

# Enchanted Holiday Stories for Children of All Ages

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## THE FAIRY'S NEW YEAR GIFT

BY EMILIE POULSSON (ADAPTED)

Two little boys were at play one day when a Fairy suddenly appeared before them and said: "I have been sent to give you New Year presents."

She handed to each child a package, and in an instant was gone.

Carl and Philip opened the packages and found in them two beautiful books, with pages as pure and white as the snow when it first falls.

Many months passed and the Fairy came again to the boys. "I have brought you each another book?" said she, "and will take the first ones back to Father Time who sent them to you."

"May I not keep mine a little longer?" asked Philip. "I have hardly thought about it lately. I'd like to paint something on the last leaf that lies open."

"No," said the Fairy; "I must take it just as it is."

"I wish that I could look through mine just once," said Carl; "I have only seen one page at a time, for when the leaf turns over it sticks fast, and I can never open the book at more than one place each day."

"You shall look at your book," said the Fairy, "and Philip, at his." And she lit for them two little silver lamps, by the light of which they saw the pages as she turned them.

The boys looked in wonder. Could it be that these were the same fair books she had given them a year ago? Where were the clean, white pages, as pure and beautiful as the snow when it first falls? Here was a page with ugly, black spots and scratches upon it; while the very next page showed a lovely little picture. Some pages were decorated with gold and silver and gorgeous colors, others with beautiful flowers, and still others with a rainbow of softest, most delicate brightness. Yet even on the most beautiful of the pages there were ugly blots and scratches.

Carl and Philip looked up at the Fairy at last.

"Who did this?" they asked. "Every page was white and fair as we opened to it; yet now there is not a single blank place in the whole book!"

"Shall I explain some of the pictures to you?" said the Fairy, smiling at the two little boys.

"See, Philip, the spray of roses blossomed on this page when you let the baby have your playthings; and this pretty bird, that looks as if it were singing with all its might, would never have been on this page if you had not tried to be kind and pleasant the other day, instead of quarreling."

"But what makes this blot?" asked Philip.

"That," said the Fairy sadly; "that came when you told an untruth one day, and this when you did not mind mamma. All these blots and scratches that look so ugly, both in your book and in Carl's, were made when you were naughty. Each pretty thing in your books came on its page when you were good."

"Oh, if we could only have the books again!" said Carl and Philip.

"That cannot be," said the Fairy. "See! they are dated for this year, and they must now go back into Father Time's bookcase, but I have brought you each a new one. Perhaps you can make these more beautiful than the others."

So saying, she vanished, and the boys were left alone, but each held in his hand a new book open at the first page.

And on the back of this book was written in letters of gold, "For the New Year."

## BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

by Marie Le Prince de Beaumont

There was once a very rich merchant, who had six children, three sons, and three daughters; being a man of sense, he spared no cost for their education, but gave them all kinds of masters. His daughters were extremely handsome, especially the youngest; when she was little, every body admired her, and called her The little Beauty; so that, as she grew up, she still went by the name of Beauty, which made her sisters very jealous. The youngest, as she was handsome, was also better than her sisters. The two eldest had a great deal of pride, because they were rich. They gave themselves ridiculous airs, and would not visit other merchants' daughters, nor keep company with any but persons of quality. They went out every day upon parties of pleasure, balls, plays, concerts, etc. and laughed at their youngest sister, because she spent the greatest part of her time in reading good books. As it was known that they were to have great fortunes, several eminent merchants made their addresses to them; but the two eldest said they would never marry, unless they could meet with a Duke, or an Earl at least. Beauty very civilly thanked them that courted her, and told them she was too young yet to marry, but chose to stay with her father a few years longer.

All at once the merchant lost his whole fortune, excepting a small country-house at a great distance from town, and told his children, with tears in his eyes, they must go there and work for their living. The two eldest answered, that they would not leave the town, for they had several lovers, who they were sure would be glad to have them, though they had no fortune; but in this they were mistaken, for their lovers slighted and forsook them in their poverty. As they were not beloved on account of their pride, every body said, "they do not deserve to be pitied, we are glad to see their pride humbled, let them go and give themselves quality airs in milking the cows and minding their dairy. But, (added they,) we are extremely concerned for Beauty, she was such a charming, sweet-tempered creature, spoke so kindly to poor people, and was of such an affable, obliging disposition." Nay, several gentlemen would have married her, though they knew she had not a penny; but she told them she could not think of leaving her poor father in his misfortunes, but was determined to go along with him into the country to comfort and attend him. Poor Beauty at first was sadly grieved at the loss of her fortune; "but, (she said to herself,) were I to cry ever so much, that would not make things better, I must try to make myself happy without a fortune." When they came to their country-house, the merchant and his three sons applied themselves to husbandry and tillage; and Beauty rose at four in the morning, and made haste to have the house clean, and breakfast ready for the family. In the beginning she found it very difficult, for she had not been used to work as a servant; but in less than two months she grew stronger and healthier than ever. After she had done her work, she read, played on the harpsichord, or else sung whilst she spun. On the contrary, her two sisters did not know how to spend their time; they got up at ten, and did nothing but saunter about the whole day, lamenting the loss of their fine clothes and acquaintance. "Do but see our youngest sister, (said they one to the other,) what a poor, stupid mean-spirited creature she is, to be contented with such an unhappy situation." The good merchant was of a quite different opinion; he knew very well that Beauty out-shone her sisters, in her person as well as her mind, and admired her humility, industry, and patience; for her sisters not only left her all the work of the house to do, but insulted her every moment.

The family had lived about a year in this retirement, when the merchant received a letter, with an account that a vessel, on board of which he had effects, was safely arrived. This news had liked to have turned the heads of the two eldest daughters, who immediately flattered themselves with the hopes of returning to town; for they were quite weary of a country life; and when they saw their father ready to set out, they begged of him to buy them new gowns, caps, rings, and all manner of trifles; but Beauty asked for nothing, for she thought to herself, that all the money her father was going to receive would scarce be sufficient to purchase every thing her sisters wanted. "What will you have, Beauty?" said her father. "Since you are so kind as to think of me, (answered she,) be so kind as to bring me a rose, for as none grow hereabouts, they are a kind of rarity." Not that Beauty cared for a rose, but she asked for something, lest she should seem by her example to condemn her sisters' conduct, who would have said she did it only to look particular. The good man went on his journey; but when he came there, they went to law with him about the merchandize, and after a great deal of trouble and pains to no purpose, he came back as poor as before.

He was within thirty miles of his own house, thinking on the pleasure he should have in seeing his children again, when going through a large forest he lost himself. It rained and snowed terribly, besides, the wind was so high, that it threw him twice off his horse; and night coming on, he began to apprehend being either starved to death with cold and hunger, or else devoured by the wolves, whom he heard howling all around him, when, on a sudden, looking through a long walk of trees, he saw a light at some distance, and going on a little farther, perceived it came from a palace illuminated from top to bottom. The merchant returned God thanks for this happy discovery, and hastened to the palace; but was greatly surprised at not meeting with anyone in the out-courts. His horse followed him, and seeing a large stable open, went in, and finding both hay and oats, the poor beast, who was almost famished, fell to eating very heartily. The merchant tied him up to the manger, and walked towards the house, where he saw no one, but entering into a large hall, he found a good fire, and a table plentifully set out, with but one cover laid. As he was wet quite through with the rain and snow, he drew near the fire to dry himself. "I hope, (said he,) the master of the house, or his servants, will excuse the liberty I take; I suppose it will not be long before some of them appear."

He waited a considerable time, till it struck eleven, and still nobody came: at last he was so hungry that he could stay no longer, but took a chicken and ate it in two mouthfuls, trembling all the while. After this, he drank a few glasses of wine, and growing more courageous, he went out of the hall, and crossed through several grand apartments with magnificent furniture, till he came into a chamber, which had an exceeding good bed in it, and as he was very much fatigued, and it was past midnight, he concluded it was best to shut the door, and go to bed.

It was ten the next morning before the merchant waked, and as he was going to rise, he was astonished to see a good suit of clothes in the room of his own, which were quite spoiled. "Certainly, (said he,) this palace belongs to some kind fairy, who has seen and pitied my distress." He looked through a window, but instead of snow saw the most delightful arbours, interwoven with the most beautiful flowers that ever were beheld. He then returned to the great hall, where he had supped the night before, and found some chocolate ready made on a little table. "Thank you, good Madam Fairy, (said he aloud,) for being so careful as to provide me a breakfast; I am extremely obliged to you for all your favours."

The good man drank his chocolate, and then went to look for his horse; but passing through an arbour of roses, he remembered Beauty's request to him, and gathered a branch on which were several; immediately he heard a great noise, and saw such a frightful beast coming towards him, that he was ready to faint away. "You are very ungrateful, (said the beast to him, in a terrible voice) I have saved your life by receiving you into my castle, and, in return, you steal my roses, which I value beyond any thing in the universe; but you shall die for it; I give you but a quarter of an hour to prepare yourself, to say your prayers." The merchant fell on his knees, and lifted up both his hands:

"My Lord (said he,) I beseech you to forgive me, indeed I had no intention to offend in gathering a rose for one of my daughters, who desired me to bring her one."

"My name is not My Lord, (replied the monster,) but Beast; I don't love compliments, not I; I like people should speak as they think; and so do not imagine I am to be moved by any of your flattering speeches; but you say you have got daughters; I will forgive you, on condition that one of them come willingly, and suffer for you. Let me have no words, but go about your business, and swear that if your daughter refuse to die in your stead, you will return within three months." The merchant had no mind to sacrifice his daughters to the ugly monster, but he thought, in obtaining this respite, he should have the satisfaction of seeing them once more; so he promised upon oath, he would return, and the Beast told him he might set out when he pleased; "but, (added he,) you shall not depart empty handed; go back to the room where you lay, and you will see a great empty chest; fill it with whatever you like best, and I will send it to your home," and at the same time Beast withdrew.

"Well (said the good man to himself) if I must die, I shall have the comfort, at least, of leaving something to my poor children."

He returned to the bed-chamber, and finding a great quantity of broad pieces of gold, he filled the great chest the Beast had mentioned, locked it, and afterwards took his horse out of the stable, leaving the palace with as much grief as he had entered it with joy. The horse, of his own accord, took one of the roads of the forest; and in a few hours the good man was at home. His children came around him, but, instead of receiving their embraces with pleasure, he looked on them, and, holding up the branch he had in his hands, he burst into tears. "Here, Beauty, (said he,) take these roses; but little do you think how dear they are like to cost your unhappy father; and then related his fatal adventure: immediately the two eldest set up lamentable outcries, and said all manner of ill-natured things to Beauty, who did not cry at all. "Do but see the pride of that little wretch, (said they); she would not ask for fine clothes, as we did; but no, truly, Miss wanted to distinguish herself; so now she will be the death of our poor father, and yet she does not so much as shed a tear."

"Why should I, (answered Beauty,) it would be very needless, for my father shall not suffer upon my account, since the monster will accept of one of his daughters, I will deliver myself up to all his fury, and I am very happy in thinking that my death will save my father's life, and be a proof of my tender love for him." "No, sister, (said her three brothers,) that shall not be, we will go find the monster, and either kill him, or perish in the attempt."

"Do not imagine any such thing, my sons, (said the merchant,) Beast's power is so great, that I have no hopes of your overcoming him; I am charmed with Beauty's kind and generous offer, but I cannot yield to it; I am old, and have not long to live, so can only lose a few years, which I regret for your sakes alone, my dear children."

"Indeed, father (said Beauty), you shall not go to the palace without me, you cannot hinder me from following you."

It was to no purpose all they could say, Beauty still insisted on setting out for the fine palace; and her sisters were delighted at it, for her virtue and amiable qualities made them envious and jealous.

The merchant was so afflicted at the thoughts of losing his daughter, that he had quite forgot the chest full of gold; but at night, when he retired to rest, no sooner had he shut his chamber-door, than, to his great astonishment, he found it by his bedside; he was determined, however, not to tell his children that he was grown rich, because they would have wanted to return to town, and he was resolved not to leave the country; but he trusted Beauty with the secret: who informed him, that two gentlemen came in his absence, and courted her sisters; she begged her father to consent to their marriage, and give them fortunes; for she was so good, that she loved them, and forgave them

heartily all their ill-usage. These wicked creatures rubbed their eyes with an onion, to force some tears when they parted with their sister; but her brothers were really concerned. Beauty was the only one who did not shed tears at parting, because she would not increase their uneasiness.

The horse took the direct road to the palace; and towards evening they perceived it illuminated as at first: the horse went of himself into the stable, and the good man and his daughter came into the great hall, where they found a table splendidly served up, and two covers. The merchant had no heart to eat; but Beauty endeavoured to appear cheerful, sat down to table, and helped him. Afterwards, thought she to herself, "Beast surely has a mind to fatten me before he eats me, since he provides such a plentiful entertainment." When they had supped, they heard a great noise, and the merchant, all in tears, bid his poor child farewell, for he thought Beast was coming. Beauty was sadly terrified at his horrid form, but she took courage as well as she could, and the monster having asked her if she came willingly; "y--e--s," said she, trembling.

"You are very good, and I am greatly obliged to you; honest man, go your ways tomorrow morning, but never think of returning here again. Farewell, Beauty." "Farewell, Beast," answered she; and immediately the monster withdrew.

"Oh, daughter, (said the merchant, embracing Beauty,) I am almost frightened to death; believe me, you had better go back, and let me stay here."

"No, father, (said Beauty, in a resolute tone,) you shall set out tomorrow morning, and leave me to the care and protection of Providence." They went to bed, and thought they should not close their eyes all night; but scarce were they laid down, than they fell fast asleep; and Beauty dreamed, a fine lady came, and said to her, "I am content, Beauty, with your good will; this good action of yours, in giving up your own life to save your father's, shall not go unrewarded."

Beauty waked, and told her father her dream, and though it helped to comfort him a little, yet he could not help crying bitterly, when he took leave of his dear child.

As soon as he was gone, Beauty sat down in the great hall, and fell a crying likewise; but as she was mistress of a great deal of resolution, she recommended herself to God, and resolved not to be uneasy the little time she had to live; for she firmly believed Beast would eat her up that night.

However, she thought she might as well walk about till then, and view this fine castle, which she could not help admiring; it was a delightful pleasant place, and she was extremely surprised at seeing a door, over which was wrote, "BEAUTY'S APARTMENT." She opened it hastily, and was quite dazzled with the magnificence that reigned throughout; but what chiefly took up her attention, was a large library, a harpsichord, and several music books. "Well, (said she to herself,) I see they will not let my time hang heavy on my hands for want of amusement." Then she reflected, "Were I but to stay here a day, there would not have been all these preparations." This consideration inspired her with fresh courage; and opening the library, she took a book, and read these words in letters of gold:--

"Welcome, Beauty, banish fear, You are queen and mistress here; Speak your wishes, speak your will, Swift obedience meets them still."

"Alas, (said she, with a sigh,) there is nothing I desire so much as to see my poor father, and to know what he is doing." She had no sooner said this, when casting her eyes on a great looking-glass, to her great amazement she saw her own home, where her father arrived with a very dejected countenance; her sisters went to meet him, and, notwithstanding their endeavours to appear sorrowful, their joy, felt for having got rid of their sister, was visible in every feature: a moment after, every thing disappeared, and Beauty's apprehensions at this proof of Beast's complaisance.

At noon she found dinner ready, and while at table, was entertained with an excellent concert of music, though without seeing any body: but at night, as she was going to sit down to supper, she heard the noise Beast made; and could not help being sadly terrified. "Beauty, (said the monster,) will you give me leave to see you sup?"



"That is as you please," answered Beauty, trembling.

"No, (replied the Beast,) you alone are mistress here; you need only bid me be gone, if my presence is troublesome, and I will immediately withdraw: but tell me, do not you think me very ugly?"

"That is true, (said Beauty,) for I cannot tell a lie; but I believe you are very good-natured."

"So I am, (said the monster,) but then, besides my ugliness, I have no sense; I know very well that I am a poor, silly, stupid creature."

"'Tis no sign of folly to think so, (replied Beauty,) for never did fool know this, or had so humble a conceit of his own understanding."

"Eat then, Beauty, (said the monster,) and endeavour to amuse yourself in your palace; for every thing here is yours, and I should be very uneasy if you were not happy."

"You are very obliging, (answered Beauty;) I own I am pleased with your kindness, and when I consider that, your deformity scarce appears."

"Yes, yes, (said the Beast,) my heart is good, but still I am a monster."

"Among mankind, (says Beauty,) there are many that deserve that name more than you, and I prefer you, just as your are, to those, who, under a human form, hide a treacherous, corrupt, and ungrateful heart."

"If I had sense enough, (replied the Beast,) I would make a fine compliment to thank you, but I am so dull, that I can only say, I am greatly obliged to you." Beauty ate a hearty supper, and had almost conquered her dread of the monster; but she had liked to have fainted away, when he said to her, "Beauty, will you be my wife?" She was some time before she durst answer; for she was afraid of making him angry, if she refused.

At last, however, she said, trembling, "No, Beast."

Immediately the poor monster began to sigh, and hissed so frightfully, that the whole palace echoed. But Beauty soon recovered her fright, for Beast having said, in a mournful voice, "then farewell, Beauty," left the room; and only turned back, now and then, to look at her as he went out.

When Beauty was alone, she felt a great deal of compassion for poor Beast. "Alas, (said she,) 'tis a thousand pities any thing so good-natured should be so ugly."

Beauty spent three months very contentedly in the palace: every evening Beast paid her a visit, and talked to her during supper, very rationally, with plain good common sense, but never with what the world calls wit; and Beauty daily discovered some valuable qualifications in the monster; and seeing him often, had so accustomed her to his deformity, that, far from dreading the time of his visit, she would often look on her watch to see when it would be nine; for the Beast never missed coming at that hour. There was but one thing that gave Beauty any concern, which was, that every night, before she went to bed, the monster always asked her, if she would be his wife. One day she said to him, "Beast, you make me very uneasy, I wish I could consent to marry you, but I am too sincere to make you believe that will ever happen: I shall always esteem you as a friend; endeavour to be satisfied with this."

"I must, said the Beast, for, alas! I know too well my own misfortune; but then I love you with the tenderest affection: however, I ought to think myself happy that you will stay here; promise me never to leave me." Beauty blushed at these words; she had seen in her glass, that her father had pined himself sick for the loss of her, and she longed to see him again.

"I could, (answered she), indeed promise never to leave you entirely, but I have so great a desire to see my father, that I shall fret to death, if you refuse me that satisfaction."

"I had rather die myself, (said the monster,) than give you the least uneasiness: I will send you to your father, you shall remain with him, and poor Beast will die with grief."

"No, (said Beauty, weeping,) I love you too well to be the cause of your death: I give you my promise to return in a week: you have shewn me that my sisters are married, and my brothers gone to the army; only let me stay a week with my father, as he is alone."

"You shall be there tomorrow morning, (said the Beast,) but remember your promise: you need only lay your ring on the table before you go to bed, when you have a mind to come back: farewell, Beauty." Beast sighed as usual, bidding her good night; and Beauty went to bed very sad at seeing him so afflicted.

When she waked the next morning, she found herself at her father's, and having rang a little bell, that was by her bed-side, she saw the maid come; who, the moment she saw her, gave a loud shriek; at which the good man ran up stairs, and thought he should have died with joy to see his dear daughter again. He held her fast locked in his arms above a quarter of an hour. As soon as the first transports were over, Beauty began to think of rising, and was afraid she had no clothes to put on; but the maid told her, that she had just found, in the next room, a large trunk full of gowns, covered with gold and diamonds. Beauty thanked good Beast for his kind care, and taking one of the plainest of them, she intended to make a present of the others to her sisters. She scarce had said so, when the trunk disappeared. Her father told her, that Beast insisted on her keeping them herself; and immediately both gowns and trunk came back again.

Beauty dressed herself; and in the mean time they sent to her sisters, who hasted thither with their husbands. They were both of them very unhappy. The eldest had married a gentleman, extremely handsome indeed, but so fond of his own person, that he was full of nothing but his own dear self, and neglected his wife. The second had married a man of wit, but he only made use of it to plague and torment every body, and his wife most of all. Beauty's sisters sickened with envy, when they saw her dressed like a Princess, and more beautiful than ever; nor could all her obliging affectionate behaviour stifle their jealousy, which was ready to burst when she told them how happy she was. They went down into the garden to vent it in tears; and said one to the other, "In what is this little creature better than us, that she should be so much happier?"

"Sister, said the eldest, a thought just strikes my mind; let us endeavour to detain her above a week, and perhaps the silly monster will be so enraged at her for breaking her word, that he will devour her."

"Right, sister, answered the other, therefore we must shew her as much kindness as possible." After they had taken this resolution, they went up, and behaved so affectionately to their sister, that poor Beauty wept for joy. When the week was expired, they cried and tore their hair, and seemed so sorry to part with her, that she promised to stay a week longer.

In the mean time, Beauty could not help reflecting on herself for the uneasiness she was likely to cause poor Beast, whom she sincerely loved, and really longed to see again. The tenth night she spent at her father's, she dreamed she was in the palace garden, and that she saw Beast extended on the grass-plot, who seemed just expiring, and, in a dying voice, reproached her with her ingratitude. Beauty started out of her sleep and bursting into tears, "Am not I very wicked, (said she) to act so unkindly to Beast, that has studied so much to please me in every thing? Is it his fault that he is so ugly, and has so little sense? He is kind and good, and that is sufficient. Why did I refuse to marry him? I should be happier with the monster than my sisters are with their husbands; it is neither wit nor a fine person in a husband, that makes a woman happy; but virtue, sweetness of temper, and complaisance: and Beast has all these valuable qualifications. It is true, I do not feel the tenderness of affection for him, but I find I have the highest gratitude, esteem, and friendship; and I will not make him miserable; were I to be so ungrateful, I should never forgive myself." Beauty having said this, rose, put her ring on the table, and then laid down again; scarce was she in bed before she fell asleep; and when she waked the next morning, she was overjoyed to find herself in the Beast's palace. She put on one of her richest suits to please him, and waited for evening with the utmost

impatience; at last the wished-for hour came, the clock struck nine, yet no Beast appeared. Beauty then feared she had been the cause of his death; she ran crying and wringing her hands all about the palace, like one in despair; after having sought for him every where, she recollected her dream, and flew to the canal in the garden, where she dreamed she saw him. There she found poor Beast stretched out, quite senseless, and, as she imagined, dead. She threw herself upon him without any dread, and finding his heart beat still, she fetched some water from the canal, and poured it on his head. Beast opened his eyes, and said to Beauty, "You forgot your promise, and I was so afflicted for having lost you, that I resolved to starve myself; but since I have the happiness of seeing you once more, I die satisfied."

"No, dear Beast, (said Beauty,) you must not die; live to be my husband; from this moment I give you my hand, and swear to be none but yours. Alas! I thought I had only a friendship for you, but, the grief I now feel convinces me, that I cannot live without you." Beauty scarcely had pronounced these words, when she saw the palace sparkle with light; and fireworks, instruments of music, every thing, seemed to give notice of some great event: but nothing could fix her attention; she turned to her dear Beast, for whom she trembled with fear; but how great was her surprise! Beast had disappeared, and she saw, at her feet, one of the loveliest Princes that eye ever beheld, who returned her thanks for having put an end to the charm, under which he had so long resembled a Beast. Though this Prince was worthy of all her attention, she could not forbear asking where Beast was.

"You see him at your feet, (said the Prince): a wicked fairy had condemned me to remain under that shape till a beautiful virgin should consent to marry me: the fairy likewise enjoined me to conceal my understanding; there was only you in the world generous enough to be won by the goodness of my temper; and in offering you my crown, I can't discharge the obligations I have to you." Beauty, agreeably surprised, gave the charming Prince her hand to rise; they went together into the castle, and Beauty was overjoyed to find, in the great hall, her father and his whole family, whom the beautiful lady, that appeared to her in her dream, had conveyed thither.

"Beauty, (said this lady,) come and receive the reward of your judicious choice; you have preferred virtue before either wit or beauty, and deserve to find a person in whom all these qualifications are united: you are going to be a great Queen; I hope the throne will not lessen your virtue, or make you forget yourself. As to you, ladies, (said the Fairy to Beauty's two sisters,) I know your hearts, and all the malice they contain: become two statues; but, under this transformation, still retain your reason. You shall stand before your sister's palace gate, and be it your punishment to behold her happiness; and it will not be in your power to return to your former state till you own your faults; but I am very much afraid that you will always remain statues. Pride, anger, gluttony, and idleness, are sometimes conquered, but the conversion of a malicious and envious mind is a kind of miracle." Immediately the fairy gave a stroke with her wand, and in a moment all that were in the hall were transported into the Prince's palace. His subjects received him with joy; he married Beauty, and lived with her many years; and their happiness, as it was founded on virtue, was complete.

## THE TALE OF MRS. TIGGY-WINKLE

BY  
BEATRIX POTTER

Author of  
"The Tale of Peter Rabbit", &c.

1905

For

THE REAL LITTLE LUCIE OF NEWLANDS

Once upon a time there was a little girl called Lucie, who lived at a farm called Little-town. She was a good little girl--only she was always losing her pocket-handkerchiefs!

One day little Lucie came into the farm-yard crying-- oh, she did cry so! "I've lost my pocket-handkin! Three handkins and a pinny! Have you seen them, Tabby Kitten?"

The Kitten went on washing her white paws; so Lucie asked a speckled hen--

"Sally Henny-penny, have you found three pocket-handkins?"

But the speckled hen ran into a barn, clucking--

"I go barefoot, barefoot, barefoot!"

And then Lucie asked Cock Robin sitting on a twig.

Cock Robin looked sideways at Lucie with his bright black eye, and he flew over a stile and away.

Lucie climbed upon the stile and looked up at the hill behind Little-town--a hill that goes up--up--into the clouds as though it had no top!

And a great way up the hillside she thought she saw some white things spread upon the grass.

Lucie scrambled up the hill as fast as her stout legs would carry her; she ran along a steep path-way--up and up--until Little-town was right away down below--she could have dropped a pebble down the chimney!

