "logs" from American forests float down the rivers in spring. And as they displayed the wondrous forethought and ingenuity of their common dwellings, a little caddis worm, in the water hard by, begged Benjy to observe that, on a smaller scale, his own house bore witness to similar patience and skill, with its rubble walls of motley variety.

In another stream a doughty little stickleback sailing round and round the barrel-shaped nest, over which he was keeping watch, displayed its construction with pardonable pride.

Then Benjy saw, with an interest it was impossible not to feel, the wonderful galleries in the earth cities of the ants; the nest of the large hornet, the wasp, and the earwig, where hive as well as comb is the work of the industrious proprietors; and whilst he was looking at these, a message came from three patches of lepraliæ on the back of an old oyster-shell by the sea, to beg that Benjy would come and see their dwellings, where the cells were not of one uniform pattern, but in all varieties of exquisite

shapes, each tribe or family having its own proper style of architecture. And it must not be supposed that, because lepralia cells can only be seen under a microscope with us, that it was so in Beastland; for there all the labors and exquisite performances of every small animal were equally manifest to sight.

But invitations came in fast. The "social grosbeaks" requested him to visit their city of nests in a distant wood; the "prairie dogs" wished to welcome him to their village of mounds, where each dog, sitting on his own little hut, eagerly awaited the honor of his visit. The rooks bade him to a solemn conference; and a sentinel was posted on every alternate tree, up to the place of meeting, to give notice of his approach. A spider (looking very like some little, old, hard-headed, wizen-faced, mechanical genius!) was really anxious to teach Benjy to make webs.

"Look here," said he, "we will suppose that you are ready and about to begin. Well. You look—anywhere, in fact—down into space, and decide to what point you wish to affix your first

line. Then—you have a ball of thread in your inside, of course?”

“I can’t say that I have,” said Benjy; “but I have a good deal of string in my pocket.”

“That’s all right,” said the spider; “I call it thread; you call it string. Pocket or stomach, it’s all the same I suppose. Well——”

But just as the spider was at the crisis of his lesson, and all was going on most pleasantly—whizz!—the tell-tale-tit made its appearance, and soon whispered, first to one animal and then to another, who and what Benjy was. The effect was magical. “Scandalous!” cried all the beasts; “the monster!” An old tabby cat puffed out her tail, and ran up a tree. “Boy!” she exclaimed, in a tone of the deepest disgust; for in Beastland they say “boy” as a term of reproach where we should say “beast.”

The confusion was great, and the tell-tale-tit reveled in it, hopping and flitting about, and adding a word here and there if the excitement seemed to flag.

“To think what he might do to us, if we were down yonder!” cried an old pug. (She

was a great-grandmother, and so fat that she could hardly waddle.)

“He is in *your* power up here, you know,” said the tell-tale-tit, suggestively.

“So he is!” cried the beasts; and with one voice they shouted—“Punishment! Punishment! Bring him to the lion!” And to the lion he was brought, the beasts still crying, “Punishment! Punishment!”

“I’ll punish him!” cried a donkey, who trotted up on hearing of the matter. “Let me get a lump of cold iron between his teeth, and tug and jerk it against the corners of his mouth. Let me pull in and flog at the same moment. Let me knock him over the head, and kick him in the ribs, and thwack his back, and prod his side; and I’ll soon make him run, and take his nasty temper out of him, and teach him to carry any weight, and go gaily in harness.”

“Gently, gently, my friend,” said the lion. “You speak under a very natural feeling of irritation; but if I am to be judge of this case, the prisoner must have fair play.”

Accordingly the beasts placed themselves in

a sort of circle, Benjy being put in the middle; and a bull-frog who lived in a ditch hard by was appointed to watch the case on his behalf. The bull-frog had big watchful eyes, and was cool and cautious. As the case proceeded he occasionally said, "Omph!" which sounded thoughtful, and committed him to nothing.

"What is the prisoner accused of?" asked the lion.

At this question everybody looked round for the tell-tale-tit; but, like most mischief-makers, the good gossip liked nothing less than being brought to book, and had taken advantage of the confusion to fly away. So the other animals had to recall what they had heard as best they might.

