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How to Find Happyland.

Van Dresser.
Illustrated by F. E. Storer.



CONTENTS:

THE THIRTEEN JEWELLED LETTERS	3
HOW GREED DESTROYED ITSELF	8
THE WONDERFUL CASTLE OF CAUSE AND EFFECT	14
THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD	18
HOW A FOOLISH WOLF LEARNED TO BE SATISFIED	25
THE PRINCESS'S LOOKING GLASS	29
THE BEST THING THAT BEGINS WITH "O"	34
THE LITTLE GOLD RING THAT KNEW ONE'S THOUGHTS	40
THE TREE OF LEADEN APPLES	44
THE TALKING STONES	49

DEAR LITTLE FRIENDS. – Would you like to know how I came to send you these stories? Well, first I will say they were written for my little son, and when they were finished I put them away in the drawer thinking they would lie there quietly till he was ready to hear them. But stories are just like children, – they love to go about making people happy.

One day they escaped from their little drawer home and kept coming into my thoughts. All day I allowed them to wander about. thinking that by sundown they would surely go back to their rest; but no such thing happened.

So in the evening, just at children's hour, I asked them what they wished to do.

This is what they answered – "Oh, please, please! Put us into a book and let us go to the homes of little children who need us. They will love us and we can make them very happy. Let us go and we will come back when your little boy is ready for us, and bring him a great many good wishes."

I could not refuse their request, so with love I send them on a visit to you.

THE LITTLE BOY'S MAMA.

The Thirteen Jewelled Letters

ONCE upon a time, for apparently no reason, a little girl lost her name, and no one could tell her where to find it. She asked every one she saw if they knew her name, and each made this strange reply: that there was no telling what wonderful thing one might find, if one searched in the right way.

Well, the little girl determined to search. "For," she said, "I may find a more beautiful name than I had before."

So one day she started out with a basket of luncheon, saying that if she did not succeed she would never come back to her beautiful home, for she felt that she was disgraced.

The first person she met was an old woman, walking with a stick.

"What have you in your basket?" asked the old woman.

"Luncheon," replied the little girl.

"What is your name?" asked the old woman.

"I don't know," answered the little girl. Then she burst out crying for shame; for who would not be ashamed at having lost such a thing as a name?

"Tut, tut!" said the old woman. "Give me your basket of luncheon."

The little girl gave it to her, and received not so much thanks as one might expect; but she was happier than she had been since she lost her name.

As she walked on through the woods she became very hungry, and turned back to see if the old woman had left a wee little crust; but all she found was the old woman's stick.

The little girl cried then, for she used to get what she wanted by crying. But this time she did not get what she wanted; and as there was no one to hear her, she stopped. Moreover, she thought, "My luncheon must have helped the old woman to walk without her stick," and that of course made her feel better.

As she got up from the stone where she was sitting, and started to walk away (not knowing what direction to take), something shining on the ground caught her eye.

Now would you believe that she stooped down and picked up a letter "N," formed of the reddest rubies you ever saw?

"Oh!" she exclaimed, jumping up and down, "I have found the first letter!" And with that she started off on a brisk walk, forgetting to wonder what direction to take; forgetting that she was hungry; and only remembering that she had found this beautiful letter, that couldn't be other than one of the letters of the wonderful name.

Soon she met a squirrel, who said, "Have you any nuts?"

"No," she replied, "but I would give them to you if I had, because then I might find another letter of my beautiful name."

"Indeed!" replied the squirrel, whisking his tail saucily, "you would never find another if that's why you would give them to me."

She was about to cry again, but the squirrel whisked out of sight, so she changed her mind and walked on.

"If the saucy little squirrel is telling the truth, I had best mind what he said." With that she fell to wondering whether the next letter would be of pearls, or of sapphires, or of what – when all of a sudden, the squirrel jumped right out at her feet, and startled her so that she almost dropped the ruby "N."

"Give me that pretty blue ribbon on your hair, to line my nest with," he said.

She gave it to him, and walked on, with her hair falling over her eyes. But she was happy, and thought only of how comfortable the squirrel's nest would be, lined with blue ribbon, – just as her own coat was so comfortably lined with blue silk.

She was thinking about that, – not thinking at all about the letter, – when she almost stepped on a bright something at her feet! And there was a letter "S," made of beautiful emeralds.

"Oh!" she said, picking it up. And then she thought: "O dear! How can any name begin with 'NS'?" And she was ready to cry again, but she remembered that crying had not done her any good since she started out; so she walked on, saying to herself, "NS, NS," but couldn't think of any name beginning with "NS."

Now would you believe what a funny thing happened? A little baby monkey came out of the woods, and asked for her cloak. Though she couldn't see what a monkey wanted with her cloak, she took it off and gave it to him, and went on, feeling pretty chilly, I can tell you, for it was not yet summer.

"But if I am chilly, maybe the monkey is too, and maybe he has never had a cloak, because nobody ever gave him one!" and you can easily see that might be true, because people take it for granted that monkeys do not need clothes.

Just then the monkey came running out of the woods with the cloak on. He had a hard time, too, for the cloak was so long that he stumbled over it every other step. He was holding up something in his hand, and shouting, "Wait! Wait!"

She waited until he came up and handed her a letter "S," made of lovely, shining pearls.

"Oh!" she said; catching her breath. "It's yours," said the monkey.

"That was good of you," said the little girl, "to bring it all that distance, tripping over a long cloak." But she was more puzzled than ever at having another letter "S," for it seemed less likely than before that she would find a name beginning with such queer letters. It could not be pretty, anyway, for it would have such a hissing sound after the "N."

But the monkey scratched his nose (though he couldn't scratch it very well, for the coat sleeve was too long, and covered his funny little hand), and said, "Maybe those are not the first letters of the name."

And that was very likely, only the little girl hadn't thought of it.

This made her happy, and thanking the monkey ; politely, she hurried on; for she was anxious to find the rest of the letters, so she could go back to her beautiful home, and show her dear mother she had searched in the right way.

Now I couldn't take time to tell you all the adventures this little girl had in the woods: how she gave away her shoes and stockings; and her pretty little baby ring; and her bonnet; and I don't know what all; and how many queer creatures she met.

But best of all, she was happy, and when least expecting it, she kept finding letters made of all kinds of beautiful precious stones.

It did seem to be a very long name, however; and after she had found twelve letters, she began to wonder how she would know when she came to the end, and how she was going to spell it (for she only knew words of three letters).

And would you believe it, – she came near missing the last letter! (for the next one was the last). And this is the way it happened:

She saw a bent old man, much more queer-looking than the old woman she first met. He asked her to help him find his spectacles, because he couldn't see well without them.

She didn't cry this time, for she was cured of that; but she thought: "Oh, how will I ever find the rest of my letters, if I turn back?"

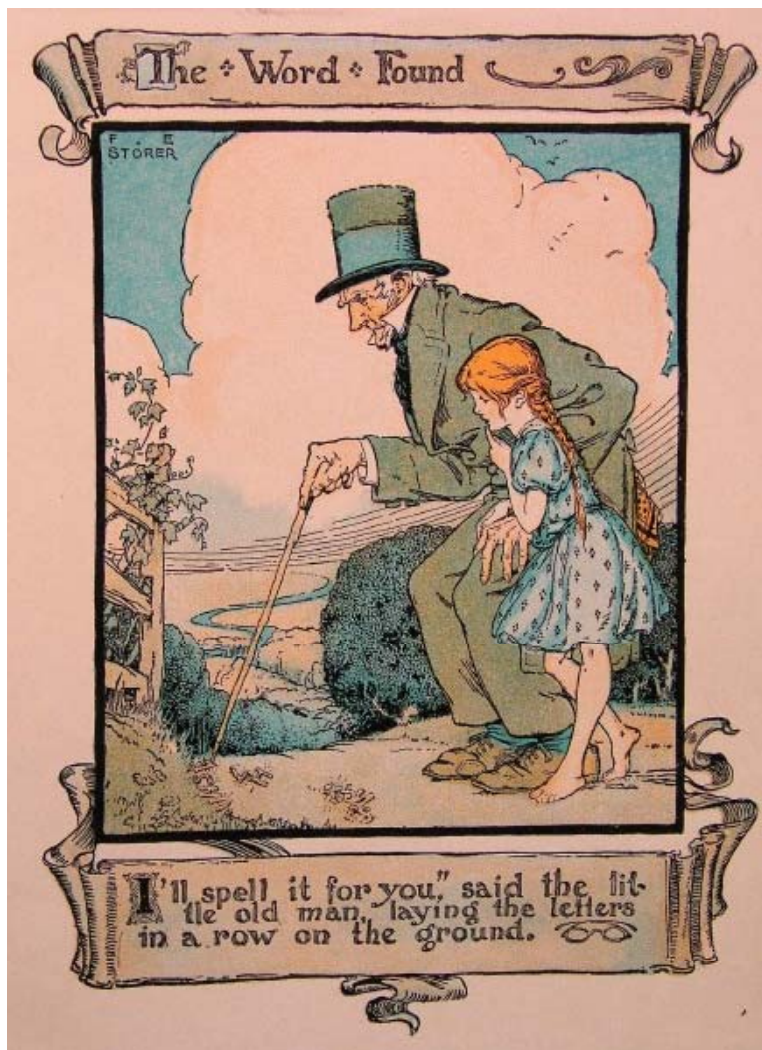
The old man, of course, didn't know about the letters. He only said:

"Oh! deary me! How am I ever going to find my specs, if no one will help me?"

That made the little girl feel very badly, so she said:

"I will go back with you," thinking she was going in the wrong direction, even though she was trying to help some one.