Presently she came to a spring, bubbling out from the hill-side.

Some one had stood a tin can upon a stone to catch the water--but the water was already running over, for the can was no bigger than an egg-cup! And where the sand upon the path was wet--there were foot-marks of a very small person.

Lucie ran on, and on.

The path ended under a big rock. The grass was short and green, and there were clothes-

props cut from bracken stems, with lines of plaited rushes, and a heap of tiny clothes pins--but no pocket-handkerchiefs!

But there was something else--a door! straight into the hill; and inside it some one was singing--

"Lily-white and clean, oh! With little frills between, oh! Smooth and hot--red rusty spot Never here be seen, oh!"

Lucie, knocked--once--twice, and interrupted the song. A little frightened voice called out "Who's that?"

Lucie opened the door: and what do you think there was inside the hill?--a nice clean kitchen with a flagged floor and wooden beams--just like any other farm kitchen. Only the ceiling was so low that Lucie's head nearly touched it; and the pots and pans were small, and so was everything there.

There was a nice hot singey smell; and at the table, with an iron in her hand stood a very stout short person staring anxiously at Lucie.

Her print gown was tucked up, and she was wearing a large apron over her striped petticoat. Her little black nose went snuffle, snuffle, snuffle, and her eyes went twinkle, twinkle; and underneath her cap--where Lucie had yellow curls--that little person had PRICKLES!

"Who are you?" said Lucie. "Have you seen my pocket-handkins?"

The little person made a bob-curtsey--"Oh, yes, if you please'm; my name is Mrs. Tiggy-winkle; oh, yes if you please'm, I'm an excellent clear-starcher!" And she took something out of a clothes-basket, and spread it on the ironing-blanket.

"What's that thing?" said Lucie--"that's not my pocket-handkin?"

"Oh no, if you please'm; that's a little scarlet waist-coat belonging to Cock Robin!" And she ironed it and folded it, and put it on one side.

Then she took something else off a clothes-horse-- "That isn't my pinny?" said Lucie. "Oh no, if you please'm; that's a damask table-cloth belonging to Jenny Wren; look how it's stained with currant wine! It's very bad to wash!" said Mrs. Tiggy-winkle.

Mrs. Tiggy-winkle's nose went snuffle, snuffle, snuffle, and her eyes went twinkle, twinkle; and she fetched another hot iron from the fire.

"There's one of my pocket-handkins!" cried Lucie--"and there's my pinny!" Mrs. Tiggy-winkle ironed it, and offered it, and shook out the frills.

"Oh that is lovely!" said Lucie.

"And what are those long yellow things with fingers like gloves?"

"Oh, that's a pair of stockings belonging to Sally Henny-penny--look how she's worn the heels out with scratching in the yard! She'll very soon go barefoot!" said Mrs. Tiggy-winkle.

"Why, there's another handkersniff--but it isn't mine; it's red?"

"Oh no, if you please'm; that one belongs to old Mrs. Rabbit; and it did so smell of onions! I've had to wash it separately, I can't get out the smell."

"There's another one of mine," said Lucie.

"What are those funny little white things?"

"That's a pair of mittens belonging to Tabby Kitten; I only have to iron them; she washes then herself."

"There's my last pocket-handkin!" said Lucie.

"And what are you dipping into the basin of starch?"

"They're little dicky shirt-fronts belonging to Tom Tits-mouse--most terrible particular!" said Mrs. Tiddy-winkle. "Now I've finished my ironing; I'm going to air some clothes."

"What are these dear soft fluffy things?" said Lucie.

"Oh those are woolly coats belonging to the little lambs at Skelghyl."

"Will their jackets take-off?" asked Lucie.

"Oh yes, if you please'm; look at the sheep-mark on the shoulder. And here's one marked for Gatesgarth, and three that come from Little-town. They're always marked at washing!" said Mrs. Tiggy-winkle.

And she hung up all sorts and sizes of clothes--small brown coats of mice; and one velvety black mole-skin waist coat; and a red tail-coat with no tail belonging to Squirrel Nutkin; and a very much shrunk jacket belonging to Peter Rabbit; and a petticoat, not marked, that had gone lost in the washing--and at last the basket was empty!

Then Mrs. Tiggy-winkle made tea--a cup for herself and a cup for Lucie. They sat before a fire on a bench and looked sideways at one another.

Mrs. Tiggy-winkle's hand, holding the tea-cup, was very very brown, and very very wrinkly with the soap suds; and all through her gown and her cap, there were hair-pins sticking wrong end out; so that Lucie didn't like to sit to near her.

When they had finished tea, they tied up the clothes in bundles; and Lucie's pocket-handkerchiefs were folded up inside her clean pinny, and fastened with a silver safety-pin.

And then they made up the fire with turf, and came out and locked the door, and hid the key under the door-sill.

Then away down the hill trotted Lucie and Mrs. Tiggy-winkle and the bundles of clothes!

All the way down the path little animals came out of the fern to meet them; the very first that they met was Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny!

And she gave them their Nice clean clothes; and all the little animals and birds were so very much obliged to dear Mrs. Tiggy-winkle.

So that at the bottom of the hill when they came to the stile, there was nothing left to carry except Lucie's one little bundle.

Lucie scrambled up the stile with the bundle in her hand; and then she turned to say, "Good-Night," and to thank the washer-woman-- But what a very odd thing! Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle had not waited either for thanks or for the washing bill! She was running running running up the hill--and Where was her white frilled cap? and her shawl? and her gown--and her petticoat?

And how small she had grown--and how brown--and covered with prickles! Why! Mrs. Tiggy-winkle was nothing but a hedgehog.

\* \* \* \* \*

(Now some people say that little Lucie had been asleep upon the stile--but then how could she have found three clean pocket-handkins and a pinny, pinned with a silver safety pin? And besides--I have seen that door into the back of the hill called Cat Bells--and besides I am very well acquainted with dear Mrs. Tiggy-winkle!)

**MRS. PETER RABBIT**

BY

THORNTON W. BURGESS

1919

TO MY DAUGHTER

WHOSE ASSISTANCE IN THE PREPARATION  
OF THIS VOLUME HAS BEEN INVALUABLE  
IT IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

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## CHAPTER I

### PETER RABBIT LOSES HIS APPETTITE

Good appetite, you'll always find,  
Depends upon your state of mind.  
Peter Rabbit.

Peter Rabbit had lost his appetite. Now when Peter Rabbit loses his appetite, something is very wrong indeed with him. Peter has boasted that he can eat any time and all the time. In fact, the two things that Peter thinks most about are his stomach and satisfying his curiosity, and nearly all of the scrapes that Peter has gotten into have been because of those two things. So when Peter loses his appetite or his curiosity, there is surely something the matter with him.

Ever since Old Man Coyote had come to live on the Green Meadows, Peter had been afraid to go very far from the dear Old Briar-patch where he makes his home, and where he always feels safe. Now there wasn't any reason why he should go far from the dear Old Briar-patch. There was plenty to eat in it and all around it, for sweet clover grew almost up to the very edge of it, and you know Peter is very fond of sweet clover. So there was plenty for Peter to eat without running any risk of danger. With nothing to do but eat and sleep, Peter should have grown fat and contented. But he didn't.

Now that is just the way with a lot of people. The more they have and the less they have to worry about, the more discontented they become, and at last they are positively unhappy. There was little Danny Meadow Mouse, living out on the Green Meadows; he was happy all the livelong day, and yet he had no safe castle like the dear Old Briar-patch where he could always be safe. Every minute of every day Danny had to keep his eyes wide open and his wits working their very quickest, for any minute he was likely to be in danger. Old Man Coyote or Reddy Fox or Granny Fox or Digger the Badger or Mr. Blacksnake was likely to come creeping through the grass any time, and they are always hungry for a fat Meadow Mouse. And as if that weren't worry enough, Danny had to watch the sky, too, for Old Whitetail the Marsh Hawk, or his cousin Redtail, or Blacky the Crow, each of whom would be glad of a Meadow Mouse dinner. Yet in spite of all this, Danny was happy and never once lost his appetite.

But Peter Rabbit, with nothing to worry him so long as he stayed in the Old Briar-patch, couldn't eat and grew more and more unhappy.

"I don't know what's the matter with me. I really don't know what's the matter with me," said Peter, as he turned up his nose at a patch of sweet, tender young clover. "I think I'll go and cut some new paths through the Old Briar-patch."

Now, though he didn't know it, that was the very best thing he could do. It gave him something to think about. For two or three days he was very busy cutting new paths, and his appetite came back.

But when he had made all the paths he wanted, and there was nothing else to do, he lost his appetite again. He just sat still all day long and moped and thought and thought and thought. The trouble with Peter Rabbit's thinking was that it was all about himself and how unhappy he was. Of course, the more he thought about this, the more unhappy he grew.

"If I only had some one to talk to, I'd feel better," said he to himself. That reminded him of Johnny Chuck and what good times they used to have together when Johnny lived on the Green Meadows. Then he thought of how happy Johnny seemed with his little family in his new home in the Old Orchard, in spite of all the worries his family made him. And right then Peter found out what was the matter with him.

"I believe I'm just lonesome," said Peter. "Yes, Sir, that's what's the matter with me.

"It isn't good to be alone,  
I've often heard my mother say.  
It makes one selfish, grouchy, cross,  
And quite unhappy all the day.  
One needs to think of other folks,  
And not of just one's self alone,  
To find the truest happiness,  
And joy and real content to own.

"Now that I've found out what is the trouble with me, the question is, what am I going to do about it?"

## **CHAPTER II**

### **PETER RABBIT PLANS A JOURNEY**

It's a long jump that makes no landing.  
Peter Rabbit.

"The trouble with me is that I'm lonesome," repeated Peter Rabbit as he sat in the dear Old Briar-patch. "Yes, Sir, that's the only thing that's wrong with me. I'm just tired of myself, and that's why I've lost my appetite. And now I know what's the matter, what am I going to do about it? If I were sure, absolutely sure, that Old Man Coyote meant what he said about our being friends, I'd start out this very minute to call on all my old friends. My, my, my, it seems an age since I visited the Smiling Pool and saw Grandfather Frog and Jerry Muskrat and Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter! Mr. Coyote sounded as if he really meant to leave me alone, but, but--well, perhaps he did mean it when he saw me sitting here safe among the brambles, but if I should meet him out in the open, he might change his mind and--oh, dear, his teeth are terrible long and sharp!"

Peter sat a little longer, thinking and thinking. Then a bright idea popped into his head. He kicked

up his heels.

"I'll do it," said he. "I'll make a journey! That's what I'll do! I'll make a journey and see the Great World.

"By staying here and sitting still  
I'm sure I'll simply grow quite ill.  
A change of scene is what I need  
To be from all my trouble freed."

Of course if Peter had really stopped to think the matter over thoroughly he would have known that running away from one kind of trouble is almost sure to lead to other troubles. But Peter is one of those who does his thinking afterward. Peter is what is called impulsive. That is, he does things and then thinks about them later, and often wishes he hadn't done them. So now the minute the idea of making a journey popped into his head, he made up his mind that he would do it, and that was all there was to it. You see, Peter never looks ahead. If he could get rid of the trouble that bothered him now, which, you know, was nothing but lonesomeness, he wouldn't worry about the troubles he might get into later.

Now the minute Peter made up his mind to make a journey, he began to feel better. His lost appetite returned, and the first thing he did was to eat a good meal of sweet clover.

"Let me see," said he, as he filled his big stomach, "I believe I'll visit the Old Pasture. It's a long way off and I've never been there, but I've heard Sammy Jay say that it's a very wonderful place, and I don't believe it is any more dangerous than the Green Meadows and the Green Forest, now that Old Man Coyote and Reddy and Granny Fox are all living here. I'll start tonight when I am sure that Old Man Coyote is nowhere around, and I won't tell a soul where I am going."

So Peter settled himself and tried to sleep the long day away, but his mind was so full of the long journey he was going to make that he couldn't sleep much, and when he did have a nap, he dreamed of wonderful sights and adventures out in the Great World.

At last he saw jolly, round, red Mr. Sun drop down to his bed behind the Purple Hills. Old Mother West Wind came hurrying back from her day's work and gathered her children, the Merry Little Breezes, into her big bag, and then she, too, started for her home behind the Purple Hills. A little star came out and winked at Peter, and then way over on the edge of the Green Forest he heard Old Man Coyote laugh. Peter grinned. That was what he had been waiting for, since it meant that Old Man Coyote was so far away that there was nothing to fear from him.

Peter hopped out from the dear, safe Old Briar-patch, looked this way and that way, and then, with his heart in his mouth, started towards the Old Pasture as fast as he could go, lipperty--lipperty--lip.

### CHAPTER III

#### HOOTY THE OWL CHANGES HIS HUNTING GROUNDS

A full stomach makes a pleasant Day;  
An empty stomach turns the whole world gray.

Peter Rabbit.

Hooty the owl sat on the tip-top of a tall dead tree in the Green Forest while the Black Shadows crept swiftly among the trees. He was talking to himself. It wouldn't have done for him to have spoken aloud what he was saying to himself, for then the little people in feathers and fur on whom he likes to make his dinner would have heard him and known just where he was. So he said it to himself, and sat so still that he looked for all the world like a part of the tree on which he was sitting. What he was saying was this:

"Towhit, towhoo! Towhit, towhoo!  
Will some one tell me what to do?  
My children have an appetite  
That keeps me hunting all the night,  
And though their stomachs I may stuff  
They never seem to have enough.  
Towhit, towhoo! Towhit, towhoo!  
Will some one tell me what to do?"

When it was dark enough he gave his fierce hunting call--"Whooo-hoo-hoo, whoo-hoo!"

Now that is a terrible sound in the dark woods, very terrible indeed to the little forest people, because it sounds so fierce and hungry. It makes them jump and shiver, and that is just what Hooty wants them to do, for in doing it one of them is likely to make just the least scratching with his claws, or to rustle a leaf. If he does, Hooty, whose ears are very, very wonderful, is almost sure to hear, and with his great yellow eyes see him, and then--Hooty has his dinner.

The very night when Peter Rabbit started on his journey to the Old Pasture, Hooty the Owl had made up his mind that something had got to be done to get more food for those hungry babies of his up in the big hemlock-tree in the darkest corner of the Green Forest. Hunting was very poor, very poor indeed, and Hooty was at his wits' end to know what he should do. He had hooted and hooted in vain in the Green Forest, and he had sailed back and forth over the Green Meadows like a great black shadow without seeing so much as a single Mouse.

"It's all because of Old Man Coyote and Granny and Reddy Fox," said Hooty angrily. "They've spoiled the hunting. Yes, Sir, that's just what they have done! If I expect to feed those hungry babies of mine, I must find new hunting grounds. I believe I'll go up to the Old Pasture. Perhaps

I'll have better luck up there."

So Hooty the Owl spread his broad wings and started for the Old Pasture just a little while after Peter Rabbit had started for the same place. Of course he didn't know that Peter was on his way there, and of course Peter didn't know that Hooty even thought of the Old Pasture. If he had, perhaps he would have thought twice before starting. Anyway, he would have kept a sharper watch on the sky. But as it was his thoughts were all of Old Man Coyote and Granny Fox, and that is where Peter made a very grave mistake, a very grave mistake indeed, as he was soon to find out.

## *CHAPTER IV*

### THE SHADOW WITH SHARP CLAWS

Now what's the use, pray tell me this,  
 When all is said and done;  
 A thousand things and one to learn  
 And then forget the one?  
 For when that one alone you need,  
 And nothing else will do,  
 What good are all the thousand then?  
 I do not see; do you?  
                                 Peter Rabbit.

Forgetting leads to more trouble than almost anything under the sun. Peter Rabbit knew this. Of course he knew it. Peter had had many a narrow escape just from forgetting something. He knew just as well as you know that he might just as well not learn a thing as to learn it and then forget it. But Peter is such a happy-go-lucky little fellow that he is very apt to forget, and forgetting leads him into all kinds of difficulties, just as it does most folks.

Now Peter had learned when he was a very little fellow that when he went out at night, he must watch out quite as sharply for Hooty the Owl as for either Granny or Reddy Fox, and usually he did. But the night he started to make a journey to the Old Pasture, his mind was so full of Old Man Coyote and Granny and Reddy Fox that he wholly forgot Hooty the Owl. So, as he scampered across the Green Meadows, lipperty--lipperty--lip, as fast as he could go, with his long ears and his big eyes and his wobbly nose all watching out for danger on the ground, not once did he think that there might be danger from the sky above him.

It was a moonlight night, and Peter was sharp enough to keep in the shadows whenever he could. He would scamper as fast as he knew how from one shadow to another and then sit down in the blackest part of each shadow to get his breath, and to look and listen and so make sure that no one was following him. The nearer he got to the Old Pasture, the safer he felt from Old Man Coyote and Granny and Reddy Fox. When he scampered across the patches of moonshine his heart didn't come up in his mouth the way it had at first. He grew bolder and bolder. Once or twice he stopped

for a mouthful of sweet clover. He was tired, for he had come a long way, but he was almost to the Old Pasture now, and it looked very dark and safe, for it was covered with bushes and brambles.

"Plenty of hiding places there," thought Peter. "It really looks as safe as the dear Old Briar-patch. No one will ever think to look for me way off here."

Just then he spied a patch of sweet clover out in the moonlight. His mouth began to water. "I'll just fill my stomach before I go into the Old Pasture, for there may not be any clover there," said Peter.

"You'd better be careful, Peter Rabbit," said a wee warning voice inside him.

"Pooh!" said Peter. "There's nothing to be afraid of way up here!"

A shadow drifted across the sweet clover patch. Peter saw it. "That must be made by a cloud crossing the moon," said Peter, and he was so sure of it that he didn't even look up to see, but boldly hopped out to fill his stomach. Just as he reached the patch of clover, the shadow drifted over it again. Then all in a flash a terrible thought entered Peter's head. He didn't stop to look up. He suddenly sprang sideways, and even as he did so, sharp claws tore his coat and hurt him dreadfully. He twisted and dodged and jumped and turned this way and that way, and all the time the shadow followed him. Once again sharp claws tore his coat and made him squeal with pain.

At last, when his breath was almost gone, he reached the edge of the Old Pasture and dived under a friendly old bramble-bush.

"Oh," sobbed Peter, "I forgot all about Hooty the Owl! Besides, I didn't suppose he ever came way up here."

## *CHAPTER V*

### IN THE OLD PASTURE

Brambles never scratch those who understand and are considerate of them.  
Peter Rabbit.

Peter Rabbit sat under a friendly bramble-bush on the edge of the Old Pasture and panted for breath, while his heart went pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat, as if it would thump its way right through his sides. Peter had had a terrible fright. There were long tears in his coat, and he smarted and ached dreadfully where the cruel claws of Hooty the Owl had torn him. And there he was in a strange place, not knowing which way to turn, for you know he never had visited the Old Pasture before.

But Peter had had so many narrow escapes in his life that he had learned not to worry over dangers

that are past. Peter is what wise men call a phi-los-o-pher. That is a big word, but its meaning is very simple. A philosopher is one who believes that it is foolish to think about things that have happened, except to learn some lesson from them, and that the best thing to do is to make the most of the present. Peter had learned his lesson. He was sure of that.

"I never, never will forget again to watch out for Hooty the Owl," said he to himself, as he nursed his wounds, "and so perhaps it is a good thing that he so nearly caught me this time. If he hadn't, I might have forgotten all about him some time when he could catch me. I certainly wouldn't have watched out for him way up here, for I didn't think he ever came up to the Old Pasture. But now I know he does, Mr. Hooty'll have to be smarter than he's ever been before to catch me napping again. My, how I do smart and ache! I know now just how Danny Meadow Mouse felt that time Hooty caught him and dropped him into the Old Briar-patch. Ouch! Well, as my mother used to say:

'Yesterday has gone away;  
Make the most of just to-day.'

Here I am up in the Old Pasture, and the question is, what shall I do next?"

Peter felt a queer little thrill as he peeped out from under the friendly bramble-bush. Very strange and wonderful it seemed. Of course he couldn't see very far, because the Old Pasture was all overgrown with bushes and briars, and they made the very blackest of black shadows in the moonlight. Peter wondered what dangers might be awaiting him there, but somehow he didn't feel much afraid. No, Sir, he didn't feel much afraid. You see those briars looked good to him, for briars are always friendly to Peter and unfriendly to those who would do harm to Peter. So when he saw them, he felt almost at home.

Peter drew a long breath. Then he cried "Ouch!" You see, he had forgotten for a minute how sore he was. He was eager to explore this new wonderland, for Sammy Jay had told him wonderful tales about it, and he knew that here old Granny Fox and Reddy Fox had found safety when Farmer Brown's boy had hunted for them so hard on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest. He felt sure that there must be the most splendid hiding-places, and it seemed as if he certainly must start right out to see them, for you know Peter is very, very curious. But the first move he made brought another "Ouch" from him, and he made up a wry face.

"I guess the best thing for me to do is to stay right where I am," said he, "for here I am safe under this friendly old bramble."

So with a sigh Peter settled down to make himself as comfortable as he could, and once, as far, far away on the Green Meadows he heard the voice of Old Man Coyote, Peter even smiled.

"I haven't anything to fear from him, anyway, for he'll never think of coming way up here," said he.

*CHAPTER VI*

## PETER RABBIT IS STILL LONESOME

A sympathetic word or two  
 A wond'rous help is, when you're blue.  
 So pity him who sits alone  
 His aches and troubles to bemoan.  
   Peter Rabbit.

All the rest of that night Peter sat under a friendly old bramble-bush on the edge of the Old Pasture and nursed the sore places made by the claws of Hooty the Owl. At last jolly, round, red Mr. Sun began to climb up in the blue, blue sky, just as he does every day. Peter looked up at him, and he felt sure that Mr. Sun winked at him. Somehow it made him feel better. The fact is, Peter was beginning to feel just a wee, wee bit homesick. It is bad enough to be in a strange place alone, but to be sore and to smart and ache as Peter did makes that lonesome feeling a whole lot harder to bear. It is dreadful not to have any one to speak to, but to look around and not see a single thing you have ever seen before,—my, my, my, it certainly does give you a strange, sinking feeling way down inside!

Before that long night was over Peter felt as if his heart had gone way down to his very toes. Yes, Sir, that's the way he felt. Every time he moved at all he cried "Ouch!" He just knew that he was growing more stiff and sore every minute. Then he began to wonder what he should do for something to eat, for he was in a strange place, you remember. And that made him think of all his private little paths through the dear Old Briar-patch, the little paths he had made all himself, and which no one used but himself, excepting Danny Meadow Mouse when he came for a visit.

"Perhaps I shall never, never see them again," moaned Peter, and two big tears filled his eyes and were just ready to drop.

At that moment he looked up and saw jolly, round, red Mr. Sun wink. Peter tried to wink back, and that made the two tears fall. But there were no more tears to follow. You see that wink had made all the difference in the world, Peter's heart had jumped right back where it belonged. Mr. Sun was one of his oldest friends and you know

When trouble comes, a friendly face  
 Makes bright the very darkest place.

And so, just as he made bright all the Old Pasture, Mr. Sun also made bright the dark little corners in Peter's heart just because he was an old friend. To be sure Peter was still lonesome, but it was a different kind of lonesomeness. He hadn't anybody to talk to, which is always a dreadful thing to Peter, but he had only to look up to catch a friendly wink, and somehow that not only made him feel better inside but it seemed to make his aches and smarts better too.



## CHAPTER VII

### PETER FINDS TRACKS

Every day is different from every other day,  
And always there is something new to see along the way.  
Peter Rabbit.

Peter Rabbit had sat still just as long as he could. He was stiff and lame and sore from the wounds made by Hooty the Owl, but his curiosity wouldn't let him sit still a minute longer. He just HAD to explore the Old Pasture. So with many a wry face and many an "Ouch" he limped out from the shelter of the friendly old bramble-bush and started out to see what the Old Pasture was like.

Now Hooty the Owl had taught Peter wisdom. With his torn clothes and his aches and smarts he couldn't very well forget to be careful. First he made sure that there was no danger near, and this time he took pains to look all around in the sky as well as on the ground. Then he limped out to the very patch of sweet clover where Hooty had so nearly caught him the night before.

"A good breakfast," said Peter, "will make a new Rabbit of me." You know Peter thinks a great deal of his stomach. So he began to eat as fast as he could, stopping every other mouthful to look and listen. "I know it's a bad habit to eat fast," said he, "but it's a whole lot worse to have an empty stomach." So he ate and ate and ate as fast as he could make his little jaws go, which is very fast indeed.

When Peter's stomach was stuffed full he gave a great sigh of relief and limped back to the friendly old bramble-bush to rest. But he couldn't sit still long, for he just had to find out all about the Old Pasture. So pretty soon he started out to explore. Such a wonderful place as it seemed to Peter! There were clumps of bushes with little open spaces between, just the nicest kind of playgrounds. Then there were funny spreading, prickly juniper-trees, which made the very safest places to crawl out of harm's way and to hide. Everywhere were paths made by cows. Very wonderful they seemed to Peter, who had never seen any like them before. He liked to follow them because they led to all kinds of queer places.

Sometimes he would come to places where tall trees made him think of the Green Forest, only there were never more than a few trees together. Once he found an old tumble-down stone wall all covered with vines, and he shouted right out with delight.

"It's a regular castle!" cried Peter, and he knew that there he would be safe from every one but Shadow the Weasel. But he never was wholly safe from Shadow the Weasel anywhere, so he didn't let that thought worry him. By and by he came to a wet place called a swamp. The ground was soft, and there were little pools of water. Great ferns grew here just as they did along the bank of the Laughing Brook, only more of them. There were pretty birch-trees and wild cherry-trees. It was still and dark and oh, so peaceful! Peter liked that place and sat down under a big fern to rest. He didn't hear a sound excepting the beautiful silvery voice of Veery the Thrush. Listening to it, Peter

fell asleep, for he was very tired.

By and by Peter awoke. For a minute he couldn't think where he was. Then he remembered. But for a long time he sat perfectly still, thinking of his adventures and wondering if he would be missed down on the Green Meadows. Then all of a sudden Peter saw something that made him sit up so suddenly that he cried "Ouch!" for he had forgotten all about how stiff and sore he was.