"He ill-uses and drowns dogs, hunts and kills cats——"

"Rough kills the cats," interrupted Benjy, for he was becoming alarmed.

"Omph!" said the bull-frog.

"Send for Mr. Rough," said the lion; and a messenger was despatched. (It is not always needful to disturb yourself, dear reader, when

your pet dog is absent without leave: he may have gone on business to Beastland.)

“Cock-a-doodle-do! Flap, flap! send for more whilst you are about it,” cried a handsome game cock, strutting into the midst. “Cock-a-doodle-do! when I crow let no other cock open his beak. There’s a nice cock-fighting, good-for-nothing young scapegrace! I know a pullet of the same breed down yonder: his name is Tom. Let him be fetched up, and we will fasten spurs on to their heels, and set them to kick each other and tear each other’s eyes out. It will be rare sport, and sport is a noble taste, and should be encouraged. Flap, flap! cock-a-doodle-do!”

The cock was just stretched on his tiptoes, in the act of crowing, when a pattering of feet and the jingling of a chain collar were heard, and Mister Rough trotted brusquely into the circle, with his clipped ears and his stumpy tail erect.

“Mister Rough,” said the lion; “the prisoner says it is you and not he who torments the cats.”

“Bowf, bowf, bowf!” replied the terrier, jumping wildly about in his stocking feet. “Whose fault is it? Wowf, wowf, wowf! who taught me to do it? Bowf, wowf! that bad boy there. Rowf, rowf! let me get hold of him by the small of the back, and I’ll shake him as I would shake a rat. Rowf, wowf, bowf!”

“*Manners!*” cried the man in the moon, and there was silence at once.

“Then he has not gone to Norwich, after all!” said Benjy to himself.

After a short pause the examination was resumed. Mister Rough deposed that he hunted cats by the teaching and imperative orders of Benjy and other human beings. That he could not now see a cat without a feeling which he could only describe as madness seizing him, which obliged him to chase and despatch puss without any delay. He never felt this sensation towards the cat of his own house, in her own kitchen. They were quite friendly, and ate from the same dish. In cross-examination he admitted that he had a natural taste for

tearing things, and preferred fur to any other material. But he affirmed that an occasional slipper or other article would have served the purpose, but for his unfortunate education, especially if the slipper or other article were hairy or trimmed with fur.

“But all that is as nothing,” cried the old tabby, indignantly; “he has been guilty of the most horrible cruelties, and they ought to be paid back to him in kind. Sss, spt, he’s a boy, I say, a regular boy!”

“Omph!” said the bull-frog, and went below to consider the case.

“Gentle beasts,” said the lion, “I consider it unnecessary to hear more evidence against the prisoner, especially as no attempt is made to deny his cruelties, though in the matter of cat hunting he implicates Mister Rough. There are not two opinions as to his guilt; the only open question is that of punishment. As you have placed the matter in my hands, I will beg you to wait until I have taken three turns and given the subject my serious consideration.

But instead of three turns the lion took

seven, pacing majestically round and round, and now and then lashing his tail. At last he resumed his seat; the bull-frog put his green head up again, and the lion gave judgment.

“Gentle beasts, birds, and fishes, I have given this subject my most serious consideration, and I trust that my decision will not give offense. Our friend, Madame Tabby, declares that the prisoner should be punished with a like cruelty to that which he has inflicted. Friend Donkey is ready to ride or drive him with all the kicking, beating, and pulling which soured his own temper, and stunted his faculties in their early development. I must frankly roar that I am not in favor of this. My friends, let us not degrade ourselves to the level of men. We know what they are. Too often stupid in their kindness, vindictive in their anger, and not seldom wantonly cruel. Is this our character as a class? Do we even commonly retaliate? Ask friend Donkey himself. Does the treatment (even more irrational than unkind) which blunts the intelligence, and twists the temper of so many of his race, prevent their rendering on the

