



# FANTASIES



# FANTASIES

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BY

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TO  
*BEATRIX*  
IN  
FRANCE



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# FANTASIES

## A True Artist

**I**T was in St. James's Hall. The rehearsal was over, and all the instruments had been placed in baize covers in the little room at the back of the platform, ready for the concert in the evening. A young composer was to introduce his works to the public; he had had great difficulty in gaining a hearing, and this was his first performance, which he was to conduct himself. He was nervous and excited, and, after the musicians had gone, he wandered restlessly about the hall, and there he was found by a friend who came to look for him.

"This won't do, old fellow," said his friend, taking him by the arm; "you'll be

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making yourself ill if you go on like this! Come and have something to eat." The composer, allowing himself to be persuaded, went out with his friend.

When they had gone there was dead silence for a time ; then a little head poked itself out of a baize cover, then another and another, here an arm and there two legs, and here they were tumbling out in all directions. You know that in each musical instrument lives a tiny Sprite, and the beauty of music is produced not so much by the cleverness of the musician as by what is called the "tone" of the instrument—that is, the Sprite that lives within it. They are very small, some of them not more than two or three inches high, and very shy, and have a great dread of being seen by a human being ; they have, besides, the power of making themselves invisible, so that you may search all over a violin for one and very likely not find it. The Sprites skipped about and began to enjoy themselves, some playing leap-frog, and others



IN EACH MUSICAL INSTRUMENT LIVES A TINY SPRITE.

*To face p. 2.*



## *A True Artist*

dancing galops and polkas, for they are very lively, when suddenly a step was heard in the hall. Helter-skelter, back they all jumped, each one into the instrument that was nearest ; so the Sprite of the trombone leapt into the violin, and the one of the flute into the 'cello ; and this was destined to produce curious results later on at the concert, for they were too much frightened to move again.

. . . . .

It was eight o'clock ; the conductor had made his bow, and the audience was settling itself comfortably to listen. The conductor raised his baton.

The first violin nearly fell from his chair, for at every stroke of his bow his instrument produced a noise like a trombone. The bassoon with all his blowing could only make a sound like a triangle ; while the clarinet had the effect of a church organ !

The conductor looked scared ; but they were practised musicians, and it would



## *Fantasies*

never have done to show their surprise, so they all went steadily on. The audience, at first astonished, became interested, and finally enthusiastic. "What originality! what power!" they said, and the conductor repeatedly had to bow in response to the plaudits.

A great prima-donna had offered to sing, in return for some service that the composer had rendered her; her song had a violin obligato accompaniment, and here the composer nearly fainted, for he thought, "Now everything must come to an end!" The prima-donna certainly looked surprised at being accompanied by a trombone; but she fortunately accepted it as a new rendering, and all went off well.

The concert went on. The flute was giving deep booms like a drum, which sounded particularly odd when it had to take a solo, but the audience was ecstatic. "How subtle! how intense!" they said, and at the end of the performance the composer received quite an ovation.

## *A True Artist*

The critics went home and wrote enthusiastically to the papers about the "arbitrary resolution of the dominant ninth," and "an inspired disregard of conventional rules," and two days later the composer's breakfast-table was covered with invitations to tea.

He had become the rage. He soon went everywhere—princes asked to have him presented to them, and no duchess considered her party complete without him; and when at the end of six months an heiress with several thousands a year signified her intention of marrying him, the composer felt that he was indeed blest.

But he never composed anything more. "The true artist," he said, "is only inspired once in his life."

## Playfellows Once

THOUSANDS of years ago, when the world was young, two Leaves were swinging on a tree. They were in love with each other—at least they thought so.

But though they were lovers they were quite unlike in disposition : one of them was quiet and retiring, and preferred the shade ; while the other danced in the sunshine from morning till night, until, because she loved it so, a ray of light entered her heart and dwelt there.

But a sad thing happened. One day when, in frolic, she was see-sawing in the wind, she swung herself completely off the tree ; and this was terrible, because the wind caught her up and carried her away for miles and miles. The autumn equinox had just begun, and every day the winds grew more

## *Playfellows Once*

boisterous, and the little Leaf soon became dry and crackled, which made her fly faster than ever, and so she was borne over land and sea ; but through all her troubles the ray of light still shone at her heart.

The other Leaf, meanwhile, was sad and disconsolate, for he never dreamed of seeing his little love again ; and he pined so much that one frosty night, when the moon was shining, he dropped silently from his branch and lay parching on the ground ; and the autumn rains beat upon him, and the cattle trampled him under foot, till no one would have known that he existed ; but he was there all the same.

Next spring the tree had fresh leaves, and next autumn they too fell, and our poor little Leaf was buried deeper than ever, and this happened every spring and autumn ; and at last the tree itself was shattered by lightning and fell, and other trees and ferns grew over its head till it too was buried.

Centuries and centuries passed away, and by process of time the Leaf that was buried

## *Fantasies*

had become a Coal—for that occasionally happens—and was hidden in a mine far below the surface of the earth. His appearance was now quite changed; but he still thought of his little playfellow and the days when they swung on a branch together.

She too was changed, for she had become a Diamond—which also sometimes happens—and lay in the bed of a river; and there one day came some men with sieves who sifted all the sand, and she, with hundreds of others, was taken out and carried away in a bag. But you wouldn't have known that she was a diamond, for she was uncut, and couldn't sparkle a bit, though she was still conscious of having absorbed a ray of light.

For a long time the Diamonds lay in a merchant's drawer, and then they were sold, and carried away to Amsterdam to be cut. This was a frightful process, and the Diamond thought that every moment would be her last. When it was over she was quite half her former size, but infinitely more beautiful, for now she sparkled with

## *Playfellows Once*

all the colours of the rainbow, and the jeweller who bought her thought so much of her that he made her the centre stone of a diamond star.

The Coal was still lying hidden in his mine, when one day a terrific report was heard, and then another and another—some men were blasting. Presently came the sound of picks, which every day came nearer, and at last the Coal was able to see the flashing of lanterns, and he was shovelled into a barrow with the block to which he was attached, and carried up to the earth's surface.

How strange to feel the sunshine and air! He almost imagined himself a leaf again.

. . . . .

The lady of the house had just come back from a ball, and had placed her jewels on a table in her dressing-room as she took them off. The fire was leaping and crackling, for it was cold, and fresh coals had just been put on, and our Coal happened to be one of them. He looked with interest

## *Fantasies*

about the room, for he had been in a dark cellar till that day—when suddenly he caught sight of the Diamond.

He knew her in a minute in spite of everything, for she danced and shimmered as of old. “My little lost love!” he cried. But the Diamond never noticed—she had other things to think of. She was thinking, in fact, of a young Ruby who was set in a bracelet, and whom she occasionally met; for they were in love with each other—at least they said so.

“I *must* speak to her,” said the Coal, and he gave a great bound; but he jumped short, and fell into the folds of a ball-gown that had been hung over a chair.

And then a truly dreadful thing happened! The gown, which was of light gauze, caught fire, and flared so high that it set fire to everything in the room, and soon the house was filled with smoke and screams and the hurrying of footsteps; and, though the people of the house did all that they could, it was almost entirely burnt down.

## *Playfellows Once*

When the ruins had cooled sufficiently, the jeweller's man came to look for the jewels, for the lady of the house was able to tell him exactly where she had left them; and there they were found; the settings were melted, and the stones blackened, but when the gems had been cleaned and polished they were as good as ever.

When they were re-set the Diamond and the Ruby were put into the same setting, and so they were happy because now they were always together.

"Love is eternal," said the Ruby, looking at the Diamond.

"Yes, eternal!" answered the Diamond softly.

No one thought of the Coal, who had perished in the flames—he was not eternal. But after all it was his own fault.



## Torpedo-boat No. 19

THERE was once a Naiad, the daughter of a river-god, who, finding the ferns and foxgloves and wooded heights of her native stream rather monotonous, had a fancy to see the world ; so one day she floated down until the stream became a river, and the river, after many many miles of bends and curves, finally ran into the sea.

She had never been so far before, and thought the great ocean too glorious for words, for she arrived just at sunset when every wave was tipped with gold. She was sitting on a rock drinking in the wonder of it with eager eyes, when suddenly a Torpedo-boat came in sight, gradually slowing down until it came to an anchor.

Then, for the simple reason that it was totally unlike anything that she had ever

## *Torpedo-boat No. 19*

seen before, although infinitely uglier, she fell in love with it. She took it for some great marine monster, a whale perhaps ; and the tremendous speed at which it could go, and the tempest that it created as it came, filled her with awe and admiration. After a little hesitation she swam out to sea and went all round it, touching its iron sides with reverent hands, and listening to the beating of the great heart within ; and when the foghorn sounded as a signal to some one on shore, she thought that she had never heard anything so melodious. It was, in spite of its enormous strength, of such a sweet and tender nature that it allowed men to ride on its back, and, in its chivalrous generosity to the weak, almost appeared to hold itself at their disposal, in return for which they apparently fed and groomed it.

Every day the Torpedo-boat went away, which at first caused the Naiad unspeakable distress ; but she found that it generally came back to anchor at the same place at night, for the little bay where the Naiad was, was

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sheltered. All day long she sat on the sea-shore watching for it, and every night when it came back she swam round and round it in an ecstasy of joy ; and this went on for a week.

By this time all the other dwellers up the stream had missed her, and were in some anxiety, so a handsome young River-god undertook to go and find her. He had been in love with her for many a long day, but the Naiad never would listen to him.

He found her as usual sitting on a rock watching for the Torpedo-boat, and begged her to go back with him. The Naiad refused curtly. The young River-god was hurt.

"Will you never care for me?" he said wistfully.

"Never, never, never," said the Naiad, gazing out to sea.

"There is some one else you care for," he cried jealously.

"That might very well be," retorted the



He found her as usual sitting on a rock watching for the  
Torpedo-boat.







AN OLD ORANGERY.

## *Torpedo-boat No. 19*

Naiad, provoked at what she considered an impertinence—so they parted in a huff.

The young River-god determined to find out the cause of the Naiad's attraction to this spot, so he remained in the neighbourhood ; and soon discovering that it was the coming and going of the Torpedo-boat in which she took such interest, he very naturally supposed that it was the officer in command that she had fallen in love with. So a day or two later, when that poor young man was bathing, the River-god sent a cuttle-fish which held him under water until he was drowned. The crew of the Torpedo-boat were much distressed at their young officer's fate, as he had been popular with them ; and knowing nothing of the cuttle-fish, could not understand it, as he was celebrated as an expert swimmer. They at last came to the conclusion that he must have been seized with cramp while swimming.

The River-god, concealing his satisfaction, sauntered up to the Naiad. "The officer



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in command of that boat has been drowned," he observed carelessly, for they were now on speaking terms again.

The Naiad, who was thinking only of the Torpedo-boat, was frightened for a minute, for she thought that perhaps now there might be no one to feed it, and the noble creature might suffer in consequence.

"Another has been appointed," continued the River-god, watching her closely as he spoke—"but he is not so good-looking as the last," he ended viciously.

The Naiad's face cleared—then the Torpedo-boat was safe after all.

"It was evidently not the officer," thought the River-god; "then it must be one of the crew."

After that it was surprising the number of things that happened to that crew: some were drowned, some were left in port with fever, some got sunstroke, for the River-god called all the forces of nature to his aid. Torpedo-boat No. 19 at last had such a bad name that the Admiralty, even

## *Torpedo-boat No. 19*

by offering treble the usual pay, had the greatest difficulty in making up a crew.

The Naiad heard of all these shocking occurrences with the most complete unconcern, now that she was sure that the Torpedo-boat was in no danger of starvation ; so the River-god was at last forced to the conclusion that it really was the boat itself that she cared for.

He promptly went to see old Neptune, and arrived just at the right moment ; Neptune was busy making out a list of the ships that were to be wrecked that autumn.

"Would you kindly include Torpedo-boat No. 19," said the River-god, "if it is not troubling you too much?"

"It's all the same to me," said Neptune ; so No. 19 was put down with the rest. "At as early a date as is convenient," added the River-god as he was taking leave.

"Certainly," said Neptune, and he made a note of it.

The River-god waited with ill-concealed

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impatience for the result of the first storm. It was terrific when it came : the sea ran mountains high, and the winds came from all quarters and danced *La Tempête* with the clouds with such vivacity that it has often been quoted as one of Neptune's best entertainments.

"This ought to do for that boat," thought the River-god, as the fury of the gale almost tore his blue mantle in two and compelled even him to take shelter. All night long it raged, and when morning dawned the River-god came out full of triumphant expectation to see what had become of his enemy. He could scarcely believe his eyes when he saw the Torpedo-boat, though beaten and tempest-tost, still riding out the gale!

Filled with rage and disappointment, he hurried off to Neptune to demand an explanation, for the gale had now moderated.

It turned out that the old sea-god, who is not very good at figures, and never *can* remember the difference between a 9 and a 6, had sent No. 16 to the bottom instead



The winds came from all quarters and danced *La Tempête*  
with the clouds.



## *Torpedo-boat No. 19*

of No. 19, which was extremely hard on No. 16, particularly as all the crew were drowned. "Dear, dear," said old Neptune, when the mistake was pointed out to him; "I must be more careful in future." However, another storm was due in a day or two, so No. 19 was entered for that.

This time the event really did occur, and the Torpedo-boat went down with all hands. The Admiralty, on the whole, were rather relieved than otherwise, and made no attempt to get the boat up again, much to the River-god's satisfaction. But he still had the Naiad to deal with. When the day broke, and she saw what had happened, her grief was indescribable. She swam round and round the wreck in an agony of distress; and when she found that her sweet monster's heart really had ceased to beat, for of course the fires had been put out, she returned to land and flung herself down on the beach, sobbing in a frenzy of despair. The River-god, when he saw her, was almost sorry for what he had done. He tried to tell her so,

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but at his first words she sprang to her feet and faced him with flashing eyes.

"It is *you*, then, who have done this," she said, pointing to the wreck, part of which was visible. "It is *you* who have killed it!"

"It never was alive," stammered the River-god. But this the Naiad indignantly denied.

"At any rate it is dead now," he went on; "so come back to the river with me," he ended pleadingly.

"I hate rivers," said the Naiad; so she swam further out to sea; while the River-god, wrapping his blue mantle round him, went back with a heavy heart to tell her relations.

The Naiad wandered wherever she felt inclined, sometimes spending a month or two with the Sirens, and sometimes with the Mermaids, to both of which families she was distantly related. At last, in her desire to see the world, she took to frequenting the haunts of men, and so one



Sometimes with the Mermaids.





## *Torpedo-boat No. 19*

bright moonlight night she found herself by chance at the mouth of a harbour, close to which was a great dockyard. Being night, it was quiet and still; so she ventured in and wandered about, deeply interested in all that she saw. Suddenly she was electrified by a vision of two or three torpedo-boats on the stocks, in various stages of completion. Could it be possible? Was it really true that they were not alive after all, but merely manufactured by human beings? She decided to wait for daylight and see; so she hid herself behind an old hulk and waited with great impatience, and at six o'clock saw the workmen come back and set to work on each boat, with a ringing of hammers and a grinding of cranes, which made mistake impossible.