But this shows that we cannot always tell where we are going to find the things we need. We might as well do what is to be done, and the first thing we know we have what is best for us.



It was this way with the little girl.

She stooped down to pick up something shining, saying, "Here are your specs! "

But it wasn't the specs at all! It was another letter "S," made of gorgeous diamonds, all shooting out beautiful rainbow colours.

"Dear me! " said the little girl, in astonishment. "Dearie me!" exclaimed the old man.

"But I can't spell such a big word!" cried the little girl.

"I'll spell it for you," said the little old man, laying the letters in a row on the ground.

"Why!" he exclaimed,

"that is what I have been looking for all these years," and, never thinking of specs, he spelled out the word better than if he had had two pairs of eyes.

"But for you I wouldn't have found it!" he said to the little girl.

"But for you I wouldn't have found it!" said she to him.

The little old man laughed; then suddenly stood up as straight as a sapling saying, "Now I must make up for the years I have been without it." And he started off as briskly as any young man.

The little girl gathered up the sparkling letters, and ran to meet a beautiful lady coming toward her.

"Come home, dear little Marybelle," said the lady, holding out her arms. "I see you have searched in the right way!"

"Oh, Mama!" she cried, "these letters do not spell Marybelle! "

Her mother spelled them out, and they spelled "UNSELFISHNESS!"

You see that has four "S"s in it, but it isn't a hissing word at all. On the contrary, it is a beautiful word.

How Greed Destroyed Itself.

ON the side of a hill, in a nice little house, lived a grey cat who tended to nobody's business but her own. Beyond in the forest lived a greedy red fox.

"The grey cat has a nice house," said the fox to himself, "and plenty stored away for the winter, while I have nothing, and must hunt for what I get." So he set about wickedly planning to get rid of the grey cat, and to live in her house; and all the time, she knew nothing of it.

"Friend Rabbit," asked the fox, "how would you like to live yonder in the grey cat's house? She has provisions for the winter and one need only sit before the fire and toast one's toes."

"Very good," said the rabbit, "has the grey cat invited us?"

"Oh, that will be arranged," replied the fox, not answering his question. "I am a friend of yours and wish you to be comfortable."

"That is very kind," said the rabbit, not suspecting anything wrong, and he promised the fox to do just what he said.

So the rabbit got an ear full of the fox's plan, – "And above all," warned the fox, "you must not mention my name to the cat."

Next morning at daybreak came rap a tap tap! at the cat's door.

"Dear me! " cried the cat, "who can be coming so early?" And hurrying to the door, who should she see but the rabbit!

"Good morning! friend Rabbit," she said pleasantly. This pleased the rabbit, for he was a little timid about calling.

"Good morning!" said he, taking off his hat. "I have a basket of meat for you, sent by – hem – ahem!" and he coughed and grew red in the face, for he had almost mentioned Mr. Fox's name.

"Since we are such close neighbours, we should be neighbourly, should we not, Mistress Tabby?" he managed to say.

The cat was quite willing to be neighbourly, and asked the rabbit to come in and have some beefsteak. The rabbit thanked her politely, but said he was busy, and hopped away to the edge of the wood, where he met the red fox.

"Was the grey cat friendly?"

Yes, she was friendly, but the rabbit would rather have the fox go to-morrow.

Oh, he would go, but not to-morrow, for he must have his whiskers trimmed. Friend Rabbit wouldn't mind going once more as a favour, would he?

No, he wouldn't mind; so rap a tap tap! it was at the cat's door the next morning.

What might friend Rabbit wish this morning?

He had a nice tender chicken, if that would tempt the cat's appetite.

Indeed, one couldn't offer her anything more tempting; she hadn't had chicken since she started housekeeping. But this morning the rabbit must come in and have a taste. So come in he did, and sat down while the chicken fried and sizzled in the pan. It's a pity they hadn't made friends before, began the cat, seating herself at the table. When one lived alone, one was pleased to have one's friends drop in.

The rabbit thought the same, and after a pleasant chat he bade the cat Good-day, and went to meet the fox.

"Was the grey cat friendly?"

Oh yes, she was friendly. He had breakfasted with her, and a fine breakfast it was, for the grey cat could fry chicken!

The rabbit smacked his lips, which did not please the greedy fox, as you would have seen by the look in his small, wicked eyes. But the rabbit suspected nothing and went on smacking his lips, saying he wouldn't mind going again, now that he and the cat were so well acquainted.

"But would you leave a friend out in the cold?" whined the fox.

Oh, no! he wouldn't leave such a good friend as the fox out in the cold. He had him to thank for the acquaintance of Mistress Tabby, and the red fox would see that friend Rabbit was a friend indeed! So rap a tap tap the next morning; and a delicacy for Mistress Tabby: some young frogs' legs! What was more, they were caught by a great admirer of Mistress Tabby.

"Dear me! who might that be?"

But the rabbit would not tell, only went on praising the good looks and good qualities of the red fox, who all the time listened through the crack of the door.

Why wouldn't his friend join them? the cat wanted to know.

Oh, he was too bashful!

This made the fox grin and rub his paws together. "Friend Rabbit is doing well," thought he.

But the cat insisted that the rabbit should go for his fine-looking friend, and at last he did.

When he opened the door, the fox had to turn a back somersault to keep out of sight.

"Friend Red! Friend Red!" called the rabbit. Finally "Friend Red" came bowing and scraping and breathing hard, – as if he had run a long distance, instead of being hid around the corner of the house. And what would friend Rabbit have?

Would he breakfast with them, for Mistress Tabby was full of curiosity to see him? And it's no use using up words to tell that that was just what the fox was after.

When the cat saw him, she gave a terrible meow, and slammed the door, but the fox, thinking he would be shut out, pushed the rabbit in so his tail got caught. My! how the rabbit squealed! The cat opened the door; but it was too late, for the rabbit's tail had been snapped off short!

"Oh! Mistress Tabby!" wailed the fox, pretending he was very sorry, "why do you treat our friend Rabbit so?" And the cat was so ashamed and confused that she let the fox in, – which was, of course, what he had planned from the start.

What a snug little house the grey cat had! commenced the fox. And what a fine mistress for the snug little house was the grey cat herself! And so on, and so on, till the grey cat was so excited she couldn't eat any frogs' legs. And the rabbit couldn't eat any, for groaning over his lost tail, – so the fox ate them all up!

And now, said the fox, would friend Rabbit mind going to the edge of the wood to fetch a package he would find there, which was a present for Mistress Tabby?

No, the rabbit wouldn't mind; and away he hopped to the edge of the wood, but found no package. What do you suppose happened meantime? As soon as the

rabbit shut the door behind him, snip! snap! the fox had his feet down from the fireplace and sprang for Mistress Tabby, – but she was up the chimney and gone, before you could say "Scat!"

And what have we now? The wicked red fox has the cat's house all to himself; the cat is running through the wood with no home; the rabbit is out in the cold with no tail, and is as hungry as can be, – all through the greed of one creature.

But sometimes, when one wants all the honey, one falls into the honey-pot and can't get out – as you will see.

When the grey cat had put a good distance between herself and the fox she stopped to think. The more she thought the more she saw how foolish she had been to run so far. All the fox wanted was her snug house, and he would waste no time chasing her. So she turned back, and who should she meet but the rabbit, looking very sad indeed.

"A fine trick the red fox has played on us!" cried he.

"Yes, yes," said the cat, "but right is right! and without a doubt the fox will taste some broth of his own brewing!"

Now it happened one day, while Mr. Fox was sitting at the window, that the rabbit passed by with a basket of eggs. Very chipper he looked, for the hair had grown out on the end of his tail.

"Some fresh eggs would taste very fine," thought the fox, and opening the window he called, "Friend Rabbit, how do eggs sell? "

"They sell very well," replied the rabbit, and was out of sight in a jiffy.

"Humph!" sniffed the fox, "the rabbit must have an egg farm. We will see about this." So he watched the next day, and sure enough, the rabbit came by with another basket of eggs.

"Hey!" called the fox, "why, I almost let friend Rabbit pass without seeing him!" And he made a great "to do" over the rabbit, inviting him in to a fine dinner of fried apples and bacon.

But the rabbit thanked him, saying he was going on an errand and was too busy for bite or sup.

"So," thought the fox, "we will see if I am to be outdone by a bobtailed rabbit."

Next day when the rabbit passed the house, he heard such a moaning and groaning inside, that he knocked at the door to see what it was about.

"Come in!" groaned a voice.

The rabbit walked in, and saw Mr. Fox stretched on the floor, carrying on as if something terrible was the matter.

"Dear me! what is it?" cried the rabbit.

"Oh, nothing!" replied the fox. "I am weeping over my sins and am going to do better."

"That is good! " said the rabbit. And they talked and chatted, till finally the fox asked the rabbit if he was in the egg business.

Oh, yes, in a way; he was busy gathering eggs for Easter, and was on his way to Mr. Man's barn, where there were nests to fill.

"Indeed! and where might Mr. Man's barn be?"

"Yonder, behind that clump of trees."

"Could one get in at night?" asked the fox.

No, one couldn't get in at night, except through a hole in the corner of the barn, which wasn't the way for honest folk.

"But dear me! I must be off!" exclaimed the rabbit. And hoping the fox's sins would not lie heavy on his conscience, he hurried away, thinking the fox had asked a lot of questions.

"Ah, ha!" laughed the fox when he was gone. " Our little bobtailed friend takes me to be as simple as he. We will see if he is telling the truth."

