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THE TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION.

[See page 131.

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THE

ENTERTAINING STORY

OF

KING BRONDÉ,

His Lily and his Rosebud.

Mrs. Abby Morton

By ~~ANNA~~ M. DIAZ.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY W. L. SHEPPARD.

BOSTON:
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THE

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THE KING'S

LILY AND ROSEBUD.

CHAPTER I.

THE THREE PRINCESSES.

IF anybody had happened to be walking along what was called the Robbers' Road, in Long Forest, a part of the possessions of good King Brondé, who lived many, many hundred years ago, he would have perceived that the road was continually curving towards the right. He would also soon have grown weary, for this winding road led, by degrees, to the top of a mountain. But if he had kept on and on, and did not give up for weariness, he would at length have come to the palace of the very king himself. A magnificent palace it was, too, and a sight of it well worth the long journey.

If you could but have seen how the gilded roof shone in the sunlight! and the white marble statues in the gardens! and the fountains and the round ponds filled with gold and silver fishes! and the flocks of lambs with blue and pink ribbons around their necks! and the shepherdesses all

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dressed in white, each with her crook and her wreath of flowers! — if you could but have seen all these beautiful things, then would the weary journey have been soon forgotten.

And could you have entered the palace itself, and have kept your eyes from being blinded by the bright colors, the sparkling ornaments, and all the splendor of this wonderful place, and have wandered on and on, through the spacious apartments, you would at last have come to an ivory door, over which was perched a red-and-green parrot. This parrot was fed upon flowers made from crystals of white sugar; and had you given him one of these he would have told you a riddle. But this, of course, you could not know. And indeed, when the door was once open, you would have forgotten parrots and everything else in gazing at the beautiful lady within, — the beautiful pale lady, King Brondé's queen.

This is her private chamber. The windows are lofty, and more than half hidden by rich curtains of crimson. The walls are covered with cloth of crimson and gold. Vases of white lilies fill the air with their fragrance. How beautiful is the pale lady, reclining upon her dark cushions of velvet! Her robe is of blue silk, embroidered with silver. Her fair hair is adorned with a wreath of blue flowers. These flowers are made of precious

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stones, and the leaves are of silver. Her eyes are blue, too, very blue, — bluer than her silk robe, — bluer than the flowers in her hair. And oh! if her cheeks had but looked rosy then, she would have been the most beautiful queen in the world. But her face was very, very pale; so that when she was not called the Queen, she was often called the Pale Lady, or the White Lady, and sometimes the Lily Queen.

But what are those blue eyes looking upon so earnestly, so tenderly, so sadly?

Ah! that I can soon tell you.

But first I must tell you that fastened to the ceiling was a golden eagle, holding in its claws a long silver cord. This cord sustained a sort of canopy, made of white velvet, and fringed with silver. From this canopy hung curtains of the most gauzy, delicate lace. These were now looped up with their jewelled bands, and it was something underneath upon which the blue eyes of the Pale Lady were fixed so earnestly.

Now this something underneath was something very charming indeed.

It was a babe which lay there, sleeping in its cradle.

This cradle was curiously wrought of sandalwood and rosewood and boxwood and ivory. It was lined with down, and its cushions were white

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and soft as new-fallen snow. The quilt was embroidered with pearls. At each of its four corners, and bending over it, was the sculptured figure of a little smiling boy. Those at the foot seemed playing softly on musical instruments, as if soothing the child to slumber. The two at the head were represented as holding out poppies over the infant beneath.

But why should the mother look with sadness upon her babe? If any one could weep in such a beautiful place, we might fancy almost those were tears in her blue eyes.

The Pale Lady had, no doubt, cause for sorrow; for she sighed frequently, and bowed her head upon the velvet cushions, saying, "O my precious one! what shall I ask for thee?"

At length she took from her bosom a curiously shaped whistle, which, when she put it to her lips, gave forth the sweetest notes you ever heard.

Then the ivory door opened softly, and there came in a bright black-eyed little boy, in a red turban. The lady, without speaking, pointed to a casket at the opposite side of the room. This the little black-eyed, also without speaking, placed in her hands, and then, with the very lightest of footsteps and the very lowest of bows, he left the room.

The lady unlocked the casket, and, after opening

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many little drawers, she at last took out a most fairy-like cup, made of alabaster, perfectly plain and white. Then, lifting the crimson and gold hangings from the wall near by, she pressed her finger upon what seemed to be a small picture fastened in the wood-work. A drawer flew out, from which the Pale Lady took three small green stones and a vial. Placing the stones in the cup, she poured over them a liquid from the vial, and very soon there began to arise a vapor, which spread through the apartment. And the Pale Lady, while the vapor was rising, sang, in low tones, these words: —

"Wild Mountain Fairy, in robes of green,
List to the call of the Lily Queen.
O, speed thee! speed quickly o'er land and o'er sea,
For the child and its mother are waiting for thee."

As the vapor melted away, there was seen, standing by the cradle, a beautiful white lamb; which, after walking three times around the room, became transformed into as pretty a green fairy as ever was seen. Now this is what the fairy said to the lady, and what the lady said to the fairy.

Fairy. — "Yes: three times I promised to come at thy bidding. This is the third. What now is the wish of the fair Lily Queen?"

Lady. — "Fairy, I pray thee bestow something good — something blessed — upon my youngest-born."

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Fairy. — "Yes, lady. And what shall it be? It is thine to choose. How is it with the two princesses, her sisters? Did I not well by them?"

Lady. — "Fairy, what I asked thou gavest. For the eldest, I chose the gift of perfect beauty, for I said, 'Every one loves the beautiful; she will draw all hearts to herself.'"

Fairy. — "And thus did it prove?"

Lady. — "Listen! I hear her step. Judge now for thyself."

As the ivory door swung open, the beautiful princess entered. Perfect beauty had indeed been given her. There was in her countenance such a bloom, such a freshness, such a smile upon her lip, such a light in her eye, that, having once looked, one was hardly able to turn away. She wore no ornament, well knowing that gold could buy nothing so pretty, so bright, so radiant, as herself.

"And such beauty as this, or even greater, wouldst thou choose for thy youngest-born?" asked the fairy.

"O no, no, no!" said the lady, earnestly. "O fairy! yonder beauty has no heart, and none love her. She is not happy; she makes no one happy."

"And did I not warn thee?" asked the fairy.

"Fairy, thou didst. The blame is mine, — mine only. I foolishly trusted that beauty alone would

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draw loving hearts around her. Oh! she is vain; she is silly; she is proud. Examine the book she holds. Inside its covers are little mirrors, that she may continually enjoy the sight of her beauty. All the artists in the kingdom are busy painting likenesses of her face, her form, her hands. And you will perceive that the very figures upon her dress are only so many miniatures of herself."

"And her sister, the second princess," inquired the fairy, "upon whom, at your request, I conferred great wisdom, — you surely find comfort in her?"

"Alas!" replied the lady, "although she can converse in all languages, and not even the wisest philosopher can puzzle her with questions, yet she cannot make herself beloved, for she knows not the secret of making even the poorest child happy. Though despising beauty, yet she is envious of her sister; and their want of affection saddens my whole life. But you will see, now, this wise princess. That is her step approaching. It will be very fortunate if we understand her, for seldom does she converse in our own language."

Again the ivory door opened, to admit the second princess, who instantly began talking.

"Alski, mofo, se lup tak sba tab enryo dyo!" she exclaimed.

Her dress was a brownish robe, reaching to the floor. It was covered with ink-spots. Her hair was

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tumbled, and stuck full of pens. Her hands were filled with big charts and rolls of manuscripts.