This was a complete disenchantment. She swam to a little island some way off, and sat down to think it over. The River-god was right then—he really was very shrewd about things, and a charming companion when he chose—after all it was

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rather nice in the old days, and perhaps some day she might think of going back.

Here she was interrupted by a voice that she knew. "How d'you do?" a Conger-eel was saying. "I have just come from your part of the world."

"How are they all?" asked the Naiad with interest.

"Flourishing," said the Conger-eel; "they are having gay doings on account of the wedding."

"Whose wedding?"

"Oh, haven't you heard?" cried the Conger-eel, delighted to impart a piece of news. "The young River-god is going to marry a wood-nymph."

"Is she pretty?" asked the Naiad.

"*Lovely!!*" said the Eel enthusiastically, and he evidently thought so.

The Naiad felt nettled, which was curious, for she had never cared for the River-god, except, of course, quite as a friend. When the Eel had finally flourished off with many expressions of delight at having met her, the



"How d'you do?" a Conger-eel was saying.



## *Torpedo-boat No. 19*

Naiad began to collect her thoughts. He (by which she meant the young River-god) must have changed his tastes considerably of late, for he never used to care for wood-nymphs; she had often heard him say that he thought them vapid and uninteresting, and that he preferred a style with more "go" about it. Here she looked at herself in a pool to see if she were as good-looking as she used to be—yes, quite; there was no question about that. She would rather like to see this wonderful nymph who had so converted him, and after all she must go back some day; and so, before she had quite made up her mind to go, she found herself half-way home.

The first person she met on arriving was the River-god himself; he was looking older, she thought, and not very gay for a bridegroom.

He gave a sudden start at seeing her.

"Permit me to congratulate you," said the Naiad. "I hear that you are engaged to be married."

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“I!” said the River-god, staring.

“Yes, to a wood-nymph,” explained the Naiad, wondering why her heart was beating so.

The River-god laughed. “Oh, that was my eldest brother,” he said; “he was married last week.”

“Oh,” said the Naiad, with a sudden quiver of her lip—and then they understood each other.

They are quite an old married couple now, and devoted to each other; but if ever the River-god makes even the most distant allusion to a torpedo-boat, the River-goddess gets a little snappish.

## Roses and Swallows

“I DON'T think that we require an introduction,” said a Swallow gaily, as he alighted upon a Rose-tree. It was a large Safrano growing round a bedroom window, and was quite twenty feet high.

The Swallow had just arrived from France and was glad to rest his wings, and his wife was expected every moment. The summer before they had built their nest under the eaves just overhead, and looked upon the Roses as quite old friends.

“How late you are,” said the Roses, for the tree was a mass of creamy blossoms, and every movement of the Swallow's wing sent down a thousand petals.

“It was too cold for us to travel sooner,” said the Swallow, for they take excellent care of themselves.



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Every moment fresh swallows kept arriving ; they were all in high spirits, and full of plans for summer residences. It was said that the nightingales had come too ; but they were still lurking in the woods, where it was more sheltered, having to be careful on account of their voices.

The Swallows over the Rose-tree soon settled down, as they had lived there once already ; the only drawback to the situation being that when the large French window of the bedroom was open they were rather apt to fly in by mistake. Of course this made it easy to fly out again, unless by mischance one happened to fly through the door into the little dressing-room beyond.

This room had been a powdering-closet in olden days, and had only a small narrow window, so that to get in there was fatal. Twice already the young lady who owned the room had found a swallow there, and had each time insisted upon kissing the top of his head before she let him fly, which had almost scared him into fits. It

## *Roses and Swallows*

certainly made them all more cautious in future.

The summer was destined to be a glorious one, and the nightingales soon plucked up courage and came down to the gardens, where their lovely liquid notes were heard in every bush. There was one who was the finest singer of all, and every night when the Roses looked like white globes in the moonlight, he perched in a yew close to the Rose-tree and poured forth his joy in floods of melody, for he was a real artist, and sang because he couldn't help it.

His singing made a great sensation in the neighbourhood. "Is it for me?" thought a Jasmine, peeping out from between her leaves, when she found that he came to the same spot every night.

"It is for me," said a Crown Imperial Lily, carrying her head more erect than ever.

But it was for neither of them ; it was the Roses who had inspired him, and they took it quite as a matter of course—it was not

## *Fantasies*

their doing that they were so beautiful. "He is quite the finest singer we have ever had," they said, as he shook out his trills and roulades. "What execution!" and they waved their leaves in applause.

The Swallows, who were not musical, didn't care for all this serenading, particularly as it was not addressed to them. "I can't stand this din any longer," said the Swallow's wife on the third night that the nightingale sang; "we must move."

"Where to?" inquired her mate.

"Anywhere on earth where one can sleep in peace," said his wife crossly, for she was thoroughly out of temper. So the next day the Swallow went house-hunting.

He was gone a long time, but at last he came back full of excitement. "I have found just the place!" he said. "In a chimney—so delightfully secluded!"

"Have nothing to do with it, or something terrible will happen," cried the older Swallows, when they heard what they were thinking of doing.

## *Roses and Swallows*

“Nonsense,” said the Swallow.

“Prejudiced old things,” said his wife, and they went on moving all the materials that they had collected for their nest to the new place, for they had already begun to build. It certainly seemed a great success; but whenever our pair of Swallows boasted of it, the older ones always said, “Wait and see.”

The summer was brilliant for once, and every one was gay and light-hearted. There were young people staying in the house, and their merry laughter was heard all day long. There were garden-parties too, in which the Swallows took great interest, skimming over the tennis-ground in the middle of a game, with a flash of their wings as they turned, which greatly bewildered the players. “This is as gay as in France,” they said, twittering joyously.

But it couldn't go on for ever, and at last the fine weather was over, and towards October the winds grew boisterous and there were deluges of rain. The Swallows began to think of packing up.

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"Stay a little longer," begged the Roses, for the nightingales had already gone, and they found it dull without their friends.

"You should come to France," said a Swallow; "there roses bloom all the year round."

"I don't believe it," said a Rose stoutly.

"It is true," laughed all the Swallows, for they were thinking of the south.

One day when it had been more stormy and wet than usual, a fire was ordered to be lighted in one of the bedrooms of the house, but the moment that a match was put to it volumes of smoke filled the room. Suddenly there was a rattle and a bump in the chimney, and a Swallow, dazed and stupefied with the smoke, fell into the room, bringing with him clouds of soot.

The maid picked him up. "Horrid little thing!" she said. "I could kill it—making all this mess—that I could!" But she didn't kill him, luckily; she put him outside on the window-sill, where his wife found him.

## *Roses and Swallows*

“What in the world is the matter?” she cried in alarm.

“It appears, my dear,” gasped the Swallow, “that we made a mistake after all ; we have built our nest over a volcano.” It was too late to build another nest that year, so they went into temporary lodgings.

Every day it grew colder, and the Swallows took longer and longer flights to train them for their long journey ; they were collecting from all parts of the country.

At last they were off. “Good-bye, Roses,” they said, as they wheeled round for the last time. “Don’t forget us ;” but they were more likely to forget.

After they were gone, the Roses held a consultation. Was it really true what the Swallows had said about French roses blooming all the year round? If so, what an everlasting disgrace! and what must the nightingales think? For the honour of Old England they must make an effort ; they were on a south wall and might have a chance. So they did their best.

## *Fantasies*

"I never knew the Safranos go on so long," said the lady of the house a month later, looking at them; "and yet it has not been particularly mild."

Another month, and still they struggled on, though they had streaks of red in them from the cold, and each one as it bloomed had fewer petals than the last.

One day it snowed, and that was hard to bear; their little heads were bowed under the weight of it, and looked quite pink by contrast.

"Is it as bad as this in France?" they said to each other, and they determined to bear it if they could. Fortunately it didn't last, and the Roses bloomed again. There seemed a very good chance of their saving the honour of England after all, when three days before Christmas the lady of the house gave orders that the Roses were all to be gathered, even the tiniest little buds.

This was an end of all their hopes. "We would have done it," cried the Roses

## *Roses and Swallows*

despairingly, as they were being cut ; and indeed it was not their fault.

When each one had been gathered, they were put into a large basket and carried to a young lady in the neighbourhood who was to be married the next day ; and she thought so much of them that she had them put all round her wedding-cake.

“Out-door roses ! How wonderful !” said the guests on the wedding-day, as the Roses perfumed the room.

“Yes,” said the bride, laughing ; “one need not send to France for flowers.” So even in their defeat they triumphed.



## The Privileges of Rank

A DUCK was dozing peacefully in a farmyard, when she was suddenly startled by a loud scrambling noise overhead. It was a large American Rat tumbling head over heels down a drain-pipe; he had lately landed, and was exploring the country, and had somehow missed his footing.

“What is your opinion of America?” said the Rat, as soon as he had recovered breath.

“I have not been there,” said the Duck.

“What does that matter?” cried the Rat sharply; “you can have an opinion about it.”

“It is ideal,” said the Duck hurriedly—“quite ideal. I only wonder that you could bring yourself to leave it.” For it is always best to be civil, and the Rat looked rather fierce.

## *The Privileges of Rank*

The Rat appeared mollified. "America is the finest country in the universe," he said. "Is this the way to the nearest booking-office?" and he left without waiting for an answer.



The Duck walked off immensely disgusted.

The Duck composed herself to sleep again, but she was not long destined to enjoy repose. This time it was a litter of young pigs, who with many squeaks and squeals completely routed her from her corner.

## *Fantasies*

The Duck walked off immensely disgusted. "The country is getting overpopulated," she said; "there is positively no peace anywhere. I will go and see my cousin the old Gander."

The Gander was not in a very good humour. He had caught a chill from bathing before the sun was up, and was feeling "below par" in consequence. He was just off to Strasburg for a course of feeding-up. "I am told that it is admirably arranged," he said; "they have reduced it to a system—you are put into a hot room, with the temperature carefully regulated, and fed every quarter of an hour."

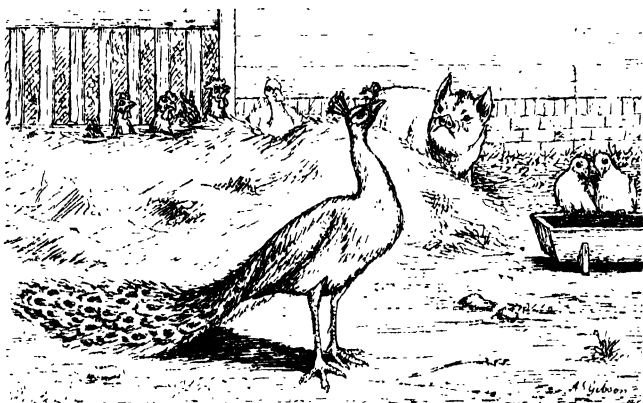
"Really, how people do go about, to be sure," said the Duck to herself, as she went on to call on the Norfolk turkeys. But the turkeys were not at home; they had gone to Leadenhall Market before Christmas, and were not expected back for some time, so the Duck had to go back to the farmyard.

An event had taken place there during her absence—a large Peacock had arrived.

## *The Privileges of Rank*

"How frightfully over-dressed!" said the Duck, staring at the new-comer; "it is quite ridiculous to wear such clothes in the country."

The Peacock, for his part, was quite out



"There is really no one here fit to associate with."

of his element, for he had just come from the banks of the Serpentine, where he had daily been the centre of an admiring crowd.

"There is really no one here fit to associate with," he said, looking round.

"Those white doves appear to be the least

## *Fantasies*

offensive." And he walked towards them ; but the doves were rather scared at the honour done them, and at once took refuge in the dovecot.

"Oh, I didn't mean him to go there," said a lady's voice a few minutes later ; "he must be put in the park, with the gold and silver pheasants." So the Peacock was removed to the park.

The gold and silver pheasants had been there for generations, and were exempt from being shot like the other pheasants ; they and the swans represented the aristocracy of the place. They introduced themselves to the Peacock with courtly grace, and they were mutually delighted with each other.

In a few days the Peacock's wife arrived. She was very simply dressed, but carried her head with the same air of distinction as her husband. She also was well received.

The Pea-fowl soon settled down, and in time had a brood of promising young Pea-chicks, of whom they thought great things.

## *The Privileges of Rank*

One day, however, a shocking piece of news arrived at the farmyard—a fox had carried off the eldest Pea-chick! “This comes of setting oneself up,” said the Duck; “if they had been content to live in a farmyard, this would never have happened.”

After this it was decided that the Pea-fowl were to sleep in a barn at night. This they didn’t much like, as it brought them too much into contact with the farmyard; but, as the odd-boy came regularly to fetch them, they had to submit.

The Pea-chicks all carried their heads in the same stately way as their parents, and this gave great offence to the farmyard.

“It is outrageous,” said the farmyard, “to see such young things giving themselves such airs!” But the Pea-chicks, who had been born so, had never noticed it, and were unaware of the cause of the popular dislike.

Another piece of news arrived! The Pea-fowl had been into the kitchen-garden and had eaten all the cauliflowers. The gardeners

## *Fantasies*

were very angry and had reported the matter, and the lady of the house had only laughed!

“If I had done such a thing,” said the Duck, “I should be killed and eaten;” which was quite true. The Pea-fowl had meant no harm; they were simply under the delusion that the whole world belonged to them.

Every day when the family were at meals, the Pea-fowl assembled on the window-sill and were fed. The farmyard saw no reason why they should not share in these benefits, so they deputed an old hen to go and try her chance.

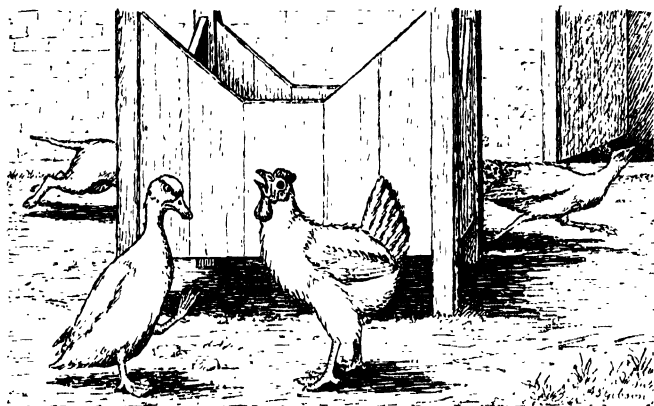
The hen came back hurriedly. “I arrived and took my place with the rest,” she said, “and I had a glass of water thrown in my face—positively a glass of water!” and she shook her ruffled feathers indignantly. It was next suggested that the Duck should go.

“If I were a duke instead of a duck,” began the Duck sardonically—when she was interrupted. A dog was chasing the Peacock

## *The Privileges of Rank*

round and round the farmyard, and had pulled three feathers out of his tail!

Every one agreed that it was a disgraceful scene, and ought never to have been allowed



"I had a glass of water thrown in my face."

to take place ; but in their secret hearts they were all delighted.