At dusk Mr. Fox came out of the cat's house; locked the door; slipped the key under the mat; and trotted away as silently as if he trod on a velvet carpet. Soon he reached the barn with its doors locked and barred.

But the fox had no use for the door. "Mr. Rabbit thinks he will deceive me and keep me from going through the hole," he chuckled, "but I am too sly for him."

Mr. Fox was nosing round for the hole in the barn, the cat and the rabbit, with no thought of what he was up to, were talking over their day's work. All of a sudden they heard terrible shrieks.

"Gracious!" they cried, scuttling into the bushes. The shrieks came louder than before.

"Hist!" said the rabbit, with his paw to his mouth. "It is the fox!" whispered the cat, with her paw to her ear.

"He is caught in Mr. Alan's trap, said the rabbit. Mercy! mercy! " shrieked the fox.

The farmer is belabouring him with his stout stick. Presently the sound ceased.

"That is the end of it," said the rabbit. "You can go back to your house, Mistress Tabby. The fox can do you no more harm."

"Greed has destroyed itself," declared the cat, "as it always does in the end."

The Wonderful Castle of Cause and Effect.

OF course your mother has told you (so, it's hardly worth mentioning except so you'll know what my story's about), that our little baby brothers and sisters are not babies at all, but fairies pretending they are babies, sent by fairy queen Alicia, whose other name (and the children like it best), is the Happiness Fairy.

The Happiness Fairy lives in the beautiful silver and gold castle of Cause and Effect.

This wonderful castle is filled with everything one can imagine to delight little girls and boys, and Alicia is a beautiful queen with hair like threads of spun gold, and eyes like violets. She wears dresses of flower petals, sewed by her loving subjects: sometimes of pansies, sometimes of lilies of the valley, and so on, – all so fresh and lovely that you can hardly tell which to choose.

Now my story is about a little girl who took away her fairy brother's toys – and did a number of things that neither fairies nor babies like not knowing,

that when he cried, he was telling the Happiness Queen about it.



Of course it is the Happiness Queen's business to see that all children are happy; and of course the little girl couldn't be happy when she was unkind to her baby – I should say "fairy" – brother. That is why I am going to tell you about this little girl, whose name I had rather not tell, since you may know her. And when you see what happened, I am sure you will decide never to treat a fairy baby as she did.

One day the nurse gave a cracker to the fairy brother, who had only a few teeth, but enough to chew a cracker. When she went out of the

room the little girl took the cracker away from the fairy brother.

He cried of course. Then all of a sudden, right before her eyes, he turned into a bottle green fairy with beautiful gauzy wings and twinkling eyes, which she couldn't believe had been filled with tears a moment ago.

"Come, quickly!" he said, seizing the little girl's hand.

She had no choice but to go. So away they went, spinning through the air, over houses and tree-tops, with the wind blowing her hair out straight behind.

At last they came to a mountain where stood a shining castle of silver and gold.

"How I wish we could go in there." thought the little girl.

While she was wishing it the fairy brother plumped right down in front of the castle, and without giving her time to catch her breath, led her up the marble steps and into the front door!

Of course children can go wherever fairies can: and if you think this castle was small, because it was a fairy castle, you should have followed them, as they went through room after room, laid with carpets of silver and gold, and glittering with precious stones.

Finally they stepped into a big room filled with happy children, where fairies dressed in pink rose petals were passing pink ice-cream. Would you believe, they didn't pass the little girl any ice-cream?

She didn't ask for any, because she had learned to be polite, even though her mother had not been able to teach her to be kind. But her lip began to tremble, and she went to Queen Alicia, who was dressed like a buttercup that day.

"Queen Alicia," she said (remembering that it was not polite to ask for ice-cream), "little girls love ice cream, do they not?"

"Indeed they do! " replied the queen, "and it is a pity you cannot eat it!"

"Oh, but I can!" cried the little girl, almost forgetting her manners.

"I do not mean that you are not able to," said the queen, "but it will melt!"

The little girl was puzzled, as she saw that the others were eating it, so Queen Alicia called a rose fairy and told her to offer the little girl a plate of ice-cream. Can you believe, that when she reached out to take it, it melted away, dish and all?

"O dear!" cried the little girl.

The queen looked very sorry.

"You see I cannot help it," she said in a kind sweet voice, "even if I am a fairy queen. The ice-cream melts away because you took your fairy brother's cracker today."

That was bad enough, but what do you suppose happened next?

The little girl heard music, and following the sound, entered a large room full of merry, dancing children. All around were beautiful trees and flowers; singing birds of every color flew about, and in the centre of the room a fountain tossed up gold and silver balls.

A little boy asked the little girl to dance, and bowing politely, she held out her hand. To her surprise, he seemed to move away from her, and though she followed, he was always just beyond her reach, holding out his hands to her. Then she saw that the whole room was moving away from her; and try as she would, she could not get into the circle of merry little boys and girls.

One of the queen's fairies in waiting said in a sorrowful voice:

"It is too bad! but you took your little fairy brother's blocks this morning, when he was playing contentedly. Of course a little girl who did that cannot get into any happy circle."

Don't you think the little girl felt sorry when she remembered she had done that very thing?

She walked quickly out of the room – then stood by the door watching the children, and couldn't help shedding a few tears.

Wandering to the next room, her eyes feasted on another happy sight. A flood of sunshine poured in upon hundreds of children playing with toys of every kind. Fairies about the room gave the children whatever they wished to play with; so the little girl went to the fairy in charge of the dolls, and picked out a baby doll in long clothes (I can't imagine why, as she didn't seem to care for babies).

Her heart went pitapat when the fairy offered her the doll. But dear me! the minute it touched the little girl's arms it crumbled away, and there was left only a little pile of white dust at her feet!

"Oh!" cried the fairy. "You would not amuse your fairy brother this morning, while nurse fixed his bath. I am so sorry, because you cannot play with the children, and all the toys you touch will crumble away."

The little girl saw that it was all her own doing, and hurried out of the castle, ashamed to find how many naughty things she had done in one day.

"Have you had a nice time?" asked Queen Alicia, standing at the door.

The little girl hung her head and did not answer.

"Never mind, little one," said the Happiness Queen. "This is the first time you have been to my castle; but you may come again, and we shall see what happens then."

With a wave of her wand she called the fairy brother, who took the little girl spinning home the way they had come.

By rights this is the end of the story; but if you will put up your ear, and promise to keep a secret, I'll tell you what happened.

She did come back to the castle, and had all the ice-cream she could eat, and nothing crumbled away.

Moreover, she had a glorious ride behind the Happiness Queen's six white ponies, and that means that she hadn't teased her fairy brother one tiny mite in a whole month.

The Greatest Thing in the World

ONE day a good and wise old king called his three sons together and said: "My sons, I wish you to go forth and search for the greatest thing in the world. The one who finds it shall rule over my kingdom, for he will rule wisely."

"Very well," agreed the brothers, "we will begin our search at once."

So they set out and journeyed along the highway, till they came to the first three corners, where sat an old woman.

"Tell us, dame," asked the brothers, "what is the greatest thing in the world?"

"One must choose for oneself," replied she. "Who follows that road, finds gold; who follows that road, finds happiness; who follows this road finds what he is worthy of."

"Ho!" cried the first brother, "I know the one I will take." And without more ado, he chose the first road.

"I will take the second," said the next brother, – a bit wiser than the first.

"I will take the third," said the last brother, "for if I am worthy of the greatest thing in the world, I shall find it; and if I am not, it will profit me nothing to take another road." So they went their ways.

After the first brother had journeyed a way he saw something glittering before him, and there indeed was a great heap of gold. On top of it sat an old man with a little mill, from which the gold pieces poured forth as fast as he could turn the handle.

"Why do you grind out so much gold?" asked the prince.

"I have nothing else to do," replied the old man.

"And what does it buy for you?"

"No more than a merry tune now and then," answered the old man. "Let us have a good song, and all the gold you can carry is yours for the taking."

Now as this first prince was a master hand at singing, he sang a tune so merry that the old man's legs twitched, and he up and jigged till the gold pieces flew all about, but never stopped grinding a moment.

When the song was finished the prince was all haste to be off with his gold.

"Stay and sing," begged the old man, "and I will grind you enough to fill your coffers and more!" The prince would not be persuaded; but loaded four asses with all they could carry, and started off for his father's kingdom.

When he approached the castle the king came to meet him, saying:

"What have you in those sacks?"

"The greatest thing in the world!" answered the prince.

"What is that?"

"Gold! and enough to last till the castle falls about our ears!"

"And what will it buy?"

"Everything!" answered the prince.

"Will it buy happiness?" asked the wise old king. No, it would not buy happiness, and now the prince saw how foolish he had been, and that the kingdom was not for him.

"Alack!" he cried, "had I taken the second road, I might have done better."

But how fared the second brother?

On he went till he came to a queer little house, where sat an old woman sewing so fast that she seemed to have twenty fingers.

"What are you making, dame?" asked the prince. "Sacks," she replied.

"Sacks for what?"

"To hold happiness."

"How could one find happiness to put in sacks?"

"Easy enough," answered the dame. "Plenty floats about for want of those who know how to use it."

"What might be the price of a sack?"

"It is yours for the taking."

The prince could hardly believe his ears; and making haste to pick out the largest sack, he slung it over his shoulder, – for it was as light as a feather, – and started off in high spirits.

"As sure as peas grow in a pod," thought he, "the kingdom will be mine for my cleverness."

"What have you in your sack?" asked the king, coming to meet him.

"Happiness!" replied the prince.

"Good!" exclaimed the king. "Now what will you do with it?"

"Why, one can always use happiness," cried the prince.

"How?"

