

VARIOUS

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THE QUEER THINGS THAT HAPPENED TO NELLY

NELLY BURTON had been weeding in the garden nearly all the summer forenoon; and she was quite tired out. "Oh, if I could only be dressed up in fine clothes, and not have to work!" thought she.

No sooner had the thought passed through her mind, than, as she looked down on the closely-mown grass by the edge of the pond, she saw the queerest sight that child ever beheld.

A carriage, the body of which was made of the half of a large walnut-shell, brightly gilt, was moving along, dragged by six beetles with backs glistening with all the colors of the rainbow.

Seated in the carriage, and carrying a wand, was a young lady not larger than a child's little finger, but so beautiful that no humming-bird could equal her in beauty. She had the bluest of blue eyes, and yellow crinkled hair that shone like gold.

She stopped her team of beetles, and, standing upright, said to

Nelly, "Listen to me. My name is Pitpat; and I am a fairy. I see how tired you are with work. Your father, though a good man, is a blacksmith; and there is often a smirch on his face when he stoops to kiss you. Your mother wears calico dresses, and doesn't fix her hair with false braids and waterfalls. Would you not like to be the daughter of a king and queen, and live in a palace?"

"Oh, yes, you beautiful Pitpat! I would like that ever so much!" exclaimed Nelly. "Then I should be a princess, and have nothing to do but amuse myself all day."

"Take the end of my wand, and touch your eyes with it," said the little fairy.

Nelly obeyed; and in a moment, before she could wink, she found herself in a beautiful room, with mirrors reaching from the ceiling to the floor. By these she saw that she was no longer clad in an old dingy dress, nor were her feet bare; but she had on a beautiful skirt of light-blue velvet, and a bodice of the most costly lace, trimmed with ribbons; while diamonds were in her hair, and a pair of gold slippers on her feet.

Servants were in attendance on her, one of whom said, "May it please your Highness, his Majesty, your royal father, is coming." Nelly's heart fluttered. The door opened, and, preceded by two or three lackeys, a pompous old gentleman entered, clad in rich robes, a golden crown on his head, and no smirch on his face.

But, dear me, instead of catching her up in his arms, and calling her his own precious little Nelly, his Majesty simply gave her his hand to kiss, and passed on.

The queen followed in his steps. Her hair was done up in a tower of top-knots and waterfalls; and there was drapery enough on the back of her dress to astonish an upholsterer. Instead of calling Nelly "her darling," as Nelly's first mother used to do, the queen merely said, as she swept by, "Where are your manners, child?" for you must know that poor Nelly had forgotten to courtesy.

Nelly put her face in her hands, and began to cry. "Oh, you cruel Pitpat!" said she, "why did you tempt me? Oh! give me back my own dear mother in her calico dress, my own dear father with the smirch on his face, my doll Angelica, my black-and-white kitten Dainty, and my own dear, dear home beside the lovely pond where the air is so sweet and the bushes are so green."

"Take the end of my wand again, and touch your eyes with it," said the voice of Pitpat. And there on the carpet, in her little gilded carriage, stood the fairy once more with her wand held out. Nelly seized it eagerly, and touched her eyes.

"Why, Dainty, what are you about?" said Nelly, as she felt the kitten's head against her arm; and then, opening her eyes, she started to find herself in the old wood-shed, seated with her back against the door, Angelica in her lap, and the soft breeze from the pond fanning her cheek and bosom. She looked at her feet. Ah! the golden slippers had disappeared. "Dear me! I must have been dreaming," said Nelly.

Ida Fay.

ROSE'S SONG

So it's hush-a-by, baby,
Hush-a-by now,
Mamma's gone to buy something good;
And she will not forget
Her own darling pet,
But will buy her a bonny blue hood:
Yes, she'll buy her a bonny blue hood.
Oh! she will not forget
Her own baby pet,
But will buy her a bonny blue hood.

Then it's crow away, baby,
Crow away, sweet,
Papa he is coming to-night;
And he'll bring home a kiss,
Like *this* and like *this*,
For his sweet little Minnie so bright,
For his dear little Minnie so bright.
Oh! he's many a kiss,
Like *this* and like *this*,
For his sweet little Minnie to-night.

Geo. Bennett.

THE SIX DUCKS

In the pond near Emily's house six tame ducks used to have a fine time swimming about, except in winter, when the pond was frozen. Emily had a name for each one of them. They used to run to her when she called; for they knew she loved them all, and would treat them well.

Among these six happy ducks there was a white one that was at one time of his life a wild duck. Emily named him *Albus*; for *albus* is Latin for *white*. I will tell you how Albus happened to become tamed.

He was once on his way to the South with a large flock of his wild companions, when, as they were alighting near a creek, Albus was shot in the wing by Dick Barker, a sportsman who was out gunning. Dick ran with his dog Spot to pick up the poor wounded bird; but Albus was not so much hurt that he could not fly a little.

He flew and flew till he came to Emily's little garden; and then he fell at her feet, faint, but not dead, as if pleading for protection. Emily took him up in her arms, though she soiled her apron with blood in so doing. Dick and Spot came up; and Dick said roughly, "Give me up that duck."

"The duck has flown to my feet for protection; and I would be shot myself before I would betray him and give him up," said Emily. "I shall keep him, and heal his wounds."

Mr. Dick Barker scolded wildly; but it was of no use. He had to go off duckless. As for Albus, he soon grew well under Emily's tender care; but his wing was not as strong as it used to be: so he concluded he would become a tame bird, and not try to fly off again with his wild companions. He had a happy home, a kind mistress, and pleasant duck acquaintances. So, like a good sensible waddler, he was content.

Emily Carter.

THE BUNCH OF GRAPES

"I am thinking what I shall do with this beautiful bunch of grapes," said Reka Lane as she sat on the bench near the arbor. Her real name was Rebecca; but they called her, for shortness, Reka.

"I know what I should do with it," said little Matilda, who had been wading in the brook, and was without shoes and stockings. "I should divide it among the present company."

"Good for Matty!" exclaimed brother Henry. "The best use you can put grapes to is to eat them before they spoil. Come, Reka, divide, divide."

"I am not sure that I shall do that," said Reka.

"Look at that queer dog!" said Matty. "He has crept under the shawl on the ground, and looks like a head with no body to it."

"That shawl was left there the other day by old Mrs. Merton," said Reka. "The dog is her son's terrier; and his name is Beauty."

"He is any thing but a beauty," said Matty. "I think him the ugliest dog I ever saw."

"I suppose they call him Beauty to make up for the bad word he gets from every one as being ugly," said Reka. "He is a good dog, nevertheless; and he knows that shawl belongs to his mistress.—Don't you, Beauty?"

Here Beauty tore out from under the shawl, and began barking in a very intelligent manner.

"Now I will tell you what we will do," said Reka. "Put on your shoes and stockings, Matty, and we will all go and call on Mrs. Merton, who is ill; and we'll take back her shawl, and give her this beautiful bunch of grapes."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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