What do you think Peter saw? Tracks! Yes, Sir, he saw tracks, Rabbit tracks in the soft mud, and Peter knew that he hadn't made them!

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### THE STRANGE TRACKS IN THE OLD PASTURE

Who has attentive ear and eye  
Will learn a lot if he but try.  
Peter Rabbit.

Peter Rabbit stared and stared at the tracks in the soft mud of the swamp in the Old Pasture. He would look first at the tracks, then at his own feet, and finally back at the tracks again. He scratched his long right ear with his long right hind foot. Then he scratched his long left ear with his long left hind foot, all the time staring his hardest at those strange tracks. They certainly were the tracks of a Rabbit, and it was equally certain that they were not his own.

"They are too big for mine, and they are too small for Jumper the Hare's. Besides, Jumper is in the Green Forest and not way off up here," said Peter to himself. "I wonder--well, I wonder if he will try to drive me away."

You see Peter knew that if he had found a strange Rabbit in his dear Old Briar-patch he certainly would have tried his best to drive him out, for he felt that the Old Briar-patch belonged to him. Now he wondered if the maker of these tracks would feel the same way about the Old Pasture. Peter looked troubled as he thought it over. Then his face cleared.

"Perhaps," said he hopefully, "he is a new comer here, too, and if he is, I'll have just as much right here as he has. Perhaps he simply has big feet and isn't any bigger or stronger than I am, and if that's the case I'd like to see him drive me out!"

Peter swelled himself out and tried to look as big as he could when he said this, but swelling himself out this way reminded him of how stiff and sore he was from the wounds given him by Hooty the Owl, and he made a wry face. You see he realized all of a sudden that he didn't feel much like fighting.

"My," said Peter, "I guess I'd better find out all about this other fellow before I have any trouble

with him. The Old Pasture looks big enough for a lot of Rabbits, and perhaps if I don't bother him, he won't bother me. I wonder what he looks like. I believe I'll follow these tracks and see what I can find."

So Peter began to follow the tracks of the strange Rabbit, and he was so interested that he almost forgot to limp. They led him this way and they led him that way through the swamp and then out of it. At the foot of a certain birch-tree Peter stopped.

"Ha!" said he, "now I shall know just how big this fellow is."

How was he to know? Why, that tree was a kind of Rabbit measuring-stick. Yes, Sir, that is just what it was. You see, Rabbits like to keep a record of how they grow, just as some little boys and girls do, but as they have no doors or walls to stand against, they use trees. And this was the measuring-tree of the Rabbit whose tracks Peter had been following. Peter stopped at the foot of it and sat down to think it over. He knew what that tree meant perfectly well. He had one or two measuring-trees of his own on the edge of the Green Forest. He knew, too, that it was more than a mere measuring-tree. It was a kind of "no trespassing" sign. It meant that some other Rabbit had lived here for some time and felt that he owned this part of the Old Pasture. Peter's nose told him that, for the tree smelled very, very strong of Rabbit--of the Rabbit with the big feet. This was because whoever used it for a measuring-tree used to rub himself against it as far up as he could reach.

Peter hopped up close to it. Then he sat up very straight and stretched himself as tall as he could, but he wisely took care not to rub against the tree. You see, he didn't want to leave his own mark there. So he stretched and stretched, but stretch as he would, he couldn't make his wobbly little nose reach the mark made by the other Rabbit.

"My sakes, he is a big fellow!" exclaimed Peter. "I guess I don't want to meet him until I feel better and stronger than I do now."

## *CHAPTER IX*

### AN UNPLEASANT SURPRISE

Legs are very useful when you want to run away;  
 Long, sharp teeth are splendid if to fight you want to stay;  
 But a far, far greater blessing, whether one may stay or quit,  
 Is a clever, trusty, quick and ever ready wit.

Peter Rabbit.

Peter Rabbit sat in a snug hiding-place in the Old Pasture and thought over what he had found out about the strange Rabbit whose tracks he had followed. They had led him to a rubbing or

measuring-tree, where the strange Rabbit had placed his mark, and that mark was so high up on the tree that Peter knew the strange Rabbit must be a great deal bigger than himself.

"If he's bigger, of course he is stronger," thought Peter, "and if he is both bigger and stronger, of course it won't be the least bit of use for me to fight him. Then, anyway, I'm too stiff and sore to fight. And then, he has no business to think he owns the Old Pasture, because he doesn't. I have just as much right here as he has. Yes, Sir, I have just as much right in this Old Pasture as he has, and if he thinks he can drive me out he is going to find that he was never more mistaken in his life! I'll show him! Yes, Sir-e-e, I'll show him! I guess my wits are as sharp as his, and I wouldn't wonder if they are a little bit sharper."

Foolish Peter Rabbit! There he was boasting and bragging to himself of what he would do to some one whom he hadn't even seen, all because he had found a sign that told him the Old Pasture, in which he had made up his mind to make his new home, was already the home of some one else. Peter was like a lot of other people; he wasn't fair. No, Sir, he wasn't fair. He let his own desires destroy his sense of fair play. It was all right for him to put up signs in the dear Old Briar-patch and the Green Forest, warning other Rabbits that they must keep away, but it was all wrong for another Rabbit to do the same thing in the Old Pasture. Oh, my, yes! That was quite a different matter! The very thought of it made Peter very, very angry. When he thought of this other Rabbit, it was always as the stranger. That shows just how unfair Peter was, because, you see, Peter himself was really the stranger. It was his first visit to the Old Pasture, while it was very plain that the other had lived there for some time.

But Peter couldn't or wouldn't see that. He had counted so much on having the Old Pasture to himself and doing as he pleased, that he was too upset and disappointed to be fair. If the other Rabbit had been smaller than he--well, that might have made a difference. The truth is, Peter was just a wee bit afraid. And perhaps it was that wee bit of fear that made him unfair and unjust. Anyway, the longer he sat and thought about it, the angrier he grew, and the more he bragged and boasted to himself about what he would do.

"I'll just keep out of sight until my wounds are healed, and then we'll see who owns the Old Pasture!" thought Peter.

No sooner had this thought popped into his head than he received a surprise, such an unpleasant surprise! It was three heavy thumps right behind him. Peter knew what that meant. Of course he knew. It meant that he must run or fight. It meant that he had been so busy thinking about how smart he was going to be that he had forgotten to cover his own tracks, and so the maker of the big tracks he had followed had found him out.

Thump! Thump! Thump! There it was again. Peter knew by the sound that it was of no use to stay and fight, especially when he was so sore and stiff. There was nothing to do but run away. He simply had to. And that is just what he did do, while his eyes were filled with tears of rage and bitterness.

## CHAPTER X

### PETER RABBIT ALMOST DECIDES TO RETURN HOME

I have no doubt that you've been told  
How timid folks are sometimes bold.  
Peter Rabbit.

In all his life Peter Rabbit had never been so disappointed. Here he was in the Old Pasture, about which he had dreamed and thought so long, and in reaching which he had had such a narrow escape from Hooty the Owl, and yet he was unhappy. The fact is, Peter was more unhappy than he could remember ever to have been before. Not only was he unhappy, but he was in great fear, and the worst of it was he was in fear of an enemy who could go wherever he could go himself.

You see, it was this way: Peter had expected to find some enemies in the Old Pasture. He had felt quite sure that fierce old Mr. Goshawk was to be watched for, and perhaps Mr. Redtail and one or two others of the Hawk family. He knew that Granny and Reddy Fox had lived there once upon a time and might come back if things got too unpleasant for them on the Green Meadows, now that Old Man Coyote had made his home there. But Peter didn't worry about any of these dangers. He was used to them, was Peter. He had been dodging them ever since he could remember, A friendly bramble-bush, a little patch of briars, or an old stone wall near was all that Peter needed to feel perfectly safe from these enemies, But now he was in danger wherever he went, for he had an enemy who could go everywhere he could, and it seemed to Peter that this enemy was following him all the time. Who was it? Why, it was a great big old Rabbit with a very short temper, who, because he had lived there for a long time, felt that he owned the Old Pasture and that Peter had no right there. Now, In spite of all his trouble, Peter had seen enough of the Old Pasture to think it a very wonderful place, a very wonderful place indeed. He had seen just enough to want to see more. You know how very curious Peter is. It seemed to him that he just couldn't go back to the dear Old Briar-patch on the Green Meadows until he had seen everything to be seen in the Old Pasture. So he couldn't make up his mind to go back home, but stayed and stayed, hoping each day that the old gray Rabbit would get tired of hunting for him, and would let him alone.

But the old gray Rabbit didn't do anything of the kind. He seemed to take the greatest delight in waiting until Peter thought that he had found a corner of the Old Pasture where he would be safe, and then in stealing there when Peter was trying to take a nap, and driving him out. Twice Peter had tried to fight, but the old gray Rabbit was too big for him. He knocked all the wind out of poor Peter with a kick from his big hind legs, and then with his sharp teeth he tore Peter's coat.

Poor Peter! His coat had already been badly torn by the cruel claws of Hooty the Owl, and Old Mother Nature hadn't had time to mend it when he fought with the old gray Rabbit. After the second time Peter didn't try to fight again. He just tried to keep out of the way. And he did, too. But in doing it he lost so much sleep and he had so little to eat that he grew thin and thin and thinner, until, with his torn clothes, he looked like a scarecrow.

And still he hated to give in  
 When there was still so much to see.  
 "Persistence, I was taught, will win,  
 And so I will persist," said he.

And he did persist day after day, until at last he felt that he really must give it up. He had stretched out wearily on a tiny sunning-bank in the farthest corner of the Old Pasture, and had just about made up his mind that he would go back that very night to the dear Old Briar-patch on the Green Meadows, when a tiny rustle behind him made him jump to his feet with his heart in his mouth. But instead of the angry face of the old gray Rabbit he saw--what do you think? Why, two of the softest, gentlest eyes peeping at him from behind a big fern.

## *CHAPTER XI*

### PETER RABBIT HAS A SUDDEN CHANGE OF MIND

Whatever you decide to do  
 Make up your mind to see it through.  
 Peter Rabbit.

Peter Rabbit stared at the two soft, gentle eyes peeping at him from behind the big fern just back of the sunning-bank in the far corner of the Old Pasture. He had so fully expected to see the angry face of the big, gray, old Rabbit who had made life so miserable for him that for a minute he couldn't believe that he really saw what he did see. And so he just stared and stared. It was very rude. Of course it was. It was very rude indeed. It is always rude to stare at any one. So it was no wonder that after a minute the two soft, gentle eyes disappeared behind one of the great green leaves of the fern. Peter gave a great sigh. Then he remembered how rude he had been to stare so.

"I--I beg your pardon," said Peter in his politest manner, which is very polite indeed, for Peter can be very polite when he wants to be. "I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to frighten you. Please forgive me."

With the greatest eagerness Peter waited for a reply. You know it was because he had been so lonesome that he had left his home in the dear Old Briar-patch on the Green Meadows. And since he had been in the Old Pasture he had been almost as lonesome, for he had had no one to talk to. So now he waited eagerly for a reply. You see, he felt sure that the owner of such soft, gentle eyes must have a soft, gentle voice and a soft, gentle heart, and there was nothing in the world that Peter needed just then so much as sympathy. But though he waited and waited, there wasn't a sound from the big fern.

"Perhaps you don't know who I am. I'm Peter Rabbit, and I've come up here from the Green Meadows, and I'd like very much to be your friend," continued Peter after a while. Still there was no sound. Peter peeped from the corner of one eye at the place where he had seen the two soft,

gentle eyes, but there was nothing to be seen but the gently waving leaf of the big fern. Peter didn't know just what to do. He wanted to hop over to the big fern and peep behind it, but he didn't dare to. He was afraid that whoever was hiding there would run away.

"I'm very lonesome; won't you speak to me?" said Peter, in his gentlest voice, and he sighed a deep, doleful sort of sigh. Still there was no reply. Peter had just about made up his mind that he would go over to the big fern when he saw those two soft, gentle eyes peeping from under a different leaf. It seemed to Peter that never in all his life had he seen such beautiful eyes. They looked so shy and bashful that Peter held his breath for fear that he would frighten them away.

After a time the eyes disappeared. Then Peter saw a little movement among the ferns, and he knew that whoever was there was stealing away. He wanted to follow, but something down inside him warned him that it was best to sit still. So Peter sat just where he was and kept perfectly still for the longest time.

But the eyes didn't appear again, and at last he felt sure that whoever they belonged to had really gone away. Then he sighed another great sigh, for suddenly he felt more lonesome than ever. He hopped over to the big fern and looked behind it. There in the soft earth was a footprint, the footprint of a Rabbit, and it was SMALLER than his own. It seemed to Peter that it was the most wonderful little footprint he ever had seen.

"I believe," said Peter right out loud, "that I'll change my mind. I won't go back to the dear Old Briar-patch just yet, after all."

## *CHAPTER XII*

### PETER LEARNS SOMETHING FROM TOMMY TIT

When you find a friend in trouble  
 Pass along a word of cheer.  
 Often it is very helpful  
 Just to feel a friend is near.  
                                 Peter Rabbit.

"Hello, Peter Rabbit! What are you doing way up here, and what are you looking so mournful about?"

Peter gave a great start of pleased surprise. That was the first friendly voice he had heard for days and days.

"Hello yourself, Tommy Tit!" shouted Peter joyously. "My, my, my, but I am glad to see you! But what are you doing up here in the Old Pasture yourself?"

Tommy Tit the Chickadee hung head down from the tip of a slender branch of a maple-tree and winked a saucy bright eye at Peter. "I've got a secret up here," he said.

Now there is nothing in the world Peter Rabbit loves more than a secret. But he cannot keep one to save him. No, Sir, Peter Rabbit can no more keep a secret than he can fly. He means to. His intentions are the very best in the world, but--

Alas! alack! poor Peter's tongue is very, very loosely hung. And so, because he MUST talk and WILL talk every chance he gets, he cannot keep a secret. People who talk too much never can.

"What is your secret?" asked Peter eagerly.

Tommy Tit looked down at Peter, and his sharp little eyes twinkled. "It's a nest with six of the dearest little babies in the world in it," he replied.

"Oh, how lovely!" cried Peter. "Where is it, Tommy Tit?"

"In a hollow birch-stub," replied Tommy, his eyes twinkling more than ever.

"But where is the hollow birch-stub?" persisted Peter.

Tommy laughed. "That's my real secret," said he, "and if I should tell you it wouldn't be a secret at all. Now tell me what you are doing up here in the Old Pasture, Peter Rabbit."

Peter saw that it was of no use to tease Tommy Tit for his secret, so instead he poured out all his own troubles. He told how lonesome he had been in the dear Old Briar-patch on the Green Meadows because he didn't dare to go about for fear of Old Man Coyote, and how at last he had decided to visit the Old Pasture. He told how Hooty the Owl had nearly caught him on his way, and then how, ever since his arrival, he had been hunted by the big, gray, old Rabbit so that he could neither eat nor sleep and had become so miserable that at last he had made up his mind to go back to the dear Old Briar-patch.

"Ho!" interrupted Tommy Tit, "I know him. He's Old Jed Thumper, the oldest, biggest, crossiest Rabbit anywhere around. He's lived in the Old Pasture so long that he thinks he owns it. It's a wonder that he hasn't killed you."

"I guess perhaps he would have only I can run faster than he can," replied Peter, looking a little shamefaced because he had to own up that he ran away instead of fighting.

Tommy Tit laughed. "That's the very wisest thing you could have done," said he. "But why don't you go back to the dear Old Briar-patch in the Green Meadows?"

Peter hesitated and looked a wee bit foolish. Finally he told Tommy Tit all about the two soft, gentle eyes he had seen peeping at him from behind a big fern, and how he wanted to know who the eyes belonged to.

"If that's all you want to know, I can tell you," said Tommy Tit, jumping out into the air to catch a foolish little bug who tried to fly past. "Those eyes belong to little Miss Fuzzy-tail, and she's the



favorite daughter of Old Jed Thumper. You take my advice, Peter Rabbit, and trot along home to the Old Briar-patch before you get into any more trouble. There's my wife calling. Yes, my dear, I'm coming! Chickadee-dee-dee!"

And with a wink and a nod to Peter Rabbit, off flew Tommy Tit.

### **CHAPTER XIII**

#### **LITTLE MISS FUZZYTAIL**

Foolish questions waste time, but wise questions lead to knowledge.  
Peter Rabbit.

"Little Miss Fuzzytail!" Peter said it over and over again, as he sat on the sunning-bank in the far corner of the Old Pasture, where Tommy Tit the Chickadee had left him.

"It's a pretty name," said Peter. "Yes, Sir, it's a pretty name. It's the prettiest name I've ever heard. I wonder if she is just as pretty. I--I--think she must be. Yes, I am quite sure she must be." Peter was thinking of the soft, gentle eyes he had seen peeping at him from behind the big fern, and of the dainty little footprint he had found there afterward. So he sat on the sunning-bank, dreaming pleasant dreams and wondering if he could find little Miss Fuzzytail if he should go look for her.

Now all the time, although Peter didn't know it, little Miss Fuzzytail was very close by. She was right back in her old hiding-place behind the big fern, shyly peeping out at him from under a great leaf, where she was sure he wouldn't see her. She saw the long tears in Peter's coat, made by the cruel claws of Hooty the Owl, and she saw the places where her father, Old Jed Thumper, had pulled the hair out with his teeth. She saw how thin and miserable Peter looked, and tears of pity filled the soft, gentle eyes of little Miss Fuzzytail, for, you see, she had a very tender heart.

"He's got a very nice face," thought Miss Fuzzytail, "and he certainly was very polite, and I do love good manners. And Peter is such a nice sounding name! It sounds so honest and good and true. Poor fellow! Poor Peter Rabbit!" Here little Miss Fuzzytail wiped her eyes. "He looks so miserable I do wish I could do something for him. I--I--oh, dear, I do believe he is coming right over here! I guess I better be going. How he limps!"

Once more the tears filled her soft, gentle eyes as she stole away, making not the least little sound. When she was sure she was far enough away to hurry without attracting Peter's attention, she began to run.

"I saw him talking to my old friend Tommy Tit the Chickadee, and I just know that Tommy will tell me all about him," she thought, as she scampered along certain private little paths of her own.

Just as she expected, she found Tommy Tit and his anxious little wife, Phoebe, very busy hunting for food for six hungry little babies snugly hidden in a hollow near the top of the old birch-stub. Tommy was too busy to talk then, so little Miss Fuzzytail sat down under a friendly bramble-bush to rest and wait, and while she waited, she carefully washed her face and brushed her coat until it fairly shone. You see, not in all the Old Pasture, or the Green Forest, was there so slim and trim and neat and dainty a Rabbit as little Miss Fuzzytail, and she was very, very particular about her appearance.

By and by, Tommy Tit stopped to rest. He looked down at Miss Fuzzytail and winked a saucy black eye. Miss Fuzzytail winked back. Then both laughed, for they were very good friends, indeed.

"Tell me, Tommy Tit, all about Peter Rabbit," commanded little Miss Fuzzytail. And Tommy did.

## *CHAPTER XIV*

### SOME ONE FOOLS OLD JED THUMPER

You cannot judge a person's temper by his size. There is more meanness in the head of a Weasel than in the whole of a Bear.

Peter Rabbit.

Old Jed Thumper sat in his bull-briar castle in the middle of the Old Pasture, scowling fiercely and muttering to himself. He was very angry, was Old Jed Thumper. He was so angry that presently he stopped muttering and began to chew rapidly on nothing at all but his temper, which is a way angry Rabbits have.

The more he chewed his temper, the angrier he grew. He was big and stout and strong and gray. He had lived so long in the Old Pasture that he felt that it belonged to him and that no other Rabbit had any right there unless he said so. Yet here was a strange Rabbit who had had the impudence to come up from the Green Meadows and refused to be driven away. Such impudence!

Of course it was Peter Rabbit of whom Old Jed Thumper was thinking. It was two days since he had caught a glimpse of Peter, but he knew that Peter was still in the Old Pasture, for he had found fresh tracks each day. That very morning he had visited his favorite feeding ground, only to find Peter's tracks there. It had made him so angry that he had lost his appetite, and he had gone straight back to his bull-briar castle to think it over. At last Old Jed Thumper stopped chewing on his temper. He scowled more fiercely than ever and stamped the ground impatiently.

"I'll hunt that fellow till I kill him, or drive him so far from the Old Pasture that he'll never think of coming back. I certainly will!" he said aloud, and started forth to hunt.

Now it would have been better for the plans of Old Jed Thumper if he had kept them to himself instead of speaking aloud. Two dainty little ears heard what he said, and two soft, gentle eyes

watched him leave the bull-briar castle. He started straight for the far corner of the Old Pasture where, although he didn't know it, Peter Rabbit had found a warm little sunning-bank. But he hadn't gone far when, from way off in the opposite direction, he heard a sound that made him stop short and prick up his long ears to listen. There it was again--thump, thump! He was just going to thump back an angry reply, when he thought better of it.

"If I do that," thought he, "I'll only warn him, and he'll run away, just as he has before."

So instead, he turned and hurried in the direction from which the thumps had come, taking the greatest care to make no noise. Every few jumps he would stop to listen. Twice more he heard those thumps, and each time new rage filled his heart, and for a minute or two he chewed his temper.

"He's down at my blueberry-patch," he muttered.

At last he reached the blueberry-patch. Very softly he crept to a place where he could see and not be seen. No one was there. No, Sir, no one was there! He waited and watched, and there wasn't a hair of Peter Rabbit to be seen. He was just getting ready to go look for Peter's tracks when he heard that thump, thump again. This time it came from his favorite clover-patch where he never allowed even his favorite daughter, little Miss Fuzzytail, to go. Anger nearly choked him as he hurried in that direction. But when he got there, just as before no one was to be seen.

So, all the morning long, Old Jed Thumper hurried from one place to another and never once caught sight of Peter Rabbit. Can you guess why? Well, the reason was that all the time Peter was stretched out on his warm sunning-bank getting the rest he so much needed. It was some one else who was fooling Old Jed Thumper.

## *CHAPTER XV*

### A PLEASANT SURPRISE FOR PETER

Sticks will break and sticks will bend,  
And all things bad will have an end.  
Peter Rabbit.

All morning, while someone was fooling Old Jed Thumper, the cross old Rabbit who thought he owned the Old Pasture, Peter Rabbit lay stretched out on the warm little sunning-bank, dreaming of soft, gentle eyes and beautiful little footprints. It was a dangerous place to go to sleep, because at any time fierce Mr. Goshawk might have come that way, and if he had, and had found Peter Rabbit asleep, why, that would have been the end of Peter and all the stories about him.

Peter did go to sleep. You see, the sunning-bank was so warm and comfortable, and he was so tired

and had had so little sleep for such a long time that, in spite of all he could do, he nodded and nodded and finally slipped off into dreamland.

Peter slept a long time, for no one came to disturb him. It was past noon when he opened his eyes and blinked up at jolly, round, red Mr. Sun. For a minute he couldn't remember where he was. When he did, he sprang to his feet and hastily looked this way and that way.

"My gracious!" exclaimed Peter. "My gracious, what a careless fellow I am! It's a wonder that Old Jed Thumper didn't find me asleep. My, but I'm hungry! Seems as if I hadn't had a good square meal for a year."

Peter stopped suddenly and began to wrinkle his nose. "Um-m!" said he, "if I didn't know better, I should say that there is a patch of sweet clover close by. Um-m, my, my! Am I really awake, or am I still dreaming? I certainly do smell sweet clover!"

Slowly Peter turned his head in the direction from which the delicious smell seemed to come. Then he whirled around and stared as hard as ever he could, his mouth gaping wide open in surprise. He blinked, rubbed his eyes, then blinked again. There could be no doubt of it; there on the edge of the sunning-bank was a neat little pile of tender, sweet clover. Yes, Sir, there it was!

Peter walked all around it, looking for all the world as if he couldn't believe that it was real. Finally he reached out and nibbled a leaf of it. It WAS real!

There was no doubt in Peter's mind then. Some one had put it there while Peter was asleep, and Peter knew that it was meant for him. Who could it have been?

Suddenly a thought popped into Peter's head. He stopped eating and hopped over to the big fern from behind which he had first seen the two soft, gentle eyes peeping at him the day before. There in the soft earth was a fresh footprint, and it looked very, very much like the footprint of dainty little Miss Fuzzytail!

Peter's heart gave a happy little jump. He felt sure now who had put the clover there. He looked wistfully about among the ferns, but she was nowhere to be seen. Finally he hopped back to the pile of clover and ate it, every bit, and it seemed to him that it was the sweetest, tenderest clover he had ever tasted in all his life.

## **CHAPTER XVI**

### **PETER RABBIT'S LOOKING-GLASS**

If people by their looks are judged,  
As judged they're sure to be,



For the next hour Peter was very busy. He washed and he brushed and he combed. When, at last, he had done all that he could, he took another look in his looking-glass, and what he saw was a very different looking Rabbit.

"Though I am homely, lank and lean,  
I can at least be neat and clean,"

said he, as he started back for the sunning-bank.

## *CHAPTER XVII*

### PETER MEETS MISS FUZZYTAIL

That this is true there's no denying--  
There's nothing in the world like trying.  
Peter Rabbit.

Peter Rabbit was feeling better. Certainly he was looking better. You see, just as soon as Old Mother Nature saw that Peter was trying to look as well as he could, and was keeping himself as neat and tidy as he knew how, she was ready to help, as she always is. She did her best with the rents in his coat, made by the claws of Hooty the Owl and the teeth of Old Jed Thumper, and so it wasn't long before Peter's coat looked nearly as good as new. Then, too, Peter was getting enough to eat these days. Days and days had passed since he had seen Old Jed Thumper, and this had given him time to eat and sleep.

Peter wondered what had become of Old Jed Thumper. "Perhaps something has happened to him," thought Peter. "I--I almost hope something has." Then, being ashamed of such a wish, he added, "Something not very dreadful, but which will keep him from hunting me for a while and trying to drive me out of the Old Pasture."