After this the Pea-fowl refused point-blank to sleep in the barn, or to have anything further to do with the farmyard, and neither the threats nor the blandishments



## *Fantasies*

of the odd-boy had the slightest effect upon them. So the odd-boy gave them up in despair, and they roosted in the trees at night.

As the year advanced, however, another sad thing happened.

The summer had been cold and wet, and the Pea-hen, who was weak-chested and suffered from rheumatism, had gradually become more and more feeble, especially now that they slept in the open; and one morning, after a more stormy night than usual, she was found lying on her back, quite dead.

The Peacock was now a widower, and both he and the Pea-chicks felt their loss keenly; and even the farmyard affected to be sorry, though they were much shocked at his still continuing to wear such bright colours.

About this time it was observed that one of the geese took longer than usual over her toilette in the morning, and frequently spent some minutes gazing at her reflection in the water.

## *The Privileges of Rank*

"I know I look well enough afloat," she said one day, in confidence to a Hen—"quite like a swan ; but does it occur to you that on land my appearance may be perhaps just a little—a little——"

"Ungraceful? Decidedly so," said the Hen.

This plain speaking much affronted the Goose, although she had invited it, and she retired into the sulks for a day or two ; but at the same time having an unpleasant conviction that the Hen was right, she thought she would consult the Duck about it.

"Of course we swimmers never look well ashore," said the Duck, when she asked her ; "but what of that? The hens can't swim."

"But I should like to do both," persisted the Goose.

"Well, you can have dancing-lessons if you think that would do any good," said the Duck, meditating. "There is a Heron down by the lake who would teach you. He can stand on one leg hours longer than any other living bird ; but his terms are rather high."

## *Fantasies*

“Who taught the Pea-chicks, do you suppose?” asked the Goose.

“Nature,” replied the Duck; but it was too late to apply to Nature on behalf of the Goose, so there was nothing for it but to go to the Heron.

“I wish to learn to walk like a pea-fowl,” said the Goose anxiously, when she had found him. “Do you think that by perseverance, and strict attention to the exercises you give me, I may be able to manage it?”

“Perhaps,” said the Heron; “but I shall have to charge you double the usual fee.”

“Why?” asked the Goose; but this the Heron wouldn’t explain.

The fees were to be paid in fish, which it took the Goose some time every day to catch, as the Heron liked them fresh; but she thought no trouble too great if she could only learn to walk like a pea-fowl. So every day for hours and hours she stood on one leg in front of the Heron and did gymnastic exercises—and all this

## *The Privileges of Rank*

trouble was taken to please the Peacock, who had never even thought of her ; for he had no intention whatever of marrying again, and certainly wouldn't have chosen the Goose if he had.



So every day for hours and hours she stood on one leg in front  
of the Heron.

“You may spare your pains, my dear,” said the Duck, after some weeks, for she was perfectly aware of the reason for all this ; “he will never look at any of us, and it appears that no amount of gymnastics

## *Fantasies*

will ever turn you into a pea-fowl. Besides, I have heard rumours."

"What sort of rumours?" asked the Goose nervously.

"That there is to be roast peacock on the sideboard at Christmas, opposite the boar's head."

"Oh," said the Goose, reflecting that if that were the case her trouble would be rather thrown away. "Do you advise me then to give up having dancing-lessons?" she asked, unable to make up her mind; "I was getting on so well."

"Please yourself," said the Duck; "but if you survive Michaelmas it will be a miracle."

And the Duck was right, for at Michaelmas the Goose made her last appearance, served up with sage and onions; and very tough she proved, on account of the exercise that she had gone through.

"Your fate will be sealed at Christmas," said the Duck spitefully to the Peacock one day when she met him; but he only

## *The Privileges of Rank*

looked at her and held his head as erect as ever. If he were to die, he would die as a gentleman should ; and, after all, to flank a boar's head at Christmas on the side-board was one of the privileges of his exalted rank.

When the time drew near, he said farewell with touching dignity to the gold and silver pheasants, and prepared with calmness to meet his fate.

"The farmyard shall see that we know how to die," he said ; and when the Pea-chicks, now grown old, relate to their descendants what a magnificent appearance he presented on that Christmas night, they all agree that it was an end worthy of their race.

## Joyeuse

THERE was once a merry little nymph called Joyeuse. She was a cousin of Cupid's, who was devoted to her; she helped him in all his pranks, and he and she between them made sad mischief.

Once, out of pure frivolity, they broke off three excellent matches that Hymen had arranged with great care and attention to detail; after they had been announced in the papers too, which made it so unpleasant for everybody.

Hymen was exceedingly angry, and he and Cupid had a quarrel. This came to Juno's ears, and as it was the eleventh or twelfth time that it had happened, every one felt that some steps must be taken.

As Cupid is divine, he could not easily be punished, so all the penalty fell upon



So he and she started off together to find Briareos.





## *Joyeuse*

Joyeuse ; and Juno would have changed her forthwith into a weeping-willow, which would not have suited her at all, when all the other deities interposed.

“Give poor little Joyeuse one more chance,” they said, “she is so young.” Even the stern Pallas pleaded for her, though she had more than once been annoyed by her tricks.

At last Juno relented. “Very well,” she said, “since she is so merry, she shall be forgiven if she can succeed in making old Briareos laugh.”

Joyeuse considered herself quite safe, for she had never yet failed to make any one laugh ; wherever she passed, faces brightened and hearts grew light. But Cupid thought more seriously of it. “He has never been known to laugh yet,” he said, “but perhaps he may be able to ; anyhow, I will help you all I can.” So he and she started off together to find Briareos.

He was a giant, and lived underground in old Vulcan's counting-house, for he was his

## *Fantasies*

foreman. All the money in the world, after it was coined, had to be counted by him before it was sent up above for mortals' use, and he had been given a hundred hands that he might do it the quicker. He was always frightfully busy, and had never been known to laugh, not because he was sad or melancholy, but because he simply had not the time. However, Joyeuse, when she heard this account, did not despair in the least.

After journeying for some time Cupid and Joyeuse came at last to a cave in the side of a mountain, and this they entered, though it was as black as night. This made no difference to Cupid, who knows his way about as well as any one, and he led Joyeuse by the hand until the air grew gradually hotter and hotter, and the sound of distant hammering proved that they were nearing Vulcan's forge.

A terrific heat! A sudden blaze of light! And here was the money being made, and here were the hideous Cyclops hard at work, surrounded by crowds of busy gnomes,

## *Joyeuse*

stirring the molten metal, or pouring it out to cool.

The noise and the glare, and the sight of the three terrible-looking Cyclops, who have only one eye between them, quite frightened Joyeuse, and if Cupid had not been there to give her courage she would almost have turned back and taken her chance as a weeping-willow. They asked for Briareos, and were directed a good way farther into the mountain, where at any rate it was cooler; for you know that wherever Vulcan has a forge, the people up above call it a volcano; and it is when the fires are freshly made up, every twenty years or so, that there is an eruption, so you may imagine the heat just inside.

They found Briareos, as usual, busy counting. "What do you want?" he said shortly, for he was not best pleased at being interrupted.

"I have come to make you laugh," said Joyeuse.

Briareos grunted. "I have no time for

## *Fantasies*

such things," he said. But Joyeuse, nothing daunted, sat down beside him and did her best to be entertaining.

She sang him little songs in the drollest possible way ; she told him stories that would have made any one on earth hold their sides ; she took off all the celebrities of Europe for his benefit, for she was a capital mimic ; she made absurd grimaces ; she propounded strange philosophies with an air of ludicrous gravity ; but he never even smiled ; save for an occasional grunt, one would never have known that he heard.

He was shown the newest eccentricities of fashion ; he was told the latest *bon-mot*, the most piquant society anecdote, the strangest freaks of fortune, and even an infallible method of governing Ireland, and, when these failed, she flew into the prettiest rage imaginable and stamped her foot—but Briareos had never laughed once ; his hands were indeed busy counting all the time. For three days and nights, for they are too busy ever to sleep down there, did Joyeuse act



Did Joyeuse . . . dance for him.



## Joyeuse

for him, dance for him, sing for him with a brilliancy which astounded even Cupid, who knew her well; and Briareos never left off counting for a moment, though it was evident that he both heard and saw her.

Poor little Joyeuse was at last quite at her wits' end, and could think of nothing fresh to do, when Cupid, who till then had kept in the background, suddenly threw a strange spell over her. She went up to Briareos, and laid her hand upon his knee.

"What is it?" said the giant testily; "what are you waiting for?"

"I love you," said Joyeuse simply.

Briareos looked at her for a minute with a dazed kind of wonder, and *then* he laughed—a laugh so long, and loud, and drear, earth had never heard any sound so sad. It echoed and re-echoed through the hollows of the mountain, and the grim Cyclops laid down their hammers to listen. Up above it caused an earthquake; towns were destroyed and ships were wrecked, and stocks



## *Fantasies*

and shares fell to nothing. Even Juno, reclining on a rainbow, heard it and was startled.

“Come away,” said Cupid; “you have done your task.” But Joyeuse lingered a moment. She took a rose from her belt and laid it on an old ledger beside Briareos, and then she and Cupid stole out.

There is more money in the world now than ever, for Briareos counts faster than he did; he will never be interrupted again, for he has given orders that no one is to be admitted except on business. Now and then, in a pause of his work, he looks at the rose and wonders why it never fades, and who put it there, for he has forgotten.

Joyeuse is as merry and ready to laugh as ever; but she has occasional fits of thoughtfulness, which she never used to have. Juno thinks she has had a lesson. Perhaps she has, for now she and Cupid leave Hymen pretty much alone.

## Orion's Belt

ORION'S Belt wanted cleaning, that was evident; but the question was, who should do it, or whether it should be done at all.

"It's not my place," said the Great Bear, and he was not a person that one cared to contradict.

Every one agreed that the Man with the Watering-pot was the most suitable, because he was always cleaning things; but the Man with the Watering-pot said himself that he had never been asked to clean belts before, and wasn't going to begin at his time of life.

As a matter of fact no one knew anything about Orion, or even if he existed; though, of course, he must have done so, or he wouldn't have had a belt. If he didn't exist now, nobody need bother himself; but, on

## *Fantasies*

the other hand, if he did, and should happen to come and want his belt in a hurry, it might be very unpleasant for every one, particularly as there was a sword attached. So there were differences of opinion on the subject.

Virgo, the maiden, thought that it ought to be cleaned, because she liked to see things look trim and neat ; but the Twins hoped that it would get as dirty as possible, and that Orion would come and want it in a hurry and be in a frightful rage, because then all manner of interesting things might happen.

The Scales offered to tell the weight of it to a fraction, but that was not the point. Cassiopeia, from the depths of her chair, said that decidedly it ought to be cleaned, and that while they were about it they might give a polish to Saturn's Ring as well, for she had noticed that it had been looking dull lately ; but she never lifted a finger to help, and nobody else cared a straw whether it were done or not.

In the end it was Virgo who did it. She

## *Orion's Belt*

went to the Pleiades and asked them to help, and they were quite ready to do so, though they would never have taken the first step; and when Leo, the lion, heard that, he said that he didn't mind lending a hand if all the females didn't talk too much. Taurus, the bull, contented himself with bellowing out directions to the workers; but, as his orders were all contradictory, no one paid the least attention to him. The Scorpion dodged about; sometimes he helped, and sometimes he sat down on his tail, and said, "How frightened you all are of Orion!"

"Here, get out of the way," said Leo, giving him a kick. "Go and get us some more pipe-clay;" for the belt took a lot of cleaning.

Capricornus, the goat, and Cancer, the crab, came and looked on. "Virgo is giving herself a lot of unnecessary trouble," said Cancer; "it is nine chances out of ten that Orion won't come, and if he does, why, let him!"

## *Fantasies*

They worked hard for six days and nights, and at last it was done. "There!" said Virgo, giving it a final pat. "Now, if Orion should come, he will be pleased. Thank you, Leo, for your help," she added to the lion, and she walked away with her arm round his neck.

"*Well!*" said the Scorpion, staring after them indignantly. "I *do* think she might have said something to me!"

"Oh, we all know you," said the Goat contemptuously; "you only helped because you wanted to be on the safe side, in case Orion should come."

"It really was very clever of Virgo," said the Pleiades, admiring their united handiwork; "it was impossible to see what a beautiful belt it really was until it was cleaned."

"And what about Saturn's Ring?" asked Cassiopeia.

## A Question of Taste

QUEEN IRIS sat on a rainbow and thought. "Beauty is the result of colour," she said, "therefore all beauty owes its origin to Me." And to convince the world of this great truth, she commanded a pageant to take place that day year, at which the whole earth should be compelled to do her homage.

Iris called her vassals from the east and from the west to do honour to her—blossoms of every hue, clouds of every tint, peacocks and butterflies, parrots and humming-birds, gorgeous serpents, resplendent lizards, glittering beetles, gems from every mine, corals, and sea-anemones, all came at her bidding. Every rose sent a petal, every waterfall a rainbow; earth, air, fire, and water, each contributed something;

## *Fantasies*

and her nymphs were kept hard at work sorting and arranging them as they arrived.

At last, after much discussion, a plan of the pageant was drawn up. Iris was, as usual, to be throned upon a rainbow ; facing her was to be a sunset like a lake of living fire ; above her head the sky was to be of the deepest azure, and connecting the two a fringe of little fleecy golden-pink clouds. Her head would be crowned with a circlet of twinkling stars ; her draperies would be of golden gossamer shot with blue, and catching and floating across them a filmy scarf made of the blush from a maiden's cheek, while her necklet would be of laughing blue eyes, all perfectly matched.

Behind her were to rise mountains of azaleas in full bloom ; at her feet would stretch a sea of crocus blossom, changing in hue as it lost itself in distance ; a demi-circle of peacocks with spread tails would flank her throne, with a small rainbow arching each, round which was to be twined a

## *A Question of Taste*

gorgeous serpent ; while on a bank of pearl-grey clouds would be bevvies of her nymphs, the colours of whose robes were to be blended with the most scrupulous care. The air meanwhile would flash and glitter with an endless flight of butterflies and humming-birds.

It was great work getting all this ready in a year, and the nymphs were almost run off their feet, though they thoroughly enjoyed it.

But there was one little nymph who was to take no part in the pageant, though she would have liked to much ; her name was Candida, and she always dressed in white. She was not one of Iris's nymphs, but she occasionally strayed in to watch the others at work and longed to be one of them.

"Do you think Iris would let me help a little?" she asked wistfully one day.

"You!" said the Rainbow nymphs in surprise, looking at her simple white gown. "Why, what could you do?"

"Oh, I could do *such* things if Iris would



## *Fantasies*

only let me try," she said impulsively. "I would give her a triumph such as she never dreams of."

"I should think not," laughed Buttercup-yellow.

"Everything to be white, of course?" asked Sky-blue, with pretended innocence.

"That would look gay!" mocked all the others.

"Not quite all white," said Candida dreamily. "I would have a little colour—a very little."

"I am glad that we should have the privilege of being present," said Rose-pink pertly.

"But quite in the background, of course?" asked Apple-green—"just to set off the masses of white?"