"Potobi, ritu fo bam. Shik, sho, tabi," said she, approaching her beautiful sister so awkwardly that she almost trod upon one of the pretty miniatures in her dress. The beauty sprang angrily up, and there would have been a great quarrel, had not the Green Fairy, with a motion of her wand, ordered them from the apartment.

Meanwhile, the pale Lily Queen, paler now than ever, sat sighing and weeping.

"Arouse yourself, dear lady," said the fairy, "and choose quickly, for others may summon me, and I must soon be gone."

"Good fairy," said the lady, "bestow upon her, not happiness for herself, but the blessing of bringing happiness to others. I ask for her the gift of exceeding love. Kindle a love-flame in her heart which shall never grow dim."

"Alas!" said the fairy, "what you ask is not mine to give. Far, far away, in a land which no mortal and no fairy ever saw, is an altar upon which the holy fire is constantly burning. Now, although no mortal and no fairy may enter there, yet there may, and there do, come messengers from thence, bearing sparks of this holy fire. Happy the heart which receives such messengers, for the love-flame, once kindled from the sacred fire, is never quenched.

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And all who have love in their hearts possess the blessing you have chosen, — the power and the will to create happiness. Be silent, now, and let only beautiful and holy thoughts enter your mind."

The fairy then described with her wand a circle upon the floor, in the centre of which she stood for some time, motionless. At last, in a low voice, she began chanting, —

"Beautiful Spirit! Spirit of Love,
Why dost thou tarry? O, where dost thou rove?
Linger not by the altar, sweet Spirit, for see!
The child of the Lily Queen waiteth for thee."

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As she chanted, her voice grew fainter and fainter. Her form faded, becoming more and more shadow-like, until, at length, its last dim outline disappeared.

But while the Pale Lady was still gazing at the spot where the fairy had stood, she heard a voice faintly singing, —

"The Fairy Green
No more is seen.
Look not for me,
Dear lady. But see!
Where cometh above
The Spirit of Love."

The lady raised her eyes to the ceiling, and saw there what appeared to be a kind of white cloud. While gazing, full of wonder at this strange appearance, she perceived, flying from it, a small, white dove. Following its motions with her eye, she saw that it was flying in circles around the cradle. These circles grew smaller and smaller, and at length the beautiful little creature alighted upon the clasped hands of the child, and then creeping into its bosom, just where its little heart was beating, it lay there as quietly as if it had never in its life known any other nest.

The lady now perceived that the air was filled with the singing of birds, and, looking up, she saw that the white cloud had changed, and was now of the most brilliant colors; and that from the midst

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of it were flying birds such as she had never before seen or heard, — birds of the most radiant plumage, purple and gold and scarlet, and whose warbling was inexpressibly melodious. The whole room was filled with their brightness and with their music. They seemed to be attendants of the white dove, for they hovered about the cradle, though not one alighted. Poised in the air, fluttering their bright wings, their singing was not like that of birds, but like some heavenly anthem, such as she had imagined might be sung by angels.

At first this music was overpowering, but grew softer by degrees, and so soothing that the lady soon lost all consciousness of what was about her. Her eyelids drooped, and she wondered how it was that the music sounded so far away.

When the power of opening her eyes was restored to her, she looked eagerly about, and then grew very sad, for there were no sweet sounds in the room, — no birds, no music.

Running to her child, she searched eagerly in its bosom. But no dove was there, — nothing but a warm, bright red spot, just over its little heart.

The babe opened its blue eyes, smiled, and put out its tiny hands to its mother; and the Pale Lady might have thought she had been dreaming, were it not for the bright red spot which, as I said before, was plainly to be seen just over the little quick-beating heart.

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CHAPTER II.

KING BRONDÉ.

ALTHOUGH I have told you something of his palace and of his daughters and of his queen, I have as yet hardly spoken of the king himself.

King Brondé was once a poor little boy, and lived with his mother in a brown hut or cottage, near the borders of a forest. One day, when he was in the forest with some other children, chopping fagots for his mother's fire, a giant chanced to pass that way, and, by accident, his foot became entangled in the branches of a thick thorn-tree, causing him to roar out most lustily. The other children screamed, and ran away. But Brondé climbed the tree, and, with his hatchet, hacked away the branches.

"Thank you, my little man!" said the giant. "Come, live with me, and I'll teach you to grow. Would you like that?"

"With all my heart," said the lad, "if mother will say yes."

He then ran quickly home, and cried out,—

"Mother! mother! May I grow up a big man?"

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"To be sure!" said his mother. "What 's to hinder?"

"Well," said the lad, "I shall go now to live with the giant, and he will teach me."

Then his mother began to weep and to wail most bitterly, and to say, "O no! O no!"

But when the little boy said he was not afraid, and told how stout he would grow and how he would take care of her, and how proud she should be of such a big son, she wiped her tears and gave him her consent. So Brondé ran to the forest, and cried out, "Sir giant! sir giant! I am ready." And then the giant put him in his pocket, and walked away.

And Brondé lived a year in the cave; and the giant fed him with something which caused him to grow very big and very tall and very strong. This something was a mountain herb which giants fed upon, and may, no doubt, be still found in that region, only that no one knows the spot where it grows.

Brondé, as I said, grew very large and strong, and would, no doubt, have some day become a giant himself, had his stout friend lived long enough.

But the giant grew sick, and laid him down to die. Knowing that his end was near, he called Brondé close to his mouth, and said to him: —

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"I shall soon leave you now. Have I not been a friend to you? Have I not fulfilled my promise?"

Then, as Brondé could not answer for crying, the giant went on:—

"There is but one man living as large and strong as yourself. He calls himself Magnus, or 'The Great.' Years ago, I did for him what I have done for you. But he grew wicked as fast as he grew strong, and I drove him from me. You will readily know him; for he is exactly your size. His hair, however, is not fair and curly like yours, but black and coarse. I pray, however, that you may never meet, for he would gladly kill you, that there may be no man living as large and as strong himself.

"Death is near," continued the giant, "and I am not sorry; for mine has been but a lonely life. But before we part I would bestow upon you a parting gift. It is one which this Magnus, of whom I have spoken, often begged of me, but never obtained. You see this vial. A few drops of its contents confer upon the person swallowing them immense strength. As its effects pass off, he sinks into a stupor resembling death, from which he awakes with only his usual powers. You are young, active, and will seek adventure,—brave, and will fear no danger. You will encounter perils; you will be reduced to extremities in which even your uncommon strength shall not avail. Preserve, therefore, this little vial

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with the utmost care, and never use it unless your very life depends upon its aid.

"This, then," said the giant, as he hung the vial about the neck of Brondé by a stout cord, "this is my dying gift; listen, now, to my dying request.

"When I am dead, leave my body in this cave. Roll rocks about the mouth of it, till no opening can be seen. Pull up oak-trees and plant them around, that no one may ever discover the entrance to my tomb."

So the giant died; and Brondé, with his immense strength, rolled rocks and planted trees, until the cave was entirely concealed. And, to this day, no

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traveller journeying that way ever knew he was passing the tomb of a giant.

Now Brondé had lived in the cave just a year and a day. And the same flowers were in bloom, the meadows were as green, the waters as blue, the sky was as bright, the air as soft, and the birds were singing as sweetly the very same tunes, as on the day when he kissed his mother and ran to meet the giant in the forest.

And Brondé wondered, as he travelled homeward, whether he really were Brondé, and really had a mother living in a brown cottage by the edge of a forest. And the more he wondered, the faster he walked; until, at length, he walked so fast that no horse could pass him by.

Now, when his mother, who was looking out from her little window at the house-top, saw this big fellow coming at such a rate, she ran down to fasten the door. She was too late, however, for he was already in the room, and searching for something on the top shelf of the cupboard.

"Ah, here it is!" said he,—"the little blue honey-pot. Now it is certain I am Brondé. For though there might be a brown cottage like this, it would not have a cupboard like this, and a little blue honey-pot on the top shelf."