Now all this time Peter had been trying to find little Miss Fuzzytail. He was already in love with her, although all he had seen of her were her two soft, gentle eyes, shyly peeping at him from behind a big fern. He had wandered here and sauntered there, looking for her, but although he found her footprints very often, she always managed to keep out of his sight. You see, she knew the Old Pasture so much better than he did, and all the little paths in it, that she had very little trouble in keeping out of his way. Then, too, she was very busy, for it was she who was keeping her cross father, Old Jed Thumper, away from Peter, because she was so sorry for Peter. But Peter didn't know this. If he had, I am afraid that he would have been more in love than ever.

The harder she was to find, the more Peter wanted to find her. He spent a great deal of time each day brushing his coat and making himself look as fine as he could, and while he was doing it, he kept wishing over and over again that something would happen so that he could show little Miss

Fuzzytail what a smart, brave fellow he really was.

But one day followed another, and Peter seemed no nearer than ever to meeting little Miss Fuzzytail. He was thinking of this one morning and was really growing very down-hearted, as he sat under a friendly bramble-bush, when suddenly there was a sharp little scream of fright from behind a little juniper-tree.

Somehow Peter knew whose voice that was, although he never had heard it before. He sprang around the little juniper-tree, and what he saw filled him with such rage that he didn't once stop to think of himself. There was little Miss Fuzzytail in the clutches of Black Pussy, Farmer Brown's cat, who often stole away from home to hunt in the Old Pasture. Like a flash Peter sprang over Black Pussy, and as he did so he kicked with all his might. The cat hadn't seen him coming, and the kick knocked her right into the prickly juniper-tree. Of course she lost her grip on little Miss Fuzzytail, who hadn't been hurt so much as frightened.

By the time the cat got out of the juniper-tree, Peter and Miss Fuzzytail were sitting side by side safe in the middle of a bull-briar patch.

"Oh? how brave you are!" sobbed little Miss Fuzzytail.

And this is the way that Peter Rabbit at last got his heart's desire.

## **CHAPTER XVIII**

### **TOMMY TIT PROVES A FRIEND INDEED**

Nothing in all the world is so precious as a true friend.

Peter Rabbit.

After Peter Rabbit had saved little Miss Fuzzytail from Black Pussy, the cat who belonged way down at Farmer Brown's house and had no business hunting in the Old Pasture, he went with her as near to her home as she would let him. She said that it wasn't necessary that he should go a single step, but Peter insisted that she needed him to see that no more harm came to her. Miss Fuzzytail laughed at that, for she felt quite able to take care of herself. It had been just stupid carelessness on her part that had given Black Pussy the chance to catch her, she said, and she was very sure that she never would be so careless again. What she didn't tell Peter was that she had been so busy peeping at him and admiring him that she had quite forgotten to watch out for danger for herself.

Finally she said that he could go part way with her. But when they were almost within sight of the bull-briar castle of her father, Old Jed Thumper, the big, gray Rabbit who thought he owned the Old Pasture, she made Peter turn back. You see, she was afraid of what Old Jed Thumper might do to Peter, and--well, the truth is she was afraid of what he might do to her if he should find out that she

had made friends with Peter.

So Peter was forced to go back, but he took with him a half promise that she would meet him the next night up near his sunning-bank in the far corner of the Old Pasture.

After that there were many pleasant days for Peter Rabbit. Sometimes little Miss Fuzzytail would meet him, and sometimes she would shyly hide from him, but somehow, somewhere, he managed to see her every day, and so all the time in Peter's heart was a little song:

"The sky is blue; the leaves are green;  
The golden sunbeams peep between;  
My heart is joyful as can be,  
And all the world looks bright to me."

And then one day Old Jed Thumper found out all about how his daughter, little Miss Fuzzytail, and Peter Rabbit had become such good friends. Old Jed Thumper went into a terrible rage. He chewed and chewed with nothing in his mouth, that is, nothing but his temper, the way an angry Rabbit will. He vowed and declared that if he never ate another mouthful he would drive Peter Rabbit from the Old Pasture.

My, my, my, those were bad days for Peter Rabbit! Yes, Sir, those certainly were bad days! Old Jed Thumper had found out how little Miss Fuzzytail had been fooling him by making him think Peter was in parts of the Old Pasture in quite the opposite direction from where he really was. Worse still, he found Peter's favorite sunning-bank in the far corner of the Old Pasture and would hide near it and try to catch Peter every time Peter tried to get a few minutes' rest there. He did something worse than that.

One day he saw fierce Mr. Goshawk hunting. He let Mr. Goshawk almost catch him. and then ducked under a bramble-bush. Then he showed himself again and once more escaped in the same way. So he led fierce Mr. Goshawk to a point where Mr. Goshawk could look down and see Peter Rabbit stretched out on his sunning-bank, trying to get a little rest. Right away Mr. Goshawk forgot all about Old Jed Thumper and sailed up in the sky from where he could swoop down on Peter, while Old Jed Thumper, chuckling to himself wickedly, hid where he could watch what would happen.

That certainly would have been the last of Peter Rabbit if it hadn't been for Tommy Tit the Chickadee. Tommy saw Mr. Goshawk and just in time warned Peter, and so Mr. Goshawk got only his claws full of soft earth for his pains, while Old Jed Thumper once more chewed on nothing in rage and disappointment. Dear me, dear me, those certainly were dreadful days for Peter Rabbit and little Miss Fuzzytail. You see, all the time little Miss Fuzzytail was terribly worried for fear Peter would be caught.



## CHAPTER XIX

### OLD MAN COYOTE PAYS A DEBT

Some little seeds of goodness  
 You'll find in every heart,  
 To sprout and keep on growing  
 When once they get a start.  
 Peter Rabbit.

Matters went from bad to worse with Peter Rabbit and little Miss Fuzzytail. Peter would have made up his mind to go back to his old home in the dear Old Briar-patch on the Green Meadows, but he felt that he just couldn't leave little Miss Fuzzytail, and little Miss Fuzzytail couldn't make up her mind to go with Peter, because she felt that she just couldn't leave the Old Pasture, which always had been her home. So Peter spent his days and nights ready to jump and run from Jed Thumper, the gray old Rabbit who thought he owned the Old Pasture, and who had declared that he would drive Peter out.

Now Peter, as you know, had an old friend in the Old Pasture, Tommy Tit the Chickadee. One day Tommy took it into his head to fly down to the Green Meadows. There he found everybody wondering what had become of Peter Rabbit, for you remember Peter had stolen away from the dear Old Briar-patch in the night and had told no one where he was going.

Now one of the first to ask Tommy Tit if he had seen Peter Rabbit was Old Man Coyote. Tommy told him where Peter was and of the dreadful time Peter was having, Old Man Coyote asked a lot of questions about the Old Pasture and thanked Tommy very politely as Tommy flew over to the Smiling Pool to call on Grandfather Frog and Jerry Muskrat.

That night, after jolly, round, red Mr. Sun had gone to bed behind the Purple Hills, and the Black Shadows had crept over the Green Meadows, Old Man Coyote started for the Old Pasture, Now, he had never been there before, but he had asked so many questions of Tommy Tit, and he is so smart anyway, that it didn't take him long to go all through the Old Pasture and to find the bull-briar castle of Old Jed Thumper, who was making life so miserable for Peter Rabbit, He wasn't at home, but Old Man Coyote's wonderful nose soon found his tracks, and he followed them swiftly, without making a sound. Pretty soon he came to a bramble-bush, and under it he could see Old Jed Thumper. For just a minute he chuckled, a noiseless chuckle, to himself. Then he opened his mouth and out came that terrible sound which had so frightened all the little people on the Green Meadows when Old Man Coyote had first come there to live.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!  
 Hee, hee, hee! Ha, ho, hee, ho!"

Old Jed Thumper never had heard anything like that before. It frightened him so that before he thought what he was doing he had jumped out from under the bramble-bush. Of course this was

just what Old Man Coyote wanted. In a flash he was after him, and then began such a race as the Old Pasture never had seen before. Round and round, this way and that way, along the cow paths raced Old Jed Thumper with Old Man Coyote at his heels, until at last, out of breath, so tired that it seemed to him he couldn't run another step, frightened almost out of his senses, Old Jed Thumper reached his bull-briar castle and was safe.

Then Old Man Coyote laughed his terrible laugh once more and trotted over to the tumble-down stone-wall in which his keen nose told him Peter Rabbit was hiding.

"One good turn deserves another, and I always pay my debts, Peter Rabbit" said he. "You did me a good turn some time ago down on the Green Meadows, when you told me how Granny and Reddy Fox were planning to make trouble for me by leading Bowser the Hound to the place where I took my daily nap, and now we are even. I don't think that old gray Rabbit will dare to poke so much as his nose out of his bull-briar castle for a week. Now I am going back to the Green Meadows, Good night, Peter Rabbit, and don't forget that I always pay my debts."

"Good night, and thank you, Mr. Coyote," said Peter, and then, when Old Man Coyote had gone, he added to himself in a shame-faced way: "I didn't believe him when he said that he guessed we would be friends."

## **CHAPTER XX**

### LITTLE MISS FUZZYTAIL WHISPERS "YES"

Love is a beautiful, wonderful thing.  
There's nothing quite like it on all the  
green earth.

'Tis love in the heart teaches birdies to sing,  
And gives the wide world all its joy and  
its mirth.

Peter Rabbit.

Peter Rabbit was finding this out. Always he had been happy, for happiness had been born in him. But the happiness he had known before was nothing to the happiness that was his when he found that he loved little Miss Fuzzytail and that little Miss Fuzzytail loved him, Peter was sure that she did love him, although she wouldn't say so. But love doesn't need words, and Peter had seen it shining in the two soft, gentle eyes of little Miss Fuzzytail. So Peter was happy in spite of the trouble that Old Jed Thumper, the big, gray Rabbit who was the father of little Miss Fuzzytail, had made for him in the Old Pasture,

He had tried very hard, very hard indeed, to get little Miss Fuzzytail to go back with him to the dear Old Briar-patch on the Green Meadows, but in spite of all he could say she couldn't make up her mind to leave the Old Pasture, which, you know, had been her home ever since she was born. And Peter couldn't make up his mind to go back there and leave her, because--why, because he loved her so much that he felt that he could never, never be happy without her. Then, when Old Jed Thumper was hunting Peter so hard that he hardly had a chance to eat or sleep, had come Old Man Coyote the Wolf and given Old Jed Thumper such a fright that for a week he didn't dare poke so much as his nose out of his bull-briar castle.

Now, although Old Man Coyote didn't know it, his terrible voice had frightened little Miss Fuzzytail almost as much as it had Old Jed Thumper. You see, she never had heard it before, She didn't even know what it was, and all that night she had crouched in her most secret hiding-place, shivering and shaking with fright. The next morning Peter had found her there. She hadn't slept a wink, and she was still too frightened to even go look for her breakfast.

"Oh, Peter Rabbit, did you hear that terrible noise last night?" she cried.

"What noise?" asked Peter, just as if he didn't know anything about it.

"Why, that terrible voice!" cried little Miss Fuzzytail, and shivered at the thought of it.

"What was it like?" asked Peter.

"Oh, I can't tell you," said little Miss Fuzzy tall, "It wasn't like anything I ever had heard before. It was something like the voice of Hooty the Owl and the voice of Dippy the Loon and the voice of a little yelping dog all in one, and it was just terrible!"

"Oh?" replied Peter, "you must mean the voice of my friend. Old Man Coyote. He came up here last night just to do me a good turn because I once did him a good turn."

Then he told all about how Old Man Coyote had come to the Green Meadows to live, and how he was smarter than even old Granny Fox, but he didn't tell her how he himself had once been frightened almost out of a year's growth by that terrible voice, or that it was because he hadn't really believed that Old Man Coyote was his friend that had led him to leave the Old Briar-patch and come up to the Old Pasture.

"Is--is he fond of Rabbits?" asked little Miss Fuzzytail.

Peter was quite sure that he was.

"And do you think he'll come up here hunting again?" she asked.

Peter didn't know, but he suspected that he would.

"Oh, dear," wailed little Miss Fuzzytail. "Now, I never, never will feel safe again!"

Then Peter had a happy thought. "I tell you what," said he, "the safest place in the world for you

and me is my dear Old Briar-patch, Won't you go there now?"

Little Miss Fuzzytail sighed and dropped a tear or two. Then she nestled up close to Peter. "Yes," she whispered.

## *CHAPTER XXI*

### PETER AND LITTLE MISS FUZZYTAIL LEAVE THE OLD PASTURE

A danger past is a danger past,  
 So why not just forget it?  
 Watch out instead for the one ahead  
 Until you've safely met it,  
                                 Peter Rabbit.

As soon as little Miss Fuzzytail had agreed to go with him to make her home in the dear Old Briar-patch down on the Green Meadows, Peter Rabbit fairly boiled over with impatience to start, He had had so much trouble in the Old Pasture that he was afraid if they waited too long little Miss Fuzzytail might change her mind, and if she should do that--well, Peter didn't know what he would do.

But Peter, who always had been so happy-go-lucky, with no one to think about but himself, now felt for the first time re-sponsi-bil-ity. That's a big word, but it is a word that everybody has to learn the meaning of sometime. Johnny Chuck learned it when he made a home for Polly Chuck in Farmer Brown's orchard, and tried to keep it a secret, so that no harm would come to Polly. It means taking care of other people or other people's things, and feeling that you must take even greater care than you would of yourself or your own things, So, while Peter himself would have been willing to take chances, and might even have made the journey down to the dear Old Briar-patch in broad daylight, he felt that that wouldn't do at all for little Miss Fuzzytail; that he must avoid every possible chance of danger for her.

So Peter waited for a dark night, not too dark, you know, but a night when there was no moon to make great patches of light, but only the kindly little Stars looking down and twinkling in the friendly way they have. At last there was just such a night. All the afternoon little Miss Fuzzytail went about in the Old Pasture saying good-by to her friends and visiting each one of her favorite little paths and hiding-places, and I suspect that in each one she dropped a tear or two, for you see she felt sure that she never would see them again, although Peter had promised that he would bring her back to the Old Pasture for a visit whenever she wanted to come.

At last it was time to start. Peter led the way. Very big and brave and strong and important he felt, and very timid and frightened felt little Miss Fuzzytail, hopping after him close at his heels. You see, she felt that she was going out into the Great World, of which she knew nothing at all.

"Oh, Peter," she whispered, "supposing we should meet Reddy Fox! I wouldn't know where to run or hide."

"We are not going to meet Reddy Fox," replied Peter, "but if we should, all you have to do is to just keep your eyes on the white patch on the seat of my trousers and follow me. I have fooled Reddy so many times that I'm not afraid of him."

Never in all his life had Peter been so watchful and careful. That was because he felt his responsibility. Every few jumps he would stop to sit up and look and listen. Then little Miss Fuzzytail would nestle up close to him, and Peter's heart would swell with happiness, and he would feel, oh, so proud and important. Once they heard the sharp bark of Reddy Fox, but it was a long way off, and Peter smiled, for he knew that Reddy was hunting on the edge of the Green Forest.

Once a dim shadow swept across the meadow grass ahead of them. Peter dropped flat in the grass and kept perfectly still, and little Miss Fuzzytail did just as he did, as she had promised she would.

"Wha--what was it?" she whispered.

"I think it was Hooty the Owl," Peter whispered back, "but he didn't see us." After what seemed like a long, long time they heard Hooty's fierce hunting call, but it came from way back of them on the edge of the Old Pasture. Peter hopped to his feet.

"Come on," said he. "There's nothing to fear from him now."

So slowly and watchfully Peter led the way down across the Green Meadows while the little Stars looked down and twinkled in the most friendly way, and just as jolly, round, red Mr. Sun started to kick off his bedclothes behind the Purple Hills they reached the dear Old Briar-patch.

"Here we are!" cried Peter.

"Oh, I'm so glad!" cried little Miss Fuzzytail, hopping along one of Peter's private little paths.

## ***CHAPTER XXII***

### **SAMMY JAY BECOMES CURIOUS**

Learn all you can about others, but keep your own affairs to yourself.  
Peter Rabbit.

Of course it was Sammy Jay who first found out that Peter Rabbit was back in the dear Old Briar-patch. Sammy took it into his head to fly over there the very morning of Peter's home-coming. Indeed, little Miss Fuzzytail hadn't had time to half see the dear Old Briar-patch which, you know, was to be her new home, when Peter saw Sammy Jay coming. Now Peter was not quite ready to

have all the world know that there was a Mrs. Peter, for of course that was what little Miss Fuzzytail was now that she had come to make her home with Peter. They wanted to keep by themselves for a little while and just be happy with each other. So as soon as Peter saw Sammy Jay headed towards the Old Briar-patch, he hid little Miss Fuzzytail under the thickest sweet-briar bush, and then hurried out to the nearest sweet-clover patch.

Of course Sammy Jay saw him right away, and of course Sammy was very much surprised.

"Hello, Peter Rabbit! Where'd you come from?" he shouted, as he settled himself comfortably in a little poplar-tree growing on the edge of the Old Briar-patch.

"Oh," said Peter with a very grand air, "I've been on a long journey to see the Great World."

"Which means," said Sammy Jay with a chuckle, "that you've been in the Old Pasture all this time, and let me tell you, Peter Rabbit, the Old Pasture is a very small part of the Great World. By the way, Tommy Tit the Chickadee was down here the other day and told us all about you. He said that you had fallen in love with little Miss Fuzzytail, and he guessed that you were going to make your home up there. What's the matter? Did her father, Old Jed Thumper, drive you out?"

"No, he didn't!" snapped Peter angrily, "It's none of your business what I came home for, Sammy Jay, but I'll tell you just the same. I came home because I wanted to."

Sammy chuckled, for he dearly loves to tease Peter and make him angry. Then the imp of mischief, who seems always to live just under that smart cap of Sammy's, prompted him to ask: "Did you come home alone?"

Now Peter couldn't say "yes" for that would be an untruth, and whatever faults Peter may have, he is at least truthful. So he just pretended not to have heard Sammy's question.

Now when Sammy had asked the question he had thought nothing about it. It had just popped into his head by way of something to say. But Sammy Jay is sharp, and he noticed right away that Peter didn't answer but began to talk about other things,

"Ha, ha!" thought Sammy to himself, "I believe he didn't come alone, I wonder now if he brought Miss Fuzzytail with him."

Right away Sammy began to peer down into the Old Briar-patch, twisting and turning so that he could see in every direction, and all the time talking as fast as his tongue could go. Two or three times he flew out over the Old Briar-patch, pretending to try to catch moths, but really so that he could look down into certain hiding-places. The last time that he did this he spied little Mrs. Peter, who was, you know, Miss Fuzzytail. At once Sammy Jay started for the Green Forest, screaming at the top of his voice:

"Peter Rabbit's married! Peter Rabbit's married!"

**CHAPTER XXIII****PETER INTRODUCES MRS. PETER**

It's what you do for others,  
 Not what they do for you,  
 That makes you feel so happy  
 All through and through and through.  
 Peter Rabbit.

Peter Rabbit made a wry face as he listened to Sammy Jay shrieking at the top of his voice as he flew through the Green Forest and over the Green Meadows, "Peter Rabbit's married!" "Peter Rabbit's married!" He saw the Merry Little Breezes who, you know, are the children of Old Mother West Wind, start for the dear Old Briar-patch as soon as they heard Sammy Jay, and he knew that they would be only the first of a lot of visitors. He hurried to where Mrs. Peter was hiding under a sweet-briar bush.

"Do you hear what that mischief-maker, Sammy Jay, is screaming?" asked Peter.

Mrs. Peter nodded. "Don't--don't you think it sounds kind of--well, kind of NICE, Peter?" she asked in a bashful sort of way.

Peter chuckled. "It sounds more than KIND of nice to me," said he. "Do you know, I used to think that Sammy Jay never did and never could say anything nice, but I've just changed my mind. Though he isn't saying it to be nice, it really is the nicest thing I've ever heard him say. We haven't been able to keep our secret, so I think the very best thing we can do is to invite everybody to call. Then we can get it over with and have a little time to ourselves. Here come the Merry Little Breezes, and I know that they will be glad to take the invitations for us."

Mrs. Peter agreed, for she thought that anything Peter did or suggested was just about right. So the Merry Little Breezes were soon skipping and dancing over the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest with this message:

"Mr. and Mrs. Peter Rabbit will be at home in the Old Briar-patch to their friends to-morrow afternoon at shadow-time."

"Why did you make it at shadow-time?" asked Mrs. Peter.

"Because that will give all our friends a chance to come," replied Peter. "Those who sleep through the day will have waked up, and those who sleep through the night will not have gone to bed. Besides, it will be safer for some of the smallest of them if the Black Shadows are about for them to hide in on their way here."

"How thoughtful you are," said little Mrs. Peter with a little sigh of happiness.

Of course, every one who could walk, creep, or fly headed for the Old Briar-patch the next day at shadow-time, for almost every one knows and loves Peter Rabbit, and of course every one was very anxious to meet Mrs. Peter. From the Smiling Pool came Billy Mink, Little Joe Otter, Jerry Muskrat, Spotty the Turtle, and old Grandfather Frog. From the Green Forest came Bobby Coon, Unc' Billy Possum and Mrs. Possum, Prickly Porky the Porcupine, Whitefoot the Woodmouse, Happy Jack the Gray Squirrel, Chatterer the Red Squirrel, Blacky the Crow, Sammy Jay, Ol' Mistah Buzzard, Mistah Mockingbird, and Sticky-toes the Treetoad. From the Green Meadows came Danny Meadow Mouse, Old Mr. Toad, Digger the Badger, Jimmy Skunk, and Striped Chipmunk, who lives near the old stone-wall between the edge of the Green Meadows and the Green Forest. Johnny and Polly Chuck came down from the Old Orchard and Drummer the Woodpecker came from the same place.

Of course Old Man Coyote paid his respects, and when he came everybody but Prickly Porky and Digger the Badger and Jimmy Skunk made way for him with great respect. Granny and Reddy Fox and Hooty the Owl didn't call, but they sat where they could look on and make fun. You see, Peter had fooled all three so many times that they felt none too friendly.

Very proud looked Peter as he stood under a bramble-bush with Mrs. Peter by his side and introduced her to his many friends, and very sweet and modest and retiring looked little Mrs. Peter as she sat beside him. Everybody said that she was "too sweet for anything", and when Reddy Fox overheard that remark he grinned and said:

"Not for me! She can't be too sweet for me, and I hope I'll have a chance to find out just how sweet she is."

What do you suppose he meant?

## ***CHAPTER XXIV***

### **DANNY MEADOW MOUSE WARNS PETER RABBIT**

Good advice Is always needed  
 But, alas! is seldom heeded,  
   Peter Rabbit.

Danny Meadow Mouse waited until all the rest of Peter Rabbit's friends had left the Old Briar-patch after paying their respects to Peter and Mrs. Peter, He waited for two reasons, did Danny Meadow Mouse. In the first place, he had seen old Granny Fox and Reddy Fox hanging about a little way



off, and though they had disappeared after a while, Danny had an idea that they were not far away, but were hiding so that they might catch him on his way home. Of course, he hadn't the slightest intention of giving them the chance. He had made up his mind to ask Peter if he might spend the night in a corner of the Old Briar-patch, and he was very sure that Peter would say he might, for he and Peter are very good friends, very good friends indeed.

The second good reason Danny had for waiting was this very friendship. You see, Peter had been away from the Green Meadows so long that Danny felt sure he couldn't know all about how things were there now, and so he wanted to warn Peter that the Green Meadows were not nearly as safe as before Old Man Coyote had come there to live. So Danny waited, and when all the rest of the callers had left he called Peter to one side where little Mrs. Peter couldn't hear. Danny stood up on his hind legs so as to whisper in one of Peter's ears.

"Do you know that Old Man Coyote is the most dangerous enemy we have, Peter Rabbit? Do you know that?" he asked.

Peter Rabbit shook his head. "I don't believe that, Danny," said he. "His terrible voice has frightened you so that you just think him as bad as he sounds. Why, Old Man Coyote is a friend of mine."

Then he told Danny how Old Man Coyote had done him a good turn in the Old Pasture in return for a good turn Peter had once done him, and how he said that he always paid his debts.

Danny Meadow Mouse looked doubtful. "What else did he say?" he demanded. "Nothing, excepting that we were even now," replied Peter.

"Ha!" said Danny Meadow Mouse.

The way he said it made Peter turn to look at him sharply.

"Ha!" said Danny again. "If you are even, why you don't owe him anything, and he doesn't owe you anything. Watch out, Peter Rabbit! Watch out! I would stick pretty close to the Old Briar-patch with Mrs. Peter if I were you. I would indeed. You used to think old Granny Fox pretty smart, but Old Man Coyote is smarter. Yes, Sir, he is smarter! And every one of the rest of us has got to be smarter than ever before to keep out of his clutches. Watch out, Peter Rabbit, if you and Old Man Coyote are even. Now, if you don't mind, I'll curl up in my old hiding-place for the night. I really don't dare go back home to-night."

Of course Peter told Danny Meadow Mouse that he was welcome to spend the night in the Old Briar-patch, and thanked Danny for his warning as he bade him good-night. But Peter never carries his troubles with him for long, and by the time he had rejoined little Mrs. Peter he was very much inclined to laugh at Danny's fear.

"What did that funny little Meadow Mouse have to say?" asked Mrs. Peter.

Peter told her and then added, "But I don't believe we have anything to fear from Old Man Coyote. You know he is my friend."

"But I don't know that he is mine!" replied little Mrs. Peter, and the way she said it made Peter look at her anxiously. "I believe Danny Meadow Mouse is right," she continued, "Oh, Peter, you will watch out, won't you?"

And Peter promised her that he would.

## *CHAPTER XXV*

### PETER RABBIT'S HEEDLESSNESS

Heedlessness is just the twin  
of thoughtlessness, you know,  
And where you find them both at once,  
there trouble's sure to grow.

Peter Rabbit.