"Come and tell Iris your ideas!" cried all the nymphs, half indignant, and then one of them caught her arms with a trail of wild vine, and another pelted her with violet-buds, while Silver-grey flung a cloudlet over her eyes, and so, laughing and gibing, her tormentors dragged her to their Queen.

## *A Question of Taste*

"We have brought you an artist, Madam," they said, as they released their unwilling captive, "who has had an inspiration for your pageant."

"What is it?" asked Iris kindly, as poor little frightened Candida stood before her. But Candida was too shy to answer.

"Tell me what your idea was," repeated the Queen gently.

"If I might be allowed to help, Madam?" said Candida timidly.

"But I am afraid that white is not sufficiently effective to be introduced," said the Queen.

"It might be made so, Madam," said Candida earnestly, "if you would only allow me to try."

"Well, we will see what you can do," said Iris, touched by Candida's evident sincerity; and Candida flew off in high glee to Flora. "Give me flowers," she cried, "all white."

"All white! You must be out of your senses, child," said Flora, for till then such things had never been known.

## *Fantasies*

“*Quite* white, please,” said Candida firmly ; so Flora had them made on purpose, for no one could withstand Candida’s pretty pleading eyes.

The delighted little nymph, filling her scarf with them, started off to carry them to Iris—hyacinths and anemones, lilies and roses, lilac and hawthorn, all pure white. But the nymphs who had teased her were vexed at Iris having been so gracious, so they sent a small Imp to waylay her on her return. “Well, Candida,” said the Imp, when he met her ; “so Flora wouldn’t consent to see you. What will you do now ?”

“Not see me ! Why, she has given me lovely things,” said Candida.

“Let me see them !” said the Imp, with pretended unbelief ; and Candida, falling into the trap, opened her scarf to show him the flowers. In a moment the Imp had snatched them from her and dabbed a huge patch of colour on each, for the nymphs had given him paint-brushes for the purpose. The hyacinths had now become blue, the lilac





## *A Question of Taste*

mauve, the roses and anemones every shade of pink, while the lilies were flame-colour, and the hawthorn red. Poor little Candida's eyes filled with tears, for it was such a disappointment, while the Imp went off chuckling. However, having a brave little soul, Candida soon dried her eyes and considered what was best to be done. "I daren't go back to Flora for more," she thought; "she would think I hadn't taken care of them." So she resolved to go to Juno.

"Would you give me some birds, Madam, all white, to take to Iris?" she asked coaxingly, having related the misadventure of the flowers.

"Poor little thing, I will see what I can do for you," said Juno, gracious for once; and she commanded them to bring some white swans and a pair of doves; so Candida started off again, well pleased. The swans and doves had been told to follow her, so this time they all arrived safely at Iris's kingdom.

## *Fantasies*

"Iris is asleep and must not be disturbed," said the nymphs, when they saw Candida return. "You had better make yourself tidy in case she wakes, and we will give your creatures some food." They said this to get her out of the way, for she was not in the least dishevelled, though she had travelled quickly; but Candida, who was very particular about being neat, took fright directly, and thanking the nymphs, left the birds with them, never for a moment suspecting that it was they who had sent the Imp to paint her flowers.

She was not gone long; but, to her horror and dismay, when she came back she found that the swans had turned black, with orange-coloured beaks, and the doves were grey! The nymphs appeared as much surprised as she was, and said they couldn't imagine how it had happened.

"Perhaps the birds were not used to that kind of food," they suggested.

It was no use showing them to Iris, so Candida went off again in search of

## *A Question of Taste*

something else. She didn't know who to go to this time, and, after wandering vaguely about for some time, she sat down sad and tired out, and began to cry.

"Hulloa, what's all this about?" said a kind gruff voice, and, looking up, she saw old Boreas, the god of the winds, whom she had known from a child. She told him all her troubles, and he was very indignant. "I'll see if I can't outwit those minxes," he said, for he guessed how it had all happened, and he went home to invent something.

"Go to Iris," he said to Candida, when he had done, "and tell her to look at the sky, and when you raise your little finger and whistle I will send some white clouds floating across. If she finds anything prettier than that she will be clever." So Candida went back to Iris.

"Well, couldn't you find anything this time?" said the Rainbow nymphs, when they saw her come back empty-handed. "The swans and doves are doing very well,



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but they show no signs of turning white again." But Candida was too much hurt to answer ; she went straight to the Queen.

"Well," said Iris, smiling, "what have you brought to convert me?"

"If you will look at the sky, Madam," said Candida, and she raised her little finger and whistled.

Almost directly great heavy creamy-white clouds came rolling across, casting lovely shadows, and making the azure more intensely blue. "It is a charming effect!" said Iris enthusiastically, with her head on one side—"quite charming!"

"If you will pardon me, Madam," said Sky-blue, stepping forward, "I think that the effect is quite as much owing to me ; if the sky were all white it would have a very poor appearance."

"Quite true," said the Queen. "I am afraid that it won't quite do," she added, turning to Candida ; "if we were having a harmony of blue and white it would be different, but so many other colours will



They went straight back to Juno.



## *A Question of Taste*

have to be introduced." So she sent the little nymph away, though she was sorry for her disappointment. "Nobody wants me," said Candida sadly, as she stood once more outside the gates.

Fortunately the swans and doves had been allowed to fly away, as the Rainbow nymphs did not want the trouble of keeping them, and they went straight back to Juno, and from their arriving such a different colour she perfectly understood what had happened.

She at once sent Diana to look for Candida, and Diana went willingly, for she considered that Iris was giving herself airs. "Come with me, child," she said, taking Candida by the hand. "Be patient until the day comes, and I will see that you have a share in the pageant." So Candida waited contentedly.

At last the year was at an end, the preparations were all complete, and the great day was come. The serpents had been burnished to the last degree of brightness, and glittered as if they were jewelled; they

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had taken their places round the rainbows, and the peacocks below all held their tails as erect as possible. The crocus-carpet was as yet untrodden, though the whole world would cross it soon to do homage to Iris. The Queen gave one critical glance round before mounting the throne, and then, well satisfied, she turned to her trumpeters and said, "You may sound the *entrée*."

She had just taken her place gracefully, and was preparing to bow in response to the salutations of the universe, when a feathery flake of snow came softly floating down and rested on her shoulder, and then another and another, and soon the air was thick with white whirling flakes, and had become piercingly cold. The serpents all sneezed, and the peacocks shook their feathers, for they were not used to this kind of thing.

Iris waited a moment, thinking that the storm might clear; but it became thicker than ever, and soon everything was covered with white. She angrily brushed the snow



Going to the pageant of Iris.



## *A Question of Taste*

from her golden wings. "This is Diana's doing," she said pettishly; and then seeing that the pageant must be given up, she said to the serpents, "You can get down," and then turning to the peacocks, "You can shut up your tails and go home. It is all spoilt!" And she sulkily prepared to descend from the throne.

"Halt!" cried a voice, and the peacocks spread their tails again without waiting to see who had ordered them, while the serpents stood at attention, for they had all been well drilled.

Iris looked round haughtily; it was Apollo, the sun-god. "You do Diana great injustice," he said, and he caused a burst of sunshine to illuminate the scene, while the snow left off falling.

What a transformation! Everything was covered with a transparent veil of white, while a thousand lovely colours showed beneath, chastened and subdued, but none the less beautiful. A fringe of icicles hung from every rainbow, which flashed and



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sparkled like diamonds—no pageant ever devised could be more lovely. Iris clapped her hands enthusiastically. “It is the loveliest after all,” she said. “Candida was right.”

And now, whenever Iris has a pageant, which is pretty often, for she is fond of display, Candida always has the foremost place, for Iris is devoted to her. The other nymphs at first were frightfully jealous, but finding that white rather set off their beauty than otherwise, they offered to make friends with Candida, and Candida readily forgave them.

Now, if you should ever go into the woods on a bright frosty winter’s day, you will see one of these pageants in its greatest glory; and if any one says to you, “Why are there all these lovely colours, when snow comes down quite white?” you can tell them all about it.

## A Dead Language

THERE was once a man who could only speak a language that no one could understand, which was a sad misfortune, and he felt it deeply. He was tall and handsome and clever, but when he went into society all the ladies shrugged their shoulders and said, "He is *such* a bore, you know;" and the great scientists of the day, after following him about and taking notes of every word he said, were at last forced to confess that they "couldn't make head or tail of him." Only the animals loved him, for he was good to them; so he went to live all alone in a great forest where he bored nobody.

He built himself a hut thatched with rushes, and supported himself by hunting;

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but he always looked sad, for he was very lonely.

One day as he was leaning against a tree eating his mid-day meal, a little piebald pig suddenly flashed past, closely pursued by a wolf; for the forest happened to be enchanted. The pig was uttering such piteous squeals that the hunter caught up his gun, and just as the wolf was seizing it by the shoulder he sent a bullet straight through his wicked black heart.

The wolf fell dead; and the little pig, in a transport of gratitude, flinging itself on its knees at its deliverer's feet, tried with tears in its eyes to lick his gaiters. The young man smiled, and was stooping to pat it, when to his surprise the pig suddenly rose upon its hind legs, and turning gracefully into a beautiful and majestic fairy, gave him her hand.

"Since you have bestowed compassion upon one so apparently unworthy of your notice," said she, "I will have compassion upon you." So saying, she shook her hand-

## *A Dead Language*

kerchief, and the air was immediately filled with myriads of parrots of every shade and hue, who flew up into the tree-tops and made themselves quite at home. The fairy, again taking the form of a piebald pig, trotted down a glade and was lost to sight, leaving the young man rather bewildered, for he could scarcely imagine how this noisy chattering crew could add much to his comfort or convenience.

Next morning he was awakened by a loud screaming overhead, and, as soon as he opened the door of his hut, in flocked the whole crowd of parrots. They invited themselves to all his meals, they hid his slippers, they stole his spoons, and never gave him one moment's peace, till he wished with all his heart that he had never done a good turn to a fairy. Worst of all, when in his anger at some fresh audacity he turned and vehemently abused them, they answered him word for word in his own language.

This set him thinking, and being lonely for want of a companion, the idea occurred

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to him of teaching them to talk. The parrots were quick to learn, and in a short time became quite fluent, still retaining, however, their mischievous dispositions.

But see how curiously things happen! One day two of the parrots having had a quarrel, one of them retired to brood over his wrongs, when, being off his guard, he was pounced upon by a hawk and carried off. The hawk sailed up into the air, digging his claws into his poor little victim, who was uttering frightful shrieks, and these fortunately attracted the attention of a young nobleman who was out shooting, who shot the hawk out of curiosity to see what he had in his clutches. Finding that the parrot, though bleeding and terrified, was not dead, he carried him to his sister, who lived in a castle near, and she treated the parrot with such skill and care, that he was soon all right again and his plumage brighter than ever.

This young lady was maid-of-honour to the Princess of that country, the King's only

## *A Dead Language*

child ; and when her turn came to go into waiting she took the parrot with her to give to the Princess ; for it was quite clear to every one that, though no one understood it, the parrot spoke a regular language.

The Princess was delighted, for she loved curiosities ; and one day when she went to see her great-grandmother she took the parrot with her, in order to find out what language he spoke, for her great-grandmother was very wise and could tell her everything. She was an old dowager, who had long been celebrated as a wit and a beauty ; but in her old age she had built herself a palace near the mountains of the Moon, and lived in great retirement.

She was asleep when the Princess arrived, but woke up to receive her great-granddaughter, of whom she was very fond. "It is the Language of Love," she said, when she had listened to the parrot. "I have heard it in my youth, but it is obsolete now, quite obsolete." And she fell asleep again.

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The Princess was enchanted, for she was highly cultured, and very much preferred a dead language to a live one. She at once sent to the universities for books on the subject.

There was not one to be found—it was so dead as all that!

The Princess was excessively annoyed. “*Some one* must have taught the parrot,” she said.

. . . . .  
“I think,” said a Duchess musingly, “that I once met a young man—” And then everybody remembered.

The young man was hunted for high and low, and at last he was found in a wood, with all his parrots about him. He was requested to come to the Princess. He didn’t understand, but seeing that they meant him well, he went with them. The Princess received him graciously, and intimated by signs that she wished to learn his language—and a very apt pupil she proved.

## *A Dead Language*

So it became the fashion, and soon everybody spoke it, and Wisdom in her cap and gown was banished the Court.

She went to complain to old Father Time, but he only laughed; he had seen that kind of thing so often before. "Your turn will come again," he said, nodding.

"I am eternal," said Wisdom proudly.

"So is Love," said old Father Time.



## The Singing Turnip

SOME Carrots and Turnips and a large Cauliflower were lying on a table in a Painter's studio. They had been sitting for their portraits, which were being introduced into the picture of an old market-woman that the Painter was then at work upon, and they were all in a state of great elation, particularly a Turnip whose portrait really was a striking likeness.

He puffed himself out with pride. "This is fame!" he said. "The picture will be hung in one of the galleries, and I shall be known throughout the universe!"

The Painter was just putting the finishing touches to his likeness, when another man entered the room, carrying a Violin to which he was fitting a string. "Well, old fellow," said the Painter, looking round,

## *The Singing Turnip*

"you gave us a treat at the concert last night ; I never heard such music."

"I never had such a reception," said the Violinist, tightening the string as he spoke.

"You never played so well," said the Painter.

"I owe quite half of that to my Violin," and the musician caressed his instrument as though it had been alive. The two artistes lodged in the same house, and were shortly to be connected, for the Violinist was going to marry the Painter's sister.

"The papers are full of you this morning," the Painter continued.

"Ah," said the Violinist carelessly, as he ran up and down a scale and finished a roulade with a trill like a nightingale's.

"I wish I were sure of such success," sighed the Painter, who was still young and unknown.

"It all depends upon yourself," said the Violinist, laying his hand on the young man's shoulder. "Given good health, with

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patience and resolution you can command success. That turnip is uncommonly good," he added, looking at the picture.

At this moment the door suddenly opened and a young girl came flying into the room.

"O Fritz! Anton!" she cried, "come quickly both of you! There has

"There has been an accident in the street."

## *The Singing Turnip*

been an accident in the street, and a young lady has fainted, and I am afraid she must be hurt. Do go and see if you can help her."

The Painter flung down his brush, and both men hurried out, the Violinist leaving his instrument on the table near the vegetables.

The Carrots and Turnips, left to themselves, soon began to talk.

"Do you live here?" asked the Turnip of the Violin.

"I have been here a few weeks," answered the Violin; "but my master and I travel a great deal," and he sighed, for he was overworked and wanted rest.

"I came up from the country this morning," said the Turnip; "I was bought in the market by the housekeeper for her master, who was anxious to paint my portrait. She gave an enormous price for me," he added complacently.

"What is it like in the country?" asked the Violin.

## *Fantasies*

"You should go there," said the Turnip. "The air is fresh, not like this, and one can breathe."

"I have heard that it is very muddy," said the Violin, who was delicate and had to be careful.

"All the better for growing," replied the Turnip. "That is how I have attained my present perfection."

"But if it rained or snowed?"

"What of that?" said the Turnip, for he had no feelings at all, and could stand anything.

"I will suggest it to my master," said the Violin. "I am in need of rest; this life is knocking me up."