Though that seemed a simple enough question the prince could not find an answer to suit the king.

"You are no wiser, my son, than those who let happiness float about when they might be using it. See, you have a sack full and know not what to do with it. The kingdom is not for you, for only a wiser than I may have my kingdom to rule, and I long ago learned that happiness, unless it be shared with others, is like so much dough without leaven."

Now the third brother, a strapping fellow with a kind word for those he liked, but hate for his brothers, strode along till nightfall, when he came to a little house, with a sign, reading:

"Here may one gain wisdom."

"Wisdom," thought he, "is what I need in my search," and he knocked at the door.

"Welcome!" cried an old man, opening it.

"Come in and sup with me. I have soup enough for two, – well flavoured with wisdom. It does not agree with fools, so you had best think twice before you eat."

"I am wise enough to know," said the prince, as he took his fill, "that I still have something to learn, and perhaps you can tell me what is the greatest thing in the world?"

"Ah! " exclaimed the old man, "I know very well, but it is not for me to tell you. Look! yonder in the sky is a beautiful star that burns night and day. If you can reach it, you will find the greatest thing in the world."

The prince was for starting at once, and would learn the way.

"Hold!" cried the old man. "Some go one way, and some another. You have a long journey, and must cross a dark forest. At the entrance is a huge dragon. Destroy him, or he will destroy you. If you are still of a mind to go, take this smooth pebble, and when in doubt cast it upon the ground."

The prince thanked the old man, and putting the pebble in his pocket, started on his journey.

On he went, and on and on, till he came to the forest. There across the path lay a great dragon, and in its four heads blazed these letters of fire, – H-A-T-E.

"Hui!" cried the prince, "one must think twice before stirring up such a foe!" And bethinking him of the pebble, he took it from his pocket and cast it on the ground.

Straightway a beautiful fairy arose before him.

"How shall I slay the dragon?" asked the prince. "My sword is the finest that skilled hand ever made, and never was blade keener, but it will not cut through the dragon's brazen scales."

"Ah!" replied the fairy, "yonder, over the three high mountains, lies the sword of Truth. Its edge and none other will cut through the dragon's brazen scales."

"Then there is work to be done!" said the prince. And putting the fairy pebble in his pocket, he started for the three high mountains.

The first and the second he crossed with nothing to hinder; but at the top of the third was a great wall, as high as ten men, and as smooth as glass. Beyond rose the turrets and towers of a castle of glittering steel. There was no getting around the wall, for on either side was a steep precipice. Seeing a great iron gate, the prince gave it three thundering raps, and a hideous old man appeared.

"What will you have?" asked the old man.

"The sword of Truth!" answered the prince.

Oh! if it was a sword he wanted, here was as fine a one as ever hung at a body's side. And the old man drew from its scabbard a beautiful sword with a hilt of silver, set with precious stones.

If the fine young fellow wished, they might strike a bargain, as he was willing to sell.

"I asked for the sword of Truth!" cried the prince, who was about to belabour the old man, when he drew another sword, with a hilt of gold set with diamonds, that shone like the frost on a starlit night.

"Perhaps," said he, as smooth-tongued as ever, "the other sword is not fine enough for so fine a young man."

But the prince was not to be fooled, even with a golden sword.

"I want the sword of Truth!" he roared, "and will have none other. Tell me where it is to be found, or it will go ill with you!"

Now the old man was as sly as a fox, and he said: "That is right, my fine fellow, take none but the best. I see I cannot fool you, so here is the sword of Truth."

With that he drew a sword that flashed as if it were made of a white ray of the moon.

"We will have a look at this," thought the prince. And taking the sword in his hand he examined it closely.

"There is a flaw in it!" he cried. "The sword of Truth has no flaw! How dare you deceive me?"

He rushed upon the old man, but before he could strike the hideous fellow disappeared, like a puff of smoke! Crash! bang! fell the iron gate. The wall crumbled and all tumbled down the precipice!

The way was now clear and the prince strode toward the castle. The great door swung back as he approached, and a beautiful white light streamed forth.

There was no mistaking that light, for compared to it, the light from the false sword was as a night without a star, to the radiance of noonday.

Within the castle, on a table of pure gold, lay the sword of Truth. Its brilliancy dazzled the prince.

Suddenly the room was filled with whispering voices:

"Beware!"

"Do not touch it!"

"It will do you harm!"

The prince did not heed the voices, but picked up the sword as if it belonged to him, as it really did, – for the sword of Truth serves well whoever scales high mountains to find it.

Hardly had the prince crossed the threshold to retrace his steps to the forest, when he found himself there without the trouble of going. At sight of him the dragon came forth, smoke and fire pouring from his eight nostrils!

"Ho! ho!" cried the prince, raising his sword aloft. "If Truth cannot destroy hate, nothing can!"

The sword's dazzling rays smote and blinded the terrible creature, and in less time than it takes to tell it, the dragon was consumed to nothing.

"Truth is a mighty weapon," declared the prince. Then putting the sword in its scabbard he turned to enter the forest.

Lo! it had vanished!

"So there was nothing to it after all!" he declared, and was about to cast the pebble on the ground, that he might ask the fairy what to do, when he saw his first brother trudging along with a great load of gold on his back.

"Oh, brother," exclaimed the prince, "how glad I am to see you! Let me carry your load, for it seems to weigh you down." And he swung the sack over his own broad shoulders.

"Where are you bound?" he asked.

"I have nowhere to go," replied the first brother. "I have wandered about homeless since I failed to win our father's kingdom."

"Then come with me, and together we will find the greatest thing in the world."

Surprised enough was the first brother, and glad too, to take the younger's strong arm; so they journeyed thus for a great way, as happy as if they had always loved each other.

"If we could but meet our other brother," said the youngest, "how happy our father would be to see us together."

And scarcely were the words out of his mouth, when they saw the second brother coming toward them, carrying his sack, now grown to be a heavy burden.

"You are well met!" cried the young prince, embracing him. "Let me carry your load, too." Then the three walked along, the two older brothers wondering at the change in the younger.

"Now, brothers," said the young prince, "let us hasten on our way, for we must journey till we reach a bright star, burning night and day, to lead us to the greatest thing in the world."

He looked up to find the star, and there it shone ,directly above his head.

For a moment the young prince could not speak for wonder. Then he threw his arms around his two brothers, crying joyously:

"Oh, my brothers, we have found the greatest thing in the world! Let us go home and share the kingdom!"

You may well believe that the older brothers wondered, for they could not see what they had done to share the kingdom. Nevertheless they were eager to return, for whatever could make such a change in the youngest brother was well worth sharing.

As they approached the castle, the great gates opened and their father received them, embracing each one tenderly.

"Ah, my sons," he cried, placing the crown upon the head of the youngest, "you have indeed made me happy, for you have found LOVE, – the greatest thing in the world."

How a Foolish Wolf Learned to be Satisfied

A DISSATISFIED wolf, sitting one day in the door of his house, saw a crow fly by.

"How is it," thought he, "that so good for nothing a creature can fly, while I can not? I would indeed be happy were I able to soar through the air."

With that he set about planning to get some wings, and being clever, as creatures go, he soon had an idea that he thought very fine. So he polished his boots; laid out his best clothes; and went to bed chuckling with glee, over what he was going to do.

Next morning, looking very fine, he was out betimes, and met a fat grey goose on her way to market, with her basket on her wing.

"Good morning!" said the goose. And having no more than a bowing acquaintance, she would have passed with a courtesy, but the wolf, as if quite by accident, scraped against her and caught his buttons in her feathers.

"Oh, madam, excuse me!" he cried, making such a fuss about getting loose that the goose was quite flurried, and glad enough to excuse him and go on her way. But that was not the end of the matter, for she had gone but a few steps when the wolf called after her.

"Madam, madam, you have lost something!" and came running up with a feather.

"Oh!" said the goose, "is that all you have? You might have saved your breath, for feathers are of no use to me after they fall out."

"Oh!" cried the wolf, "I could not think it was worthless, for I so admire your beautiful wings. I wonder you are not flying all the time, instead of going along the ground, as we poor creatures must be content to do. Perhaps you will give me this beautiful feather for a keepsake."

The goose, too honest to be puffed up by this flattery, gave him the feather, wondering how it was that no one had ever before called her modest plumage "beautiful."

"Well begun is half done," thought the wolf, as he trotted off; for having won the good will of the honest goose by his flattery, she made no objection to his walking along the road with her every morning.

"Dear me, something is pricking me!" the goose would say, as they parted at the crossroads.

"It is the sun beating down," the wolf would reply, or else, "A fly is biting you." And he would be off through the woods with another feather, while the poor goose preened her wings, never guessing why they were ruffled.

At last the wolf had enough feathers and sat at home, with wire and string, making a pair of wings; nor was he the least bothered that he had not come by the feathers honestly.

When the wings were finished he fastened them to his sides, twisting the wire and string around his poor body till he could scarcely breathe; but he paid no attention to that, since he thought he looked so grand, and strutting before the glass he cried:

"How the birds and the fowls will envy me! I will outfly them all, and the ugly black crows will not dare caw at me any more!"

Now he must show the goose what a handsome bird he made, – not a delicate thing to do, you'll agree, since his wings were made of the goose's feathers.

When the grey goose saw him she was indeed surprised.

"Do not, I beg of you, try to fly!" she cried. Whereupon the wolf thought she was angry because he had stolen her feathers.

"Oh, no!" cried the goose. "Of what use are they to me now? I have new ones in place of them. If it were meant for you to fly, you would have wings. What should we all come to, I would like to know, if each wished to do the other's work, instead of what we are fitted for? If I tried to be a canary what kind of singing do you think I could do? I am indeed thankful that I am a goose, and shall be the best goose I know how to be!"