whole the largest labor for the roughest usage of any servant of man? Need I speak of dogs? Do they bear malice towards a harsh master? Are they unfaithful because he is unkind? Would Mister Rough himself permit any one to touch an article of his master's property, or grudge his own life in his defense? No, my friends, we are beasts, remember—not boys. We have our own ideas of chase and sport, like men; but cruelty is not one of our vices. I believe, gentle beasts, that it is a principle with the human race to return good for evil; but according to my experience the practise is more common amongst ourselves. Gentle beasts, we *cannot* treat this boy as he has treated us: but he is unworthy of our society, and I condemn him to be expelled. Some of our dog-friends have taken refuge here with tin-kettles at their tails. Let one of these be fastened to Benjy, and let him be chased from Beastland."

This was no sooner said than done. And with an old tin pan cutting his heels at every step, Benjy was hunted from the moon. The lion gave one terrific roar as the signal for start

ing, and all the beasts, with Mister Rough at their head, gave chase.

Dear readers, did you ever wonder—as I used to wonder—if one could get to the end of the world *and jump off*? One is bound to confess that, as regards our old earth, it is not feasible; but permit me (in a story) to state that Benjy ran and ran till he got to the end of the moon and jumped off, Mister Rough jumping after him. Down, down they went through space; past the Great Bear (where were all the ghosts of the big wild beasts); past the Little Bear (where were the ghosts of all the small wild beasts); close by the Dog Star, where good dogs go to when they die, and where “the dog in the manger” sat outside and must never go in till all the dogs are assembled. This they passed so close that they could see the dog of Montargis and the hound Gelert affably licking each other’s noses, and telling stories of old times to the latest comer. This was a white poodle, whose days on earth had been prolonged by tender care till he outlived almost every faculty and sense but the power to eat, and a

strange intuitive knowledge of his master's presence, surviving every other instinct. There he sat now, no longer the blind, deaf, feeble, shrunken heap of bones and matted wool, that died of sheer old age, and was buried on the garden side of the churchyard wall, as near as permissible to the family vault; but the snowy, fluffy, elegant poodle of his youth, with graceful ears raised in respectful attention to the hero of Montargis.

Down, down they went, on, on! How far and long it seemed! And now it was no longer night but morning, and the sun shone, and still they went on, on, down, down: Benjy crying "Oh! oh!" and Rough and his chain collar going "Bowf, wowf, jingle, jingle," till they came close above the river, and before Benjy could give an extra shriek the two were floundering in the water. Rough soon swam ashore, but Benjy could not swim, and the water sucked him down as it had sucked down many a dog in that very spot. Then Benjy choked, and gasped, and struggled as his victims had so often choked, and gasped, and struggled under his eyes. And

he fought with the intolerable suffocation till it seemed as if his head must burst, yet he could not cry out, for the cold water gagged him. Then he grasped at something that floated by, but it gave him no help, for it was a dead dog—the one he had thrown into the river the evening before. And horror chilled him more than the cold water had done, as he thought that now he himself must be drowned, and rot among these ghastly relics of his cruelty. And a rook on a tree hard by cried, “Serve him right! serve him right!” whilst the frogs on the river’s brink sat staring at the crushed bodies of their relatives, and croaked, “Stone him! stone him!”

A pike hovering near could owe him no grudge, for the creatures he had drowned had afforded it many a meal. But, like most accomplices, the pike was selfish, and only waited for the time when it could eat Benjy too.

Meanwhile, some one on the bank was giving short barks, like minute guns of distress, that had quite a different meaning.

And then Benjy sank; and as he went down

the remembrance of all his cruelties rushed over his mind, as the water rushed over his body. All, from the first bumble-bee he had tortured, to the needle in Nox's lip, came together in one hideous crowd to his remembrance, till even the callous soul of Benjy sickened, and he loathed himself.

And now he rose again for a moment to the surface, and caught a breath of air, and saw the blue sky, and heard a corn-crake in the field where his sisters had wanted him to go cowslip-gathering; and he fancied that he saw the beautiful black head of Nox also in the water, and found himself saying in his heart, "No, no! thank God I didn't kill *him*."