"What do you do?" asked all the vegetables.

"We travel all over Europe," said the Violin. "My master takes me to a concert almost every night; he is celebrated, and whenever he has played on me, the applause is almost deafening, and next morning the papers are full of nothing else. But what

## *The Singing Turnip*

use is it? Try as one may, one never reaches one's ideal."

"What is an ideal?" asked the Turnip.

"One's perception of the Absolute."

"What is the Absolute?"

"The Infinite, the Unattainable, the Unutterable," said the Violin, with a tremor in his voice.

This was all pure Greek to the Turnip; but there was one thing that he did grasp.

"Then if one has a perception of the Absolute," he said, "one can produce music like yours, and be applauded and written about in the papers?"

"I suppose that is about all that it amounts to," said the Violin, for he was low and dispirited.

There was silence for a moment.

"The Carrot's grandfather was written about in the papers," said the Turnip thoughtfully; "he took a prize at a show."

"Yes," said the Carrot, delighted at being brought into the conversation. "He was of enormous size, and exactly the colour

## *Fantasies*

of a halfpenny stamp"—for she had once seen one.

A breeze came into the room, fluttering the window curtains. "Oh, if they had only shut that window," moaned the Violin, for he was subject to neuralgia and felt the damp.

"How sensitive you are!" said the Turnip. "You should have been brought up in the country like me, and then you would have had no feelings at all."

"I wish I could have no feelings at all," sighed the Violin.

"I wish I could have a perception of the Absolute and be written about in the papers," said the Turnip.

Nemesis happened to be listening at that moment, and she smiled; and when Nemesis smiles, something always happens. This time the result was that the Turnip became like the Violin, and the Violin like the Turnip, in everything except outward appearance.

A large tom-cat now came in by the

## *The Singing Turnip*

window, and seeing the vegetables on the table, he mounted it to see if haply there might be a fish amongst them. He was sniffing about, when the sound of the studio door opening to admit two or three people all talking at once, startled him.

“No, she was not really hurt,” the Violinist was saying — “only frightened,” when suddenly there was a loud crash. It was the tom-cat, who, in trying to reach the window unobserved, had stepped on to the neck of the Violin, which was lying over the edge of the table; the cat’s weight had caused it to overbalance, and it had fallen with terrific force, hitting the leg of a chair and giving vent to a loud thrum of anguish as it fell.

The Violinist gave a cry of alarm and rushed to pick it up; he laid it against his shoulder and drew his bow across it anxiously.

“There is something wrong with it,” he said, after a minute, “it must be cracked;” and his face looked the picture of misery,



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for he loved it as a mother loves her child, and frankly acknowledged that he owed much of his success to it. He at once sent it to a celebrated instrument-maker, and told him to do all in his power to put it right again. "It *is* cracked," said the violin-maker, looking it over; "it must have a new back, and then it will be as good as ever." So he put one, but after a time he sent to the owner of it. "I can do nothing with that Violin of yours," he wrote. "You had better take it away. I have tried everything I know, and it might just as well be an old turnip for all the music I can get out of it. I can't understand it; it must have got strained in some way."

The Violinist then took it to other makers, but they all said the same thing—nothing that they did had any effect on it; so, as it was now useless, his wife tied a ribbon round it and hung it up in her drawing-room for the sake of old times. But the Violin cared nothing, for he had no feelings at all.



She happened to lift the Turnip by the green tuft at the top of his head.



## *The Singing Turnip*

The Turnip meanwhile was having great adventures. He now had a perception of the Absolute, and, when he was pressed, could produce music like the Violin; but this was not found out all at once.

When the Painter had done with the vegetables, they were cleared away by the housekeeper; but as she happened to lift the Turnip by the green tuft at the top of his head, his peculiar properties were not discovered.

The housekeeper, not thinking the vegetables fresh enough to eat, for they had been a day or two in the studio in an atmosphere of tobacco-smoke, gave them all to a poor woman who came to the door begging, and she carried them home to a cottage in the country, to be made into soup. On the way, however, she happened to drop the Turnip without noticing it, though he gave a thrum as the Violin had done; but being rather deaf, she merely clutched the cauliflower, of which she thought a great deal, and passed on.

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The Turnip lay in the long grass by the roadside ; it had been raining, and the road



The Turnip lay in the long grass by  
the roadside.

was full of large pools. "I shall die of this," said the Turnip. "This terrible atmosphere is penetrating every fibre of my being. If I only had a green baize cover," he sighed.

Just then a large farm-cart came along. The boy in charge of it was cracking a whip and whistling as he

tramped beside it on the grass. He saw

## *The Singing Turnip*

the Turnip, and picking it up, tossed it into the air, but in catching it again, he happened to press it, and the Turnip immediately gave vent to the first bar of a lovely aria of Schubert's. The boy dropped it and stood thunderstruck. Then he picked it up again, and again unconsciously squeezing it, the Turnip continued the melody. The boy didn't know what to make of it; but as his horse was getting on ahead, and he was more than half frightened, he threw the Turnip over the hedge into a neighbouring field and continued his way.

Some horses were grazing in the field, and amongst them was a Colt wild with youth and spirits. He was scampering round the field when he came upon the Turnip. Kicking up his heels, he seized it in his teeth with a squeal; then suddenly jumping off all four legs at once, he stood trembling and staring before taking flight to the uttermost parts of the earth—the Turnip had executed a brilliant arpeggio in D minor!

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The Colt, after a senseless terrified gallop, at last pulled up at the side of the other horses.

"I do wish you would give one five minutes' peace now and then," grumbled an old Cart-horse; "it makes one giddy to see you flying round like that."

"There is a Turnip down there," said the Colt.

"Well, what of that?"

"It makes noises," explained the Colt.

"What sort of noises?"

"Extraordinary noises—like a band at a fair."

"It is your imagination," said the Cart-horse, but all the same he began to feed slowly in that direction. Presently he came upon the Turnip. "I suppose this is what that young ass has frightened himself with," he said, pawing it contemptuously. The Turnip began an adagio of Mozart's. The Cart-horse started and snorted, pointing his ears; however, he ventured again. This time it was the overture to "Midsummer Night's Dream." The Cart-horse decided

## *The Singing Turnip*

to go back to his friends, and tried not to walk faster than he could help. "You are right," he said to the Colt. "I have examined the Turnip and it is highly dangerous, probably explosive." So none of the horses ever went near that side of the field.

"It is very odd," said the farmer to whom they belonged, as he walked through one day. "I never see the horses at this end of the field now, and the grass is growing quite long. And yet here is something that might tempt them," he added, picking up the Turnip.

The Turnip began a melody of Rubinstein's with variations. The farmer's eyes grew bigger and rounder, and his jaw dropped lower and lower. "Well, I'm blessed!" he began, and then speech failed him. He took out his handkerchief and mopped his forehead. "This is what comes of them patent manures," he went on. "I never did hold with them;" and he put the Turnip into his pocket, intending to carry it to a friend.



## *Fantasies*

“My life is saved,” said the Turnip, as he rejoiced in the warmth. “Another night or two in the open air would have killed me.”

The farmer showed it to his friend, and the fame of the “Singing Turnip” soon spread through the neighbourhood, and people flocked from far and near to see and hear it.

“They are only clods,” said the Turnip to himself; “but if they have the faintest symptom of a soul amongst them I will discover it;” and he sang with all the pathos of which he was capable whenever he was pressed.

“Lor’, it do sound curious!” said the people, as they stood gaping round.

By-and-by a short paragraph about it appeared in the county paper, and soon afterwards a man in a large-patterned check suit came to see the farmer. “I should like to see that Turnip of yours,” he said. “How do you make it work?”

“I just squeeze it,” said the farmer, “and

## *The Singing Turnip*

it does the rest itself. It's all along of them chemical manures."

"What will you take for it?" said the man in the check suit, after the Turnip had performed.

"Twenty pounds," said the farmer promptly.

"Done," said the stranger ; and indeed he would have given double and treble that sum, for he was advertising a chemical manure, and hoped to make a good thing out of it. The stranger carried off the Turnip to the capital of a great empire, and began giving a series of "recitals," at each of which an advertisement of the manure was handed gratis to every one who entered.

The Turnip, delighted at having an intelligent audience, excelled himself at each performance, and soon became the talk of the town. The papers were full of him, and even scientific men were attracted. "Of course it is done by phonograph," they said ; "but it is exceedingly clever." When,

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however, they were allowed to handle the Turnip for themselves, they began to have doubts. "It is very ingenious," they all ended by saying, and then arose disputes as to how it was done. "It is ventriloquism," suggested a conjurer, and this view was adopted by some.

Meanwhile the Singing Turnip, as he was called, continued to draw crowds, and his portrait, more than a hundred times life-size, was on every hoarding. At every dinner-party, as the guests took their seats, "Have you heard the Singing Turnip?" was the first remark that each man made to his neighbour. Nine times out of ten she had, and then ensued an animated discussion in which the whole table presently joined.

The Turnip was hired out to evening parties and entertainments, only on these occasions the advertisement papers were left behind. But sing as he could, he was never able to get people to do more than put up their eye-glasses and say, "Dear me, how extraordinary!" just like the

## *The Singing Turnip*

country people. "Have they no souls?" he cried in despair, as he lavished all the greatness of his nature upon them. "Can they never rise above this miserable mud-heap of an earth?" And he sang more divinely than ever, just like the sweetest violin. "It is like Paganini," said some one. Then the spiritualists took up the idea. "It is Paganini," they said; "it is his spirit haunting a turnip," for they didn't believe in chemical manures. So the Turnip went out more than ever, for now he went to the *séances* too.

"Oh," he cried, "if I could only teach this idle babbling crowd the majesty of sorrow, the glory of grief, the serenity of a pure-souled devotion to an ideal!" And he did his best.

"Is it really the result of a manure?" said the audience, as the sobbing, wailing notes of one of Chopin's nocturnes fell upon the air.

"Dolts! Idiots! Imbeciles!" cried the Turnip, "will you never understand?" and his music became more impassioned than ever.

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Once he really surpassed himself, surpassed Paganini, surpassed everything and everybody—no one had ever heard such music before ; and when the last note had died away, the whole audience sat spell-bound.

Suddenly the silence was broken. “I think I’ll try a cartload of that manure,” a voice was heard to say, as its owner buttoned himself into his greatcoat, and then every one recovered speech and went out.

The next time that the Turnip was to have performed, they couldn’t get a note out of him ; he had died of a broken heart—which proves that it undoubtedly answers best to have no feelings at all.

After this, as the Turnip was quite useless, his owner thought it prudent to vanish, particularly as he had made a large fortune and could afford to live in comfort. So the mystery never was solved to the satisfaction of the public, but the chemical manure sold all the better on that account.

## The Island of Fantasy

**I**N the lovely island of Fantasy once lived a beautiful Maiden all alone. The place was ideal: there were towers and turrets and mighty crags, rippling streams and hanging woods, cascades and groves of slender pines, and a sward that could not be matched for verdure, and, to make it complete, in and out of these sylvan splendours wandered an endless company of knights and dames.

But the greatest charm of it all was that all these things were only visions, and that when one was tired of them one had only to wave one's hand and they immediately vanished to give place to something equally lovely but quite different. They spoke too, the knights and ladies, and said charming things, so that it was impossible ever to feel dull.

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Sometimes, instead of woods and waterfalls, the island would assume the appearance of some great city like Venice, and that was more bewitching still, because you could hear the gondoliers calling to each other, and the people in the streets were so quaintly dressed. Then you waved your hand and it was gone, and there was a fairy grotto all sparkling with diamonds, with tiny fays playing at leap-frog. Oh, it was a delightful place for a maiden to live in !

One day a Man arrived in a boat. That was nothing—thousands of men had come in thousands of boats ; but the difference this time was that this happened to be a real man in a real boat. The Maiden could not know that, of course ; but she realised at once that he was handsomer than all the rest had been.

“Do you live here all alone ?” asked the Stranger in surprise, when she came tripping down to meet him as she had tripped down to meet all the others.

“Yes,” said the Maiden, smiling ; she had

## *The Island of Fantasy*

been asked that question nineteen times before.

“You don’t find it very dull?”

And the Maiden laughed gaily—how could she be dull in that enchanted spot?

“You are like some radiant vision,” said the Stranger, looking dazzled. She had been told that once already, or was it twice? and she smiled again, for she liked being talked to so.

“Years ago,” he went on, gazing into her eyes, “I had a dream of a maiden like you from over the sea, who became my wife. Could it ever be possible, do you think?”

“I don’t know,” said the Maiden shyly; but she was charmed, for no one had put it exactly like that.

“Have you never thought of leaving?”

“Oh yes, often,” said the Maiden.

“Then come with me now, and let the dream be true;” and the Stranger held out his hand persuasively, and the Maiden went with him readily, never doubting but that it was a vision as all the rest had been.



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They sailed and sailed till a beautiful white palace rose out of the sea, and here they landed, and were met by a train of crimson-clad pages, who bowed low on seeing the Maiden; and she was more delighted than ever, for the Stranger, it appeared, was a great duke, and had an estate as large as a kingdom. He presented her to his mother and sisters, who welcomed her sweetly, for an old prophecy had said that he would marry a maiden from over the sea, so that they had really been expecting her for years. They led her through wonderful rooms, and clothed her with costly garments, and the following day the wedding was celebrated with great magnificence.

The little Maiden was now a duchess, and thought it quite the most wonderful vision that she had ever had, for every one adored her and paid her homage. The Duke, too, was all that was delightful; not one of her dream-lovers had been so chivalrous, so handsome, so devoted; not

## *The Island of Fantasy*

one had told her quite so many times a day how much he loved her. Every day there were fêtes and entertainments in her honour, with new gowns to wear at each, and artists and poets rivalled each other in celebrating her beauty; and so things went on for a couple of months, and then—and then—and then—she grew tired of it all, and one day she waved her hand.

Nothing happened.

She waved it again imperiously.

Still nothing happened.

She sprang to her feet and waved both hands frantically.

“What *are* you doing?” said the old Duchess, her mother-in-law; but without reply the little new Duchess flung herself on the floor, and sobbed as if her heart would break.

It was fixed, unchangeable, then? It would go on always like this? And then she hated it—hated all the pomp and splendour, all the homage she received—hated

## *Fantasies*

above all the young Duke, who was the cause of it.

“What is it? What can I do<sup>\*</sup> for you?” he cried in distress, when he found that she was sullen and wouldn’t speak to him.

“My island, my beautiful island!” she wept.

“Your beautiful island,” he repeated incredulously—“why, it was nothing but a rock in mid-ocean, half buried in sea-fog.”

And she hated him all the more for that. “Take me back,” she cried from morning till night.

“Very well,” said the Duke, when he had quite lost patience, “you *shall* go back;” so they stepped silently into the little boat that had brought them, and sailed away and away.

When they came at last to the island it was night, and too dark to see much, but the little Duchess knew that it was the same. “Good-bye,” said the Duke, as he left her, “you will never see me again;” but she never even gave him her hand.

## *The Island of Fantasy*

And behold! when the sun arose next morning, it was exactly what the Duke had said—a barren rock, half buried in sea-fog. For if ever one leaves the island of Fantasy, it is never quite the same when one goes back. And there she is living still.