When the good dame reached the bottom of the

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stairs, she was terribly frightened to see such a powerful man in possession of her room and her honey-pot.

"Pardon me," said he, "but I have travelled long, and am very hungry."

The dame, seeing she could do no other, brought her oatmeal cakes and all her pans of milk, and then, by way of passing the time, asked if there were any news.

"O, great news!" said he; "the giant is dead."

"Alas!" said the good woman, beginning to weep, "where, then, is my little son?"

Then Brondé laughed, and cried out, —

"I am your little son!"

And he pulled from his pocket the whole suit of clothes which he had worn away.

Then the dame knew it was her own son, and would have fainted away for joy, had not Brondé caught her in his arms and kissed her and hugged her as if she had only been a little child.

And Brondé lived many years with his mother, and was a good son to her till she died.

He then went forth into the world to seek his fortune. And chancing to stop in a great city, through which a legion of soldiers was passing, he resolved to join the army, and fight for the king.

Now the king of the land soon heard of the mar-

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vellous deeds of his new soldier, and straightway sent for him to come to the palace, that he might behold with his own eyes this great wonder.

Brondé, therefore, visited the palace. And the king was so charmed with his lofty stature, his noble air, and his fine appearance, that he must needs have him among his own private guards, and very soon made him captain over them all. And it was soon found that this great soldier was as good as he was great, and as gentle as he was strong. For never in his life had he used his strength to oppress the weak; but, on the contrary, sought to help all who were in distress.

Now the king had an only child, a daughter as fair and sweet as a lily. And the king never called her anything but his White Lily, or his Precious Lily. This princess was the life and light of the court. She was sweet-tempered and modest, yet merry and playful as a kitten, dancing and singing from morning to night.

And one day, when the king was away, and the courtiers were feasting in the grand banquet-hall, there ran in among them maidens weeping, and crying out, —

"Save the princess! Oh! who will save the princess?"

And every one rushed from the palace to learn what had befallen the king's Lily.

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The maidens ran swiftly towards the river, and then every one thought she had been drowned. But no. On towards the mountains the maidens ran. And, half-way up the mountain path, they pointed below to a crevice between two huge rocks, and told how the princess, in her eagerness to chase a gazelle, had slipped and fallen through. And hardly had they finished speaking before the voice of the princess was heard, in tones of distress, calling out for help.

All were now in dismay, crying out, "Alas! alas! the princess will die!"

But when Brondé arrived, and saw that trees were growing about the foot of the outer rock, he quickly let himself down, and began pulling them out by their roots. This so loosened the earth that, by means of his great strength, he could easily start the rock from its nest. And this he did, and sent it rolling, whirling, plunging, nobody looked to see how far, for all were busy with the princess, who, though very little hurt, was trembling with fright. And Brondé, seeing that she could hardly stand, took her in his arms and bore her to the palace, the rest following far behind.

If he had not taken her in his arms and borne her to the palace, it is probable this story would never have been written, as will presently be shown.

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When the princess found herself unhurt, she began to laugh within herself at this adventure, and at the odd way she was travelling home. And as her head lay upon the shoulder — the big, broad shoulder — of Brondé, his long, fair curls touched her cheek. So, being fond of mischief, she slyly drew forth her scissors, cut off one curl, and kept it hid in her hand. And Brondé did not know a word about it; though, had he known, it would not have displeased him, since, had she wished, he would gladly have given her every one of them; for he was quite fond of the charming little princess.

And he grew still more fond of her as years passed, and wondered within himself whether such a big fellow as he could ever please such a delicate little creature as the king's Lily. And if that

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could ever happen, why, what would the king say then? It was quite doubtful whether he should be thought worthy to be the son-in-law of a king. Whatever his thoughts were, therefore, none were the wiser for them, as they remained hidden in his own breast.

Now the king's Lily looked with admiration upon the brave, noble-hearted Brondé.

"Ah!" said she to herself, "he is gentle and good, and can do no wrong; he is strong and brave, and can fear no danger; and he is handsome enough to gaze upon for a lifetime. And I think,—I think he likes very well even a small, pale thing like me; yet he has never told me this."

So she, too, kept her own counsel, and nobody was the wiser. But it is curious to see how, sometimes, events are brought about.

The king said one day to his daughter: "Choose you now a husband, for old age is coming upon me, and I would know, before I die, that my child and my kingdom are well cared for."

But the pretty White Lily grew bashful and said, "Let me not choose, but rather be chosen."

Then the king said: "Who would dare to choose my beautiful Lily, my princess? But give yourself no uneasiness, since I myself can make the choice."

Then the princess was quite troubled, not know-

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ing upon whom the choice might fall. And she thought that by a cunning little trick matters might be well arranged. So she said to her father, the king: "My dearest father, in coming from the mountains one day, I discovered a lock of hair, so beautiful that I have preserved it ever since. Whoever, now, in all your court, can match this lock with one of his own, he, and he only, shall be my choice."

Now when this declaration of the princess was made known, it caused great commotion among the young nobles of the court. All were examining their locks, and longing to know the color of that which the king's Lily had discovered in coming from the mountain.

Brondé sent in one of his fair curls with the rest, and was, of course, the lucky winner. For not one in the whole court had hair so soft and of so beautiful a color as he.

And he soon found that the heart of the princess was quite large enough to love even so big a fellow as himself. And the princess made the discovery that the small, pale thing, as she had called herself, was the very thing, in all the world, that Brondé most wished for. The king, too, was well pleased to give to his daughter so kind a protector, and to his kingdom so brave a defender. And thus it happened, for once, that everybody was pleased. The

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lady with her lover, the lover with his lady, the king with his son-in-law, and the people with their king that was to be.

There was one person, however, who, far away, hearing of Brondé's good fortune, was not so well pleased. This person was a man of great strength and size, who has already been spoken of. He called himself Magnus, or "The Great."

He, too, had once been among the king's guards, and would have been quite ready to take both daughter and kingdom. But by reason of his cruelty and for his many bad acts, he was banished from the country. After Brondé had been made a great captain in the army, Magnus went to him secretly, by night, and said: "Come, now, we two are strong and can accomplish whatsoever we will. Let us gather about us a troop of brave men; let us entice the king's soldiers; there are many who will gladly fight under two such powerful leaders. We will attack the palace, throw the king into prison, and become ourselves rulers of the land."

But Brondé said, "I will not use my strength to do evil." And Magnus, for this, hated Brondé, and was, therefore, far from rejoicing at his good fortune.

His envy and his displeasure, however, were alike unknown to Brondé and the princess. They were married and lived happily. Their father, the king, built for them two fine palaces, one within the

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city and the other far away among the forests and mountains. It was this summer palace, standing high, all glittering with silver and gold, which was spoken of in the beginning. And it will now be understood that the Pale Lady, sitting in the Crimson Chamber, was the good old king's Lily Princess whom Brondé saved on the mountain, whom he bore home in his arms, and whom he afterwards married. The old king had now long been dead, and King Brondé was enjoying a peaceful reign. Affairs went smoothly on, his people loved him and he loved his people, and he still spent the summers at the beautiful palace in Long Forest.

But peaceful days last not always, and troubles, dangers, and bitter sorrows were in store for the good King Brondé and his Lily Queen.

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CHAPTER III.

THE WOOD-CUTTER'S CHILDREN.

WE left, at the end of the first chapter, a child sleeping in its cradle within a chamber of the royal palace. To this child, this third little princess, was given the name of Rosebud. Her father, King Brondé, it was, who gave his little daughter this name. He came into the chamber one day just as she had awakened, with flushed cheeks, from a long sleep. Now the Lily Queen, in remembrance of the Green Fairy, had the child dressed always in green. King Brondé, when he lifted her in his arms, said: "Why, my dear Lily, with her red cheeks she is like a rosebud in its green jacket." And they agreed that she should be called Rosebud.