And this was wisdom from a goose, for aught people say they are silly.

But what did the wolf care for all this!

Only sorry that he had delayed trying his wings, he bade her good-bye, and trotted off, looking too vain and silly for anything. It is true he could not go very fast, as his wings did not lie flat when he tried to run, as did those of the goose.

"But one cannot have everything!" thought he, "and it will be so glorious to fly that I shall not want to run any more."

Finally he reached the top of a hill so high that his nose was poking into the clouds, while the cattle in the valley below looked like specks.

"Ah!" exclaimed the wolf, trying to spread his wings, "this is something like it!"

His wings did not spread and flap as he expected, but he was quite certain that when he started to fly the wind would make them go; so swelling out his chest, he looked about to see if anyone was watching.

"Ha, ha!" he laughed, seeing the fox and the weasel and some other of his comrades below on the hill, "now they shall see a sight that will open their eyes!"



He gave a mighty leap into the air!

Crash, bang! crash, bang! down through tree-tops and bushes; rolling over and over; bumping on stones; scraping his shins on the sharp rocks, and into the creek at the bottom, came the wolf with his fine wings!

"Oh, let me get rid of these!" he cried, but they were so twisted about him that there was no getting them loose.

"Ho, ho!" laughed a hunter coming along, "you are caught in a trap, my fine fellow! I will not shoot you!" So he tied a rope round the wolf's neck, and led him along like a calf.

"Oh, sir!" cried the wolf, "let me go! I have harmed no one but myself. I was trying to fly."

"He, ho!" laughed the hunter, "so these are your wings, and it is you who have been plucking the feathers from my good goose. It is true that you have harmed no one but yourself; but that you may have time to think over your folly, I shall take you home with me and set you to churning my butter."

While the wolf was treading the milk into fine butter he thought somewhat in this wise:

"Had I heeded the grey goose and been satisfied to be a good wolf, I should be safe in my house to-day!"

So much for being envious! for what was it but envy that got the wolf into all this trouble? and of what use are other creatures' wings to us, when we do not know how to use them?

The Princess's Looking Glass

LONG time ago there was in a certain kingdom a curious mirror.

It did not seem different from other mirrors, and indeed many who peeped into it noticed nothing strange about their reflections therein. Aside, therefore, from its rich gilt frame set with precious stones, one would hardly give this mirror a second thought, but for the strange story told about it.

The mirror was owned by a beautiful princess. All day she sat before it admiring herself; and persons wishing to speak with her must stand so she could see them in the mirror. If they appeared homely she would have nothing to do with them; and strangely enough, whatever the opinion of her father and the rest of the kingdom, the princess thought everyone homely.

So one fine day, having grown tired, as she said, of homely people, she fastened her mirror to the silver trappings of her palfrey, and rode away.



Now you can readily see, as the princess looked only in the mirror in front of her, that she might get into a peck of trouble, which is exactly what happened, though for a time she jogged along smoothly enough.

Soon after she left her father's kingdom she met a fine youth. He was dressed as became so fine a fellow and rode a beautiful bay mare.

Would the princess look at him? Indeed not! She fastened her gaze on her mirror as soon as ever she caught sight of him in the distance.

"Good morning! beautiful Princess!" said the

youth, reining in his horse.

"Are you as beautiful as I?" asked the princess, without even greeting him.

"Alas! fair lady, I am not!" returned the handsome youth.

At that the princess turned her mirror to have it reflect his face.

"I should say you are not!" she cried, – for she saw in her mirror a creature no more like him than black is like white! And, believing what the mirror told her, she rode away, never looking at the fellow himself.

Pretty soon along came another youth. While the first had waving brown hair and kind grey eyes, this one was tall and handsome with golden hair and blue eyes. He was mounted on a palfrey as white as milk and even more beautiful than that of the princess.

"Are you as beautiful as I?" asked the princess, the moment she came up to him.

"Oh, fair lady, no!" he exclaimed, bowing low. "Who could be as fair as the Princess Beautiful?"

"You are right!" was her answer. "My mirror shows me what an unpleasant-looking creature you are! I bid you good morrow, and I am glad that my beauty can take the place of your ugly image!" So saying she jogged along, seeing no more beauty in the fair green valley about her than in the youths she had passed. Quite content, moreover, with what was contained within the gilt frame of her mirror.

The third person she met was as bright-eyed a fellow as one could wish to see. His steed was black as a raven's wing, with flowing mane and tail as fine and silken as the young man's raven locks. A golden bridle studded with jewels lay on the creature's glossy neck; and as for the youth, – one need not look twice to see he was no ordinary person.

Well, you'd hardly believe what the princess saw in her mirror! Without a word to the fellow she passed him by.

Just then, whiz! came a terrific wind! lifting the princess and her horse off the ground, and sailing them through the air at such a rate of speed that all the princess could do was to hold to her mirror; and it was well she did, since it served in the end, to teach her a lesson.

At last the wind stopped, and let the princess down with a jolt that made her forget everything but her beauty.

"Dear me!" she cried, looking into the glass, "I do not like this country!" nor would you have liked what she saw in the mirror.

"I wish to go back to my father's kingdom," she said to the first person she saw, who appeared in the mirror to be a homely old woman.

"Your father's kingdom! Who are you?" asked the dame.

"I am the most beautiful princess in the land!" answered the princess indignantly, – whereat the dame took her hand and led her to a pool of water.

"Look at the reflection," she said, "is that the most beautiful princess in the land?"

The princess looked, then started back, for the pool reflected a face one would not wish to see a second time.

"What has happened to me?" she cried. "My mirror says I am beautiful!"

"Your mirror lies!" replied the dame. "This is the pool of Truth!"

"How can such a green slimy pool be the pool of Truth?" wept the princess.

"It is not green and slimy," answered the dame. The princess was bewildered, for she saw the green scum on the face of the pool, as plainly as she saw the reflection.

"Does every one see me thus," she asked, "instead of as my mirror says I am?"

"Go look in your mirror."

Lo! the mirror had grown dim and no longer reflected at all!

"Oh!" cried the princess, now as unhappy as could be, "take me to your house, dame, and hide me. I can never go back to my father's kingdom, for no one there, however homely, will even look at me!"

"Very well," said the dame, "you may come with me to my cottage and spin flax."

So they went to the cottage, where the dame gave her a tiny room, no bigger than her own bed in her father's castle.

All day long she sat at the door of the cottage spinning flax; and hard work it was for the princess, who had never even put on her own shoes. She was very sad, and never a day passed but the dame's flax was wet with the princess's tears.

One day as she sat at the door, eating her luncheon of black bread and cheese, an old man stopped to look at her. This was not strange, for the people often paused, and the princess, thinking it was to wonder at her ugliness, never raised her eyes.

"I am hungry," said the man, whereat the princess handed him her black bread and cheese, of which she had only taken two bites.

She was surprised to see that a kindly light beamed from the old man's eyes.

"He does not see how ugly I am," she thought with a thrill of happiness; and she asked the dame if the old man could see well.

"He sees perfectly," replied the dame, – which puzzled the princess, for she wondered then that he could bear to look at her.

At last the dame's flax was spun, and the princess, thinking she would be sent away, grew sadder than ever.

"Let me stay with you, dame," she pleaded, "I will work for you and never grow weary!"

"You should go back to your father's kingdom," was the dame's advice.

"No one will welcome me there! Take pity on me! for none but you, whom I have grown to love, can bear to look upon me!"

"Ah! then," said the dame, "you will find work," and she sent the princess to help the needy. Soon she was so busy, thinking of others, that she forgot herself.

"How strange!" she said to the dame, one day. "I once thought these were the ugliest people in the world, and now I see only kind, beautiful faces."

The dame laughed, saying:

"We see ourselves reflected in others."

"How is it, then, that you are beautiful, when I am not?" asked the princess.

For answer the dame led her to the pool.

What did the princess see when she bent over, but her own self reflected in a clear, sparkling pool! only she was now so wonderfully lovely, that she could not believe she had ever thought the old self, in the mirror, beautiful.

"Where is the scum, dame?" she cried.

"There never was any scum."

"What will my mirror say?"

"It will never tell any more lies! It was the mirror of self-love and has melted away!"

The princess opened her eyes in astonishment; but before she could say another word, a gust of wind picked her up, and again she was sailing through the air on her white horse.

"Oh, I can look over the country," she cried joyfully, "for I haven't an old mirror to hold to!" And she had barely time to throw a kiss and wave good-bye to the dame, when she disappeared from view.

A little while afterwards the king, in the watchtower of his castle, roused the whole kingdom by declaring that through his spy-glass, he could see his daughter returning with three handsome princes at her side.

"Surely not your daughter, your Majesty," they cried, "The proud princess, who would look at no one!" But they all took a peep through the glass, and indeed it was she!

The king hopped about like a grain of corn in a popper till his daughter reached his side. Great rejoicing there was then, for the princess embraced her father crying:

"Oh, father, how glad I am that the dreadful mirror is gone! and how happy I am to return to your beautiful kingdom!"

Whereat everybody began crying and laughing at once, for pure joy, and they were so happy that they forgot all about the feast, which was eaten by the cook and the serving-maids.

The Best Thing that Begins with "O"



THERE was once a little girl with blue eyes, golden hair, and cheeks as pink as the blow of a peach, so you can well believe she was pretty.

One day she found she was growing homely: her hair was becoming less golden, her eyes less blue, her cheeks less pink; and finally, unless her mother did her hair in curl-papers, it didn't curl at all!