Peter Rabbit didn't mean to be heedless. No, indeed! Oh, my, no! Peter thought so much of Mrs. Peter, he meant to be so thoughtful that she never would have a thing to worry about. But Peter was heedless. He always was heedless. This is the worst of a bad habit--you can try to let go of it, but it won't let go of you.

So it was with Peter. He had been heedless so long that now he actually didn't know when he was heedless.

When there was nobody but himself to think about, and no one to worry about him, his heedlessness didn't so much matter. If anything had happened to him then, there would have been no one to suffer. But now all this was changed. You see, there was little Mrs. Peter. At first Peter had been perfectly content to stay with her in the dear Old Briar-patch. He had led her through all his private little paths, and they had planned where they would make two or three more. He had showed her all his secret hiding-places and the shortest way to the sweet-clover patch. He had pointed out where the Lone Little Path came down to the edge of the Green Forest and so out on to the Green Meadows. He had shown her where the Crooked Little Path came down the hill. Little Mrs. Peter had been delighted with everything, and not once had she complained of being homesick for the Old Pasture.

But after a little while Peter began to get uneasy. You see in the days before Old Man Coyote had come to live on the Green Meadows, Peter had come and gone about as he pleased. Of course he had had to watch out for Granny and Reddy Fox, but he had had to watch out for them ever since he was a baby, so he didn't fear them very much in spite of their smartness. He felt quite as smart as they and perhaps a little bit smarter. Anyway, they never had caught him, and he didn't believe they ever would. So he had come and gone as he pleased, and poked his nose into everybody's business, and gossiped with everybody.

Of course it was quite natural that Peter should want to call on all his old friends and visit the Green Forest, the Old Orchard, the Laughing Brook, and the Smiling Pool. Probably Mrs. Peter wouldn't have worried very much if it hadn't been for the warning left by Danny Meadow Mouse.

Danny had said that Old Man Coyote was more to be feared than all the Hawk family and all the Fox family together, because he was smarter and slyer than any of them. At first Peter had looked very serious, but after Danny had gone back to his own home Peter had laughed at Danny for being so afraid, and he began to go farther and farther away from the safe Old Briar-patch.

One day he had ventured as far as halfway up the Crooked Little Path. He was thinking so hard of a surprise he was planning for little Mrs. Peter that he forgot to watch out and almost ran into Old Man Coyote before he saw him. There was a hungry look, such a hungry look in Old Man Coyote's eyes as he grinned and said "Good morning" that Peter didn't even stop to be polite. He remembered that Jimmy Skunk's old house was near, and he reached it just one jump ahead of Old Man Coyote.

"I thought you said that we were friends," panted Peter, as he heard Mr. Coyote sniffing at the doorway.

"So we were until I had paid my debt to you. Now that I've paid that, we are even, and it is everybody watch out for himself," replied Old Man Coyote. "But don't forget that I always pay my debts, Peter Rabbit."

## *CHAPTER XXVI*

### PETER RABBIT LISTENS TO MRS. PETER

Safety first is a wise rule for those who would live long.  
Peter Rabbit.

Peter Rabbit was glad enough to get back to the dear Old Briar-patch after his narrow escape from Old Man Coyote by dodging into Jimmy Skunk's old house halfway up the hill. And little Mrs. Peter was glad enough to have him, you may be sure. She had been watching Peter when he so heedlessly almost ran into Old Man Coyote, and it had seemed to her as if her heart stopped beating until Peter reached the safety of that old house of Jimmy Skunk just one jump ahead. Then she saw Old Man Coyote hide in the grass near by and she was terribly, terribly afraid that Peter would be heedless again and come out, thinking that Mr. Coyote had gone.

Poor little Mrs. Peter! She was so anxious that she couldn't sit still. She felt that she just had to do something to warn Peter. She stole out from the dear Old Briar-patch and halfway to where Old Man Coyote was hiding. He was so busy watching the doorway of the old house where Peter was hiding that he didn't notice her at all. Little Mrs. Peter found a bunch of tall grass behind which she

could sit up and still not be seen. So there she sat without moving for a long, long time, never once taking her eyes from Old Man Coyote and the doorway of the old house. By and by she saw Peter poke his nose out to see if the way was clear. Old Man Coyote saw him too, and began to grin. It was a hungry, wicked-looking grin, and it made little Mrs. Peter very, very angry indeed.

She waited just a minute longer to make sure that Peter was where he could see her, and then she thumped the ground very hard, which, you know, is the way Rabbits signal to each other. Peter heard it right away and thumped back that he would stay right where he was, though right down in his heart Peter thought that little Mrs. Peter was just nervous and foolish, for he was sure that Old Man Coyote had given up and gone away long ago.

Now of course Old Man Coyote heard those thumps, and he knew just what they meant. He knew that he never, never could catch Peter so long as Mrs. Peter was watching him and ready to warn Peter, So he came out of his hiding-place with an ugly snarl and sprang toward little Mrs. Peter just to frighten her. He laughed as he watched her run and, all breathless, dive into the dear, Old Briar-patch, and then he trotted away to his favorite napping-place.

As soon as Peter was sure that he was safe he started for home, and there little Mrs. Peter scolded him soundly for being so heedless and thoughtless.

Peter didn't have a word to say. For a long time he sat thinking and thinking, every once in a while scratching his head as if puzzled. Little Mrs. Peter noticed it.

"What's the matter with you, Peter?" she asked finally.

"I'm just studying what Old Man Coyote means by telling me one day that he is my friend, and proving it by doing me a good turn, and then trying to catch me the very next time he sees me. I don't understand it," said Peter, shaking his head, "Oh, you dear old stupid!" replied little Mrs. Peter. "Now, you listen to me. You did Old Man Coyote a good turn and he paid you back by doing you a good turn. That made you even, didn't it?"

Peter nodded.

"Well, then you are right back where you started from, and Old Man Coyote doesn't see any reason why he should treat you any differently than at first, and I don't see why he should either, when I come to think it over. I tell you what, Peter, the thing for you to do is to keep doing good turns to Old Man Coyote so that he will always be in debt to you. Then he will always be your friend,"

As little Mrs. Peter stopped speaking, Peter sprang to his feet. "The very thing!" he cried. "It's sort of a Golden Rule, and I do believe it will work."

"Of course it will," replied little Mrs. Peter.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### MISTAH MOCKER PLAYS A JOKE ON MRS. PETER

This little point remember, please--  
There's little gained by those who tease.

Peter Rabbit.

Mistah Mocker the Mockingbird had been very late in coming up to the Green Meadows from way down South. The truth is, he had almost decided not to come. You see, he loves the sunny southland so much, and all who live there love him so much, that if it hadn't been for Unc' Billy Possum and Ol' Mistah Buzzard he never, never would have thought of leaving, even for a little while. Unc' Billy and Ol' Mistah Buzzard are particular friends of his, very particular friends, and he felt that he just had to come up for a little visit.

Now Mistah Mocker reached the Green Meadows just after Peter Rabbit had brought little Mrs. Peter down from the Old Pasture to live with him in the dear Old Briar-patch. He knew that little Mrs. Peter didn't know anything about him, for he never had visited the Old Pasture where she had spent her life. But he knew all the bird people who do live there, for he had met them in the sunny southland, where they spent the winter,

"I believe I'll go pay my respects to Mrs. Peter," said Mistah Mocker one day, winking at Ol' Mistah Buzzard. Ol' Mistah Buzzard chuckled and winked back.

"Ah cert'nly hopes yo'all will behave yo'self right proper and not forget that yo' is a member of one of the oldest families in the Souf," said he.

Mistah Mocker looked quite solemn as he promised to behave himself, but there was a twinkle in his eyes as he flew toward the Old Briar-patch. There he hid in a thick tangle of vines. Now it happened that Peter Rabbit had gone over to the sweet-clover patch, and little Mrs. Peter was quite alone. Somehow she got to thinking of her old home, and for the first time she began to feel just a wee, wee bit homesick. It was just then that she heard a familiar voice. Little Mrs. Peter pricked up her ears and smiled happily.

"That's the voice of Tommy Tit the Chickadee, and it must be that his wife is with him, for I hear him calling 'Phoebe! Phoebe!' How lovely of them to come down to see me so soon."

Just then she heard another voice, a deep, beautiful, ringing voice, a voice that she loved. It was the voice of Veery the Thrush. "Oh!" cried little Mrs. Peter, and then held her breath so as not to miss one note of the beautiful song. Hardly had the song ended when she heard the familiar voice of Redeye the Vireo. Little Mrs. Peter clapped her hands happily. "It must be a surprise party by my old friends and neighbors of the Old Pasture!" she cried. "How good of them to come way down here, and how glad I shall be to see them!"

With that little Mrs. Peter hurried over to the tangle of vines from which all the voices seemed to come and eagerly peered this way and that way for a sight of her friends. But all she saw was a stranger wearing a very sober-colored suit. He was very polite and told her that he was an old friend of Peter Rabbit.

"If you are a friend of Peter, then you are a friend of mine." said little Mrs. Peter very prettily. "Have you seen anybody in this tangle of vines since you arrived? I am sure some friends of mine are here, but I haven't been able to find them."

"No," said the stranger, who was, of course, Mistah Mocker the Mockingbird. "I haven't seen any one here, and I don't think there has been any one here but myself."

"Oh, yes, indeed there has!" cried little Mrs. Peter. "I heard their voices, and I couldn't possibly be mistaken in those, especially the beautiful voice of Veery the Thrush, I--I would like very much to find them."

Mistah Mocker had the grace to look ashamed of himself when saw how disappointed little Mrs. Peter was. Very softly he began to sing the song of Veery the Thrush.

Little Mrs. Peter looked up quickly. "There it is!" she cried. "There"-- she stopped with her mouth gaping wide open. She suddenly realized that it was Mistah Mocker who was singing.

"I--I'm very sorry," he stammered. "I did it just for a joke and not to make you feel bad. Will you forgive me?"

"Yes," replied little Mrs. Peter, "if you will come here often at shadow-time and sing to me." and Mistah Mocker promised that he would.

## *CHAPTER XXVIII*

### NEWS FROM THE OLD BRIAR-PATCH

To use your eyes is very wise  
 And much to be commended;  
 But never see what cannot be  
 For such as you intended.  
 Peter Rabbit.

Jenny Wren is a busybody. Yes, Sir, she certainly is a busybody. If there is anything going on in her neighborhood that she doesn't know about, it isn't because she doesn't try to find out. She is so small and sly that it is hard work to keep track of her, and she pops out at the most unexpected times and places. Then, before you can say a word, she is gone.

And in all the Old Orchard or on the Green Meadows there is not to be found another tongue so busy as that of Jenny Wren. It is sharp sometimes, but when she wants it to be so there is none smoother. You see she is a great gossip, is Jenny Wren, a great gossip. But if you get on the right side of Jenny Wren and ask her to keep a secret, she'll do it. No one knows how to keep a secret better than she does.

How it happened nobody knows, but it did happen that when Peter Rabbit came home to the clear Old Briar-patch, bringing Mrs. Peter with him, Jenny Wren didn't hear about it. Probably it was because the new home which she had just completed was so carefully hidden that the messengers sent by Peter to invite all his friends to call didn't find it, and afterward she was so busy with household affairs that she didn't have time to gossip. Anyway, Peter had been back some time before Jenny Wren knew it. She was quite upset to think that she was the last to hear the news, but she consoled herself with the thought that she had been attending strictly to her duties, and now that her children were able to look out for themselves she could make up for lost time.

Just as soon as she could get away, she started for the Old Briar-patch. She wanted to hear all about Peter's adventures in the Old Pasture and to meet Mrs. Peter. But like a great many other busybodies, she wanted to find out all she could about Peter's affairs, and she thought that the surest way to do it was not to let Peter know that she was about until she had had a chance to use her sharp little eyes all she wanted to. So when she reached the Old Briar-patch, she didn't make a sound. It didn't take her long to find Peter. He was sitting under one of his favorite bramble-bushes smiling to himself. He smiled and smiled until Jenny Wren had to bite her tongue to keep from asking what was pleasing him so.

"He looks tickled almost to death over something, but very likely if I should ask him what it is he wouldn't tell me," thought Jenny Wren. "I guess I'll look around a bit first. I wonder where Mrs. Peter is."

So leaving Peter to smile to his heart's content, she went peeking and peering through the Old Briar-patch. Of course it wasn't a nice thing to do, not a bit nice. But Jenny Wren didn't stop to think of that. By and by she saw something that made her flutter all over with excitement. She looked and looked until she could sit still no longer. Then she hurried back to where Peter was sitting. He was still smiling.

"Oh, Peter Rabbit, it's perfectly lovely!" she cried.

Peter looked up quickly, and a worried look chased the smile away. "Hello, Jenny Wren! Where did you come from? I haven't seen you since I got back," said he.

"I've been so busy that I haven't had time to call before," replied Jenny. "I know what you've been smiling about, Peter, and it's perfectly splendid. Has everybody heard the news?"

"No," said Peter, "nobody knows it but you, and I don't want anybody else to know it just yet. Will you keep it a secret, Jenny Wren?"

Now Jenny was just bursting with desire to spread the news, but Peter looked so anxious that finally she promised that she would keep it to herself, and she really meant to. But though Peter looked greatly relieved as he watched her start for home, he didn't smile as he had before. "I wish her

tongue didn't wag so much," said he.

## **CHAPTER XXIX**

### **JIMMY SKUNK VISITS PETER RABBIT**

It's hard to keep a secret which you fairly ache to tell;  
So not to know such secrets is often quite as well.

Peter Rabbit.

On her way home from the Old Briar-patch, Jenny Wren stopped to rest in a bush beside the Crooked Little Path that comes down the hill, when who should come along but Jimmy Skunk. Now just as usual Jenny Wren was fidgeting and fussing about, and Jimmy Skunk grinned as he watched her.

"Hello, Jenny Wren!" said he. "What are you doing here?"

"I'm resting on my way home from the Old Briar-patch, if you must know, Jimmy Skunk!" replied Jenny Wren, changing her position half a dozen times while she was speaking.

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed Jimmy Skunk. "Do you call that resting! That's a joke, Jenny Wren. Resting! Why, you couldn't sit still and rest if you tried!"

"I could so! I'm resting right now, so there, Jimmy Skunk!" protested Jenny Wren in a very indignant tone of voice, and hopped all over the little bush while she was speaking. "I guess if you knew what I know, you'd be excited too."

"Well, I guess the quickest way for me to know is for you to tell me," replied Jimmy. "I'm just aching to be excited."

Jimmy grinned, for you know Jimmy Skunk never does get excited and never hurries, no matter what happens.

"You'll have to keep right on aching then," replied Jenny Wren, with a saucy flirt of her funny little tail. "There's great news in the Old Briar-patch, and I'm the only one that knows it, but I've promised not to tell."

Jimmy pricked up his ears. "News in the Old Briar-patch must have something to do with Peter Rabbit," said he. "What has Peter done now?"

"I'll never tell! I'll never tell!" cried Jenny Wren, growing so excited that it seemed to Jimmy as if there was danger that she would turn herself inside out. "I promised not to and I never will!" Then, for fear that she would in spite of herself, she flew on her way home.



Jimmy watched her out of sight with a puzzled frown. "If I didn't know that she gets so terribly excited over nothing, I'd think that there really is some news in the Old Briar-patch," he muttered to himself. "Anyway, I haven't anything better to do, so I believe I'll drop around that way and make Peter Rabbit a call."

He found Peter in some sweet clover just outside the Old Briar-patch, and it struck Jimmy that Peter looked uncommonly happy. He said as much.

"I am," replied Peter, before he thought. Then he added hastily, "You see, I've been uncommonly happy ever since I returned with Mrs. Peter from the Old Pasture."

"But I hear there's great news over here in the Old Briar-patch," persisted Jimmy Skunk. "What is it, Peter?"

Peter pretended to be very much surprised. "Great news!" he repeated. "Great news! Why, what news can there be over here? Who told you that?"

"A little bird told me," replied Jimmy slyly.

"It must have been Jenny Wren!" said Peter, once more speaking before he thought.

"Then there IS news over here!" cried Jimmy triumphantly. "What is it, Peter?"

But Peter shook his head as if he hadn't the slightest idea and couldn't imagine. Jimmy coaxed and teased, but all in vain. Finally he started for home no wiser than before.

"Just the same, I believe that Jenny Wren told the truth and that there is news over in the Old Briar-patch," he muttered to himself. "Something has happened over there, and Peter won't tell. I wonder what it can be."

## *CHAPTER XXX*

### REDDY FOX LEARNS THE SECRET

Nothing that you ever do,  
 Nothing good or nothing bad,  
 But has effect on other folks--  
 Gives them pain or makes them glad.  
                                 Peter Rabbit.

Of course Jenny Wren didn't mean to tell the secret of the Old Briar-patch, because she had promised Peter Rabbit that she wouldn't. But she didn't see any harm in telling every one she met that there was a secret there, at least that there was great news there, and so, because Jenny Wren is a great gossip, it wasn't long before all the little people on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest and around the Smiling Pool had heard it and were wondering what the news could be.

After Jimmy Skunk's visit came a whole string of visitors to the Old Briar-patch. One would hardly have left before another would appear. Each one tried to act as if he had just happened around that way and didn't want to pass Peter's home without making a call, but each one asked so many questions that Peter knew what had really brought him there was the desire to find out what the news in the Old Briar-patch could be. But Peter was too smart for them, and they all went away no wiser than they came, that is, all but one, and that one was Reddy Fox.

There isn't much going on in the Green Forest or on the Green Meadows that Reddy doesn't know about. He is sly, is Reddy Fox, and his eyes are sharp and his ears are keen, so little happens that he doesn't see or hear about. Of course he heard the foolish gossip of Jenny Wren and he pricked up his ears.

"So there's news down in the Old Briar-patch, is there? A secret that Jenny Wren won't tell? I think I'll trot down there and make Peter a call. Of course he'll be glad to see me."

Reddy grinned wickedly as he said this to himself, for he knew that there was no one for whom Peter Rabbit had less love, unless it was old Granny Fox.

So Reddy trotted down to the Old Briar-patch. Peter saw him coming and scowled, for he guessed right away what Reddy was coming for, and he made ready to answer all Reddy's questions and still tell him nothing, as he had with all the others who had called.

But Reddy asked no questions. He didn't once mention the fact that he had heard there was news in the Old Briar-patch. He didn't once speak of Jenny Wren. He just talked about the weather and the Old Pasture, where Peter had made such a long visit, and all the time was as pleasant and polite as if he and Peter were the dearest of friends.

But while he was talking, Reddy was using those sharp eyes and those keen ears of his the best he knew how. But the Old Briar-patch was very thick, and he could see only a little way into it, and out of it came no sound to hint of a secret there. Then Reddy began to walk around the Old Briar-patch in quite the most matter-of-fact way, but as he walked that wonderful nose of his was testing every little breath of air that came out of the Old Briar-patch. At last he reached a certain place where a little stronger breath of air tickled his nose. He stopped for a few minutes, and slowly a smile grew and grew. Then, without saying a word, he turned and trotted back towards the Green Forest.

Peter Rabbit watched him go. Then he joined Mrs. Peter in the heart of the Old Briar-patch. "My dear," he said, with a sigh that was almost a sob, "Reddy Fox has found out our secret."

"Never mind," said little Mrs. Peter brightly. "It would have to be found out soon, anyway."

Trotting back up the Lone Little Path, Reddy Fox was grinning broadly. "It IS news!" said he. "Jenny Wren was right, it IS news! But I don't believe anybody else knows it yet, and I hope they

won't find it out right away, least of all Old Man Coyote. What a wonderful thing a good nose is! It tells me what my eyes cannot see nor my ears hear."

## **CHAPTER XXXI**

### **BLACKY THE CROW HAS SHARP EYES**

Mischief always waits to greet  
Idle hands and idle feet.  
Peter Rabbit.

That is what a lot of people say about Blacky the Crow. Of course it is true that Blacky does get into a lot of mischief, but if people really knew him they would find that he isn't as black as he looks. In fact, Blacky the Crow does a whole lot of good in his own peculiar way, but people are always looking for him to do bad things, and you know you most always see what you expect to see. Thus the good Blacky does isn't seen, while the bad is, and so he has grown to have a reputation blacker than the coat he wears.

But this doesn't worry Blacky the Crow. No, Sir, it doesn't worry him a bit. You see he has grown used to it. And then he is so smart that he is never afraid of being caught when he does do wrong things. No one has sharper eyes than Blacky, and no one knows better how to use them. There is very little going on in the Green Forest or on the Green Meadows that he misses when he is about.

The day after Reddy Fox visited the Old Briar-patch and with his wonderful nose found out Peter Rabbit's secret, Blacky just happened to fly over the Old Briar-patch on his way to Farmer Brown's cornfield. Now, being over the Old Briar-patch, he could look right down into it and see all through it. Just as he reached it, he remembered having heard Sammy Jay say something about gossipy little Jenny Wren's having said that there was great news there. He hadn't thought much about it at the time, but now that he was right there, he might as well have a look for himself and see if there was any truth in it.

So Blacky the Crow flew a little lower, and his sharp eyes looked this way and that way through all the bramble-bushes of the Old Briar-patch. He saw Peter Rabbit right away and winked at him. He thought Peter looked worried and anxious.

"Peter must have something on his mind," thought Blacky. "I wonder where Mrs. Peter is."

Just then he caught sight of her under the thickest growing sweet-briar bush. He had opened his mouth to shout, "Hello, Mrs. Peter," when he saw something that surprised him so that he didn't speak at all. He almost forgot to flap his wings to keep himself in the air. He hovered right where he was for a few minutes, looking down through the brambles. Then with a hoarse chuckle, he started for the Smiling Pool, forgetting all about Farmer Brown's cornfield. "Caw, caw, caw!" he

shrieked, "Peter Rabbit's got a family! Peter Rabbit's got a family!"

Reddy Fox heard him and ground his teeth. "Now Old Man Coyote will know and will try to catch those young Rabbits, when they ought to be mine because I found out about them first," he grumbled.

Jimmy Skunk heard Blacky and grinned broadly. "So that's the great news Jenny Wren found out!" said he. "I hope Peter will take better care of his babies than he ever has of himself. I must call at once."

Redtail the Hawk heard, and he smiled too, but it wasn't a kindly smile like Jimmy Skunk's. "I think young Rabbit will taste very good for a change," said he.

## *CHAPTER XXXII*

### PETER RABBIT'S NURSERY

With home, the home you call your own,  
 It really doesn't matter where,  
 There is no place, in all the world,  
 That ever will or can compare.  
                                 Peter Rabbit.

The news was out at last, thanks to Blacky the Crow. Peter Rabbit had a family! Yes, Sir, Peter Rabbit had a family! Right away the Old Briar-patch became the most interesting place on the Green Meadows to all the little people who live there and in the near-by Green Forest. Of course all of Peter's friends called as soon as ever they could. They found Peter looking very proud, and very important, and very happy. Mrs. Peter looked just as proud, and just as happy, but she also looked very anxious. You see, while she was very glad to have so many friends call, there were also other visitors. That is, they were not exactly callers, but they hung around the outside of the Old Briar-patch, and they seemed quite as much interested as the friends who really called. Indeed, they seemed more interested.

Who were they? Why, Reddy Fox was one. Then there was Old Man Coyote, also Redtail the Hawk and Digger the Badger, and just at dusk Hooty the Owl. They all seemed very much interested indeed, but every time little Mrs. Peter saw them, she shivered. You see, she couldn't help thinking that there was a dreadful, hungry look in their eyes, and if the truth is to be told, there probably was.

But happy-go-lucky Peter Rabbit didn't let this worry him. Hadn't he grown up from a teeny-weeny baby and been smart enough to escape all these dangers which worried Mrs. Peter so? And if he could do it, of course his own babies could do it, with him to teach them and show them how.

Besides, they were too little to go outside of the Old Briar-patch now. Indeed, they were too little to go outside their nursery, which was in a clump of sweet-briar bushes in the very middle of the Old Briar-patch, and Peter felt that there they were perfectly safe.

"It isn't time to worry yet," said Peter to little Mrs. Peter, as he saw the fright in her eyes as the shadow of Redtail passed over them. "I don't believe in borrowing trouble. Time enough to worry when there is something to worry about, and that won't be until these little scallawags of ours are big enough to run around and get into mischief. Did you ever see such beautiful babies in all your life?"

For a minute the worried look left little Mrs. Peter, and she gazed at the four little helpless babies fondly. "No," she replied softly, "I never did. Oh, Peter, they are perfectly lovely! This one is the perfect image of you, and I'm going to call him Little Pete. And don't you think his brother looks like his grandfather? I think we'll call him Little Jed."

Peter coughed behind his hand as if something had stuck in his throat. He had no love for Little Jed's grandfather, Old Jed Thumper, the big, gray, old Rabbit who had tried so hard to drive him from the Old Pasture, but he didn't say anything. If Mrs. Peter wanted to name this one Little Jed, he wouldn't say a word. Aloud he said:

"I think, my dear, that this one looks just as you must have looked when you were little, and so we'll call her Fuzzy. And her sister we'll call Wuzzy," continued Peter. "Was ever there such a splendid nursery for baby Rabbits?"

"I don't believe there ever was, Peter. It's better than my old nursery in the Old Pasture," replied little Mrs. Peter, as with a sigh of perfect happiness she stretched out beside their four babies.

And Peter softly tiptoed away to the nearest sweet-clover patch with his heart almost bursting with pride.

Of the doings of Peter and Mrs. Peter Rabbit and their four children there are many more stories, so many that one book will not hold all of them. Besides, Bowser the Hound insists that I must write a book about him, and I have promised to do it right away. So the next book will be Bowser the Hound.

## THE BENEVOLENT GOBLIN

FROM GESTA ROMANORUM (ADAPTED)

In the kingdom of England there is a hillock in the midst of a dense wood. Thither in old days knights and their followers were wont to repair when tired and thirsty after the chase. When one of their number called out, "I thirst!" there immediately started up a Goblin with a cheerful countenance, clad in a crimson robe, and bearing in his outstretched hand a large drinking-horn richly ornamented with gold and precious jewels, and full of the most delicious, unknown beverage.