And a sweet Rosebud she was to them always. First, till she was a year old, when she walked; then, till she was two years old, when she talked; then, till three years old, when she sang; then, till four years old, when she could sit before her father, on horseback, and go forth riding in the forest. The

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lords and ladies of the court were quite charmed with the king's Rosebud, and as her years increased she came to be the delight of the whole palace.

For the love-flame kindled in her heart was always burning there. It shone through her eyes, it lighted up her face, and she had smiles and pleasant words and loving ways for everybody.

The heart of the Pale Lily Queen was comforted. And as for King Brondé, there was nothing too beautiful or too costly for his darling Rosebud. She was the joy of his heart.

But very often his Lily Queen would say to him: "My dear Brondé, we are now too happy. Surely some evil will soon befall us."

Then would Brondé encircle the child with his arms, and say, "O, may this precious one, at least, be kept from harm."

But the Lily Queen, sighing, would murmur softly to herself, "Ah, she is too bright, too lovely a flower for earth!"

As Rosebud grew older, she showed great delight in birds, squirrels, wild flowers, and everything which lived or grew in the woods, and her attendants had plenty to do in following her up and down about the country. The woodmen all knew her, for she was continually dancing along the forest paths, or dropping like a sunbeam into their rude

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huts. Yes, like a sunbeam, for she brought the light of her bright face and the warmth of her loving heart. She made little children glad, she made the old people glad, and for miles around every one knew and loved the king's Rosebud.

One day as Rosebud was walking with her sisters along the river's bank, they heard a noise as of some one calling, "Tirra, Tirra, Tirra, Tirra La!"

It was not a shout, but a faint, mournful cry. Looking up, they saw, at a short distance from the shore, a small boat drifting along with the stream. A pale, ragged child sat leaning his forehead upon the boat's edge, now and then raising it to call out, in a feeble voice, "Tirra, Tirra, Tirra, Tirra La! Tirra, Tirra, Tirra, Tirra La!"

Seeing the three maidens, he eagerly stretched forth his hands as if asking for assistance.

The eldest princess said: "Pshaw! what do we care for the ugly, dirty fellow?"

And the second princess said: "Stupid, ignorant little wretch! Let him go!"

But the third princess ran for a man and a boat, which were soon in readiness; for every one was eager to obey even the slightest wish of little Rosebud.

When the drifting boat was towed to the shore, there was found in it not only a boy, but a little girl,

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lying in the bottom of the boat, — a very pale little girl, who seemed too weak to do more than just open her brown eyes and gaze piteously about her. But when food and cordials had been given them, it was found that they could both talk, and that quite well.

Now this is the story the little boy told of himself and his little sister.

They belonged a great way up the river. A long time ago, he could not tell how long, there was famine in that country, and their mother sickened and died.

One day their father embraced them, with tears in his eyes, and said: —

"Farewell, farewell, my pretty dears. I am going now to seek employment in the kingdom of good King Brondé, where, as I am told, all may find work and bread."

And they were left in the care of a woman who treated them ill. This woman was not only cruel, but a thief. She kept the gold their father sent, and would give them no news of him, except that he was a wood-cutter, in Long Forest.

One moonlight night the boy showed to his sister a bag of dry crusts, and said, "Let us go and seek our father."

And she said, "O yes!"

Then they jumped into a little skiff, which had no oar. "No matter for that," said the boy; "it will

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be sure to drift down." For they knew that their father had sailed away down the river.

And a very long river the boy thought it must be. For they had drifted, night and day, through many a desolate plain and gloomy forest. And all the time he had kept shouting, loud and clear at first, but more feebly as his strength grew less, "Tirra, Tirra, Tirra, Tirra La! Tirra, Tirra, Tirra, Tirra La!"

"And what was that for?" asked Rosebud.

Why, in their own country, the boy said, were robbers and bandits and many fierce men. There was danger always; and their father, as he returned from his day's hunting, or his day's labor, would call out, while crossing the little bridge near their cottage, "Tirra, Tirra, Tirra, Tirra La! Tirra, Tirra, Tirra, Tirra La!" to let them know of his safety. And they would answer back the same cry, that he might be sure no harm had come to them in his absence.

"And so," continued the little boy, "we called, 'Tirra, Tirra, Tirra, Tirra La!' while floating along, that our father might hear."

"But he did not hear!" said the little girl, sadly.

"Now, children," said Rosebud, "do not be sorrowful any more, for this is Long Forest. The palace of King Brondé is near, and I am his little girl, and I shall help you to find your father. Pray what

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is his name?" But the children knew only that he was called "Father." "For all that, we shall find him," said Rosebud. And every morning, though dressed out in costly array, and her princess's crown, she took the two children by the hand, and they walked together along the forest paths; and whenever they heard the sound of a wood-chopper's axe they shouted: —

"Tirra, Tirra, Tirra, Tirra La!" and then stopped awhile to listen, but heard only the echoes, repeating, more and more faintly, "Tirra, Tirra, Tirra, Tirra La! Tirra, Tirra, Tirra, Tirra La!"

And the children grew very sad, and said, "O, we shall never, never again see our father!"

And the two elder princesses said: "Rosebud, why will you keep such low company? You really trouble yourself a great deal about nothing."

But Rosebud answered, "Is it nothing to lose a father?" And she cheered the two children, and said to them: "Do not give up yet, for I am sure we shall not fail."

And one bright, calm summer noon, as they were passing a thick grove of oaks, there was heard, far away, the sound of a wood-cutter's axe.

They called out, as was their custom, "Tirra, Tirra, Tirra, Tirra La!" and then stood listening.

"Tirra, Tirra, Tirra, Tirra La!" they heard in reply.

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"That 's not an echo!" cried the boy; "call again!"

They called again, all together, very loud: "Tirra, Tirra, Tirra, Tirra La!"

The answer came back in a clear, strong voice, and much nearer than before.

Then a crashing of branches was heard, and a stout man burst through.

At first he could not speak, from astonishment. But at last he caught the two children in his arms, kissed them, hugged them, wept over them, and called them his precious, precious children.

And Rosebud, seeing that they both were crying for joy, herself stepped forward and told their story.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE CAVE.

THE Robbers' Road, spoken of in the beginning, could never have been called by that name without some reason.

Before the father of the Lily Queen built this summer palace for his children, there dwelt in Long Forest a band of robbers. So numerous and so bold were they, that few travellers dared trust themselves in the neighborhood, and the road through the forest was called the Robbers' Road.

But before bringing his bride to the new palace, Brondé sent troops of soldiers thither, who scoured the forest, and dispersed the band.

It happened that, after many years had passed, a portion of these robbers found their way back. They were cautious at first, and wary, but grew bolder as their numbers increased; and, at the time of which we are speaking, their operations were seriously felt by the shepherds, the farmers, and the woodmen.

Their head-quarters were in a large cave. There they plotted mischief and divided the spoils.

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It was in this cave that, late one summer's night, they came together, each bringing with him the booty he had secured during the day. Blazing torches hung around on the dark walls. In the corners were piles of grain, fruit, meats, stolen from the farmers; also bags and portmanteaus taken from unfortunate travellers.

They gathered about the long table, — tall, gaunt figures, with dark faces, — they gathered about the long table with but few words, for they had travelled fast and far, and were eager for food.

When their appetites were satisfied, their captain drew forth a heavy bag, from which he emptied a heap of gold. Half of this he locked up in an iron box, and was proceeding to divide the remainder, when, chancing to raise his eyes, he saw, standing at the foot of the table, a man of great size, dressed in skins and well armed. A company of men, dressed and armed like himself, but inferior in size, were stealing softly into the cave and grouping themselves around him.