Now that was a state of affairs! and though every one had something to say, nobody could tell the cause of it, and nothing came of all their talk.

Well, one day Annabel (for that was her name), wearing her best pink frock, went to the brook, though her mother forbade her going, and splashed about till her frock was ruined. One wrong thing leads to another, unless we stop short; and instead of going home, Annabel ran away to the wood, where she sat on a log, and cried till the creatures came to see what the matter was!

A little brown rabbit, bolder than the rest, came and sat beside her.

"I know what you should do," he said, "but it isn't so easy!"

"What?" cried Annabel, jumping up.

"Softly! softly! hurry-flurry brings but worry! Across the forest is a beautiful lake, clear as crystal. In the lake swims a snow-white swan, who can tell you what will bring back the pink to your frock, and your cheeks as well, so you will be as pretty as ever."

"Dear me, do tell me where to find her!" cried Annabel.

"Follow yonder path and you will find the lake; but mind! – do not speak to the swan till the sun is a golden ball upon the horizon."

Annabel started up the path as briskly as if it led to the lollipop shop, and after going a good way came to the crystal lake, where swam a beautiful white swan.

But the sun was still high in the sky.

"Oh, I cannot wait till the sun sets!" cried Annabel; and as the swan swam by, she called, "Oh, swan, tell me how to bring back the color to my frock and my cheeks."

The swan sighed mournfully but did not reply. Then there was a great rumbling and whirring, and the whole forest spun around under Annabel's feet, till she was in a place she had never seen before. She wandered here and there in the thick wood, finding never a sign of a path, and at last she sat down crying, "O, dear! what shall I do?"

"What do you wish to do?" asked a frog in a pool near by.

"I wish to find my way back to the swan," cried Annabel, "I am lost!"

"No you are not! you are sitting on a log," declared the frog. "When a thing is lost it's nowhere! and you're somewhere! I'm sure."

"I hadn't thought of that," returned Annabel; "then it's the swan and the lake that are lost."

"Don't keep saying such foolish things!" snapped the frog. "They're somewhere too, and if you want to find them, you'll never do it by sitting there, saying things that aren't true! You'd better be going a wrong way than no way at all," he added, handing her the end of a string. "When you find it's wrong you can turn around and go the other way. Hold tight to this string and see if you can find the other end of it."

At that the frog plumped into the water and Annabel sat holding the string, trying to decide what she had best do.

Presently, growing curious to find what was at the other end, she got up and started off, slipping the string through her fingers as she went.

"You'll find something you need at the end," called the frog; "it begins with 'O.' Wind your string in a nice round ball like an 'O' and it'll help you to remember."

"How ridiculously he talks!" thought Annabel. "What do I need beginning with 'O'? I'll not bother to wind the string." So she went on, letting it slip through her fingers; and presently she had to stop short, for she was wound about like a silkworm in a cocoon, with the tangled string.

She pulled and tugged, but she couldn't get loose, so she sat down and pouted. While she sat, some more creatures came out of the woods, and began offering advice – some of which was good, and most of which wasn't.

"Draw in your breath and break the string!" suggested a fat little woodchuck. Annabel drew in her breath and puffed out her cheeks, but the string only cut in deeper.

The chipmunk tried to gnaw it; but he did no good. Then the squirrel gnawed, saying that he was a better gnawer than the chipmunk, though he meant no slight; but he did no good, and with all their advice and good wishes, Annabel was as tightly bound as ever.

"Turn round and unwind yourself!" said the deep voice of the frog, though Annabel couldn't tell where it came from.

"That's very well for him to say," she grumbled, "but how can I unwind myself when the string is full of hard knots and I don't know where the end is?" So, without even trying, she began to cry, – and crying, as you know, never makes pink cheeks. After a while a bear came along.

"You humans are funny!" he said, "why did you want to tangle yourself up that way?"

"I didn't want to and I didn't do it," contradicted Annabel. "The string tangled itself."

"Tangled itself!" cried the bear, rolling over and laughing till he shook. "How can a string tangle itself?"

"Well, I'm sure I didn't touch it," insisted Annabel crossly, "any more than to let it slip through my fingers; and I think instead of laughing you might help."

"I would if I could," said the bear politely, sitting up. "Humans are always getting themselves into scrapes and blaming something else. You shouldn't have let it slip."

Annabel tossed her head and did not answer, so the bear got up and walked away.

Presently he came back to say: "If you didn't tie those knots and the string couldn't, I don't see how there can be any knots there." And he went away again.

"That sounds reasonable," thought Annabel, "but how can anybody look at me and say there aren't any knots?"

"They wouldn't say so," called back the bear sharply.

"That's right!" piped up the woodchuck, "there are knots and knots! – knots in strings and knots in people! – so if you can't untie 'em one way you'd best try another."

"I wonder if there are knots in me," thought Annabel, trying to rub herself and find out.

"Not knots that you can feel," said the rabbit. "Listen: can you do sums?"

"Of course I can," she replied. "I am in the first reader."

"Then you ought to know that n-o-t is the same as k-n-o-t."

"I don't see any connection," returned Annabel. "that's spelling and we're talking about arithmetic – besides, they 're not the same."

"Yes, they are – sometimes," said the rabbit. "They are with you, because you're always saying, 'I will not,' and that's a knot that has to be untied, – I'm telling you for your own good!" he added, scuttling away before Annabel had time to answer. Annabel sat thinking for a while and then she began searching among the tangle for the end of the string. After looking industriously, she found it. Then she began slipping it in and out of the tangle, winding it in a ball as she went along. Presently she came to a hard knot, and although she worked at it for a long time, she couldn't untie it.

"Now you see," said the rabbit, who had come back and sat watching her, "that's the way you humans do – you always go at things hind part before! You must untie it the same way you tied it."

"But I didn't tie it," said Annabel.

"That's just it!" cried the rabbit, scratching his head so hard that he scratched out a little piece of fur, "you didn't tie a k-n-o-t! "

"I tied an n-o-t," admitted Annabel meekly. "I guess I tied it when I wouldn't try to unwind the string, after the frog told me to."

The rabbit looked pleased but did not say anything, and Annabel tried again to untie the knot, – which she did without the least trouble, then went on winding the

string. She had a good-sized ball before she came to the next snarl, – a big one. Annabel blushed over it, for she knew it came from not heeding the frog, when he first told her to wind the string.

"Never mind! You're coming on fine!" declared the rabbit. "Lots of people have knots to untie and it takes them a long time to find out how to do it. Just see how quickly you've learned. Now you've come to playing in the brook and spoiling your frock – that's a terrible snarl, isn't it?"

If Annabel had had to work over every knot in that string, she'd have been at it yet, I guess. But the more she worked, the more easily they came untangled, till before long, she found herself at the end of the string, with a neatly wound ball in her hand.

"What will I find beginning with 'O'?" was her first thought.

"You have already found it," called a voice. And turning about, Annabel saw, to her surprise, that she was beside the crystal lake, and at her very feet swam the snow-white swan.

She looked at the sun and saw that it was a golden ball on the horizon, and then she cried, "Oh, beautiful swan, tell me how to bring back the pink to my cheeks and to my frock!"

"Pretty is as pretty does!" was the swan's reply, "look into the crystal lake, little one."

As she bent over and gazed into the clear water, Annabel saw a little girl with yellow ringlets! eyes as blue as the sky! and cheeks and frock as pink as the blow of a peach!

"Oh, thank you, beautiful swan! How can I repay you?" she cried, throwing her arms around the creature's graceful neck.

"By never losing what you have found," answered the swan. "Put your ball in your pocket and run home, for your mother is waiting for you."

You may be sure Annabel wanted to get home, so she started off as fast as she could go.

The little brown rabbit and all the rest of the creatures came hopping and scampering after her and stood at the edge of the wood waving good-bye.

"Good-bye! dear creatures," cried the happy little girl. "I shall never forget you."

Then on she ran and soon reached her own front door, where her mother met her and caught her in her arms crying:

"Here is my dear little girl who has learned O –" but she whispered the rest of the word in Annabel's ear, and I didn't catch it! Did you?

The Little Gold Ring that Knew One's Thoughts.

THERE was once a little gold ring – "That is not wonderful!" you say, – but indeed this ring was wonderful, for it had a way of turning black whenever the wearer of it did anything he or she shouldn't.

Now you open your eyes – and well you may! for if you had such a ring, how much of the time do you think it would be black, and how much of the time bright and golden? Besides, this little ring knew one's thoughts; and that is the reason the little girl, to whom it belonged, hid it away in her bureau drawer, and said she would never put it on her finger again.

Astonishing! Did the little girl want to be naughty?

No, she wanted to be good, – but she wasn't willing to try hard enough; and you know there is a long road to travel between wanting to be good and being good.



One day a maid-servant took the ring out of the drawer and put it on her finger, when flash! it turned black, as she was not doing right.

Since it was no longer pretty and shining, the maid-servant threw it aside; and on sweeping day it was swept out into the street, where it rolled and rolled, goodness knows how far, till it hid under a leaf.

"Dear! dear!" cried the little ring, "what a journey I have had! Now I am free to find some little girl or boy whose thoughts are right, so I can be always golden."

And when you think of it, you see that the little ring would much prefer to be golden; and it was a pity, when it had done nothing wrong, that it should have to turn black.

The ring lay hid, till one day the rain washed the leaves away and left it in plain sight. "Surely," it thought, "with a world so full of good children, I will be found by one." True enough, soon a little girl came along and picked up the ring and put it on her finger.