The Goblin presented the horn to the thirsty knight, who drank and instantly felt refreshed and cool. After the drinker had emptied the horn, the Goblin offered a silken napkin to wipe the mouth. Then, without waiting to be thanked, the strange creature vanished as suddenly as he had come.

Now once there was a knight of churlish nature, who was hunting alone in those parts. Feeling thirsty and fatigued, he visited the hillock and cried out:--

"I thirst!"

Instantly the Goblin appeared and presented the horn.

When the knight had drained it of its delicious beverage, instead of returning the horn, he thrust it into his bosom, and rode hastily away.

He boasted far and wide of his deed, and his feudal lord hearing thereof caused him to be bound and cast into prison; then fearing lest he, too, might become partaker in the theft and ingratitude of the knight, the lord presented the jeweled horn to the King of England, who carefully preserved it among the royal treasures. But never again did the benevolent Goblin return to the hillock in the wood.

## THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW

by Washington Irving

FOUND AMONG THE PAPERS OF THE LATE DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER.

A pleasing land of drowsy head it was,  
 Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye;  
 And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,  
 Forever flushing round a summer sky.

CASTLE OF INDOLENCE.

In the bosom of one of those spacious coves which indent the eastern shore of the Hudson, at that broad expansion of the river denominated by the ancient Dutch navigators the Tappan Zee, and where they always prudently shortened sail and implored the protection of St. Nicholas when they crossed, there lies a small market town or rural port, which by some is called Greensburgh, but which is more generally and properly known by the name of Tarry Town. This name was given, we are told, in former days, by the good housewives of the adjacent country, from the inveterate propensity of their husbands to linger about the village tavern on market days. Be that as it may, I do not vouch for the fact, but merely advert to it, for the sake of being precise and authentic. Not far from this village, perhaps about two miles, there is a little valley or rather lap of land among high hills, which is one of the quietest places in the whole world. A small brook glides through it, with just murmur enough to lull one to repose; and the occasional whistle of a quail or tapping of a woodpecker is almost the only sound that ever breaks in upon the uniform tranquillity.

I recollect that, when a stripling, my first exploit in squirrel-shooting was in a grove of tall walnut-trees that shades one side of the valley. I had wandered into it at noontime, when all nature is peculiarly quiet, and was startled by the roar of my own gun, as it broke the Sabbath stillness around and was prolonged and reverberated by the angry echoes. If ever I should wish for a retreat whither I might steal from the world and its distractions, and dream quietly away the remnant of a troubled life, I know of none more promising than this little valley.

From the listless repose of the place, and the peculiar character of its inhabitants, who are descendants from the original Dutch settlers, this sequestered glen has long been known by the name of SLEEPY HOLLOW, and its rustic lads are called the Sleepy Hollow Boys throughout all the neighboring country. A drowsy, dreamy influence seems to hang over the land, and to pervade the very atmosphere. Some say that the place was bewitched by a High German doctor, during the early days of the settlement; others, that an old Indian chief, the prophet or wizard of his tribe, held his powwows there before the country was discovered by Master Hendrick Hudson. Certain it is,

the place still continues under the sway of some witching power, that holds a spell over the minds of the good people, causing them to walk in a continual reverie. They are given to all kinds of marvellous beliefs, are subject to trances and visions, and frequently see strange sights, and hear music and voices in the air. The whole neighborhood abounds with local tales, haunted spots, and twilight superstitions; stars shoot and meteors glare oftener across the valley than in any other part of the country, and the nightmare, with her whole ninefold, seems to make it the favorite scene of her gambols.

The dominant spirit, however, that haunts this enchanted region, and seems to be commander-in-chief of all the powers of the air, is the apparition of a figure on horseback, without a head. It is said by some to be the ghost of a Hessian trooper, whose head had been carried away by a cannon-ball, in some nameless battle during the Revolutionary War, and who is ever and anon seen by the country folk hurrying along in the gloom of night, as if on the wings of the wind. His haunts are not

confined to the valley, but extend at times to the adjacent roads, and especially to the vicinity of a church at no great distance. Indeed, certain of the most authentic historians of those parts, who have been careful in collecting and collating the floating facts concerning this spectre, allege that the body of the trooper having been buried in the churchyard, the ghost rides forth to the scene of battle in nightly quest of his head, and that the rushing speed with which he sometimes passes along the Hollow, like a midnight blast, is owing to his being belated, and in a hurry to get back to the churchyard before daybreak.

Such is the general purport of this legendary superstition, which has furnished materials for many a wild story in that region of shadows; and the spectre is known at all the country firesides, by the name of the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow.

It is remarkable that the visionary propensity I have mentioned is not confined to the native inhabitants of the valley, but is unconsciously imbibed by every one who resides there for a time. However wide awake they may have been before they entered that sleepy region, they are sure, in a little time, to inhale the witching influence of the air, and begin to grow imaginative, to dream dreams, and see apparitions.

I mention this peaceful spot with all possible laud, for it is in such little retired Dutch valleys, found here and there embosomed in the great State of New York, that population, manners, and customs remain fixed, while the great torrent of migration and improvement, which is making such incessant changes in other parts of this restless country, sweeps by them unobserved. They are like those little nooks of still water, which border a rapid stream, where we may see the straw and bubble riding quietly at anchor, or slowly revolving in their mimic harbor, undisturbed by the rush of the passing current. Though many years have elapsed since I trod the drowsy shades of Sleepy Hollow, yet I question whether I should not still find the same trees and the same families vegetating in its sheltered bosom.

In this by-place of nature there abode, in a remote period of American history, that is to say, some thirty years since, a worthy wight of the name of Ichabod Crane, who sojourned, or, as he expressed it, "tarried," in Sleepy Hollow, for the purpose of instructing the children of the vicinity. He was a native of Connecticut, a State which supplies the Union with pioneers for the mind as well as for the forest, and sends forth yearly its legions of frontier woodmen and country schoolmasters. The cognomen of Crane was not inapplicable to his person. He was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for shovels, and his whole frame most loosely hung together. His head was small, and flat at top, with huge ears, large green glassy eyes, and a long snipe nose, so that it looked like a weather-cock perched upon his spindle neck to tell which way the wind blew. To see him striding along the profile of a hill on a windy day, with his clothes bagging and fluttering about him, one



might have mistaken him for the genius of famine descending upon the earth, or some scarecrow eloped from a cornfield.

His schoolhouse was a low building of one large room, rudely constructed of logs; the windows partly glazed, and partly patched with leaves of old copybooks. It was most ingeniously secured at vacant hours, by a withe twisted in the handle of the door, and stakes set against the window shutters; so that though a thief might get in with perfect ease, he would find some embarrassment in getting out,—an idea most probably borrowed by the architect, Yost Van Houten, from the mystery of an eel-pot. The schoolhouse stood in a rather lonely but pleasant situation, just at the foot of a woody hill, with a brook running close by, and a formidable birch-tree growing at one end of it. From hence the low murmur of his pupils' voices, conning over their lessons, might be heard in a drowsy summer's day, like the hum of a beehive; interrupted now and then by the authoritative voice of the master, in the tone of menace or command, or, peradventure, by the appalling sound of the birch, as he urged some tardy loiterer along the flowery path of knowledge. Truth to say, he was a conscientious man, and ever bore in mind the golden maxim, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Ichabod Crane's scholars certainly were not spoiled.

I would not have it imagined, however, that he was one of those cruel potentates of the school who joy in the smart of their subjects; on the contrary, he administered justice with discrimination rather than severity; taking the burden off the backs of the weak, and laying it on those of the strong. Your mere puny stripling, that winced at the least flourish of the rod, was passed by with indulgence; but the claims of justice were satisfied by inflicting a double portion on some little tough wrong-headed, broad-skirted Dutch urchin, who sulked and swelled and grew dogged and sullen beneath the birch. All this he called "doing his duty by their parents;" and he never inflicted a chastisement without following it by the assurance, so consolatory to the smarting urchin, that "he would remember it and thank him for it the longest day he had to live."

When school hours were over, he was even the companion and playmate of the larger boys; and on holiday afternoons would convoy some of the smaller ones home, who happened to have pretty sisters, or good housewives for mothers, noted for the comforts of the cupboard. Indeed, it behooved him to keep on good terms with his pupils. The revenue arising from his school was small, and would have been scarcely sufficient to furnish him with daily bread, for he was a huge feeder, and, though lank, had the dilating powers of an anaconda; but to help out his maintenance, he was, according to country custom in those parts, boarded and lodged at the houses of the farmers whose children he instructed. With these he lived successively a week at a time, thus going the rounds of the neighborhood, with all his worldly effects tied up in a cotton handkerchief.

That all this might not be too onerous on the purses of his rustic patrons, who are apt to consider the costs of schooling a grievous burden, and schoolmasters as mere drones, he had various ways of rendering himself both useful and agreeable. He assisted the farmers occasionally in the lighter labors of their farms, helped to make hay, mended the fences, took the horses to water, drove the cows from pasture, and cut wood for the winter fire. He laid aside, too, all the dominant dignity and absolute sway with which he lorded it in his little empire, the school, and became wonderfully gentle and ingratiating. He found favor in the eyes of the mothers by petting the children, particularly the youngest; and like the lion bold, which whilom so magnanimously the lamb did hold, he would sit with a child on one knee, and rock a cradle with his foot for whole hours together.

In addition to his other vocations, he was the singing-master of the neighborhood, and picked up many bright shillings by instructing the young folks in psalmody. It was a matter of no little vanity to him on Sundays, to take his station in front of the church gallery, with a band of chosen singers; where, in his own mind, he completely carried away the palm from the parson. Certain it is, his voice resounded far above all the rest of the congregation; and there are peculiar quavers still to

be heard in that church, and which may even be heard half a mile off, quite to the opposite side of the millpond, on a still Sunday morning, which are said to be legitimately descended from the nose of Ichabod Crane. Thus, by divers little makeshifts, in that ingenious way which is commonly denominated "by hook and by crook," the worthy pedagogue got on tolerably enough, and was thought, by all who understood nothing of the labor of headwork, to have a wonderfully easy life of it.

The schoolmaster is generally a man of some importance in the female circle of a rural neighborhood; being considered a kind of idle, gentlemanlike personage, of vastly superior taste and accomplishments to the rough country swains, and, indeed, inferior in learning only to the parson. His appearance, therefore, is apt to occasion some little stir at the tea-table of a farmhouse, and the addition of a supernumerary dish of cakes or sweetmeats, or, peradventure, the parade of a silver teapot. Our man of letters, therefore, was peculiarly happy in the smiles of all the country damsels. How he would figure among them in the churchyard, between services on Sundays; gathering grapes for them from the wild vines that overran the surrounding trees; reciting for their amusement all the epitaphs on the tombstones; or sauntering, with a whole bevy of them, along the banks of the adjacent millpond; while the more bashful country bumpkins hung sheepishly back, envying his superior elegance and address.

From his half-itinerant life, also, he was a kind of travelling gazette, carrying the whole budget of local gossip from house to house, so that his appearance was always greeted with satisfaction. He was, moreover, esteemed by the women as a man of great erudition, for he had read several books quite through, and was a perfect master of Cotton Mather's "History of New England Witchcraft," in which, by the way, he most firmly and potently believed.

He was, in fact, an odd mixture of small shrewdness and simple credulity. His appetite for the marvellous, and his powers of digesting it, were equally extraordinary; and both had been increased by his residence in this spell-bound region. No tale was too gross or monstrous for his capacious swallow. It was often his delight, after his school was dismissed in the afternoon, to stretch himself on the rich bed of clover bordering the little brook that whimpered by his schoolhouse, and there con over old Mather's direful tales, until the gathering dusk of evening made the printed page a mere mist before his eyes. Then, as he wended his way by swamp and stream and awful woodland, to the farmhouse where he happened to be quartered, every sound of nature, at that witching hour, fluttered his excited imagination,—the moan of the whip-poor-will from the hillside, the boding cry of the tree toad, that harbinger of storm, the dreary hooting of the screech owl, or the sudden rustling in the thicket of birds frightened from their roost. The fireflies, too, which sparkled most vividly in the darkest places, now and then startled him, as one of uncommon brightness would stream across his path; and if, by chance, a huge blockhead of a beetle came winging his blundering flight against him, the poor varlet was ready to give up the ghost, with the idea that he was struck with a witch's token. His only resource on such occasions, either to drown thought or drive away evil spirits, was to sing psalm tunes and the good people of Sleepy Hollow, as they sat by their doors of an evening, were often filled with awe at hearing his nasal melody, "in linked sweetness long drawn out," floating from the distant hill, or along the dusky road.

Another of his sources of fearful pleasure was to pass long winter evenings with the old Dutch wives, as they sat spinning by the fire, with a row of apples roasting and spluttering along the hearth, and listen to their marvellous tales of ghosts and goblins, and haunted fields, and haunted brooks, and haunted bridges, and haunted houses, and particularly of the headless horseman, or Galloping Hessian of the Hollow, as they sometimes called him. He would delight them equally by his anecdotes of witchcraft, and of the direful omens and portentous sights and sounds in the air, which prevailed in the earlier times of Connecticut; and would frighten them woefully with

speculations upon comets and shooting stars; and with the alarming fact that the world did absolutely turn round, and that they were half the time topsy-turvy!

But if there was a pleasure in all this, while snugly cuddling in the chimney corner of a chamber that was all of a ruddy glow from the crackling wood fire, and where, of course, no spectre dared to show its face, it was dearly purchased by the terrors of his subsequent walk homewards. What fearful shapes and shadows beset his path, amidst the dim and ghastly glare of a snowy night! With what wistful look did he eye every trembling ray of light streaming across the waste fields from some distant window! How often was he appalled by some shrub covered with snow, which, like a sheeted spectre, beset his very path! How often did he shrink with curdling awe at the sound of his own steps on the frosty crust beneath his feet; and dread to look over his shoulder, lest he should behold some uncouth being tramping close behind him! And how often was he thrown into complete dismay by some rushing blast, howling among the trees, in the idea that it was the Galloping Hessian on one of his nightly scourings!

All these, however, were mere terrors of the night, phantoms of the mind that walk in darkness; and though he had seen many spectres in his time, and been more than once beset by Satan in divers shapes, in his lonely perambulations, yet daylight put an end to all these evils; and he would have passed a pleasant life of it, in despite of the Devil and all his works, if his path had not been crossed by a being that causes more perplexity to mortal man than ghosts, goblins, and the whole race of witches put together, and that was--a woman.

Among the musical disciples who assembled, one evening in each week, to receive his instructions in psalmody, was Katrina Van Tassel, the daughter and only child of a substantial Dutch farmer. She was a blooming lass of fresh eighteen; plump as a partridge; ripe and melting and rosy-cheeked as one of her father's peaches, and universally famed, not merely for her beauty, but her vast expectations. She was withal a little of a coquette, as might be perceived even in her dress, which was a mixture of ancient and modern fashions, as most suited to set off her charms. She wore the ornaments of pure yellow gold, which her great-great-grandmother had brought over from Saardam; the tempting stomacher of the olden time, and withal a provokingly short petticoat, to display the prettiest foot and ankle in the country round.

Ichabod Crane had a soft and foolish heart towards the sex; and it is not to be wondered at that so tempting a morsel soon found favor in his eyes, more especially after he had visited her in her paternal mansion. Old Baltus Van Tassel was a perfect picture of a thriving, contented, liberal-hearted farmer. He seldom, it is true, sent either his eyes or his thoughts beyond the boundaries of his own farm; but within those everything was snug, happy and well-conditioned. He was satisfied with his wealth, but not proud of it; and piqued himself upon the hearty abundance, rather than the style in which he lived. His stronghold was situated on the banks of the Hudson, in one of those green, sheltered, fertile nooks in which the Dutch farmers are so fond of nestling. A great elm tree spread its broad branches over it, at the foot of which bubbled up a spring of the softest and sweetest water, in a little well formed of a barrel; and then stole sparkling away through the grass, to a neighboring brook, that babbled along among alders and dwarf willows. Hard by the farmhouse was a vast barn, that might have served for a church; every window and crevice of which seemed bursting forth with the treasures of the farm; the flail was busily resounding within it from morning to night; swallows and martins skimmed twittering about the eaves; and rows of pigeons, some with one eye turned up, as if watching the weather, some with their heads under their wings or buried in their bosoms, and others swelling, and cooing, and bowing about their dames, were enjoying the sunshine on the roof. Sleek unwieldy porkers were grunting in the repose and abundance of their pens, from whence sallied forth, now and then, troops of sucking pigs, as if to snuff the air. A stately squadron of snowy geese were riding in an adjoining pond, convoying whole fleets of ducks; regiments of turkeys were gobbling through the farmyard,

and Guinea fowls fretting about it, like ill-tempered housewives, with their peevish, discontented cry. Before the barn door strutted the gallant cock, that pattern of a husband, a warrior and a fine gentleman, clapping his burnished wings and crowing in the pride and gladness of his heart,--sometimes tearing up the earth with his feet, and then generously calling his ever-hungry family of wives and children to enjoy the rich morsel which he had discovered.

The pedagogue's mouth watered as he looked upon this sumptuous promise of luxurious winter fare. In his devouring mind's eye, he pictured to himself every roasting-pig running about with a pudding in his belly, and an apple in his mouth; the pigeons were snugly put to bed in a comfortable pie, and tucked in with a coverlet of crust; the geese were swimming in their own gravy; and the ducks pairing cosily in dishes, like snug married couples, with a decent competency of onion sauce. In the porkers he saw carved out the future sleek side of bacon, and juicy relishing ham; not a turkey but he beheld daintily trussed up, with its gizzard under its wing, and, peradventure, a necklace of savory sausages; and even bright chanticleer himself lay sprawling on his back, in a side dish, with uplifted claws, as if craving that quarter which his chivalrous spirit disdained to ask while living.

As the enraptured Ichabod fancied all this, and as he rolled his great green eyes over the fat meadow lands, the rich fields of wheat, of rye, of buckwheat, and Indian corn, and the orchards burdened with ruddy fruit, which surrounded the warm tenement of Van Tassel, his heart yearned after the damsel who was to inherit these domains, and his imagination expanded with the idea, how they might be readily turned into cash, and the money invested in immense tracts of wild land, and shingle palaces in the wilderness. Nay, his busy fancy already realized his hopes, and presented to him the blooming Katrina, with a whole family of children, mounted on the top of a wagon loaded with household trumpery, with pots and kettles dangling beneath; and he beheld himself bestriding a pacing mare, with a colt at her heels, setting out for Kentucky, Tennessee,--or the Lord knows where!

When he entered the house, the conquest of his heart was complete. It was one of those spacious farmhouses, with high-ridged but lowly sloping roofs, built in the style handed down from the first Dutch settlers; the low projecting eaves forming a piazza along the front, capable of being closed up in bad weather. Under this were hung flails, harness, various utensils of husbandry, and nets for fishing in the neighboring river. Benches were built along the sides for summer use; and a great spinning-wheel at one end, and a churn at the other, showed the various uses to which this important porch might be devoted. From this piazza the wondering Ichabod entered the hall, which formed the centre of the mansion, and the place of usual residence. Here rows of resplendent pewter, ranged on a long dresser, dazzled his eyes. In one corner stood a huge bag of wool, ready to be spun; in another, a quantity of linsey-woolsey just from the loom; ears of Indian corn, and strings of dried apples and peaches, hung in gay festoons along the walls, mingled with the gaud of red peppers; and a door left ajar gave him a peep into the best parlor, where the claw-footed chairs and dark mahogany tables shone like mirrors; andirons, with their accompanying shovel and tongs, glistened from their covert of asparagus tops; mock-oranges and conch-shells decorated the mantelpiece; strings of various-colored birds eggs were suspended above it; a great ostrich egg was hung from the centre of the room, and a corner cupboard, knowingly left open, displayed immense treasures of old silver and well-mended china.

From the moment Ichabod laid his eyes upon these regions of delight, the peace of his mind was at an end, and his only study was how to gain the affections of the peerless daughter of Van Tassel. In this enterprise, however, he had more real difficulties than generally fell to the lot of a knight-errant of yore, who seldom had anything but giants, enchanters, fiery dragons, and such like easily conquered adversaries, to contend with and had to make his way merely through gates of iron and brass, and walls of adamant to the castle keep, where the lady of his heart was confined; all

which he achieved as easily as a man would carve his way to the centre of a Christmas pie; and then the lady gave him her hand as a matter of course. Ichabod, on the contrary, had to win his way to the heart of a country coquette, beset with a labyrinth of whims and caprices, which were forever presenting new difficulties and impediments; and he had to encounter a host of fearful adversaries of real flesh and blood, the numerous rustic admirers, who beset every portal to her heart, keeping a watchful and angry eye upon each other, but ready to fly out in the common cause against any new competitor.

Among these, the most formidable was a burly, roaring, roystering blade, of the name of Abraham, or, according to the Dutch abbreviation, Brom Van Brunt, the hero of the country round, which rang with his feats of strength and hardihood. He was broad-shouldered and double-jointed, with short curly black hair, and a bluff but not unpleasant countenance, having a mingled air of fun and arrogance. From his Herculean frame and great powers of limb he had received the nickname of BROM BONES, by which he was universally known. He was famed for great knowledge and skill in horsemanship, being as dexterous on horseback as a Tartar. He was foremost at all races and cock fights; and, with the ascendancy which bodily strength always acquires in rustic life, was the umpire in all disputes, setting his hat on one side, and giving his decisions with an air and tone that admitted of no gainsay or appeal. He was always ready for either a fight or a frolic; but had more mischief than ill-will in his composition; and with all his overbearing roughness, there was a strong dash of waggish good humor at bottom. He had three or four boon companions, who regarded him as their model, and at the head of whom he scoured the country, attending every scene of feud or merriment for miles round. In cold weather he was distinguished by a fur cap, surmounted with a flaunting fox's tail; and when the folks at a country gathering descried this well-known crest at a distance, whisking about among a squad of hard riders, they always stood by for a squall. Sometimes his crew would be heard dashing along past the farmhouses at midnight, with whoop and halloo, like a troop of Don Cossacks; and the old dames, startled out of their sleep, would listen for a moment till the hurry-scurry had clattered by, and then exclaim, "Ay, there goes Brom Bones and his gang!" The neighbors looked upon him with a mixture of awe, admiration, and good-will; and, when any madcap prank or rustic brawl occurred in the vicinity, always shook their heads, and warranted Brom Bones was at the bottom of it.

This rantipole hero had for some time singled out the blooming Katrina for the object of his uncouth gallantries, and though his amorous toyings were something like the gentle caresses and endearments of a bear, yet it was whispered that she did not altogether discourage his hopes. Certain it is, his advances were signals for rival candidates to retire, who felt no inclination to cross a lion in his amours; insomuch, that when his horse was seen tied to Van Tassel's paling, on a Sunday night, a sure sign that his master was courting, or, as it is termed, "sparking," within, all other suitors passed by in despair, and carried the war into other quarters.

Such was the formidable rival with whom Ichabod Crane had to contend, and, considering all things, a stouter man than he would have shrunk from the competition, and a wiser man would have despaired. He had, however, a happy mixture of pliability and perseverance in his nature; he was in form and spirit like a supple-jack--yielding, but tough; though he bent, he never broke; and though he bowed beneath the slightest pressure, yet, the moment it was away--jerk!--he was as erect, and carried his head as high as ever.

To have taken the field openly against his rival would have been madness; for he was not a man to be thwarted in his amours, any more than that stormy lover, Achilles. Ichabod, therefore, made his advances in a quiet and gently insinuating manner. Under cover of his character of singing-master, he made frequent visits at the farmhouse; not that he had anything to apprehend from the meddlesome interference of parents, which is so often a stumbling-block in the path of lovers. Balt Van Tassel was an easy indulgent soul; he loved his daughter better even than his

pipe, and, like a reasonable man and an excellent father, let her have her way in everything. His notable little wife, too, had enough to do to attend to her housekeeping and manage her poultry; for, as she sagely observed, ducks and geese are foolish things, and must be looked after, but girls can take care of themselves. Thus, while the busy dame bustled about the house, or plied her spinning-wheel at one end of the piazza, honest Balt would sit smoking his evening pipe at the other, watching the achievements of a little wooden warrior, who, armed with a sword in each hand, was most valiantly fighting the wind on the pinnacle of the barn. In the mean time, Ichabod would carry on his suit with the daughter by the side of the spring under the great elm, or sauntering along in the twilight, that hour so favorable to the lover's eloquence.

I profess not to know how women's hearts are wooed and won. To me they have always been matters of riddle and admiration. Some seem to have but one vulnerable point, or door of access; while others have a thousand avenues, and may be captured in a thousand different ways. It is a great triumph of skill to gain the former, but a still greater proof of generalship to maintain possession of the latter, for man must battle for his fortress at every door and window. He who wins a thousand common hearts is therefore entitled to some renown; but he who keeps undisputed sway over the heart of a coquette is indeed a hero. Certain it is, this was not the case with the redoubtable Brom Bones; and from the moment Ichabod Crane made his advances, the interests of the former evidently declined: his horse was no longer seen tied to the palings on Sunday nights, and a deadly feud gradually arose between him and the preceptor of Sleepy Hollow.

Brom, who had a degree of rough chivalry in his nature, would fain have carried matters to open warfare and have settled their pretensions to the lady, according to the mode of those most concise and simple reasoners, the knights-errant of yore,—by single combat; but Ichabod was too conscious of the superior might of his adversary to enter the lists against him; he had overheard a boast of Bones, that he would "double the schoolmaster up, and lay him on a shelf of his own schoolhouse;" and he was too wary to give him an opportunity. There was something extremely provoking in this obstinately pacific system; it left Brom no alternative but to draw upon the funds of rustic waggery in his disposition, and to play off boorish practical jokes upon his rival. Ichabod became the object of whimsical persecution to Bones and his gang of rough riders. They harried his hitherto peaceful domains; smoked out his singing school by stopping up the chimney; broke into the schoolhouse at night, in spite of its formidable fastenings of withe and window stakes, and turned everything topsy-turvy, so that the poor schoolmaster began to think all the witches in the country held their meetings there. But what was still more annoying, Brom took all opportunities of turning him into ridicule in presence of his mistress, and had a scoundrel dog whom he taught to whine in the most ludicrous manner, and introduced as a rival of Ichabod's, to instruct her in psalmody.