"Betrayed!" shouted the robbers; and each man man felt for his sword.

But the fierce-looking stranger threw down his arms, bade his followers do the same, and, waving his hand to the company, said: —

"No, not betrayed. We are no spies, but, on the contrary, would become your friends. Listen, now,

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for a while, that I may show you how well we shall agree, and that our interests are the same. Do you love a wild life, and to be your own masters?"

"We do."

"So do I. Do you like plenty of gold, good living, and light labor?"

"We do."

"So do I. Do you care for law?"

"We do not."

"Neither do I. For knowledge?"

"We do not."

"Neither do I. For goodness?"

"We do not."

"Neither do I, my friends. And now another question. Do you hate King Brondé?"

"We do!" they exclaimed.

"Do you wish his destruction?"

"We do."

"Will you do your best to accomplish this?"

"We will! We will!" they cried.

"And so will I. You see, now, how well we are agreed, and that our interests are the same. My name is Magnus. These are my trusty followers. Shake hands, my brave fellows. Right! We are brothers now. You hate King Brondé, because it was to make room for him that your once powerful band was dispersed. Many of you mourn the loss of friends, comrades, kindred, slain by his orders."

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"True! True!" they cried, eagerly.

"Yes, true," exclaimed Magnus. "And I hate King Brondé because he is richer and luckier than myself. There is no reason why I should not have wedded a princess and inherited a kingdom. I am as strong to protect, as brave to defend. And I seek his death; for, when he is gone, I need not then say, 'I am the largest and strongest man living, except—'; but, 'I am the largest and strongest man living,'—and nothing more. I have a plan, my friends, which I will now unfold to you."

This speech was received with cheers and wild hurrahs; but Magnus, with a wave of his hand, said:—

"Quietly, my brave fellows. Our time is not yet. Nothing can be done openly. King Brondé is surrounded by brave soldiers, who would shed for him their last drop of blood. Listen now."

There was then deep silence in the cave, while Magnus, in a long speech, unfolded his plans.

But what those plans were, need not here be related, since all who read further will discover for themselves.

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CHAPTER V.

MEETING OF THE FAIRIES.

NOW on this very night the Green Fairy was holding her court in Daisy Hollow, deep in the forest. How lovely were these pretty creatures, as they appeared, one after another, their bright wings fluttering, and glistening with dew!

Truly fairy-like were their greetings! A mortal, listening near, might have supposed he heard only the sighing of the summer breeze, the murmur of brooklets, or the far-off tinkling of little bells.

But their queen allowed them very little time for greeting. For it had been long since they met, and much was to be told and much heard, before the dawn. She therefore began singing: —

"Where the softest grass is found,
Quickly form your circle round.
Let each one say,
E'er the dawning of day,
What wonderful things she has seen on her way.
Through meadow and wildwood ye 've been on the wing,
What news do ye bring? What news do ye bring?"

They then began telling, each in turn, of all their adventures since the last meeting. And, at last, one

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little pink fairy jumped up briskly, singing thus; and, as she sang, a little attendant fairy echoed her last words: —

" I know a cave in the forest deep,
Forest deep,
Where a wicked band their revels keep,
Revels keep.
Old Magnus now has joined them too,
Joined them too,
With his bold and fearless crew,
Fearless crew.
I scented mischief in the air,
In the air.
There 's mighty mischief brewing there,
Brewing there."

Now, when the Green Fairy heard this, she quickly broke up the court. For Magnus's hatred of King Brondé was well known to her; and, although ignorant of his plans, yet she knew very well whose life they would endanger.

In the shape of an owl she flew into the cave, and there, perched on a rock near the roof, she listened while Magnus made known to the company his intentions with regard to King Brondé and his court.

Next day, changing herself to a beautiful bird, she flew swiftly to the palace, where the queen was sitting with her ladies upon the balcony. And while flying over their heads, she sang thus: —

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"There is danger in the air.
Lily Queen, beware, beware!
Danger dark to one you love;
Bid him not afar to rove;
Bid him keep a watchful care;
There is danger in the air!"

None but the queen understood the song. The ladies only said, "Truly a pretty bird, and a sweet singer!" and wondered why it was that their Lily Queen turned so deadly pale and left them so hastily.

She ran swiftly through the rooms of the palace, found the king in his private apartments, and eagerly told him of the beautiful bird and its warning song.

But when the king learned that the others had only heard sweet music, he treated the matter rather lightly, thinking it to be merely her fancy. What could a little woman fear, he said, who had a husband so big and strong! But, that she might be comforted, he promised to be watchful, and not to roam about the forest unattended. If he had only known what we know, he would have sent to the city for a strong army of soldiers, who could easily have taken possession of the cave and routed the whole band.

But, as he did not know, he only took his Lily Queen upon his knee, and there they sat, a long, long time, talking of their sweet little Rosebud, and of old times, and of the good king, her father, and how she was near dying in the rocky chasm. And

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then, as she felt his brown curls brushing her cheek, she confessed, for the first time, the trick she played him on their way from the mountains. But I don't believe he was at all angry with her, — do you ?

Not long after this, as the king and all his court were amusing themselves one fine morning on the lawn, in front of the palace, there came running in among them a wood-cutter, crying out that two lions had been seen in the forest ! Then ran every man for his bow and spear, the king as swift as any. All were eager for the hunt, but the queen was full of alarm. She wept, and, clasping the hands of her husband, begged him to remain. But this, of course, he would not do. What were a couple of lions to a strong man like him ?

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CHAPTER VI.

GOING A HUNTING, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

NOW these were the orders which Magnus had given to his company.

First, no blood must be shed. King Brondé's men were to be carried off prisoners to his strong castle, in a far country, — an immense castle, whose walls were of such thickness, and so well defended, that the king of the country himself dared not attack it. The ladies of the court were also to be taken to the castle, and even their children. For all these prisoners, Magnus expected that heavy ransoms would be offered in silver and gold. King Brondé, loaded with chains, would be confined in the cave, until Magnus should decide the manner of his death. As for the lower people, the wood-cutters, foresters, laborers, they must also be carried off with the rest, as laboring men were much needed at the castle.

But in the first place Magnus sent a message to the powerful band he had left behind, commanding that one hundred of his strongest, boldest men, well armed, should come to him without delay.

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As soon as this order was received, one hundred strong, bold men, well armed, mounted their fleetest horses, and rode night and day until they reached the cave.

Spies were then sent out, with orders to watch the movements of King Brondé, and to give timely notice whenever he should go forth to hunt.

But a whole week passed, and still the wished-for notice was not given.

"King Brondé is weary of hunting deer," said one of the men, as they were gathered, one evening, in the cave.

"If that be so," cried Magnus, "why, we can easily manage a lion or two."

He then made a sign to one of his men, who

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suddenly gave such a terrible roar that the whole company sprang to their feet, thinking there was surely a lion near.

Magnus then took some skins, and had them stuffed so well that they might easily, at a distance, be taken for lions.

Not long after this the most terrible roarings were heard in the forest, and on several occasions, when the wood-cutters were walking homeward at twilight, the stuffed lions were popped out so suddenly before them, with such awful roarings, that they ran home almost out of their wits, and with scarcely breath enough to tell the story.

This trick of the robbers accomplished their purpose. The wood-cutter, with his story, startled the whole court. All were eager to join the lion hunt; and, in an hour's time after the alarm was given, lords, high captains, knights, squires, pages, foresters, woodmen, were scouring the forest in every direction.

It was a fine, breezy day. The skies were clear, the sun shone brightly, birds sang sweetly. The horses were fleet, the hearts of the huntsmen were light and gay. Baying of hounds, merry shouts and bugle calls, resounded through the forest.