## Edelweiss

**I**T was late summer, and a lovely Swiss valley was filled with flowers—gentians and forget-me-nots, mountain-pinks and Alpine roses, and many others equally beautiful.

The Wind was quite delighted when he arrived, for they had all blossomed since his last visit. He ruffled their petals tenderly.

“Ugh!” said the Flowers. “How cold you are!”

“I have just come from the Mountain,” he said. “He is so lonely up there all by himself.”

“No wonder!” said the Flowers. “He is so morose that no one will live with him.”

“He is not really morose,” said the Wind; “only reserved.”

## *Edelweiss*

"I went there once," said a Bird, "and I never shall forget the coldness of my reception!" and he appeared lost in recollection.

"What happened?" asked the Flowers.

"It nearly killed me," said the Bird, and that was all that they could get out of him.

"It is only his manner," said the Wind, speaking of the Mountain. "He is really very warm-hearted, and he feels dreadfully lonely, for he has told me so."

"I will go and live with him," said a little Blossom suddenly.

"You! Ridiculous!" cried all the other Flowers.

"You will die of it," said the Bird warningly. "I went once, and it has ruined my constitution for life." And he plunged into thought again.

"Do you really mean it?" the Wind asked the little Blossom.

"Yes," she answered bravely; and the Flowers all murmured, "She is perfectly mad!"

## *Fantasies*

“Very well,” said the Wind. “Then you must mount on my back and I will take you there; but I have to go all round the earth first.” He stooped down and picked her up, and the little Blossom went off, waving her petals to her comrades, for she was sorry to leave them.

They passed over many, many countries, and saw wonders that the little Blossom had never even dreamed of. “I shall have more to tell the Mountain when I get there,” she thought, and she took everything in.

“You had better let me leave you here,” said the Wind. “You will have perpetual summer, and refreshing dews at night, and I shall come once a year to see you and give you news of your friends.” The little Flower looked down. They were hovering over a garden; there were splashing fountains, and groves of palms and tree-ferns, while flowers of every kind and colour bore witness to the care with which they were tended.



Two lovely women were standing on a flight of moss-grown steps.





## *Edelweiss*

Two lovely women were standing on a flight of moss-grown steps. "How delicious!" exclaimed one. "Yes, flowers are a passion with me," said the other. "I collect them from all parts of the earth."

For a moment the little Blossom was almost tempted to stay. "But what would the Mountain do?" she asked.

"He doesn't know that you are coming," the Wind objected.

"But he would be as lonely as ever," she answered. "No, I will go on." So they went on. When they crossed the South Pole the cold was terrible. "Hide yourself well in my wings," said the Wind, "or you will never be able to stand it;" but the Wind himself had got warmed by the Equator, so she managed to keep fairly snug.

At last they arrived. "I have brought you a little Blossom," said the Wind to the Mountain. "She heard that you were lonely, and has come to live with you."

The Mountain was really delighted; but he said nothing, so no one knew if he

## *Fantasies*

were pleased or not. "Good-bye," said the Wind. "I shall come and see how you are in a year's time;" and he flew off whistling.

It certainly was very cold, and the little Flower wondered whether she would be able to bear it. "The Bird nearly died of it," she thought, "and he was here only a short time." Soon, however, she began to be conscious that under all that ice and snow a warm heart was beating which was gladdened by her coming, and the thought of that gave her courage.

Meanwhile in the valley, Flora was having the yearly inspection of all the Flowers. "Where is Edelweiss?" she asked, when she missed her.

"She has gone to live with the Mountain," said the other Flowers. "She heard he was lonely."

"I advised her not to do it," said the Bird. "I went there once and I never *shall* forget it;" and he fell into gloomy abstraction.

## *Edelweiss*

When the inspection was over, Flora went to look for Edelweiss. "It is too cold for you here," she said when she had found her; "you had better let me take you back."

"I can stand it," said Edelweiss bravely, though she looked terribly pinched and shivering; "and the Mountain likes to have me."

"Well, I will do what I can for you," said Flora, and she gave her a little white fur coat to keep her warm, and this Edelweiss always wears. "Take care of her," Flora said to the Mountain, as she was leaving; "she has nearly given her life for you."

"I will," he answered in his deep voice. And he does: wherever there is a sheltered nook where she can get all the sunshine, he puts his little Edelweiss; and in the summer when mountaineers climb to the top of his broad back, they always take back a piece of Edelweiss to show those in the valley how high they have been.

## Common Sense

FAR away in the country there is an old house, which for many years was the subject of a lawsuit.

As it couldn't be decided one way or the other, the house was at last deserted and almost fell into ruins. The creepers hung over the windows in long festoons, so that it must have been quite dark inside ; while the carriage-drive was so covered with grass that the gates could not be opened ; but that didn't matter, for no one came there. The apples in the orchard lay where they fell, the hay was never cut from year to year, and in the garden the flowers all ran riot.

But the old house was not so deserted as it looked—a little Mouse lived there. His family had once been of some consequence, having come to England with

## *Common Sense*

William the Conqueror, and had had a "De" before their name, but that was now dropped, though they still retained traces of French descent. They were also celebrated for having once possessed an entire Stilton cheese, and, though this wealth had long ago been squandered, the recollection of it gave them a certain prestige in the neighbourhood.

Moustache, for such was his name, was now the last representative, and had fallen upon evil times, for he could often barely find enough to eat; but he was a universal favourite and had plenty of friends.

In an outhouse in the orchard lived another little mouse, with whom Moustache was on very good terms, and "Brunette," for so he called her, though that was not her real name, was truly a dainty little thing. She was "out," and had already received several offers. An owl and a snake both wished to marry her—this was in order to eat her, but Brunette did not know that.

## *Fantasies*

Moustache himself one day, quite captivated by the entrancing manner in which Brunette had squeaked "Three blind mice," asked her to be his wife; and Brunette whispered, "Yes, if there was something



An owl and a snake both wished to marry her.

nice at the wedding-breakfast." This was a regular facer! for Moustache possessed nothing, except a large house with nothing in it; and in this Brunette showed her admirable common-sense, for two young things can't start in life upon nothing at all.

## *Common Sense*

When he had recovered himself, being a gallant little fellow, Moustache resolved to go forth and seek his fortune, and Brunette promised to wait for him. So one fine morning off he started.



"There is no chance at all for a new-comer," said some of them.

"Emigrate," cried others.

He went first to a farm close by ; but the ricks were full of mice, who were all trying to make a living. "There is no chance at all for a new-comer," said some of them. "Emigrate," cried others ; but Moustache shook his head—he didn't want to go so far



## *Fantasies*

from Brunette. And everywhere it was the same—no mice were wanted.

At last he found his way up to a big town, and there he lived for months, barely making enough to eat, and further than ever from marrying Brunette; and so, after a time, disheartened and discouraged, he fell into evil ways and took to speculating.

It was quite easy. There is a large trap well known to all the mice. In the trap hangs a piece of cheese. If you can succeed in getting the cheese and making off before the door shuts, well and good; if not, you pay the forfeit with your life. Nine times out of ten in taking the cheese you bring down the trap—and this was exactly what happened to Moustache.

He began first by going to look at it; there could be no possible danger in that. Several other mice were looking at it too. "The cheese is larger than usual," they were all saying.

"Is it long since a mouse was caught?" asked Moustache of one of them.

## *Common Sense*

"Some days," was the answer.

His heart gave a bound; then there might be a chance—the trap would probably have got rusty and wouldn't work. "I suppose the risk is tremendous?" he said, trying to appear cool.

"It need not be," said the mouse he had spoken to before. "Now I have invented a system which makes escape an absolute certainty, and which I shall be very happy to show you for an inch of candle-end." But Moustache was not possessed of such means; he only wished he was!

"Then I suppose *you* go in and out whenever you like?" he said admiringly.

"Well, no," replied the other, looking rather confused; "you see, being rheumatic I am not sufficiently agile; but for a young active mouse like you there would be no danger at all."

Moustache went home again wondering how he could manage to get an inch of candle-end. "It would be almost as easy to get the cheese itself," he thought. At

## *Fantasies*

last, by some lucky chance, he found a crumb of seed-cake. He was hungry, but, instead of eating it, he carried it near the trap, hoping to find the mouse there—yes, there he was, trying to induce another



"Well, no," replied the other, looking rather confused.

mouse to buy his "system." "You are flinging away an absolute certainty," he was saying.

Moustache laid the crumb of seed-cake at his feet. "I am ashamed to offer you such a trifle," he said apologetically—"it

## *Common Sense*

is all I have ; but if you will explain your system to me, I will undertake to give you half the cheese when I get it."

"I very much prefer being paid on the spot," said the other mouse sharply. "Can you swear that this is all that you possess?"

"I swear it," said Moustache sadly, feeling very hungry indeed.

"Very well then, I must make an exception in your favour," and here he led Moustache out of earshot. "This is the system," he said. "You crawl through the door as close to the ground as possible ; then once inside the trap, you raise yourself on your hind legs, fix your teeth in the cheese and work it gently off the wire, at the same time coiling your tail round the wire, to keep it steady and prevent any movement from bringing down the trap. Having got the cheese, you crawl out as before, leaving your tail coiled round the wire until you are at least a yard outside."

"But how can my tail—" began Moustache, bewildered.

## *Fantasies*

"I have explained the system," interrupted the other coldly, "which is more than most mice would have done for a crumb of seed-cake. If you don't choose to benefit by it, I can only beg that you will not disclose it to any one else;" and he went off apparently offended, taking the seed-cake with him.

"I must be a great dunce," thought Moustache, "for this system is quite beyond me. I should have thought that the best plan was to be as quick as possible."

He went and looked at the trap again; if he could get the cheese, Brunette would marry him at once. After all it was worth the risk. He hesitated one moment—thought of Brunette and the merry days they had had together; thought of the old home which had been the cradle of his race; thought of the owl and the snake—and then in he dashed.

Bang! went the trap. Moustache was caught. After an hour or two he was taken out and thrown to the cat, who made short

## *Common Sense*

work of him ; every one said that it was a pity, for he was a fine little fellow and had plenty of good in him.

Brunette, after hearing the news, married the snake, and was devoured at the wedding-



Brunette, after hearing the news, married the snake.

breakfast ; which was not what she had expected.

Some time afterwards some one died, which settled the lawsuit, and the old house was restored and people came to live there. Finding the garden overrun with snakes

## *Fantasies*

and creeping things, they turned peacocks into it, who soon made a clearance of them ; and I have reason to believe that Brunette's snake was one of the earliest victims, which would have gratified Moustache if he had known.

## To Jupiter and Back— Carriage Free

THERE was once a German Professor, who having, by great luck, been born in a pair of spectacles, had in consequence a genius for scientific research, and was much esteemed for his cleverness.

No subject was too humble to receive the powers of his great mind, and he had amongst other things invented a plan for boiling an egg with the aid of gunpowder, which he reckoned would take one-sixtieth of the usual time. He was in the act one day of putting this theory into practice, when suddenly an explosion occurred. No one knew how it happened—it was something in the egg perhaps; but at all events the Professor was shot so high that he found himself caught upon the tail of a passing



## *Fantasies*

comet. "Charming!" said the Professor, hanging head downwards. "I have now a complete bird's-eye view of the universe." And he entered several observations in his note-book.

The comet, shortly after this, passing over Jupiter, which planet the Professor at once recognised, it occurred to him to land for the purpose of making further discoveries. With this idea he leapt down and was immediately received into the crater of a volcano, which fortunately happened to be extinct.

Scrambling out none the worse, he made a few rapid observations, at the same time filling his pockets with lava and pumice-stone with the intention of founding a museum upon his return. He had already sketched the outlines of a lecture upon the subject, when upon turning a corner suddenly he found himself face to face with a gigantic Megatherium.

This animal, which is extinct upon earth, still enjoys full activity in the planet of

## *To Jupiter and Back*

Jupiter. It is about twice the size of an ordinary elephant, and lives by preference upon rose-buds; when they are not to be obtained, however, it becomes strictly impartial in its diet and will eat anything.

The Professor was enraptured; never in his wildest dreams had he imagined a moment of such bliss! Seating himself upon a rock, he got out his pencil and began a rough sketch, when the Megatherium, who had watched him with astonishment, suddenly advancing with a roar, compelled him to beat a hasty retreat.

Having great presence of mind, and being perfectly acquainted with the tastes and habits of the animal, the Professor fortunately recollected that his wife that morning had put a rose-bud in his button-hole. Yes, there it was, as fresh as ever! He took it out, and fixing the huge beast with his spectacles, with calm dignity offered it the rose.

The effect was magical! In a moment the monster became as quiet as a lamb,

## *Fantasies*

not to say affectionate, for it was quite a month since roses had bloomed in Jupiter ; and the Professor was enabled without fear to take a footrule from his pocket and note its exact proportions.

Having made a complete survey of the Megatherium, the Professor, who had never been so happy in his life, walked on, leaving the great beast looking after him sadly, and soon found himself at the edge of a vast plain extending for miles and miles in all directions. The heat was tremendous ; behind him the mountains gleamed like brass, while everywhere the ground was the colour of rust, and so hot that it burnt his shoes. Huge lizards, the size of crocodiles, lay basking on the sand ; but they were quiet, inoffensive creatures, and never even troubled to open an eye while he measured them accurately from head to tail.

Seeing a cloud of steam in the distance, the Professor went towards it, and soon found that it arose from a lake of boiling

## *To Jupiter and Back*

water—for this is all that there is to drink in Jupiter. He at once took the temperature, with a view to the boiling of eggs in future; for he thought, “If the supply of gunpowder should run short upon earth, it might be a possible substitute.” Here he suddenly caught sight of the footprint of an enormous bird on the margin of the lake, with claws at least two feet long, and could hardly contain his emotion. “This must be the great Dinornis,” he exclaimed; “how *deeply* interesting!” And he was kneeling down to measure the footprint, when an enormous beak suddenly seized him by the coat-tails and hurled, yes, literally hurled him into space!

. . . . .

When he came to, he was lying in a darkened room, with a wet towel round his head. “What surprising vigour these birds have,” he said. “About seven hundred million horse-power, I should think.”

“You really should be more careful of the sun, Gustav,” his wife’s voice was saying.

## *Fantasies*

“The Sun!” exclaimed the Professor.  
“It was Jupiter.”

“Jupiter or the Sun, what does it matter?” said his wife; “it has certainly affected your head.” So the museum never was founded after all.

## Absent without Leave

EVERY one knows that butterflies are only flowers out on leave; and you will see for yourself that this is true, because in the winter, when there are no flowers, there are no butterflies either.

Every now and then Flora gives her flowers a holiday, and they take it in turns to go; and that is why you very seldom see a bush entirely covered with blossom, except in hothouses, where they can't get out, and may just as well stay on their stalks as not. But they all have the strictest orders to be home by sunset, for if the dew fell on them and spoilt their wings, the gardener, seeing them on their stalks next day, would complain that they were faded.