And then he sank again. And he thought of his home, and his father and mother and the little sisters whom he had teased; and how he had got them into scrapes, and killed their pets, and laughed at their tears. And he remembered how they had come to meet him last mid-summer holidays, with flowers in their hats and flowers round the donkey's ears; and how he had prodded poor Neddy with a stick having a

sliding spike, which he had brought with him. And what fun he had found in the starts of the donkey and the terror and astonishment of the children. Oh! how often had he not skulked from the society of these good and dear ones, to be proud of being noticed and instructed in evil by some untaught village blackguard! And then he thought of the cosy bed and his mother's nightly blessing, never more to be his who must now lie amongst dead dogs as if he himself were such another!

And then he rose again, and there was the noble head of old Nox not three feet from him. He could see the clear brown eyes fixed eagerly upon him, and he thought, "He is coming to revenge himself on me." But he did not mind, for he was almost past feeling any new pain. Only he gave one longing, wistful look towards the home that had been his. And as he looked a lark rose and went up into the summer sky. And as the lark went up, up, Benjy went down down.

Now as he sank there came into his mind a memory of something he had once read, compar-

ing the return of a Christian soul to GOD to the soaring of a lark into the heavens. And no animal that he had seized in his pitiless grasp ever felt such despair and helplessness as Benjy felt when the strong, pitiless thought seized his soul that though his body might decay among dead dogs, he could not die as the dogs had died—irresponsible for the use of life. And many a sin, besides sins of cruelty came back to poor Benjy's mind—known sins, for which he had been punished, but not penitent; sins that were known to no human being but himself, and sins that he had forgotten until now. And he remembered one day at school, when the head master had given some serious warnings and advice to himself and a few other boys in private. And how he had sat mum and meek, with his smudgy and secretive face, till the old doctor had departed, and how he had then delivered a not very clever mimic address in the doctor's style, to the effectual dissipation of all serious thought. And now—opportunities, advice, and time of amendment were all but gone, and what had he to look forward to? From

the depths of his breaking heart Benjy prayed he might somehow or other be spared to do better. And for the third and last time he rose to the surface.

The lark was almost out of sight ; but close to Benjy's pallid face was a soft black nose, and large brown eyes met his with an expression neither revengeful nor affectionate. It was business-like, earnest, and somewhat eager and proud. And then the soft, sensitive mouth he had wounded seized Benjy with a hold as firm and as gentle as if he had been a rare water-fowl, and Nox paddled himself round with his broad, brown paws, and made gallantly for shore. Benjy was much heavier than a dead cat, and the big brave beast had hard work of it ; so that by the time he had dragged the body to land, Nox was too far spent to toss his head and carry his prize about as usual. He dropped Benjy, and lay down by him, with one paw on the body, as much as to say, "Let no unauthorized person meddle in this matter."

But when he had rested, he took up Benjy in his mouth, and—not deigning so much as a

glance in the direction of some men who were shouting and running towards him—he tottered with his burden to the Morgue under the willow tree, where he laid Benjy down side by side with two dead dogs, a kitten, and an old hat.

After which he shook himself, and went home to breakfast.

* * * * *

WHAT BECAME OF BENJY.



BENJY was duly found under the willow tree, and taken home. For a long time he was very ill, though at last he recovered; and I am bound to state that some of his relatives consider his visit to Beastland to be entirely mythical. They believe that he fell from the willow tree into the water, and that his visit to the moon is a fanciful conceit woven during illness by his fevered brain.

However that may be, Benjy and beasts were thenceforward on very different terms. Some other causes may have helped towards this. Perhaps when the boys of a family are naturally disagreeable, the fact is apt to be too readily acquiesced in. They have a license which no one would dream of according to "the girls," but it may sometimes be too readily decided that "boys will be boys," in the most obnoxious sense of the phrase, and a "bad name" is unfavorable to them as well as to dogs.