In this way matters went on for some time, without producing any material effect on the relative situations of the contending powers. On a fine autumnal afternoon, Ichabod, in pensive mood, sat enthroned on the lofty stool from whence he usually watched all the concerns of his little literary realm. In his hand he swayed a ferule, that sceptre of despotic power; the birch of justice reposed on three nails behind the throne, a constant terror to evil doers, while on the desk before him might be seen sundry contraband articles and prohibited weapons, detected upon the persons of idle urchins, such as half-munched apples, popguns, whirligigs, fly-cages, and whole legions of rampant little paper gamecocks. Apparently there had been some appalling act of justice recently inflicted, for his scholars were all busily intent upon their books, or slyly whispering behind them with one eye kept upon the master; and a kind of buzzing stillness reigned throughout the schoolroom. It was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of a negro in tow-cloth jacket and trowsers, a round-crowned fragment of a hat, like the cap of Mercury, and mounted on the back of a ragged, wild, half-broken colt, which he managed with a rope by way of halter. He came clattering

up to the school door with an invitation to Ichabod to attend a merry-making or "quilting frolic," to be held that evening at Mynheer Van Tassel's; and having delivered his message with that air of importance, and effort at fine language, which a negro is apt to display on petty embassies of the kind, he dashed over the brook, and was seen scampering away up the hollow, full of the importance and hurry of his mission.

All was now bustle and hubbub in the late quiet schoolroom. The scholars were hurried through their lessons without stopping at trifles; those who were nimble skipped over half with impunity, and those who were tardy had a smart application now and then in the rear, to quicken their speed or help them over a tall word. Books were flung aside without being put away on the shelves, inkstands were overturned, benches thrown down, and the whole school was turned loose an hour before the usual time, bursting forth like a legion of young imps, yelping and racketing about the green in joy at their early emancipation.

The gallant Ichabod now spent at least an extra half hour at his toilet, brushing and furbishing up his best, and indeed only suit of rusty black, and arranging his locks by a bit of broken looking-glass that hung up in the schoolhouse. That he might make his appearance before his mistress in the true style of a cavalier, he borrowed a horse from the farmer with whom he was domiciliated, a choleric old Dutchman of the name of Hans Van Ripper, and, thus gallantly mounted, issued forth like a knight-errant in quest of adventures. But it is meet I should, in the true spirit of romantic story, give some account of the looks and equipments of my hero and his steed. The animal he bestrode was a broken-down plow-horse, that had outlived almost everything but its viciousness. He was gaunt and shagged, with a ewe neck, and a head like a hammer; his rusty mane and tail were tangled and knotted with burs; one eye had lost its pupil, and was glaring and spectral, but the other had the gleam of a genuine devil in it. Still he must have had fire and mettle in his day, if we may judge from the name he bore of Gunpowder. He had, in fact, been a favorite steed of his master's, the choleric Van Ripper, who was a furious rider, and had infused, very probably, some of his own spirit into the animal; for, old and broken-down as he looked, there was more of the lurking devil in him than in any young filly in the country.

Ichabod was a suitable figure for such a steed. He rode with short stirrups, which brought his knees nearly up to the pommel of the saddle; his sharp elbows stuck out like grasshoppers'; he carried his whip perpendicularly in his hand, like a sceptre, and as his horse jogged on, the motion of his arms was not unlike the flapping of a pair of wings. A small wool hat rested on the top of his nose, for so his scanty strip of forehead might be called, and the skirts of his black coat fluttered out almost to the horse's tail. Such was the appearance of Ichabod and his steed as they shambled out of the gate of Hans Van Ripper, and it was altogether such an apparition as is seldom to be met with in broad daylight.

It was, as I have said, a fine autumnal day; the sky was clear and serene, and nature wore that rich and golden livery which we always associate with the idea of abundance. The forests had put on their sober brown and yellow, while some trees of the tenderer kind had been nipped by the frosts into brilliant dyes of orange, purple, and scarlet. Streaming files of wild ducks began to make their appearance high in the air; the bark of the squirrel might be heard from the groves of beech and hickory-nuts, and the pensive whistle of the quail at intervals from the neighboring stubble field.

The small birds were taking their farewell banquets. In the fullness of their revelry, they fluttered, chirping and frolicking from bush to bush, and tree to tree, capricious from the very profusion and variety around them. There was the honest cock robin, the favorite game of stripling sportsmen, with its loud querulous note; and the twittering blackbirds flying in sable clouds; and the golden-winged woodpecker with his crimson crest, his broad black gorget, and splendid plumage; and the

cedar bird, with its red-tipt wings and yellow-tipt tail and its little monteiro cap of feathers; and the blue jay, that noisy coxcomb, in his gay light blue coat and white underclothes, screaming and chattering, nodding and bobbing and bowing, and pretending to be on good terms with every songster of the grove.

As Ichabod jogged slowly on his way, his eye, ever open to every symptom of culinary abundance, ranged with delight over the treasures of jolly autumn. On all sides he beheld vast store of apples; some hanging in oppressive opulence on the trees; some gathered into baskets and barrels for the market; others heaped up in rich piles for the cider-press. Farther on he beheld great fields of Indian corn, with its golden ears peeping from their leafy coverts, and holding out the promise of cakes and hasty-pudding; and the yellow pumpkins lying beneath them, turning up their fair round bellies to the sun, and giving ample prospects of the most luxurious of pies; and anon he passed the fragrant buckwheat fields breathing the odor of the beehive, and as he beheld them, soft anticipations stole over his mind of dainty slapjacks, well buttered, and garnished with honey or treacle, by the delicate little dimpled hand of Katrina Van Tassel.

Thus feeding his mind with many sweet thoughts and "sugared suppositions," he journeyed along the sides of a range of hills which look out upon some of the goodliest scenes of the mighty Hudson. The sun gradually wheeled his broad disk down in the west. The wide bosom of the Tappan Zee lay motionless and glassy, excepting that here and there a gentle undulation waved and prolonged the blue shadow of the distant mountain. A few amber clouds floated in the sky, without a breath of air to move them. The horizon was of a fine golden tint, changing gradually into a pure apple green, and from that into the deep blue of the mid-heaven. A slanting ray lingered on the woody crests of the precipices that overhung some parts of the river, giving greater depth to the dark gray and purple of their rocky sides. A sloop was loitering in the distance, dropping slowly down with the tide, her sail hanging uselessly against the mast; and as the reflection of the sky gleamed along the still water, it seemed as if the vessel was suspended in the air.

It was toward evening that Ichabod arrived at the castle of the Heer Van Tassel, which he found thronged with the pride and flower of the adjacent country. Old farmers, a spare leathern-faced race, in homespun coats and breeches, blue stockings, huge shoes, and magnificent pewter buckles. Their brisk, withered little dames, in close-crimped caps, long-waisted short gowns, homespun petticoats, with scissors and pincushions, and gay calico pockets hanging on the outside. Buxom lasses, almost as antiquated as their mothers, excepting where a straw hat, a fine ribbon, or perhaps a white frock, gave symptoms of city innovation. The sons, in short square-skirted coats, with rows of stupendous brass buttons, and their hair generally queued in the fashion of the times, especially if they could procure an eel-skin for the purpose, it being esteemed throughout the country as a potent nourisher and strengthener of the hair.

Brom Bones, however, was the hero of the scene, having come to the gathering on his favorite steed Daredevil, a creature, like himself, full of mettle and mischief, and which no one but himself could manage. He was, in fact, noted for preferring vicious animals, given to all kinds of tricks which kept the rider in constant risk of his neck, for he held a tractable, well-broken horse as unworthy of a lad of spirit.

Fain would I pause to dwell upon the world of charms that burst upon the enraptured gaze of my hero, as he entered the state parlor of Van Tassel's mansion. Not those of the bevy of buxom lasses, with their luxurious display of red and white; but the ample charms of a genuine Dutch country tea-table, in the sumptuous time of autumn. Such heaped up platters of cakes of various and almost indescribable kinds, known only to experienced Dutch housewives! There was the doughty doughnut, the tender oly koek, and the crisp and crumbling cruller; sweet cakes and short cakes, ginger cakes and honey cakes, and the whole family of cakes. And then there were apple pies, and peach pies, and pumpkin pies; besides slices of ham and smoked beef; and moreover delectable



dishes of preserved plums, and peaches, and pears, and quinces; not to mention broiled shad and roasted chickens; together with bowls of milk and cream, all mingled higgledy-piggledy, pretty much as I have enumerated them, with the motherly teapot sending up its clouds of vapor from the midst--Heaven bless the mark! I want breath and time to discuss this banquet as it deserves, and am too eager to get on with my story. Happily, Ichabod Crane was not in so great a hurry as his historian, but did ample justice to every dainty.

He was a kind and thankful creature, whose heart dilated in proportion as his skin was filled with good cheer, and whose spirits rose with eating, as some men's do with drink. He could not help, too, rolling his large eyes round him as he ate, and chuckling with the possibility that he might one day be lord of all this scene of almost unimaginable luxury and splendor. Then, he thought, how soon he'd turn his back upon the old schoolhouse; snap his fingers in the face of Hans Van Ripper, and every other niggardly patron, and kick any itinerant pedagogue out of doors that should dare to call him comrade!

Old Baltus Van Tassel moved about among his guests with a face dilated with content and good humor, round and jolly as the harvest moon. His hospitable attentions were brief, but expressive, being confined to a shake of the hand, a slap on the shoulder, a loud laugh, and a pressing invitation to "fall to, and help themselves."

And now the sound of the music from the common room, or hall, summoned to the dance. The musician was an old gray-headed negro, who had been the itinerant orchestra of the neighborhood for more than half a century. His instrument was as old and battered as himself. The greater part of the time he scraped on two or three strings, accompanying every movement of the bow with a motion of the head; bowing almost to the ground, and stamping with his foot whenever a fresh couple were to start.

Ichabod prided himself upon his dancing as much as upon his vocal powers. Not a limb, not a fibre about him was idle; and to have seen his loosely hung frame in full motion, and clattering about the room, you would have thought St. Vitus himself, that blessed patron of the dance, was figuring before you in person. He was the admiration of all the negroes; who, having gathered, of all ages and sizes, from the farm and the neighborhood, stood forming a pyramid of shining black faces at every door and window, gazing with delight at the scene, rolling their white eyeballs, and showing grinning rows of ivory from ear to ear. How could the flogger of urchins be otherwise than animated and joyous? The lady of his heart was his partner in the dance, and smiling graciously in reply to all his amorous oglings; while Brom Bones, sorely smitten with love and jealousy, sat brooding by himself in one corner.

When the dance was at an end, Ichabod was attracted to a knot of the sager folks, who, with Old Van Tassel, sat smoking at one end of the piazza, gossiping over former times, and drawing out long stories about the war.

This neighborhood, at the time of which I am speaking, was one of those highly favored places which abound with chronicle and great men. The British and American line had run near it during the war; it had, therefore, been the scene of marauding and infested with refugees, cowboys, and all kinds of border chivalry. Just sufficient time had elapsed to enable each storyteller to dress up his tale with a little becoming fiction, and, in the indistinctness of his recollection, to make himself the hero of every exploit.

There was the story of Doffue Martling, a large blue-bearded Dutchman, who had nearly taken a British frigate with an old iron nine-pounder from a mud breastwork, only that his gun burst at the sixth discharge. And there was an old gentleman who shall be nameless, being too rich a mynheer to be lightly mentioned, who, in the battle of White Plains, being an excellent master of defence, parried a musket-ball with a small sword, insomuch that he absolutely felt it whiz round the blade, and glance off at the hilt; in proof of which he was ready at any time to show the sword, with

the hilt a little bent. There were several more that had been equally great in the field, not one of whom but was persuaded that he had a considerable hand in bringing the war to a happy termination.

But all these were nothing to the tales of ghosts and apparitions that succeeded. The neighborhood is rich in legendary treasures of the kind. Local tales and superstitions thrive best in these sheltered, long-settled retreats; but are trampled under foot by the shifting throng that forms the population of most of our country places. Besides, there is no encouragement for ghosts in most of our villages, for they have scarcely had time to finish their first nap and turn themselves in their graves, before their surviving friends have travelled away from the neighborhood; so that when they turn out at night to walk their rounds, they have no acquaintance left to call upon. This is perhaps the reason why we so seldom hear of ghosts except in our long-established Dutch communities.

The immediate cause, however, of the prevalence of supernatural stories in these parts, was doubtless owing to the vicinity of Sleepy Hollow. There was a contagion in the very air that blew from that haunted region; it breathed forth an atmosphere of dreams and fancies infecting all the land. Several of the Sleepy Hollow people were present at Van Tassel's, and, as usual, were doling out their wild and wonderful legends. Many dismal tales were told about funeral trains, and mourning cries and wailings heard and seen about the great tree where the unfortunate Major André was taken, and which stood in the neighborhood. Some mention was made also of the woman in white, that haunted the dark glen at Raven Rock, and was often heard to shriek on winter nights before a storm, having perished there in the snow. The chief part of the stories, however, turned upon the favorite spectre of Sleepy Hollow, the Headless Horseman, who had been heard several times of late, patrolling the country; and, it was said, tethered his horse nightly among the graves in the churchyard.

The sequestered situation of this church seems always to have made it a favorite haunt of troubled spirits. It stands on a knoll, surrounded by locust-trees and lofty elms, from among which its decent, whitewashed walls shine modestly forth, like Christian purity beaming through the shades of retirement. A gentle slope descends from it to a silver sheet of water, bordered by high trees, between which, peeps may be caught at the blue hills of the Hudson. To look upon its grass-grown yard, where the sunbeams seem to sleep so quietly, one would think that there at least the dead might rest in peace. On one side of the church extends a wide woody dell, along which raves a large brook among broken rocks and trunks of fallen trees. Over a deep black part of the stream, not far from the church, was formerly thrown a wooden bridge; the road that led to it, and the bridge itself, were thickly shaded by overhanging trees, which cast a gloom about it, even in the daytime; but occasioned a fearful darkness at night. Such was one of the favorite haunts of the Headless Horseman, and the place where he was most frequently encountered. The tale was told of old Brouwer, a most heretical disbeliever in ghosts, how he met the Horseman returning from his foray into Sleepy Hollow, and was obliged to get up behind him; how they galloped over bush and brake, over hill and swamp, until they reached the bridge; when the Horseman suddenly turned into a skeleton, threw old Brouwer into the brook, and sprang away over the tree-tops with a clap of thunder.

This story was immediately matched by a thrice marvellous adventure of Brom Bones, who made light of the Galloping Hessian as an arrant jockey. He affirmed that on returning one night from the neighboring village of Sing Sing, he had been overtaken by this midnight trooper; that he had offered to race with him for a bowl of punch, and should have won it too, for Daredevil beat the goblin horse all hollow, but just as they came to the church bridge, the Hessian bolted, and vanished in a flash of fire.

All these tales, told in that drowsy undertone with which men talk in the dark, the countenances of the listeners only now and then receiving a casual gleam from the glare of a pipe, sank deep in the mind of Ichabod. He repaid them in kind with large extracts from his invaluable author, Cotton Mather, and added many marvellous events that had taken place in his native State of Connecticut, and fearful sights which he had seen in his nightly walks about Sleepy Hollow.

The revel now gradually broke up. The old farmers gathered together their families in their wagons, and were heard for some time rattling along the hollow roads, and over the distant hills. Some of the damsels mounted on pillions behind their favorite swains, and their light-hearted laughter, mingling with the clatter of hoofs, echoed along the silent woodlands, sounding fainter and fainter, until they gradually died away,--and the late scene of noise and frolic was all silent and deserted. Ichabod only lingered behind, according to the custom of country lovers, to have a tête-à-tête with the heiress; fully convinced that he was now on the high road to success. What passed at this interview I will not pretend to say, for in fact I do not know. Something, however, I fear me, must have gone wrong, for he certainly sallied forth, after no very great interval, with an air quite desolate and chapfallen. Oh, these women! these women! Could that girl have been playing off any of her coquettish tricks? Was her encouragement of the poor pedagogue all a mere sham to secure her conquest of his rival? Heaven only knows, not I! Let it suffice to say, Ichabod stole forth with the air of one who had been sacking a henroost, rather than a fair lady's heart. Without looking to the right or left to notice the scene of rural wealth, on which he had so often gloated, he went straight to the stable, and with several hearty cuffs and kicks roused his steed most uncourteously from the comfortable quarters in which he was soundly sleeping, dreaming of mountains of corn and oats, and whole valleys of timothy and clover.

It was the very witching time of night that Ichabod, heavy-hearted and crestfallen, pursued his travels homewards, along the sides of the lofty hills which rise above Tarry Town, and which he had traversed so cheerily in the afternoon. The hour was as dismal as himself. Far below him the Tappan Zee spread its dusky and indistinct waste of waters, with here and there the tall mast of a sloop, riding quietly at anchor under the land. In the dead hush of midnight, he could even hear the barking of the watchdog from the opposite shore of the Hudson; but it was so vague and faint as only to give an idea of his distance from this faithful companion of man. Now and then, too, the long-drawn crowing of a cock, accidentally awakened, would sound far, far off, from some farmhouse away among the hills--but it was like a dreaming sound in his ear. No signs of life occurred near him, but occasionally the melancholy chirp of a cricket, or perhaps the guttural twang of a bullfrog from a neighboring marsh, as if sleeping uncomfortably and turning suddenly in his bed.

All the stories of ghosts and goblins that he had heard in the afternoon now came crowding upon his recollection. The night grew darker and darker; the stars seemed to sink deeper in the sky, and driving clouds occasionally hid them from his sight. He had never felt so lonely and dismal. He was, moreover, approaching the very place where many of the scenes of the ghost stories had been laid. In the centre of the road stood an enormous tulip-tree, which towered like a giant above all the other trees of the neighborhood, and formed a kind of landmark. Its limbs were gnarled and fantastic, large enough to form trunks for ordinary trees, twisting down almost to the earth, and rising again into the air. It was connected with the tragical story of the unfortunate André, who had been taken prisoner hard by; and was universally known by the name of Major André's tree. The common people regarded it with a mixture of respect and superstition, partly out of sympathy for the fate of its ill-starred namesake, and partly from the tales of strange sights, and doleful lamentations, told concerning it.

As Ichabod approached this fearful tree, he began to whistle; he thought his whistle was answered; it was but a blast sweeping sharply through the dry branches. As he approached a little nearer, he thought he saw something white, hanging in the midst of the tree: he paused and ceased whistling but, on looking more narrowly, perceived that it was a place where the tree had been scathed by lightning, and the white wood laid bare. Suddenly he heard a groan--his teeth chattered, and his knees smote against the saddle: it was but the rubbing of one huge bough upon another, as they were swayed about by the breeze. He passed the tree in safety, but new perils lay before him.

About two hundred yards from the tree, a small brook crossed the road, and ran into a marshy and thickly-wooded glen, known by the name of Wiley's Swamp. A few rough logs, laid side by side, served for a bridge over this stream. On that side of the road where the brook entered the wood, a group of oaks and chestnuts, matted thick with wild grape-vines, threw a cavernous gloom over it. To pass this bridge was the severest trial. It was at this identical spot that the unfortunate André was captured, and under the covert of those chestnuts and vines were the sturdy yeomen concealed who surprised him. This has ever since been considered a haunted stream, and fearful are the feelings of the schoolboy who has to pass it alone after dark.

As he approached the stream, his heart began to thump; he summoned up, however, all his resolution, gave his horse half a score of kicks in the ribs, and attempted to dash briskly across the bridge; but instead of starting forward, the perverse old animal made a lateral movement, and ran broadside against the fence. Ichabod, whose fears increased with the delay, jerked the reins on the other side, and kicked lustily with the contrary foot: it was all in vain; his steed started, it is true, but it was only to plunge to the opposite side of the road into a thicket of brambles and alder bushes. The schoolmaster now bestowed both whip and heel upon the starveling ribs of old Gunpowder, who dashed forward, snuffling and snorting, but came to a stand just by the bridge, with a suddenness that had nearly sent his rider sprawling over his head. Just at this moment a plashy tramp by the side of the bridge caught the sensitive ear of Ichabod. In the dark shadow of the grove, on the margin of the brook, he beheld something huge, misshapen and towering. It stirred not, but seemed gathered up in the gloom, like some gigantic monster ready to spring upon the traveller.

The hair of the affrighted pedagogue rose upon his head with terror. What was to be done? To turn and fly was now too late; and besides, what chance was there of escaping ghost or goblin, if such it was, which could ride upon the wings of the wind? Summoning up, therefore, a show of courage, he demanded in stammering accents, "Who are you?" He received no reply. He repeated his demand in a still more agitated voice. Still there was no answer. Once more he cudgelled the sides of the inflexible Gunpowder, and, shutting his eyes, broke forth with involuntary fervor into a psalm tune. Just then the shadowy object of alarm put itself in motion, and with a scramble and a bound stood at once in the middle of the road. Though the night was dark and dismal, yet the form of the unknown might now in some degree be ascertained. He appeared to be a horseman of large dimensions, and mounted on a black horse of powerful frame. He made no offer of molestation or sociability, but kept aloof on one side of the road, jogging along on the blind side of old unpowder, who had now got over his fright and waywardness.

Ichabod, who had no relish for this strange midnight companion, and bethought himself of the adventure of Brom Bones with the Galloping Hessian, now quickened his steed in hopes of leaving him behind. The stranger, however, quickened his horse to an equal pace. Ichabod pulled up, and fell into a walk, thinking to lag behind,--the other did the same. His heart began to sink within him; he endeavored to resume his psalm tune, but his parched tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and he could not utter a stave. There was something in the moody and dogged silence of this pertinacious companion that was mysterious and appalling. It was soon fearfully accounted for.

On mounting a rising ground, which brought the figure of his fellow-traveller in relief against the sky, gigantic in height, and muffled in a cloak, Ichabod was horror-struck on perceiving that he was headless!--but his horror was still more increased on observing that the head, which should have rested on his shoulders, was carried before him on the pommel of his saddle! His terror rose to desperation; he rained a shower of kicks and blows upon Gunpowder, hoping by a sudden movement to give his companion the slip; but the spectre started full jump with him. Away, then, they dashed through thick and thin; stones flying and sparks flashing at every bound. Ichabod's flimsy garments fluttered in the air, as he stretched his long lank body away over his horse's head, in the eagerness of his flight.

They had now reached the road which turns off to Sleepy Hollow; but Gunpowder, who seemed possessed with a demon, instead of keeping up it, made an opposite turn, and plunged headlong downhill to the left. This road leads through a sandy hollow shaded by trees for about a quarter of a mile, where it crosses the bridge famous in goblin story; and just beyond swells the green knoll on which stands the whitewashed church.

As yet the panic of the steed had given his unskilful rider an apparent advantage in the chase, but just as he had got half way through the hollow, the girths of the saddle gave way, and he felt it slipping from under him. He seized it by the pommel, and endeavored to hold it firm, but in vain; and had just time to save himself by clasping old Gunpowder round the neck, when the saddle fell to the earth, and he heard it trampled under foot by his pursuer. For a moment the terror of Hans Van Ripper's wrath passed across his mind,--for it was his Sunday saddle; but this was no time for petty fears; the goblin was hard on his haunches; and (unskilful rider that he was!) he had much ado to maintain his seat; sometimes slipping on one side, sometimes on another, and sometimes jolted on the high ridge of his horse's backbone, with a violence that he verily feared would cleave him asunder.

An opening in the trees now cheered him with the hopes that the church bridge was at hand. The wavering reflection of a silver star in the bosom of the brook told him that he was not mistaken. He saw the walls of the church dimly glaring under the trees beyond. He recollected the place where Brom Bones's ghostly competitor had disappeared. "If I can but reach that bridge," thought Ichabod, "I am safe." Just then he heard the black steed panting and blowing close behind him; he even fancied that he felt his hot breath. Another convulsive kick in the ribs, and old Gunpowder sprang upon the bridge; he thundered over the resounding planks; he gained the opposite side; and now Ichabod cast a look behind to see if his pursuer should vanish, according to rule, in a flash of fire and brimstone. Just then he saw the goblin rising in his stirrups, and in the very act of hurling his head at him. Ichabod endeavored to dodge the horrible missile, but too late. It encountered his cranium with a tremendous crash,--he was tumbled headlong into the dust, and Gunpowder, the black steed, and the goblin rider, passed by like a whirlwind.

The next morning the old horse was found without his saddle, and with the bridle under his feet, soberly cropping the grass at his master's gate. Ichabod did not make his appearance at breakfast; dinner-hour came, but no Ichabod. The boys assembled at the schoolhouse, and strolled idly about the banks of the brook; but no schoolmaster. Hans Van Ripper now began to feel some uneasiness about the fate of poor Ichabod, and his saddle. An inquiry was set on foot, and after diligent investigation they came upon his traces. In one part of the road leading to the church was found the saddle trampled in the dirt; the tracks of horses' hoofs deeply dented in the road, and evidently at furious speed, were traced to the bridge, beyond which, on the bank of a broad part of the brook, where the water ran deep and black, was found the hat of the unfortunate Ichabod, and close beside it a shattered pumpkin.

The brook was searched, but the body of the schoolmaster was not to be discovered. Hans Van Ripper as executor of his estate, examined the bundle which contained all his worldly effects. They consisted of two shirts and a half; two stocks for the neck; a pair or two of worsted stockings; an old pair of corduroy small-clothes; a rusty razor; a book of psalm tunes full of dog's-ears; and a broken pitch-pipe. As to the books and furniture of the schoolhouse, they belonged to the community, excepting Cotton Mather's "History of Witchcraft," a "New England Almanac," and a book of dreams and fortune-telling; in which last was a sheet of foolscap much scribbled and blotted in several fruitless attempts to make a copy of verses in honor of the heiress of Van Tassel. These magic books and the poetic scrawl were forthwith consigned to the flames by Hans Van Ripper; who, from that time forward, determined to send his children no more to school, observing that he never knew any good come of this same reading and writing. Whatever money the schoolmaster possessed, and he had received his quarter's pay but a day or two before, he must have had about his person at the time of his disappearance.