Orders had been given that at midday all should assemble at Daisy Hollow, there to report progress,

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and to partake of the refreshment which must at that time be needed.

Accordingly, at the time appointed, they began to appear, one after another, at this rendezvous, and to relate their adventures.

It seemed that but little had been done. One had seen a tail, another a head, many had heard roarings, and many had neither seen nor heard anything at all. Provisions were spread upon the grass, and, after eating and drinking, the whole company joined in singing a hunting-song.

Meanwhile, Magnus's men had quietly formed a circle around the Hollow, and were eagerly awaiting from their leader the signal to advance. Magnus had ordered that each should select his man, he himself taking King Brondé. But knowing that the strength of his rival fully equalled his own, he had selected from the company ten stout men to assist him.

While the hunting party were gayly eating and drinking, the circle had been gradually closing around them. As soon as the singing began, Magnus waved his sword. This was the signal agreed upon, and the wild crew crept stealthily forward among the trees, now flat upon the grass, now over rocks, and now forcing with their swords a way through tangled thickets.

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And at last, just as the chorus of the merry band rang loudly and cheerily out, they burst with loud cries from the wood, and in an instant each one of the hunters found himself laid prostrate upon the ground, a powerful foot upon his breast, a sharp knife at his throat. And so quickly and so skilfully was this accomplished, that hardly a single drop of blood had been shed.

The moment that King Brondé saw the powerful form bending over him, he knew well who was his enemy. Exerting all his immense strength, he endeavored to set himself free. But Magnus was armed, and had strength fully equal to his own. He was also assisted by the ten picked men.

King Brondé, recollecting the little vial hanging at his neck, contrived to draw it forth, and was in the act of drawing out the cork with his teeth, when Magnus, who knew its contents, snatched it away, at the same time breaking the cord.

But in the contest the little vial fell to the ground. Magnus vainly sought it, for one of Brondé's men, who had in some way escaped from his captor, very cunningly, with the tip of his sword, rolled it under a plantain-leaf. When the search was over, he hid it in his bosom, and amid the confusion contrived to make his way unnoticed to the woods, and so escaped.

King Brondé and his men were taken to the

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cave, and there made to exchange clothes with their captors. Magnus cut off King Brondé's fair curls, and covered with them his own coarse black locks, that the Lily Queen might suppose him to be the real Brondé.

The robbers then, clothed in the garments of their prisoners, and bearing their bows and spears, marched boldly to the palace. Now the queen and all her ladies were met upon the Velvet Lawn, near the palace, where they were amusing themselves by shooting at a mark. They wore dresses of pure white, their heads were adorned with wreaths of flowers, and about their waists were green garlands. Their arrows were silver-tipped, and their bows decked with ribbons. But the dress of Rosebud was green, besprinkled with diamonds like dew-drops on the grass. For she was always dressed in this color, in remembrance of the Green Fairy.

The robbers approached, amid the winding of horns and bugle-blasts.

"Ah!" cried Rosebud, "I see my stout, handsome father coming!" And she was off like an arrow to meet him.

"Ah, yes!" cried the queen; "there are my Brondé's fair curls. And there is the red feather I placed this morning in his cap!"

Ah, poor Rosebud! And ah, poor Lily Queen! In one short hour after this, queen, ladies, servants,

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children, laborers, — all were prisoners! All bound, and on their way to some gloomy castle belonging to Magnus. Also the costly treasures of the palace, the gold, the jewels, the ermine robes, — everything of value which could be taken.

One precious thing only was left, and this precious thing was the king's Rosebud.

It happened in this way.

Rosebud, with outstretched arms, ran to meet her father, her face beaming with joy, her heart brimming over with love for him. He had returned! — returned safe! Nothing had happened to him in the forest.

"Dear, dear father!" she cried.

As we all know, however, it was not really her father, but the wicked Magnus.

Now, when this wicked Magnus looked down into the face of Rosebud, he beheld there something which he never saw before. He had seen courage, he had seen strength, he had seen bravery; but a deep, o'erflowing love, like that expressed in the flushed and beaming face before him, he had never yet known.

And while he secured her as his prisoner, and saw her tears, and the horror and affright with which she regarded him, he felt a strange desire creeping into his heart to bring back that same look again; and, more than this, to have that beautiful

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look meant, really meant, for himself. That grim, bad man actually felt that the love of a little child would be a pleasant thing to have!

"Very soon," said he to himself, "she will have neither father nor mother. I can very well manage that. I will then provide for her a beautiful abode, and give her many pretty things, gay toys, fine clothes, and she shall call me father. And when I come home she will run with outstretched arms, and with a shining face, and will say, 'Dear, dear father!'"

Rosebud, therefore, was not sent away with the rest, but was placed on a bed, in an upper chamber, all by herself, with the door locked.

And in the middle of the night there came a stout man into the chamber, who lifted her from the bed, saying:—

"I am sent by the great Magnus. You need not struggle, for I am strong; nor cry aloud, for there are none to hear you; and you need not fear, for no harm will befall you."

So Rosebud lay quite still in his arms, like a wounded bird, while he trudged stoutly on, till they came to a place in the woods where stood three men by a litter. Into this litter Rosebud was placed, and the four men, each bearing one end of a pole, went on as rapidly as the path would admit.

On they travelled, day after day, a weary, weary

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way. But Rosebud cared little for weariness. She mourned for her father, whose fate was not known to her, and for her mother in the power of that cruel man.

But so tender and so full of love was her little heart, that she could not help pitying the men who had to carry her so far. And she spoke so gently, and smiled so sweetly, in the midst of her grief, that even those wild robbers were softened. They moved her tenderly, they placed soft furs about her, and plucked, now and then, some pretty flower which grew by the wayside, well pleased if she but smiled in return.

And one of these, the guide, whose name was Rupert, resolved that Rosebud should not be taken to Magnus, but that he himself would keep her for his own. He had once been a simple-minded, laboring man, and had joined the robbers only from being pressed by poverty. What though outwardly rough and ungainly, his heart was kind, and so wholly drawn to Rosebud, that he could not see her come to harm. He was weary of roving, weary of strife. He would quit the castle, and in some other kingdom would lead an honest life; and Rosebud should be his own child, his pleasant little companion. He would go forth mornings, to work for food; she would tidy up the house and welcome him back with smiles.

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Now this fine little plan was not fully carried out. A beginning, however, was made, as will now be related.

One night, after weeks of weary journeying, — not in the direction of the castle, however, Rupert had seen to that, — after weeks of weary journeying, they stopped by the edge of a wood for a few hours' sleep. Rosebud was lying in her litter, upon the ground. A lion-skin was thrown over her, as a protection from the night dews.

She heard the deep breathing of the men around her, and knew that they were asleep. And as she lay there, quite still, looking up through the branches at the twinkling stars, listening to the rustling of the leaves as the night wind blew over them, she heard, so it seemed to her, a whispering or murmuring voice, which appeared to come from a tall, flowering shrub growing near, whose blossoms were white in the moonlight.

A soft, silvery voice it was, but Rosebud, listening carefully, could distinguish words like these: —

"Be of good cheer,
O maiden dear;
No longer fear,
For help is near."

Rosebud opened wide her eyes to make sure it was not a dream. But no, there were the stars, the rustling leaves, and the sleeping men around her.