The only things, in fact, that can go about safely at night are the mushrooms

## *Fantasies*

and toadstools, which take the form of great white and brown moths, and this is because they do all their growing at night and can therefore see in the dark ; their wings are also thicker and heavier. The bad flowers, such as nettles and deadly-nightshade, become gnats and mosquitoes, and still retain their power to hurt ; while the berries turn into ladybirds and beetles.

. . . . .  
In a garden in the depths of the country, there is an old orangery.

At one end of it is a fernery filled with ferns and begonias, and round the walls of it climb geraniums and citrons and heliotrope—everything, in fact, but oranges ! From the light rafters overhead hang festoons of yellow Banksia roses ; and on the occasion of a garden-party, tea is always laid in there. During the day the door and windows are left open, so that the flowers can get in and out ; but these are shut at night on account of the cold.

There was to be a garden-party next

## *Absent without Leave*

day, and all the flowers had orders to look their best on the occasion ; but meanwhile they were allowed out on leave, and one of the little Banksia roses, having taken the form of a yellow butterfly, was sailing out merrily into the sunshine.

She winged her way over the garden, stopping at all the roses as she passed, for the least she could do was to visit those who had to stay at home. Then she flew over the yew hedge into the walled garden ; here were espaliers of fruit-trees laden with blossom, and rows of tall Mary-lilies just coming into bloom, and she alighted on each, for they were all well acquainted with her family, the fruit-blossoms in particular being a kind of distant cousins.

She trifled about till nearly sunset, even going as far as the village to speak to a honeysuckle that she knew, when, as she was winging her way home, she heard herself called. It was a pansy who was going about in the shape of a lovely "peacock" butterfly.



## *Fantasies*

"I am *so* sorry to trouble you," said the "Peacock"; "but I have to go so much farther than you, and I particularly wish to send a message to a young dragon-fly at the pond, to whom I am engaged. *Could* you take it for me?"

"I am afraid," said the Yellow Butterfly, hesitating. "It is already so late." But the other looked so much distressed that at last she consented.

The dragon-fly, who was really an iris, was pretty sure to be found near the pond, for they are hardier than the butterflies, and can therefore stay out later. He was not there, however, nor could the water-lilies tell her anything about him. "I can't wait," said the Butterfly, so she left the message with them, and they promised faithfully to deliver it.

She flew home as fast as her wings could carry her; but, alas! the windows were already shut. What should she do? She beat her little wings frantically against the glass in her efforts to get in; and there,



THE WALLED GARDEN.



## *Absent without Leave*

later on, one of Flora's nymphs found her, and handed her over to a Blue-bottle, who took her in charge, for he was the policeman.

Next morning when Flora held her court, the Butterfly was placed on trial and charged with having been "absent without leave"; but when the court opened there were two or three other cases which had to be heard first, so she remained in charge of the Blue-bottle. She was very unhappy, for she knew that she had a poor chance on account of her offence having been committed just before a garden-party, when the rules are, of course, stricter than usual; and she looked forward with terror to nothing less than being made into pot-pourri.

There were several lookers-on, for the public were admitted to the court, and amongst them was a Thrush. "It is a hard case that of the Yellow Butterfly's," he said to a Linnet who was near him. "She was on her way home last night in good time, when one of those 'peacock'

## *Fantasies*

butterflies met her and persuaded her into taking a message for her, and out of pure good-nature she consented. I was in a bush close by and heard the whole thing. The consequence was that it made her late and she got locked out. I am afraid it will go hardly with her."

"Is that the case?" said the Linnet; and he went to the Yellow Butterfly and asked her who had undertaken her defence.

"No one," said the Butterfly, with drooping wings. "I don't know a creature here."

"Then I will," said the Linnet, for he was practised in the law and could plead eloquently.

The case came on, the Nymph and the Blue-bottle both gave evidence, and every one looked upon the Butterfly as sentenced already, when suddenly her champion, stepping forward, pleaded her cause with such fire and eloquence that he managed to obtain her release, and the Butterfly was dismissed with a caution. Nor would he consent to take any fee.

## *Absent without Leave*

The Butterfly tried brokenly to express her thanks. "You have covered yourself with distinction," said the Thrush, after congratulating the Butterfly. "I never heard finer pleading in my life." And the Linnet became famous from that day.

The Butterfly flew home, and on to her stalk again with quivering wings, for she was still much upset by her fright, and was received with delight by her family, who had been terribly anxious about her.

So the Banksia roses were all at the garden-party and were immensely admired, in spite of the water-lilies who covered the tea-table, and tried hard to cut them out.

The Pansy never heard what had happened ; perhaps she didn't want to !

## Grandes Dames

THERE were once two very great ladies indeed : they were a Pearl and a Turquoise, and they frequently met in society.

The Pearl was the result of a disease on the part of an oyster ; while the Turquoise was in reality the tooth of a wild animal which, having fallen on a particular kind of soil, had, in decaying, produced this lovely effect ; but, as these subjects were never mentioned, each of them supposed that no one knew it, and you would certainly never have guessed it from their appearance.

The Pearl was fair and delicate, with a caressing manner, and much given to musing ; her friends called her “ Marguerite.” The Turquoise was of a more pronounced type of beauty, and was therefore more

## *Grandes Dames*

affected by changes of fashion ; just at present she was very much admired.

One day a Society Journal published something about an oyster in connection with a pearl. The Pearl immediately sent out and bought up every copy ; but it was too late, the news had already reached the ears of her rival.

The Pearl thought it best to divert the attention of society, so she decided to give a ball ; all the Stones came, and it was a most brilliant affair.

The Pearl was looking lovely, and was more sweet and caressing than ever. During the evening she carelessly let fall something about an "old tooth," in the hearing of the Turquoise. The Turquoise turned green ; she affected not to hear, but she was in reality in great alarm.

After this the Turquoise shut herself up for some time ; it was stated that she was writing the pedigree of the Turquoise family, in two large volumes. "I should have thought that it might have been



## *Fantasies*

published in pamphlet form," said the Pearl languidly.

When it came out everybody read it. There was not a word about an old tooth in it; on the contrary, it appeared that the Turquoises were of the highest descent—not to say meteoric.

The Pearl shortly after this left town. The Turquoise gave out that she had gone to stay with "her relations the oysters"; but she had, in fact, gone to Paris.

From there she sent to the Editor of a Society Journal, a London Sparrow well up in all the gossip of the town, and rather a celebrity in his way, requesting him to interview her personally.

The Editor replied that his terms for a personal interview of twenty minutes were five quartern loaves, besides his travelling expenses.

The Pearl answered loftily that that was of no consequence; and indeed she was very rich, having been left a large

## *Grandes Dames*

fortune by her late husband, a black pearl of some standing.

A week or two later the Society Journal had to double its usual issue, for everybody wanted to read the interview between the Pearl and the Editor, and there was quite a run on the office.

In the article the Sparrow stated that being unable to obtain an interview with the Pearl in London on account of her numerous engagements, he had followed her to Paris, where she had been kind enough to accord him twenty minutes. The Sparrow, who was clearly rather dazzled, wrote eloquently of her charm of manner and beautiful appearance. "But these," he said, "are only natural, considering that Madame is a lineal descendant of Cleopatra's famous pearl, which, as every one knows, was brought by Diana herself direct from the moon."

The Turquoise couldn't contain her laughter. "What a romance!" she said.

"I wonder how much she paid for it?"

## *Fantasies*

said a young Topaz, with a flash of illumination.

"Thousands," said everybody.

When the Pearl came back she was received with covert smiles ; every one was talking of the interview. "Yes," said the Pearl, in her languid drawl ; "the dreadful creature bothered me so much that at last I really had to see him, and he has written such nonsense about me. *Such* nonsense !" she repeated, with a deprecating smile.

"So the Turquoise thought," said a young Garnet, delighted to make mischief.

"Ah, she is always amiable," said the Pearl briefly.

"I always thought the Pearl frightfully overrated," said the Turquoise at an "at home", one afternoon, at which the Pearl was not present.

"So affected," said a Moonstone.

"So colourless," said a Coral.

"Wanting in depth," said an Emerald.

"And a little gone off, don't you think?"

## *Grandes Dames*

said the Topaz, who was beginning to fade himself.

“Wanting in style,” said a Carbuncle.

“But then her father was only a diseased oyster,” said the Turquoise.

A great Diamond, who had been listening with an amused smile, now roused himself and spoke for the first time. “I hope soon,” he said quietly and rather severely, “to have the honour of calling the Pearl my wife. She has faults—who has not? But she also has charms which few can equal and no one deny.”

Every one murmured something in which the words “congratulate” and “so sweet” were all that could be distinguished, and the party broke up early. But there was no mention of oysters after that, and the Pearl became more popular than ever.

Shortly after the Diamond and the Pearl were united, and, as he was of the very first water, it was considered a brilliant match for her. The Turquoise became so green that she was taken out of the brooch

## *Fantasies*

in which she was set, and replaced by a Peridot ; for turquoises were going out of fashion, on account, it was said, of its being found that they were nothing but old teeth.

And she still lies forgotten in a drawer.

## The Key to Success

THERE is a king who has three fair daughters, and the youngest is the fairest of all. The king is old Father Time, and his daughters are Yesterday, To-day, and To-morrow, and To-morrow is the fairest of all.

A young man ardently wished to be rich and famous. "Time alone can bring that," said all his friends; so he resolved to seek old Father Time to see if he could hasten matters.

"Where does he live?" he inquired of every one he met.

"In the moon, probably," they all answered; so one night, when the moon flung a path of silver down to earth, he climbed and climbed until he reached old Father Time's kingdom.

## *Fantasies*

Fortunately he happened to be at home. "Here is a mortal," said old Father Time, catching sight of him. "What does he want?"

"Success," said the Youth, advancing boldly.

"It is a jewel kept in a locked casket," said the old king, "and one of my daughters has the key."

"May I be allowed to know which?"

"No," said old Father Time; "every one must find out for himself."

The three daughters were standing a little apart with their faces to the east, watching for the first sunbeam, for the moment it came it would be time for To-day to fly down to earth. She was shaking her wings in preparation, and Yesterday and To-morrow were giving her messages to take to mortals down below. "Tell them that I have warned them," Yesterday was saying.

"Tell them that I promise them," said To-morrow, when the young man suddenly



Watching for the first sunbeam.





## *The Key to Success*

appeared. "Here is a mortal," said To-morrow; "what has he come for?"

"For the key of the casket which holds a jewel called Success," he answered, looking wistfully from one sister to the other to see if any gave signs of having the key.

To-morrow smiled radiantly. "She must have it," thought the Youth. Then he glanced at To-day; she looked more common-place than the others, and took no notice of him; while Yesterday, the eldest of the three, turned away and sighed; she was veiled, which perhaps made her look lovelier than she really was.

\* At that moment the first sunbeam shot across the sky, and To-day spread her wings and flew down to earth.

"So you want the key to success?" said To-morrow gaily, turning to the Youth. "What will you give me for it?"

"Anything! Everything!" he cried impetuously.

"Your life? your soul? your honour?" she asked, holding him imperiously with

## *Fantasies*

her magic eyes. Yesterday gave one glance at her and then flew sadly away.

"All that I have to give," he said recklessly.

"Then follow me," said To-morrow, tripping lightly ahead.

They passed through gardens of magic roses, through forests of scented trees, by fountains from which jewels fell back in spray, and wherever they went To-morrow still led the way. "Stay for nothing," she cried imperiously when he was inclined to linger. "I will give you lovelier sights and sweeter scents than these." And he followed on. Gradually the road became rougher and more stony; but To-morrow pointed with her finger to where a star shone in the far distance. "There is the casket," she cried; "have no fear." And she still flitted ahead.

The young man followed her; but his steps were halting and stumbling, for he was getting footsore, and the road was steep and slippery, and skirted with thorn



The young man followed her, but his steps were halting and stumbling.



## *The Key to Success*

bushes—but what matter? It led to success.

“Help me,” cried a little child, who had fallen by the wayside and was hurt.

“Stay for nothing,” cried To-morrow, waving him imperiously forward, and the young man hung his head and passed.

The day grew dark, and thunder-clouds began to roll. “Revenge me,” cried a woman, pointing to a thief in the distance; “he has robbed me of all I had.”

The man glanced at To-morrow. “I regret exceedingly, Madam,” he said to the woman, “that I have not sufficient leisure to attend to your affairs.”

To-morrow was still ahead, but the star was growing very bright. “It can’t be far off now,” he thought.

The lightning flashed and the rain descended in sheets; the man could no longer walk as he did, for he was growing old, but To-morrow had no mercy. “You must hasten,” she said, “or you will die before you reach it.”

## *Fantasies*

He cut himself a staff and dragged his weary limbs along. Bats flitted through

the twilight, and serpents hissed around his path.

"Was it worth while?" he asked himself, as his dim eyes sought the star that still hung radiant.

"Faster," said To-morrow; "there must be no delay," and she beckoned him on. His breath came in gasps, and his knees shook under him—he couldn't have



On the altar was a casket.

held out much longer, but at last the goal was reached.

## *The Key to Success*

In the centre of an enormous bare plain, utterly destitute of any living thing, animal or vegetable, stood a kind of altar ; and on the altar was a casket, from the lid of which streamed a flood of light.

Beside the altar stood To-morrow, waiting. "Here is the key," she said, handing it to him.

The old man took it in his trembling fingers and tried to insert it in the lock, but his sight was dim and he was slow. At last the key turned, and the lid flew open. . . . The casket was empty.

There was a merry peal of laughter, and To-morrow had vanished. In her place stood To-day, and her face was terrible to see. "You should have sought it on earth," she said. "The casket is there, and it is I who hold the key."

She beckoned to Yesterday. "Take him," she said ; "he is dead." And Yesterday gently covered him with her veil.



## How Demeter's Nose was Broken

IT was a big night at the British Museum. Demeter, the great statue who has an alcove all to herself, was giving an "At home," and all London had been invited. Apollo, who lives in the alcove opposite, had helped her to make out the list of invitations, and there had been great discussions as to who should be asked, but at last everything was settled.

It had been arranged that, as space was limited, the equestrian statues should dismount in the court-yard, and leave their horses to the care of the lions from Trafalgar Square, who were to be on guard ; and Nelson and the Duke of York had been requested to leave their columns behind. The Monument and Cleopatra's Needle had to be



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## *How Demeter's Nose was Broken*

invited as a matter of form, but each had sent excuses, which was just as well.

There was a long debate between Demeter and Apollo, as to whether the mummies should be included, for they were dreadfully excitable, having once been really alive ; but being under the same roof they couldn't well be left out, so Demeter decided to ask three of the quietest. However, the minute the mummies heard that there was going to be a party, they sent to say that they would *all* be delighted to come.

"I do hope they will behave themselves," said Demeter, looking at Apollo.

• "The lions will be in the court-yard," he replied ; "and if there is any sign of a disturbance we can have one of them in."

There was to be a separate entertainment on their own floor for the little Greek and Etruscan statuettes upstairs, for being only ten or twelve inches high, the difficulty of getting downstairs, and the risk of breakages, would be too great ; the waxworks from Madame Tussaud's had also been asked, and

## *Fantasies*

were coming, except those in the Chamber of Horrors; "One must draw the line somewhere," said Demeter. The lions and unicorns from all London were to range themselves on the steps at the entrance, according to height, and present arms to the crowned heads as they arrived, which as the lions were gilt, and the unicorns had gold horns and chains, would have a very pretty effect.