The mysterious event caused much speculation at the church on the following Sunday. Knots of gazers and gossips were collected in the churchyard, at the bridge, and at the spot where the hat and pumpkin had been found. The stories of Brouwer, of Bones, and a whole budget of others were called to mind; and when they had diligently considered them all, and compared them with the symptoms of the present case, they shook their heads, and came to the conclusion that Ichabod had been carried off by the Galloping Hessian. As he was a bachelor, and in nobody's debt, nobody troubled his head any more about him; the school was removed to a different quarter of the hollow, and another pedagogue reigned in his stead.

It is true, an old farmer, who had been down to New York on a visit several years after, and from whom this account of the ghostly adventure was received, brought home the intelligence that Ichabod Crane was still alive; that he had left the neighborhood partly through fear of the goblin and Hans Van Ripper, and partly in mortification at having been suddenly dismissed by the heiress; that he had changed his quarters to a distant part of the country; had kept school and studied law at the same time; had been admitted to the bar; turned politician; electioneered; written for the newspapers; and finally had been made a justice of the Ten Pound Court. Brom Bones, too, who, shortly after his rival's disappearance conducted the blooming Katrina in triumph to the altar, was observed to look exceedingly knowing whenever the story of Ichabod was related, and always burst into a hearty laugh at the mention of the pumpkin; which led some to suspect that he knew more about the matter than he chose to tell.

The old country wives, however, who are the best judges of these matters, maintain to this day that Ichabod was spirited away by supernatural means; and it is a favorite story often told about the neighborhood round the winter evening fire. The bridge became more than ever an object of superstitious awe; and that may be the reason why the road has been altered of late years, so as to approach the church by the border of the millpond. The schoolhouse being deserted soon fell to decay, and was reported to be haunted by the ghost of the unfortunate pedagogue and the plowboy, loitering homeward of a still summer evening, has often fancied his voice at a distance, chanting a melancholy psalm tune among the tranquil solitudes of Sleepy Hollow.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE CORN

### AN IROQUOIS LEGEND

BY HARRIET MAXWELL CONVERSE (ADAPTED)

There was a time, says the Iroquois grandmother, when it was not needful to plant the corn-seed nor to hoe the fields, for the corn sprang up of itself, and filled the broad meadows. Its stalks grew strong and tall, and were covered with leaves like waving banners, and filled with ears of pearly grain wrapped in silken green husks.

In those days Onatah, the Spirit of the Corn, walked upon the earth. The sun lovingly touched her dusky face with the blush of the morning, and her eyes grew soft as the gleam of the stars on dark streams. Her night-black hair was spread before the breeze like a wind-driven cloud.

As she walked through the fields, the corn, the Indian maize, sprang up of itself from the earth and filled the air with its fringed tassels and whispering leaves. With Onatah walked her two sisters, the Spirits of the Squash and the Bean. As they passed by, squash-vines and bean-plants grew from the corn-hills.

One day Onatah wandered away alone in search of early dew. Then the Evil One of the earth, Hahgwehdaetgah, followed swiftly after. He grasped her by the hair and dragged her beneath the ground down to his gloomy cave. Then, sending out his fire-breathing monsters, he blighted Onatah's grain. And when her sisters, the Spirits of the Squash and the Bean, saw the flame-monsters raging through the fields, they flew far away in terror.

As for poor Onatah, she lay a trembling captive in the dark prison-cave of the Evil One. She mourned the blight of her cornfields, and sorrowed over her runaway sisters.

"O warm, bright sun!" she cried, "if I may walk once more upon the earth, never again will I leave my corn!"

And the little birds of the air heard her cry, and winging their way upward they carried her vow and gave it to the sun as he wandered through the blue heavens.

The sun, who loved Onatah, sent out many searching beams of light. They pierced through the damp earth, and entering the prison-cave, guided her back again to her fields.

And ever after that she watched her fields alone, for no more did her sisters, the Spirits of the Squash and Bean, watch with her. If her fields thirsted, no longer could she seek the early dew. If the flame-monsters burned her corn, she could not search the skies for cooling winds. And when the great rains fell and injured her harvest, her voice grew so faint that the friendly sun could not hear it.

But ever Onatah tenderly watched her fields and the little birds of the air flocked to her service. They followed her through the rows of corn, and made war on the tiny enemies that gnawed at the roots of the grain.

And at harvest-time the grateful Onatah scattered the first gathered corn over her broad lands, and the little birds, fluttering and singing, joyfully partook of the feast spread for them on the meadow-ground.





## THE HORN OF PLENTY

BY OVID (ADAPTED)

Aeneus, King of Aetolia, had a daughter whose name was Deianira. So beautiful was the maiden that her fame spread throughout the world, and many princes came to woo her. Among these were two strangers, who drove all the other suitors from the hall of King Aeneus.

One was Hercules, huge of limb and broad of shoulder. He was clad in the skins of beasts, and carried in his hand a knotted club. His tangled hair hung down upon his brawny neck, and his fierce eyes gleamed from behind his shaggy brows.

The other stranger was Achelous, god of the Calydonian River. Slender and graceful was he, and clad in flowing green raiment. In his hand he carried a staff of plaited reeds, and on his head was a crown of water-lilies. His voice was soft and caressing, like the gentle murmur of summer brooks.

“O King Aeneus,” said Achelous, standing before the throne, “behold I am the King of Waters. If thou wilt receive me as thy son-in-law I will make the beautiful Deianira queen of my river kingdom.”

“King Aeneus,” said the mighty Hercules, stepping forward, “Deianira is mine, and I will not yield her to this river-god.”

“Impertinent stranger!” cried Achelous, turning toward the hero, while his voice rose till it sounded like the thunder of distant cataracts, and his green garment changed to the blackness of night,—“impertinent stranger! how darest thou claim this maiden,—thou who hast mortal blood in thy veins! Behold me, the god Achelous, the powerful King of the Waters! I wind with majesty through the rich lands of my wide realms. I make all fields through which I flow beautiful with grass and flowers. By my right divine I claim this maiden.”

But with scowling eye and rising wrath Hercules made answer. “Thou wouldst fight with words, like a woman, while I would win by my strength! My right hand is better than my tongue. If thou wouldst have the maiden, then must thou first overcome me in combat.”

Thereupon Achelous threw off his raiment and began to prepare himself for the struggle. Hercules took off his garment of beasts' skins, and cast aside his club. The two then anointed their bodies with oil, and threw yellow sand upon themselves.

They took their places, they attacked, they retired, they rushed again to the conflict. They stood firm, and they yielded not. Long they bravely wrestled and fought; till at length Hercules by his might overcame Achelous and bore him to the ground. He pressed him down, and, while the fallen river-god lay panting for breath, the hero seized him by the neck.

Then did Achelous have recourse to his magic arts. Transforming himself into a serpent he

escaped from the hero. He twisted his body into winding folds, and darted out his forked tongue with frightful hissings.

But Hercules laughed mockingly, and cried out: ``Ah, Achelous! While yet in my cradle I strangled two serpents! And what art thou compared to the Hydra whose hundred heads I cut off? Every time I cut off one head two others grew in its place. Yet did I conquer that horror, in spite of its branching serpents that darted from every wound! Thinkest thou, then, that I fear thee, thou mimic snake?" And even as he spake he gripped, as with a pair of pincers, the back of the river-god's head.

And Achelous struggled in vain to escape. Then, again having recourse to his magic, he became a raging bull, and renewed the fight. But Hercules, that mighty hero, threw his huge arms over the brawny neck of the bull, and dragged him about. Then seizing hold of his horns, he bent his head to one side, and bearing down fastened them into the ground. And that was not enough, but with relentless hand he broke one of the horns, and tore it from Achelous's forehead.

The river-god returned to his own shape. He roared aloud with rage and pain, and hiding his mutilated head in his mantle, rushed from the hall and plunged into the swirling waters of his stream.

Then the goddess of Plenty, and all the Wood-Nymphs and Water-Nymphs came forward to greet the conqueror with song and dance. They took the huge horn of Achelous and heaped it high with the rich and glowing fruits and flowers of autumn. They wreathed it with vines and with clustering grapes, and bearing it aloft presented it to Hercules and his beautiful bride Deianira.

And ever since that day has the Horn of Plenty gladdened men's hearts at Harvest-Time.



## THE FIRST CHRISTMAS-TREE

BY LUCY WHEELOCK

Two little children were sitting by the fire one cold winter's night.  
All at once they heard a timid knock at the door and one ran to open it.

There, outside in the cold and darkness, stood a child with no shoes  
upon his feet and clad in thin, ragged garments. He was shivering with  
cold, and he asked to come in and warm himself.

"Yes, come in," cried both the children. "You shall have our place by  
the fire. Come in."

They drew the little stranger to their warm seat and shared their  
supper with him, and gave him their bed, while they slept on a hard  
bench.

In the night they were awakened by strains of sweet music, and looking  
out, they saw a band of children in shining garments, approaching the  
house. They were playing on golden harps and the air was full of melody.

Suddenly the Strange Child stood before them: no longer cold and  
ragged, but clad in silvery light.

His soft voice said: "I was cold and you took Me in. I was hungry and  
you fed Me. I was tired and you gave Me your bed. I am the  
Christ-Child, wandering through the world to bring peace and happiness  
to all good children. As you have given to Me, so may this tree every  
year give rich fruit to you."

So saying, He broke a branch from the fir-tree that grew near the door,  
and He planted it in the ground and disappeared. And the branch grew  
into a great tree, and every year it bore wonderful fruit for the kind  
children.

## A KIDNAPPED SANTA CLAUS

by L. Frank Baum

Santa Claus lives in the Laughing Valley, where stands the big, rambling castle in which his toys are manufactured. His workmen, selected from the ryls, knooks, pixies and fairies, live with him, and every one is as busy as can be from one year's end to another.

It is called the Laughing Valley because everything there is happy and gay. The brook chuckles to itself as it leaps rollicking between its green banks; the wind whistles merrily in the trees; the sunbeams dance lightly over the soft grass, and the violets and wild flowers look smilingly up from their green nests. To laugh one needs to be happy; to be happy one needs to be content. And throughout the Laughing Valley of Santa Claus contentment reigns supreme.

On one side is the mighty Forest of Burzee. At the other side stands the huge mountain that contains the Caves of the Daemons. And between them the Valley lies smiling and peaceful.

One would think that our good old Santa Claus, who devotes his days to making children happy, would have no enemies on all the earth; and, as a matter of fact, for a long period of time he encountered nothing but love wherever he might go.

But the Daemons who live in the mountain caves grew to hate Santa Claus very much, and all for the simple reason that he made children happy.

The Caves of the Daemons are five in number. A broad pathway leads up to the first cave, which is a finely arched cavern at the foot of the mountain, the entrance being beautifully carved and decorated. In it resides the Daemon of Selfishness. Back of this is another cavern inhabited by the Daemon of Envy. The cave of the Daemon of Hatred is next in order, and through this one passes to the home of the Daemon of Malice--situated in a dark and fearful cave in the very heart of the mountain. I do not know what lies beyond this. Some say there are terrible pitfalls leading to death and destruction, and this may very well be true. However, from each one of the four caves mentioned there is a small, narrow tunnel leading to the fifth cave--a cozy little room occupied by the Daemon of Repentance. And as the rocky floors of these passages are well worn by the track of passing feet, I judge that many wanderers in the Caves of the Daemons have escaped through the tunnels to the abode of the Daemon of Repentance, who is said to be a pleasant sort of fellow who gladly opens for one a little door admitting you into fresh air and sunshine again.

Well, these Daemons of the Caves, thinking they had great cause to dislike old Santa Claus, held a meeting one day to discuss the matter.

"I'm really getting lonesome," said the Daemon of Selfishness. "For Santa Claus distributes so many pretty Christmas gifts to all the children that they become happy and generous, through his example, and keep away from my cave."

"I'm having the same trouble," rejoined the Daemon of Envy. "The little ones seem quite content with Santa Claus, and there are few, indeed, that I can coax to become envious."

"And that makes it bad for me!" declared the Daemon of Hatred. "For if no children pass through the Caves of Selfishness and Envy, none can get to MY cavern."

"Or to mine," added the Daemon of Malice.

"For my part," said the Daemon of Repentance, "it is easily seen that if children do not visit your caves they have no need to visit mine; so that I am quite as neglected as you are."

"And all because of this person they call Santa Claus!" exclaimed the Daemon of Envy. "He is simply ruining our business, and something must be done at once."

To this they readily agreed; but what to do was another and more difficult matter to settle. They knew that Santa Claus worked all through the year at his castle in the Laughing Valley, preparing the gifts he was to distribute on Christmas Eve; and at first they resolved to try to tempt him into their caves, that they might lead him on to the terrible pitfalls that ended in destruction.

So the very next day, while Santa Claus was busily at work, surrounded by his little band of assistants, the Daemon of Selfishness came to him and said:

"These toys are wonderfully bright and pretty. Why do you not keep them for yourself? It's a pity to give them to those noisy boys and fretful girls, who break and destroy them so quickly."

"Nonsense!" cried the old graybeard, his bright eyes twinkling merrily as he turned toward the tempting Daemon. "The boys and girls are never so noisy and fretful after receiving my presents, and if I can make them happy for one day in the year I am quite content."

So the Daemon went back to the others, who awaited him in their caves, and said:

"I have failed, for Santa Claus is not at all selfish."

The following day the Daemon of Envy visited Santa Claus. Said he: "The toy shops are full of playthings quite as pretty as those you are making. What a shame it is that they should interfere with your business! They make toys by machinery much quicker than you can make them by hand; and they sell them for money, while you get nothing at all for your work."

But Santa Claus refused to be envious of the toy shops.

"I can supply the little ones but once a year--on Christmas Eve," he answered; "for the children are many, and I am but one. And as my work is one of love and kindness I would be ashamed to receive money for my little gifts. But throughout all the year the children must be amused in some way, and so the toy shops are able to bring much happiness to my little friends. I like the toy shops, and am glad to see them prosper."

In spite of the second rebuff, the Daemon of Hatred thought he would try to influence Santa Claus. So the next day he entered the busy workshop and said:

"Good morning, Santa! I have bad news for you."

"Then run away, like a good fellow," answered Santa Claus. "Bad news is something that should be kept secret and never told."

"You cannot escape this, however," declared the Daemon; "for in the world are a good many who do not believe in Santa Claus, and these you are bound to hate bitterly, since they have so wronged you."

"Stuff and rubbish!" cried Santa.

"And there are others who resent your making children happy and who sneer at you and call you a foolish old rattlepate! You are quite right to hate such base slanderers, and you ought to be revenged upon them for their evil words."

"But I don't hate 'em!" exclaimed Santa Claus positively. "Such people do me no real harm, but merely render themselves and their children unhappy. Poor things! I'd much rather help them any day than injure them."

Indeed, the Daemons could not tempt old Santa Claus in any way. On the contrary, he was shrewd enough to see that their object in visiting him was to make mischief and trouble, and his cheery laughter disconcerted the evil ones and showed to them the folly of such an undertaking. So they abandoned honeyed words and determined to use force.

It was well known that no harm can come to Santa Claus while he is in the Laughing Valley, for the fairies, and ryls, and knooks all protect him. But on Christmas Eve he drives his reindeer out into the big world, carrying a sleighload of toys and pretty gifts to the children; and this was the time and the occasion when his enemies had the best chance to injure him. So the Daemons laid their plans and awaited the arrival of Christmas Eve.

The moon shone big and white in the sky, and the snow lay crisp and sparkling on the ground as Santa Claus cracked his whip and sped away out of the Valley into the great world beyond. The roomy sleigh was packed full with huge sacks of toys, and as the reindeer dashed onward our jolly old Santa laughed and whistled and sang for very joy. For in all his merry life this was the one day in the year when he was happiest--the day he lovingly bestowed the treasures of his workshop upon the little children.

It would be a busy night for him, he well knew. As he whistled and shouted and cracked his whip again, he reviewed in mind all the towns and cities and farmhouses where he was expected, and figured that he had just enough presents to go around and make every child happy. The reindeer knew exactly what was expected of them, and dashed along so swiftly that their feet scarcely seemed to touch the snow-covered ground.

Suddenly a strange thing happened: a rope shot through the moonlight and a big noose that was in the end of it settled over the arms and body of Santa Claus and drew tight. Before he could resist or even cry out he was jerked from the seat of the sleigh and tumbled head foremost into a snowbank, while the reindeer rushed onward with the load of toys and carried it quickly out of sight and sound.



Such a surprising experience confused old Santa for a moment, and when he had collected his senses he found that the wicked Daemons had pulled him from the snowdrift and bound him tightly with many coils of the stout rope. And then they carried the kidnapped Santa Claus away to their mountain, where they thrust the prisoner into a secret cave and chained him to the rocky wall so that he could not escape.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the Daemons, rubbing their hands together with cruel glee. "What will the children do now? How they will cry and scold and storm when they find there are no toys in their stockings and no gifts on their Christmas trees! And what a lot of punishment they will receive from their parents, and how they will flock to our Caves of Selfishness, and Envy, and Hatred, and Malice! We have done a mighty clever thing, we Daemons of the Caves!"

Now it so chanced that on this Christmas Eve the good Santa Claus had taken with him in his sleigh Nuter the Ryl, Peter the Knook, Kilter the Pixie, and a small fairy named Wisk--his four favorite assistants. These little people he had often found very useful in helping him to distribute his gifts to the children, and when their master was so suddenly dragged from the sleigh they were all snugly tucked underneath the seat, where the sharp wind could not reach them.

The tiny immortals knew nothing of the capture of Santa Claus until some time after he had disappeared. But finally they missed his cheery voice, and as their master always sang or whistled on his journeys, the silence warned them that something was wrong.

Little Wisk stuck out his head from underneath the seat and found Santa Claus gone and no one to direct the flight of the reindeer.

"Whoa!" he called out, and the deer obediently slackened speed and came to a halt.

Peter and Nuter and Kilter all jumped upon the seat and looked back over the track made by the sleigh. But Santa Claus had been left miles and miles behind.

"What shall we do?" asked Wisk anxiously, all the mirth and mischief banished from his wee face by this great calamity.

"We must go back at once and find our master," said Nuter the Ryl, who thought and spoke with much deliberation.

"No, no!" exclaimed Peter the Knook, who, cross and crabbed though he was, might always be depended upon in an emergency. "If we delay, or go back, there will not be time to get the toys to the children before morning; and that would grieve Santa Claus more than anything else."

"It is certain that some wicked creatures have captured him," added Kilter thoughtfully, "and their object must be to make the children unhappy. So our first duty is to get the toys distributed as carefully as if Santa Claus were himself present. Afterward we can search for our master and easily secure his freedom."

This seemed such good and sensible advice that the others at once resolved to adopt it. So Peter the Knook called to the reindeer, and the faithful animals again sprang forward and dashed over hill and

valley, through forest and plain, until they came to the houses wherein children lay sleeping and dreaming of the pretty gifts they would find on Christmas morning.

The little immortals had set themselves a difficult task; for although they had assisted Santa Claus on many of his journeys, their master had always directed and guided them and told them exactly what he wished them to do. But now they had to distribute the toys according to their own judgment, and they did not understand children as well as did old Santa. So it is no wonder they made some laughable errors.

Mamie Brown, who wanted a doll, got a drum instead; and a drum is of no use to a girl who loves dolls. And Charlie Smith, who delights to romp and play out of doors, and who wanted some new rubber boots to keep his feet dry, received a sewing box filled with colored worsteds and threads and needles, which made him so provoked that he thoughtlessly called our dear Santa Claus a fraud.

Had there been many such mistakes the Daemons would have accomplished their evil purpose and made the children unhappy. But the little friends of the absent Santa Claus labored faithfully and intelligently to carry out their master's ideas, and they made fewer errors than might be expected under such unusual circumstances.

And, although they worked as swiftly as possible, day had begun to break before the toys and other presents were all distributed; so for the first time in many years the reindeer trotted into the Laughing Valley, on their return, in broad daylight, with the brilliant sun peeping over the edge of the forest to prove they were far behind their accustomed hours.

Having put the deer in the stable, the little folk began to wonder how they might rescue their master; and they realized they must discover, first of all, what had happened to him and where he was.

So Wisk the Fairy transported himself to the bower of the Fairy Queen, which was located deep in the heart of the Forest of Burzee; and once there, it did not take him long to find out all about the naughty Daemons and how they had kidnapped the good Santa Claus to prevent his making children happy. The Fairy Queen also promised her assistance, and then, fortified by this powerful support, Wisk flew back to where Nuter and Peter and Kilter awaited him, and the four counseled together and laid plans to rescue their master from his enemies.

It is possible that Santa Claus was not as merry as usual during the night that succeeded his capture. For although he had faith in the judgment of his little friends he could not avoid a certain amount of worry, and an anxious look would creep at times into his kind old eyes as he thought of the disappointment that might await his dear little children. And the Daemons, who guarded him by turns, one after another, did not neglect to taunt him with contemptuous words in his helpless condition.

When Christmas Day dawned the Daemon of Malice was guarding the prisoner, and his tongue was sharper than that of any of the others.

"The children are waking up, Santa!" he cried. "They are waking up to find their stockings empty! Ho, ho! How they will quarrel, and wail, and stamp their feet in anger! Our caves will be full today, old Santa! Our caves are sure to be full!"

But to this, as to other like taunts, Santa Claus answered nothing. He was much grieved by his capture, it is true; but his courage did not forsake him. And, finding that the prisoner would not reply to his jeers, the Daemon of Malice presently went away, and sent the Daemon of Repentance to take his place.

This last personage was not so disagreeable as the others. He had gentle and refined features, and his voice was soft and pleasant in tone.

"My brother Daemons do not trust me overmuch," said he, as he entered the cavern; "but it is morning, now, and the mischief is done. You cannot visit the children again for another year."

"That is true," answered Santa Claus, almost cheerfully; "Christmas Eve is past, and for the first time in centuries I have not visited my children."

"The little ones will be greatly disappointed," murmured the Daemon of Repentance, almost regretfully; "but that cannot be helped now. Their grief is likely to make the children selfish and envious and hateful, and if they come to the Caves of the Daemons today I shall get a chance to lead some of them to my Cave of Repentance."

"Do you never repent, yourself?" asked Santa Claus, curiously.

"Oh, yes, indeed," answered the Daemon. "I am even now repenting that I assisted in your capture. Of course it is too late to remedy the evil that has been done; but repentance, you know, can come only after an evil thought or deed, for in the beginning there is nothing to repent of."

"So I understand," said Santa Claus. "Those who avoid evil need never visit your cave."

"As a rule, that is true," replied the Daemon; "yet you, who have done no evil, are about to visit my cave at once; for to prove that I sincerely regret my share in your capture I am going to permit you to escape."

This speech greatly surprised the prisoner, until he reflected that it was just what might be expected of the Daemon of Repentance. The fellow at once busied himself untying the knots that bound Santa Claus and unlocking the chains that fastened him to the wall. Then he led the way through a long tunnel until they both emerged in the Cave of Repentance.

"I hope you will forgive me," said the Daemon pleadingly. "I am not really a bad person, you know; and I believe I accomplish a great deal of good in the world."

With this he opened a back door that let in a flood of sunshine, and Santa Claus sniffed the fresh air gratefully.

"I bear no malice," said he to the Daemon, in a gentle voice; "and I am sure the world would be a dreary place without you. So, good morning, and a Merry Christmas to you!"

With these words he stepped out to greet the bright morning, and a moment later he was trudging along, whistling softly to himself, on his way to his home in the Laughing Valley.

Marching over the snow toward the mountain was a vast army, made up of the most curious creatures imaginable. There were numberless knooks from the forest, as rough and crooked in appearance as the gnarled branches of the trees they ministered to. And there were dainty ryls from the fields, each one bearing the emblem of the flower or plant it guarded. Behind these were many ranks of pixies, gnomes and nymphs, and in the rear a thousand beautiful fairies floated along in gorgeous array.

This wonderful army was led by Wisk, Peter, Nuter, and Kilter, who had assembled it to rescue Santa Claus from captivity and to punish the Daemons who had dared to take him away from his beloved children.

And, although they looked so bright and peaceful, the little immortals were armed with powers that would be very terrible to those who had incurred their anger. Woe to the Daemons of the Caves if this mighty army of vengeance ever met them!

But lo! coming to meet his loyal friends appeared the imposing form of Santa Claus, his white beard floating in the breeze and his bright eyes sparkling with pleasure at this proof of the love and veneration he had inspired in the hearts of the most powerful creatures in existence.

And while they clustered around him and danced with glee at his safe return, he gave them earnest thanks for their support. But Wisk, and Nuter, and Peter, and Kilter, he embraced affectionately.

"It is useless to pursue the Daemons," said Santa Claus to the army. "They have their place in the world, and can never be destroyed. But that is a great pity, nevertheless," he continued musingly.

So the fairies, and knooks, and pixies, and ryls all escorted the good man to his castle, and there left him to talk over the events of the night with his little assistants.

Wisk had already rendered himself invisible and flown through the big world to see how the children were getting along on this bright Christmas morning; and by the time he returned, Peter had finished telling Santa Claus of how they had distributed the toys.

"We really did very well," cried the fairy, in a pleased voice; "for I found little unhappiness among the children this morning. Still, you must not get captured again, my dear master; for we might not be so fortunate another time in carrying out your ideas."

He then related the mistakes that had been made, and which he had not discovered until his tour of inspection. And Santa Claus at once sent him with rubber boots for Charlie Smith, and a doll for Mamie Brown; so that even those two disappointed ones became happy.

As for the wicked Daemons of the Caves, they were filled with anger and chagrin when they found that their clever capture of Santa Claus had come to naught. Indeed, no one on that Christmas Day appeared to be at all selfish, or envious, or hateful. And, realizing that while the children's saint had so many powerful friends it was folly to oppose him, the Daemons never again attempted to interfere with his journeys on Christmas Eve.