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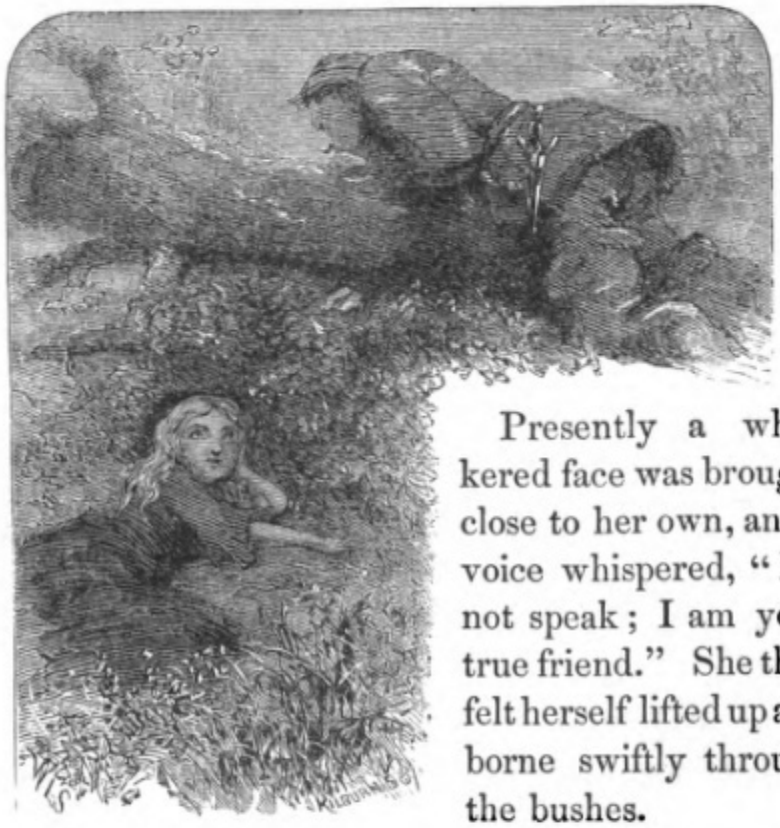

Presently a whiskered face was brought close to her own, and a voice whispered, "Do not speak; I am your true friend." She then felt herself lifted up and borne swiftly through the bushes.

After some time, she was laid gently upon the ground and felt herself sinking, sinking, very slowly, into a deep hole in the earth. But the bottom was covered thick with leaves and soft grass; Rosebud, therefore, was not at all hurt, but very much frightened; for why should a true friend bury her up?

Rupert, for it was he who was the true friend, then drew a fallen tree over the hole, in such a manner that the air could easily make its way through, and then, with all speed, he joined his comrades by

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the edge of the woods. He lay quietly down among them, and, being very tired from the long journey, fell sound asleep.

At daylight he was aroused by the voices of his companions calling upon him to rise quickly and help to find their little prisoner, who had escaped, or had been carried away, during the night. Rupert then ran eagerly about among the trees, taking care to go always in the wrong direction.

After long searching, they became weary and resolved to seek no longer. For, said they, whatever may be her fate, the child cannot fare worse than if in the hands of Magnus.

But, in order to escape his anger, they agreed to leave the country and never return.

Now Rupert, as soon as the other three were at a safe distance, ran quickly to release Rosebud. She was fast asleep!

Some miles distant, close by the sea-shore, dwelt an old woman, who, in her youth, had been the friend of Rupert's mother; and it was in her care that for the present he had determined to leave Rosebud. He remained in the woods through the day, and at night took his little girl in his arms, and carried her safely to the hut of this old woman. It was his plan to leave her here, while he sought, in some distant country, employment by which to support both her and himself. He would then claim and keep her for his own.

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So Rosebud was left in the hut by the sea-shore, where she had some truly wonderful adventures, all of which will be told at a proper time. We must now see what became of King Brondé, whom we left with his men in the Robbers' Cave.

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CHAPTER VII.

ESCAPING FROM PERILS.

ALL the other prisoners were carried away to the castle, but King Brondé was left,— left alone in the cave. This was because it would take too many men to guard him on the road. A strong band were to return for him. He was, therefore, dragged to the deepest depths of the cave, far from the light of day, and there securely bound. Magnus, then, with his immense strength, and the assistance of his men, heaped up at the entrance such a mountain of rocks, earth, and trees as would require an army of men to remove.

Now while the robbers, in the depths of the cave, were roughly fastening their chains around good King Brondé, he observed that one among them, who was very busy at his right arm, seemed much fiercer than the rest, much more eager to bind him. And when, at one time, this very zealous robber rudely thrust his hand beneath the robe of the king, and directly over his heart, Brondé was sure that he meant, with some hidden weapon, to deal him his death-blow. But the hand was quickly withdrawn,

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and King Brondé felt that it had left something in his bosom. Some deadly poison, he feared it was, which, working by slow degrees, would destroy his life. Still he showed no fear, nor asked for mercy, for freedom, or for life.

And when the last man had disappeared, and he was left alone, a prisoner, chained, buried in the depths of the earth, he by no means despaired. A few glaring pine torches still blazed upon the walls, and he resolved that, while these yet burned, he would exert his strength to the utmost in an effort to burst his chains. Once freed from these, he was possessed of a secret, by means of which he was sure of escaping.

To his surprise and joy, on moving very slightly

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his right arm, the chain dropped! His right arm was free! He quickly drew forth from his bosom what had been so mysteriously placed there. It was a rude box, made of dark wood. He must have touched some hidden spring, for the lid flew up, and he beheld there the vial which had been lost in the fight.

As he joyfully seized this lost treasure, now become doubly precious, he touched another spring. A second lid flew up, and he saw within a half-blown rosebud and a pure white lily, side by side. With tears of joy he kissed the pretty flowers, emblems of his dear wife and child, and his heart was comforted. For he had yet a friend able to assist him, — a friend who would care for his loved ones.

The mystery of this friend may as well be explained at once, and now. He was the wood-cutter, whose little boy and girl Rosebud had saved from the boat, — that little boy and girl with whom she ran, hand in hand, along the forest paths, calling as they ran, "Tirra, Tirra, Tirra, Tirra La!" She was kind and good to them always, and he felt grateful, and longed to do her a service. When King Brondé was overpowered in Green Hollow, on the day of the lion hunt, he kept close by his side. It was he, who, with the tip of his sword, thrust the little vial under the plantain-leaf, and afterwards escaped with it. After the robbers had exchanged

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clothes with their prisoners, they were, of course, dressed like himself. He then went boldly among them and heard all their plans. As Magnus offered great rewards for the lost vial, he felt sure it contained some secret charm, and resolved to restore it to King Brondé. He was the very zealous robber who was so eager to secure the right arm of the king, but who, in reality, left the chain unfastened.

King Brondé, now, his right arm free, his lost treasure restored, felt sure of escaping. He swallowed a few drops of the liquid, and then, making one powerful effort, burst his chains and stood once more erect with limbs unbound!

After this, he lay for hours in a heavy sleep, or stupor. Upon awakening, he found himself in complete darkness, the torches having burnt out long before. After groping in the dark for some time, he succeeded in finding the spot where the entrance had been, but the masses of rock there heaped up were as firm as were the solid walls. He felt for his vial, but it was gone. It had, no doubt, dropped upon the ground, during that long sleep, and afterwards been crushed beneath his heavy tread, for not a trace of it was ever found.

But, as has been mentioned, he was possessed of a secret, by means of which he might escape.

It appears that, long before, and at the time their

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summer palace had been built by the father of his Lily Queen, King Brondé had often, while his men were ranging in the forest, examined this cave in every part, and, being exceedingly tall, had made a discovery. And it was by means of this discovery that he now proposed to gain his freedom.

Climbing up, several yards from the ground, he reached an opening which extended, not upwards, but horizontally, for thirty feet or more. Through this he crept, until he came to a second opening, which led upwards. Through this he began climbing, but soon found, to his sorrow, that it was filled with rocks and earth.

This opening was, no doubt, a private entrance to the cave, known only to the leaders of the first band of robbers, until accidentally discovered by King Brondé.