Now, during long weeks of convalescence,

Benjy's only companions were his parents and the little sisters whose sympathy with beastkind had always been in such manifest contrast with his own tastes. And as the little maids could only amuse him with their own amusements, and as, moreover, there is no occupation so soothing, healing, and renovating to mind and body, so full of interest without hurtful excitement, as the study of Nature, it came about that Benjy's sick-room was so decorated with plants, aquariums, and so forth, that it became a sort of miniature Beastland. From watching his sisters, Benjy took to feeding the fresh-water beasts himself; and at last became so tenderly interested in their fate, that he privately "tipped" the housemaid with his last half-crown, to induce her to come up the stairs in the morning with great circumspection. For the crayfish was given to escaping from his tank for an early stroll, and had once been all but trodden on at the bottom of the first flight of stairs.

But it was a very sad event which finally and fully softened Benjy's heart.

As Benjy was being carried into the house

after his accident, Mister Rough caught sight of his master in this doleful position, and was anxious to follow and see what became of him. But as he was in the way, a servant was ordered to fasten him up in his own out-house; and to this man's care he was confided through Benjy's illness. The little girls often asked after him, and received satisfactory reports of his health, but as the terrier's temper was supposed to be less trustworthy than that of Nox, they were not allowed to play with him, or take him out with them. Hence it came about that he was a good deal neglected at this time, Benjy's parents being so absorbed by the anxiety of his illness, and the sisters not being allowed to make the dog their companion. Once or twice the servant took him out for a run; but Mister Rough would not take a proper "constitutional." The instant he was free, he fled to the house to see what had become of Benjy. As he did this every time, and it was inconvenient, the servant finally left him alone, and did not take him out at all. Food was put within his reach, but Mister Rough's appetite failed daily. A cat

crept in under the roof and looked at her old enemy with impunity. A rat stole his crusts; and Mister Rough never moved his eyes nor his nose from the opening under the barn-door. Oh, for one sniff of Benjy passing by! Oh, to be swung round a dozen times by the teeth or tail! Oh, for a kicking, a thrashing—for *anything* from Benjy! So the gentle heart within that rough little body pined day by day in its loving anxiety for a harsh master.

But the first time that Benjy came down-stairs he begged that Mister Rough might be brought into the drawing-room; for, as I have said, if he had a regard for any animal, it was for the wiry terrier. So the servant opened the barn-door; and Mr. Rough thought of Benjy, and darted into the house. And when he got into the front hall, he smelt Benjy, and ran into the drawing-room; and when he got into the drawing-room he saw Benjy, who had heard the jingle of his collar, and stood up to receive him with outstretched arms. Then with one wild sound, that was neither a bark nor a whine, Mister Rough sprang to Benjy's arms, and fell at his feet.

Dead? Yes, dead; with one spasm of unspeakable joy!

Benjy's grief for his faithful friend was not favorable to his bodily health just then, but it was good for him in other ways. And as the bitter tears poured over his cheeks and dropped on to the scarred, grizzled little face that could feel cruelty or kindness no more, the smudginess seemed to be washed away from his body and soul.

Yes, in spite of all past sins, Benjy lived to amend, and to become, eventually, a first-rate naturalist and a good friend to beasts. For there is no doubt that some most objectionable boys do get scrubbed, and softened, and ennobled into superior men. And Benjy was one of these.

By the time he was thoroughly strong again, he and his little sisters had a common interest in the animals under their care—their own private Beastland. He tried to pet another terrier, but in vain. So the new "Rough" was given to his sisters, and Benjy adopted Nox. For he said, "I should like a dog who knew Mister Rough:" and, "If Nox likes me in spite

of old times, I shall believe I am fit to keep a pet." And no one who knows dogs needs to be told that not the ghost of a bit of malice lessened the love which the benevolent retriever bore to his new master.

The savings of Benjy's pocket-money for some time were expended on a tombstone for the terrier's grave, with this inscription :

TO A FAITHFUL FRIEND,
ROUGH WITHOUT AND GENTLE WITHIN,
WHO DIED OF JOY,
APRIL 3, 18—
ON HIS MASTER'S RECOVERY FROM SICKNESS.

And that true and tender beast, who bore so much hard usage for so long, but died of his one great happiness——

Dear reader, do you not think he is in the Dog Star?





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