The ring was silent, – otherwise the little girl would have known it was a marvellous ring; and it did not wish to be marvellous, – it only wished to be shining and golden on some good little girl's or boy's good little finger.

It was very bright however, for this was quite the prettiest little girl it had ever seen. Her hair was like the yellow of egg beaten to a fluff, and her pretty white petticoat stood out like flower petals. "Indeed!" thought the ring, "if prettiness is the sign of goodness (and real prettiness is), she cannot do anything wrong."

When the little girl got home she ran to show her mother the ring.

"It is very pretty," said her mother, "but we must advertise it, for some child may feel very bad over having lost it."

"I found it and it is mine!" cried the little girl, stamping her foot, "and I won't give it up!" Then all of a sudden she caught sight of the ring and it was black!

"Why!" she said and stopped crying at once. "What made you turn black, little ring?"

"Because you were naughty," it replied sadly. "O dear! O dear! you did look like such a nice little girl! I shall have to search for another owner, for I do want to be shining and golden."

"Oh, please do not!" begged the little girl. "I'll be good and let Mamma advertise you." She promised so earnestly that the ring slowly turned bright and was happy again.

The mother did advertise it, but no one answered the advertisement. So the little girl, with plenty of jewelled rings of her own, kept this one, caring more for it than for any of the others.

But one day, while she was washing her dolly's clothes, a little bad temper crept in, and what do you suppose! that ring slipped off her finger and was washed away! Later a workman found it and took it home to his little daughter.

The workman's home was very different from the rich little girl's home. There was not nearly so much crying and stamping of feet, and there was very little pouting or selfishness, – so the ring had no chance to turn black for some time. It had less chance than it might have had, for it was the only gold ring

that the workman's daughter, or any of his children, had ever owned, and it was worn only on Sunday.

One Sunday when the workman's children, dressed in their best clothes, were on their way to Sunday-school, they met their friend Elsa.

"Elsa is proud because she has a new hat with daisies on it!" whispered the workman's daughter to her brothers and sisters. And she held her hand so Elsa could see the gold ring, – but the ring was black.

"Oh!" she cried, and the children stared and asked what was the matter. But she put her hand behind her and would not tell, and two big tears rolled down her cheeks.

All the time she was in Sunday-school she kept her hand hid, but as soon as she reached home she ran to her room crying, "Please tell me, little ring, what made you turn black?"

"Dear! dear! it's too bad! I was very happy with you!" cried the little ring. "You were such a loving little girl, and now you've said such an unloving thing about Elsa! O dear!" and the little ring gave a sigh.

Well, the workman's little daughter wondered and wondered what she could do to make the ring golden again. Then, one day, without saying a word to anyone, she put the ring in a little box, pinned a note to it, and took it to Elsa's house and left it.

When Elsa read the note, she could hardly believe her eyes. It said:

"Dear Elsa: – I said you were proud because you had daisies on your hat. I was the proud one, so I give you my ring so it may be golden.

"Truly yours,

"KATY M."

Of course the ring turned golden, and Katy was very happy, even though she did not have it any more.

The adventures of the little ring were not yet at an end, however, for one day, when Elsa was angry at her little sister, it slipped off her finger into the cake she was stirring for her mother, and she didn't know it.

When the cake was baked, she cut several slices and gave one to her friend Tommy. Tommy bit on something hard, and it was the gold ring.

Tommy said something that you would not understand if I wrote it, but it meant that he was astonished to find a gold ring in a slice of cake. He put it on his third finger and strutted about saying, "See my gold ring!" not thinking that he ought to ask Elsa if it belonged to her.

The little ring turned very black indeed!

Tommy stared at it hard while the ring sighed softly "Oh, Tommy!"

Tommy, very uncomfortable, blushed; but he pretended that he didn't know what the ring meant, and went to playing ball with the boys. The more he played, the more uncomfortable he felt, for the ring kept saying, "Oh, Tommy, I want to be golden! Oh, Tommy, be an honest little boy so I can be golden!"

He kept throwing the balls harder and harder, till all at once, the ring flew off and fell in the dusty street. Tommy searched and searched, but didn't find it. When he went to bed, he felt very sad, for he was a kind-hearted little boy, and he thought the ring would have to stay black, because he couldn't find it and return it to Elsa.

The next day he told Elsa all about it.

"Oh, Tommy," she cried, "I am so glad you told me! for now the little ring will turn golden again, and even if we never find it, some one will see it shine and pick it up."

And then, I am sorry to say, I lost track of the little ring; though I have reason to believe that it was found – by – a little girl? – no – a little boy? – I really have forgotten which. Perhaps – yes – it is quite possible – if you have a little gold ring, that it is the one! And you wouldn't think even one wrong thought to find out – would you?

The Tree of Leaden Apples

THERE was once a princess who was not grown up, as they mostly are in stories, but was a little girl like yourself, though she wore long dresses as princesses do, whether they be little or big.

Despite the fact that the princess had hundreds of playthings, beautiful dolls, and real ponies to drive, she was not a happy little girl. Indeed at the moment this story begins. she sat in the beautiful garden of the palace, as unhappy as could be, because nothing in the world gave her pleasure.

"What do you wish, little Princess to make you happy?" whispered a voice in her ear.

"I wish a little friend to play with all day long." Hardly had she said the words when across the garden came a beautiful lady with a fair-haired boy. "Oh!" cried the princess, taking the boy's hand, "what a nice little playmate you will be!" and without "By your leave" to the beautiful lady, who at once disappeared, she led him away.

The two played happily, day after day, in the beautiful garden; and the princess could not have found a more generous companion than the flaxen-haired boy. If they had red apples he picked the largest and reddest for the princess; if they sailed ships she must have the finest; whatever it was the princess must have the best of it, taking everything with not so much as a "Thank you!"

Nevertheless she grew tired of her playfellow, and told him one day to go away and leave her alone. No sooner had she said this than he disappeared! The princess shrugged her shoulders, saying she was glad he was gone.

Soon, however, she found that the garden, without her playmate, was a lonely place; and thinking him hid nearby, she ran about calling him. But the fair-haired boy did not answer, and the princess, disappointed and angry, sat by the fountain and wept. While she was weeping, a wise little toad came, and hopped about at her feet.

"See!" he said, "how easy it is to be happy! When a fly comes near I snap him, and say 'Thank you!' and that does till the next one."

"Thank you, indeed!" cried the princess. "You are but a poor little toad, and should be thankful, but I am a princess, and should have what I wish, and thank nobody!"

"Ah me!" sighed the toad, for he knew what the trouble was.

One day an old beggar woman came by.

"Pretty miss, give me a ha' penny," she whined, "and I will give you my blessing."

"What good will the blessing of such as you do me?" asked the princess. And at that the old woman slipped a bag over the princess's head, dragging her along through thicket and brush, screams and all, for no one could hear her through the thick bag: no one but the toad, who had hopped into the princess's pocket without being seen.

At last they stopped. The old woman blew a shrill whistle and a great raven flew down, carrying her and the princess away on his back. Up, up! they went, till the princess thought they must have reached the moon; then down they came with a thump! and the bag was whisked off as quickly as it had been put on.

"Now, my pretty Princess," said the beggar woman, as the great raven flew away, "you may not get away as quickly as you came, so make yourself at home. I will give you this golden plate and goblet, and you may fare well, for they will be filled as often as you please, for a 'Thank you!' " So saying she disappeared.

Then the toad, who had stayed quietly in the princess's pocket all the time, hopped out and said: " Princess, if you wish to find the way out, you must think twice before you speak."

"Think twice! indeed!" cried the princess, who thought things were bad enough without being advised by an ugly toad. "As if a princess had to be bothered with thinking!" With that she picked up the toad, and threw him as far as she could.

Having no one to talk to she walked about, and soon found herself in a beautiful grove of trees, whose branches, laden with fruit, reached invitingly down to her.

Plucking a plateful of the luscious fruit, without so much as a " Thank you," as was her way, she sat down to eat it. While she ate, a white cow with silver horns came and laid her soft nose in the princess's hand.

Who, indeed, but a princess, should drink milk from this beautiful cow! So milking her goblet full, she drank with a relish.

But her thirst was not quenched nor her hunger satisfied, so she set about to fill her plate and goblet again. What was her surprise, – when she started to pluck an apple, the tree lifted its branches far out of her reach!

She went to the next tree and the next. but all did the same, and not a peach nor a pear could she pluck! In a rage she stamped her foot; but the trees only lifted their branches higher, and sang softly:

"Oh, sad! that one so fair of face
Should wanting be in gentle grace!
Princess, you should rue the day
You threw the harmless toad away."

The princess tossed her head, and taking her goblet, went in search of the white cow. But the cow would give no milk, whereupon the princess threw her goblet at the gentle creature, and broke off one of her silver horns.

"Oh, what will the old woman say!" she cried. And quickly, to hide what she had done, she dug a hole and buried the horn. Immediately there sprang up from the spot a tree full of shining apples that looked like silver!

"How clever I am!" cried the princess, now smiling. "How pleased the old woman will be to have these apples for nothing but the broken horn of a cow!"

That was the way she looked at it; but you know, some say green is "green," and others say green is "blue!"

"So you have caused a tree of ugly, leaden apples to grow in my orchard!" cried the beggar woman. "Go to picking them this instant, and do not stop till every apple is gone!"

"Oh, oh! " wailed the princess, "I thought they were silver apples!"

"Silver, indeed!" snapped the old woman. "You have been sowing only seeds for leaden apples, and now you call them silver! Let me hear no more such nonsense, but get to plucking them, for you have more of a task than you think."

"Alas!" thought the princess, beginning at once to pluck apples, "if the friendly little toad were here he would help me."