Supper was to be laid in the Reading-Room, which had been cleared for the purpose—cleared of everything, particularly the students; and the dolphins from the Embankment were coming to wait. In fact, nothing appeared better than all the arrangements, but Demeter still looked disturbed.

"It is those mummies," she said to Apollo when he questioned her. "If one of them should do anything to Achilles, it would be too dreadful—he is so touchy." For Achilles, living as he did just opposite Hyde Park Corner, was accustomed to the best society,

## *How Demeter's Nose was Broken*

and was known to be exceedingly particular.

"You say he has never been here before?" said Apollo thoughtfully.

"No," replied Demeter; "he generally refuses to come so far east."

"Venus must take him in hand," said Cupid, who had strolled in to listen; and Venus, who had overheard, laughed and nodded, "Leave him to me."

The great night was come, and with it all the guests. Demeter, with her gentle, gracious dignity, was shaking hands right and left, and Cupid was wandering about saying charming things to every one, and helping with Apollo to see that all went right. The mummies had been the first to arrive, but were behaving decorously so far. There was a faint cheer outside. Gog and Magog were come from the Guildhall, and had been recognised by the crowd; and the Egyptian Gallery was soon crammed with celebrities.

"I am considered the finest equestrian

## *Fantasies*

statue in London," George the Third was saying to the old Duke of Wellington, who faces Apsley House.

"Ah," said the old Duke dryly; "and the French say that I avenge Waterloo."

Venus passed with Achilles. "I am at least a thousand years older than you," she was saying coquettishly, looking bewitchingly young and lovely; and Achilles was too much taken up to even glance at the mummies. "It is going off splendidly," said Apollo to Demeter when they met in the crowd, and Demeter nodded and smiled.

A younger brother of Cupid's, who had lately taken up his residence on a fountain at Piccadilly Circus, was being a good deal bantered. "Why do you always aim straight into a portmanteau shop?" he was asked.

"Love is blind," said some one.

"I represent Charity," he said demurely, and there was a shout of laughter, in which he good-humouredly joined.

A mummy was telling old Madame

## *How Demeter's Nose was Broken*

Tussaud the history of her life. "You have no idea what a pathetic love-story mine was," she was beginning, when a curious noise was heard outside. It was at first a confused roar, but presently could be heard cries of "Let us in! We will have our rights!"

"It reminds me of the Revolution," said old Madame Tussaud, beginning to tremble.

Apollo, on going to see what was the matter, found the court-yard filled with a dense mob, consisting of all the Barbers' Blocks in London, with a sprinkling of Highlanders from the tobacconists. "Let us in! We will have our rights! It's a free institooshun!" they were shouting, and the lions from Trafalgar Square were vainly trying to keep order.

"Nonsense," said Apollo, addressing them from the steps. "This is a private reception, and can only be attended by invitation. The Museum is only open to the public during the daytime between fixed hours, and you know that as well as I do."



## *Fantasies*

"Why, you've got half London here," said a Barber's Block; "if that ain't the public I don't know what is."

"Eh, mon, but I hear there's grand whisky inside," said a tobacconist's Highlander.

"Oh, do give them something and send them away," said Demeter, who had come out on the steps with some of the guests, and was dreadfully frightened.

"Don't hurry yourself, Marm," said one of the Blocks sarcastically; "but when you've quite done with the Museum, perhaps you'll be kind enough to let us and our ladies walk round and inspect the cases, free of charge, as per usual. We shan't touch nothing of yours, you may be *quite* sure."

"I wants to see some books most per-tickler," said another.

"Oh, good gracious! Where are the books?" said Demeter distractedly.

"Piled in heaps on the floor of the ceramic section," said Apollo; "but they can't see them without an order. You must each get

## *How Demeter's Nose was Broken*

an order for the Reading-Room," he said, turning to the crowd, "signed by a London householder attesting your respectability."

"We *are* respectable," was the reply ; "a deal more respectable than that Venus you've got in there."

"*Oh!*" said Demeter, too much shocked for words.

"If you don't call off those lions, I'll have you summonsed for assault," said a voice.

"If you don't leave at once I shall give the order to charge," retorted Apollo.

"Oh, *don't* irritate them," said Demeter imploringly. "I do hope Achilles knows 'nothing of all this," she added, looking round for him.

"He's all right," said Cupid's younger brother, who was at her elbow. "I saw him in the supper-room with Venus not five minutes ago." Most of the principal guests, including all the crowned heads, were there too, which was a mercy, for being quite at the back of the building they couldn't hear what was going on.

## *Fantasies*

At this moment a mummied cat lost its head with excitement, and went spinning round and round like a teetotum, shouting "Vive la gloire!"

"Remove that cat," said Demeter sternly, and it was carried off struggling by the two pointers from Ulster House.

But worse was to follow, for in the hustling caused by this incident, a unicorn by some accident got his horn under the body of another mummied cat standing on the step above him, and pitchforked it clean out on to the heads of the crowd below.

"Here, they're a-flinging dead cats at us," said the Barbers' Blocks indignantly.

"Hoot awa'," cried the Highlanders, and there was an ugly rush up the steps.

"Get back into the hall," said Apollo quickly to the ladies, and they scurried in while he protected their retreat.

Just then the crowd was reinforced by a detachment of Figure-heads from the docks—very rough customers these. "Shut the gates," roared Magog, when he saw what

## *How Demeter's Nose was Broken*

was happening ; but it was too late—the Figure-heads were already surging through, for the lions couldn't do everything, and they had to manage the horses as well. The struggle went on ; Apollo and Magog were driven back disputing each step of the way, and the crowd had already gained a footing in the Museum. At this appalling crisis the electric light suddenly went out, which is exactly what one might have expected, and the combat was continued in total darkness.

When day dawned, and it was time for the Barbers' Blocks and the Highlanders to return to their work, the inhabitants of the Museum were left in a shocking condition. Demeter's nose was found to be badly chipped, and she had lost both arms, while some of the other statues were simply in fragments.

The authorities of the Museum, on learning what had happened, were naturally horrified at the scandal, and, to hush it up, at once invented a beautiful legend, to

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the effect that these accidents occurred in Greece before the statues ever arrived here, and if you ask the attendants they will tell you so. But you and I know better ; they were all the result of Demeter's "At home."

## The Twelfth Mass

ONCE long ago there was a Musician who was very poor, and had a hard struggle to earn a livelihood. He gave violin lessons and taught harmony, but as his coat grew shabbier his pupils became fewer, for the people of the town where he lived naturally preferred having their sons and daughters taught by some one who was rather better dressed and less starved-looking. So the poor Musician's prospects went from bad to worse, and his face grew more sad and hopeless every day.

One night, when things were at their worst, an Angel came to him in a dream and said, "Choose—either to be celebrated yourself while your works shall be easily surpassed by those of others, or to compose one work so great that the fame of it shall

## *Fantasies*

last to the end of the world, while you yourself remain unknown."

The Musician awoke with such a vivid recollection of his dream, that all day long it seemed as if he heard the Angel, with his sweet serious face, saying to him, "Choose." He had composed many things, but on account of his poverty-stricken appearance, and his being entirely unknown, no publisher had even taken the trouble to glance over them; they had merit, he was sure of that, but nothing that would remain famous to the end of the world. And yet he felt great powers within him.

He took the old manuscripts out of a portfolio and looked at them, and recalled the bitter disappointment he had had over each, for he had once had dreams of fame, when his name should be on every lip and his works known throughout every land; how bitterly he laughed when he remembered that! Suppose such a choice really did lie before him—what would he say? He wandered about restless and miserable,

## *The Twelfth Mass*

tormenting himself with this question, and too much preoccupied to think of settling down to work ; and more often than not he forgot to take any food—besides it was an economy not to eat till one absolutely had to. And this went on for two days.

At the end of the second day, suddenly becoming conscious that he was exhausted and tired out, the Musician turned into the cathedral to rest a minute or two ; evensong was just over, and the organist was playing a voluntary while the lights were being put out. Two or three people had stayed to listen, and the Musician waited too, and then, when the last light was extinguished, and the last mellow note had throbbed upon the air and died away amongst the arches, he found the answer to the question that had been haunting him so long. He flung himself upon his knees before a side-altar, and with quivering lips cried, "Give me, O Lord, the power to express, even though dimly, Thy glory, and love, and sorrow, so that the world may understand, and I



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renounce all earthly fame, even life itself if need be." He knelt until the echo of the last footfall had died away, and then, soothed and strengthened, he rose and went home with his heart full of great thoughts.

He took up his pen and began to write, while mighty harmonies shaped themselves clearly and distinctly in his brain, almost as though they were dictated to him—"And yet I have never heard it before," he said to himself wonderingly. Far on into the night he wrote, afraid lest if it were interrupted the inspiration should cease, and towards morning, quite worn out, he lay down for two or three hours' sleep.

He set to work again the moment he awoke, for so much remained to be done, and the kind-hearted old landlady, with whom he lodged, found him still writing when she came up later on to know if he had had any breakfast. "I don't think I want any," said the Musician; "I am so very busy just now." So the old landlady

## *The Twelfth Mass*

went away to find something to tempt him when he had leisure.

An hour or two later a friend burst into the room. "Well, old fellow," he cried joyously, "I've got something for you at last! The second violin of the duke's orchestra is ill, and the man they have in his place has quarrelled with the conductor, who asked me if I knew of any one else, as he would be glad to get rid of him, and I thought directly of you. If you get it you will probably be taken on for the rest of the season, which will give you a chance at last; but you must come at once, as they are rehearsing for the concert to-night."

"Thanks very much," said the Musician, "but I am afraid I am too busy."

"Busy!" echoed the other, surprised. "Oh, I see, spoiling more paper. But that can wait."

"I am afraid not," said the Musician, raising his head with a weary smile. He knew that if he once left off the inspiration would never come back.

## *Fantasies*

“Oh well,” said his friend contemptuously, “you know your own affairs best ; there is no helping those who won’t help themselves.” And he went out and shut the door with rather a bang, and whistled crossly as he ran downstairs.

The Musician went on writing ; he had it all in his head, the themes for the Kyrie and the Gloria, and the plaintive modulations of the Agnus Dei, for it was a Mass that he was composing. He wrote with feverish haste, for he was afraid that his strength might fail ; want of sleep and food had flushed his cheek and made his eyes strangely bright. The landlady was in dismay when, on coming to take away the tray of dainties she had sent up, she found them still untouched.

“Oh yes,” said the Musician, passing his hand over his brow with a weary gesture ; “I am so sorry. I meant to eat them, but I forgot.”

The next day it was the same ; he ate a little when he remembered it, which was

## *The Twelfth Mass*

not often, and the following night his work was so nearly done that it was scarcely worth while to leave off until it was finished, though by this time he was very very weary, and the notes all seemed to be swimming about in his head.

At last it was finished, full, complete ; and the Musician laid his throbbing head upon his arms and slept. And there, when the candle had burnt down into the socket, and the chill grey dawn came stealing through the chinks of the shutters, an Angel came to take the pen from his tired fingers and rest his weary brain.

•No one came to claim his belongings, so they were sold to pay the expenses of the funeral, and the little that remained over was kept by the landlady in payment of a month's lodging that her tenant had owed her. There had not been much—a little furniture, two suits of clothes very much the worse for wear, an old violin, and some manuscript music. The music the landlady put away in a cupboard,

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not supposing it to be of the slightest value, and the other things went to the sale.

The violin was bought by a dealer for a mere song, though he afterwards declared it to be a genuine Amati, and resold it for an enormous sum, and after passing through two or three hands, it came into the possession of a rich amateur, who had a high opinion of it. However, one day in discussing it with some musical critics, one of them threw a doubt upon its being quite genuine. The owner of it was indignant, and on the other remaining unconvinced, resolved to discover its previous history as far as he could, in order to leave no possibility of doubt.

He had no difficulty in tracing it to the dealer who had bought it at the sale, though it was many years after; and from him he learnt the name of the house where the Musician had lodged, for the dealer had known him slightly. When, however, he went to the house and inquired of the old landlady what she had known concerning her late lodger, he learnt very little, for

## *The Twelfth Mass*

the landlady knew nothing of his history, though she was loud in her praises of him personally. "I have some bits of his music upstairs now, sir," she said, struck by a sudden recollection, "if you would like to look at them? Just odds and ends like, such as he worked himself to death over," and she bustled off to fetch them.

When they were brought, her visitor looked them over carelessly, for the Musician had never been known in any way as a composer, but there was one Mass that caught his attention. "Do you think that he wrote this himself?" he asked.

• "I am sure he did, sir," said the landlady; "for it was lying just under his hand when we found him, and he had been writing hard for days."

"I will give you five pounds for it," said the amateur, and the landlady, thinking this decidedly a fancy price, readily agreed to part with it.

The amateur having gone into the manuscript thoroughly, thought so well of it that

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he sent it to a great composer who was then world-renowned, and a friend of his. "I am sending you a treasure-trove," he wrote with it; "a composition which is almost worthy of you." The composer thanked his friend, put the manuscript into a drawer, for he was busy, and forgot it. And there it lay for seven years.

At last one day, in looking for something else, the great master came across it again. He took it up and hummed the principal themes; he sat down fascinated and played it; he put on his hat and carried it to the choirmaster of the cathedral. "Here is something for your Easter celebration," he said.

"Ah, you have had time to write us something after all!" said the choirmaster jubilantly.

"No, it is not mine," said the composer. "It was sent me years ago by a friend who is now dead. It is supposed to be by a young violinist who died soon after composing it—he mentioned the name, but I

## *The Twelfth Mass*

have forgotten, and there is no means now of finding out."

So the Mass was performed in the cathedral on Easter Sunday; and as the grand opening unisons of that mighty Gloria fell upon the air, those who heard it listened breathless, entranced, exalted, until the last echo had fallen into silence. Then they roused themselves with a sigh. "It was like a vision of Paradise," they said afterwards.

More than a hundred years have passed since then, but it still stands unsurpassable, unapproachable, grand in its simplicity, the most glorious Mass that ever was penned. And if you ask who wrote it? "No one quite knows," some one will answer; "but it was not Mozart after all," for it had long passed under his name.

But the violinist was surely not without his reward, for as his spirit mounted up to Heaven, "Gloria tibi Domine," sang the Angels, and they sang it in the strains of that Gloria that he knew so well.



## *Fantasies*

I have written the story, not of one musician, but of thousands ; for Music is not an art, but a religion, and they who succeed in it are those who, regarding themselves as its consecrated priests, are ready to renounce earthly joys, and sacrifice their lives, if need be, in its service. For the least of the inspirations of God is far beyond the greatest of our endeavours, and such can only enter a heart emptied of all human desires.

And what matter leaving the frets and discords of this earthly life, if when an angel - voice shall gently whisper, " In nomine Dei æternam pax," we rise to find their perfect resolution in the great Harmony above ?

THE END