But there was no stopping to find the road. Indeed it looked as if the princess would be plucking apples forever! for as fast as she plucked one, another grew in its place, and when night came there was not one apple the less on the tree.

The princess lay down on the grass, and was soon fast asleep. While she slept, she saw a white cloud floating towards her. It stopped and out of it stepped her fair-haired playmate.

"Oh, why have you come?" she cried.

"To tell you how to pick the leaden apples, little Princess. Break one open and see what is inside." Then, though the princess tried to stop him, he stepped back into the cloud, and floated away.

When she awoke it was daylight. Immediately she plucked an apple and broke it open. Across each half was the word "ingratitude!"

She broke another, to find it the same; and still another had the ugly word inside. In astonishment the princess sat gazing at the broken apples, and there's no telling how long she'd have puzzled but for the cow, who came up and said:

"'Gratitude' is the opposite of 'ingratitude.'"

The princess opened her pretty eyes very wide, and threw her arms around the white cow's neck, weeping to think how ungrateful she had been to the gentle, forgiving creature.

Thud! an apple tumbled to the ground! None came in its place, and instantly the cow's silver horn reappeared on her head.

Then the princess picked up her skirts, and ran through the orchard crying, "Thank you, trees, for your fruit!" and the trees bent down their branches, whispering softly as if they were pleased.

When she came back to the tree of leaden apples, the ground beneath it was strewn with the ugly fruit which shrivelled up and disappeared before her very eyes! Yet there remained on the tree two apples.

"One is my ingratitude to the beggar woman!" cried the princess. "But for her I would not have known I was sowing seed for leaden apples!" Down came one of the apples! and before her appeared the beautiful lady who had brought the fair-haired boy to the palace garden.

"Little Princess!" she exclaimed, "your ingratitude to me harmed only you, for it took the ugly shape of the beggar woman and hid my real self!"

"Oh!" exclaimed the princess, and without more words ran to look for the little toad.

"Little toad," she cried, "I have been most ungrateful to you!"

Thump! down came the last apple! The tree disappeared, and there stood her playmate, a real little prince!

"Come, dear Princess," he cried, "let us go back to our garden."

The beautiful lady put a little silver whistle to her lips and blew a sweet blast – immediately the great raven appeared.

"Go, little ones," she said, "sow wisely and you will always be happy."

She kissed them good bye and away they sailed to the palace garden, where they are sowing seeds for silver apples, and golden ones too, for all I know.

The Talking Stones.

ONCE there was a great queen, who had everything she desired to make her happy, except love. Thinking it easy to gain love she sent costly presents to all in her vast kingdom.

To her surprise, however, the rich gifts did not win the love of her people.

"Why is it," she then asked the court fool, "that my people do not love me when I have sent them beautiful gifts?"

The fool snapped his fingers, answering thus:

"A fig for your fine presents! Fill your golden goblets with Love, for Love begets Love! But perhaps, your Majesty, the advice of a fool is not worth taking, and you had best ask counsel of your wise men."

So the queen sent for the three wise men and asked them to explain what the fool had said.

"Indeed, your Majesty," said they, bowing till the tops of their bald heads scraped the floor, "our business is to know about wisdom, and we cannot tell you anything about Love."

"Begone!" cried the queen, and so angry was she, finding that her wealth could not buy what she wanted most, that she gave commands for all who did not love her to be east into prison.

When the dungeons of the castle were filled, and the queen had found neither love nor happiness, she set the prisoners free. Then she sent the fool out on the highway, to fetch in any passer-by who might know about Love.

The fool sat on the highway; but he did not stop the first who passed, nor the next nor the next.

By and by a man came along singing gaily, though he carried a heavy sack on his back.

"Hold!" cried the fool, "her Majesty, the queen, would speak with you."

"What can she wish of such as I?" thought the poor man; but he followed the fool into the castle, and was led into the presence of the great queen.

"Do you know about Love?" asked the queen.

"Indeed!" replied the man, "it is builded into my house with every stone in the walls! "

"Then," said the queen, "I would have you tear down your house and bring me the stones." However that may have surprised the man, he trudged home and told his wife what they must do. "Well," said she with a merry laugh, "let us begin at once, for the sooner the queen finds that this is the wrong way to find love, the better for her. As for us, – what are a few stones?"

So they set about tearing down their house, as merrily as if they were to exchange it for a castle as fine as the queen's. And next morning a load of stones was brought to the palace and dumped into the courtyard.

The queen came out and poked about among the stones with her golden sceptre; but finding nothing that she thought looked like love, she ran into the castle shedding tears of anger.

"They have cheated me!" she cried. "They have brought the stones and kept the love!"

"Love cannot be kept!" declared the fool, "for it is free as air! And only as we give it and receive it, can we realize it is love!"

This puzzled the queen, but she would ask no more questions of the fool, so she sent again for the three wise men.

"What is it," she asked, "that cannot be kept, but is free as air; and we only know it for what it is as we give it and receive it?"

"That," answered the first wise man, "is the most difficult riddle I have ever heard! There cannot be any such thing; for if we cannot keep a thing, how can we give it! "

The second and the third thought the same as the first; and none of the three was wise enough to see that what we give we cannot keep. So they backed out of the queen's presence, and left her wondering if they were not right, and if there was perhaps no such thing as love.

Not knowing then what to do, she went out into the courtyard and sat on the pile of stones, thinking maybe she would find a wee bit of love sticking to them, in spite of what the wise men had said.

As she sat she heard whispering voices, and bending over, she found that the stones were talking to one another.

"Do you know," said one, "that the poor man will have a much finer house than the one of which we were built? He will have a castle as fine as the queen's, and finer, for hers has no love in it, though it is so rich and beautiful."

"Hist!" said another, "the queen sits near by!" and the stones talked no more, though the queen listened to hear if they would tell where the poor man got his love.

Next day the queen, dressed as a serving maid, again sat upon the pile of stones; and not recognising her, the stones talked freely.

"Listen," said one, "I will tell you a story."

THE STONE'S STORY

There was once a king who envied the possessions of others, and had little scruple about getting what he wanted, no matter to whom it belonged.

One day, with his great army, he marched to a neighbouring kingdom, thinking it better than his own, and putting the king to flight, took possession of it.

"Now," thought he, "I will be happy in this great castle. And he went from room to room admiring the rich hangings and beautiful golden ornaments.

There was, however, always something displeasing: here was too much or there was too little; here was green when there should have been yellow. "Indeed," thought he, "these rooms are not to my liking, for the colours are not harmonious."

He then ordered a great feast prepared, and sat at the head of the table, where the fine ladies and gentlemen of the court, in their silken robes and glittering jewels, paid homage to him, for they were afraid of his great army.

The king felt quite pleased and important, till the feast was brought in, when he began making wry faces, for nothing tasted to suit him: this was too hot and that was too cold; what wasn't burned was not cooked enough; till the king, indignant, seized the tablecloth and was about to drag everything onto the floor.

"Oh, stay! your Majesty," cried a sweet little maid, running up and curtsying prettily, "if you will but bow your head, so I can whisper in your ear; I will tell you the trouble."

"Ha, ha!" guffawed the king, "what a wise little miss we have here!" Nevertheless he bowed his head, and quick as a wink the little maid snatched a pair of huge spectacles off his nose!

"See!" she cried, holding them up, "these are the spectacles of envy! they make the possessions of others seem finer than one's own!" And at that she threw them on the stone floor and smashed them into a thousand bits!

The king rubbed his eyes and looked about: then he rushed out of the castle, jumped on his horse, and galloped home, followed by his great army, wondering why their king was in such a hurry.

"Indeed!" cried he, when he reached home, "I am well paid for my trouble, by getting rid of those specs that have itched my nose for so long! The good king may come back to his castle, for now that I see what a beautiful kingdom I have, I will waste no time seeking happiness elsewhere!"

As the story was finished the queen arose and walked away.

"It is a bad thing to be envious," she thought. "I am glad I do not see the world through such spectacles!"

As she was musing thus, a gorgeous chariot, carrying beautiful Queen Hermione, of the neighboring kingdom, passed along the highway.

When the queen saw her she frowned, and hastening to the castle, called the fool.

"Is Queen Hermione more beautiful than I?" she asked.

"Your Majesty." answered the fool, "you might be the most beautiful queen in the world! "

"Why do you say 'might be'?" cried the queen. "Because, your Majesty, those big spectacles you are wearing make you the ugliest queen I have ever seen!"

Putting her hand to her eyes, she found, sure enough, a pair of spectacles. The unhappy queen ran to her room, threw herself on the bed and cried as if she were a little girl.

Presently she stopped and dried her eyes, as well as she could under the big spectacles; then she went into the garden and plucked a beautiful red rose. With her eyes now twinkling she went into the strong-room where she kept her chests of silver and gold, and took out the most beautiful golden goblet she could find. Putting the red rose into it, she sent it by her swiftest courier to Queen Hermione.

A reply was not long coming, and what do you think it was? – another golden goblet, as beautiful as the one the queen had sent, and in it a lovely, sweet-smelling red rose!

The queen clapped her hands for joy; then looked into the mirror. The ugly spectacles had disappeared, leaving never a trace of having been there!

"I have found Love!" she cried. And indeed it was so, for people came flocking from all over the kingdom, to tell the queen how they loved her. And she was so happy that she forgot that there had ever been a time when she did not know about Love.

From that day to this the stones have been in the courtyard; and more than once, the queen has slipped down to listen to the stories they told.

Your eyes would open wide, little children, if you could hear those stories; and indeed, if you are patient, you will hear them all sometime.

The End