The obstructions which now filled this opening he, with great labor, at length removed. As there was no means of telling day from night, it was impossible to know how much time was thus consumed. By degrees he worked his way upwards, taking no rest, and at last felt himself grasping the roots of trees. And presently after, to his great joy, he perceived a ray of light! A faint, feeble ray, but it came, as he knew, from the warm sun and through the free air! Redoubling now his exertions, he pressed upwards, and not many hours elapsed before

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he sprang forth into the open air, and stood, a free man, upon the side of the mountain!

Not knowing how many of his enemies might be near, he concealed himself until evening, and then cautiously approached his palace. He watched and listened long, but saw no light, heard no sound. What, then, had become of all the ladies of the court? of his own Lily and precious Rosebud? He entered the palace, wandered through its deserted chambers, but found none to answer the questions he was so eager to ask.

He stood long by the window, gazing at the desolate scene around, vainly striving to think calmly, that he might decide upon some plan of action. The moon shone brightly, lighting up the deserted lawn, the woodland paths, the pleasant groves which had once rung with the music of happy voices! He heard the bleating of a goat near. It was a little white goat, belonging to Rosebud, and which she had fed daily. O, where was Rosebud now?

In his despair he was about to rush from the palace, when his attention was arrested by a noise like that of distant music. As it grew nearer, he could plainly distinguish the roll of drums. Nearer, still, it came, and he saw the glitter of spears in the moonlight.

"Magnus," said he, "has returned; I will conceal myself." He looked again. O, the joyful surprise!

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They were his own soldiers! — his City Guards! On they came, covering the vast lawn before the palace, the wide meadows, and reaching, he could not tell how far, into the woods beyond!

Now who had sent this army to the rescue of King Brondé? It was that same true friend, the wood-cutter. He had hastened to the city and sounded the alarm. The soldiers of the City Guard heard, in the dead hours of the night, loud cries.

"The king! The king is in danger! Arouse! The king! The king is buried alive! To arms! To arms!" And thus the whole city was aroused, and the City Guards marched with all speed to Long Forest. But when they saw him, alive and well, standing between the great brazen lions which guarded the palace gate, they were overcome with joy, and made the forest ring with cries and loud huzzas!

I will now relate how the castle of Magnus was burned, and his prisoners set free.

King Brondé first learned from the wood-cutter the name of the country to which the robbers had fled with their prisoners. He then sent messengers to the king of that country, saying that he should come with his soldiers to rescue his family and his people, and demanding help.

Now this king was feeble, both in mind and body,

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and had by no means a large army at his command. He was, therefore, well pleased that King Brondé should unite with him to break up that powerful band of robbers, who, entrenched in their strong castle, had grown so strong and bold, that they were the terror of the whole country, defying the king and all his soldiers.

These two kings, then, with their two armies, marched boldly to the castle. The robbers, fearing no danger, had set no watchmen upon the towers. They were surprised and captured. Their prisoners were found confined, far apart from each other, in dismal cells. These were set free, while Magnus and all his men were carried off in chains, by the king of the country. The castle was then set on fire. This all took place in the night.

As may well be imagined, there were many joyful meetings among the prisoners. Husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, rushed to embrace each other. King Brondé pressed to his heart the pale Lily Queen, with tears of joy. And next the two elder princesses were folded in his arms.

"But where is Rosebud?" he cried, looking eagerly among the crowd.

And, "Where is Rosebud?" asked the Lily Queen of the king.

Alas, neither of them could tell where was Rosebud!

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And all were certain that it was not known even to Magnus himself, for many inquiries about her had been made by him, and large rewards offered, but all in vain. It was known that four men had set out with her from Long Forest, but not one of these four men had been heard from since. Grateful, then, as were the king and queen at being restored to each other, their return home was but sorrowful, for the joy of their life, their darling Rosebud, was lost to them, and O, would she ever, ever be found?

But King Brondé and his soldiers and the whole assembly must now depart for their own country. Trumpets were sounded, drums beaten, bugle calls rang loud and clear, and at dawn of the day word was given to move forward.

Thus, with the blazing castle behind them, and the glowing eastern sky before, they began their journey home. A happy journey to the husbands and wives, parents and children, so lately reunited, but full of sadness to King Brondé and his Lily Queen, mourning for their lost Rosebud!

Let us leave them, now, to find their way back to Long Forest, while we learn how it fares with their child, in the hut of the old woman.

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CHAPTER VIII.

LIFE AT THE SEA-SHORE.

IF Rupert had known more of this old woman, he certainly would not have left Rosebud in her care. The place where she lived was under the control of a powerful lord, or governor, appointed by the king of that country. This lord had in various parts of his dominions curious little stone cages, very small stone cages, in which he shut up such as offended him; and of one of these our old woman was the keeper. They were very mysterious cages. No one knew where they were, except their owner, their prisoners, and their keepers. The approach to them was hidden. Several of these were placed in an extensive wood, which could be seen from the hut. It was called the Enchanted Wood.

It was called the Enchanted Wood, on account of sounds frequently heard there; sometimes singing, sometimes notes of a musical instrument, and at other times sorrowful moans. The prisoners could, of course, have explained these sounds; but as they were not free to do it, and no one else

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could or would, it happened that the place obtained the name of the Enchanted Wood. Besides being the keeper of one of these cages, our old woman was friendly with a number of bad characters from whom she received stolen money and jewels, which she hid for them in the cellar beneath her hut. She was a little bent old woman, with thin gray locks about her withered face, and always wore a small blue blanket pinned over her head. Being lame, she never went without her staff.

"What are you crying for?" she said, as Rosebud sat weeping, after Rupert had said good by. "What are you crying for? there, go to bed." And she pushed open the door of a closet which contained one stool, and one little mattress of straw, and one very small square window.

This was the best she could give Rosebud,—Rosebud, so lately come from the splendid chambers, the velvet cushions, the decorated walls, the lofty ceilings, the soft couches of a palace, where helpful servants were glad to do her bidding, and where, better than all, she was blest with the love of her dear father and mother. Poor little Rosebud! She thought, while crying herself to sleep, that she would gladly live in the hut, could she but see the pale face of her mother bending over her for a good-night kiss, or lay her weary head upon her father's big shoulder, and feel his arms

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clasped lovingly around her. But Rosebud had become quite accustomed to crying herself to sleep now, and, being weary from so long a journey, was soon quite unconscious whether she were in a hut or a palace.

The next morning she found that three grandchildren lived with the old woman, — a girl named Bess, another girl named Judy, and a little boy called Grump. She could hear them from her room, quarrelling over their breakfast, calling each other names, while the old woman scolded or beat them with her staff.

Rosebud opened her door and stood among them with that same sweet, innocent look which had already won so many hearts, and spoke to them pleasantly. The children gazed upon her with wonder, their rude voices hushed. It was as if some rare flower had suddenly bloomed out before them, or some sweet song-bird had alighted there!

After breakfast she was ordered to help scour the platters, sand the floor, wash the potatoes, and drive the geese to water, and then to go with the others to pick up drift-wood.

Drift-wood is whatever bits of board, sticks, or timber the waves throw up and leave upon the sand. This drift-wood was collected at low water, dried in the sun, and supplied the people of the shore with their winter's fuel.

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Rosebud was delighted with this employment. The ocean was new to her, and she was never tired of looking at the foaming, tumbling waves, the sea-birds skimming over the water, the far-off white-sailed ships, or the smaller boats tossing up and down near the shore. For the beach was inhabited by fishermen who owned a great many boats. She longed to be in one of these, and sit riding all so lightly upon the waves.

And Grump promised to give her a boat-ride, for he could manage an oar very well.

"But not now," said he, "while granny is watching, for if too little wood is got, then she will beat us. But when she goes to the town, then we 'll go, up and down, up and down, all day long. Shall

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you like that? What a funny name! Rosebud! Where did you come from? How white your face is! All but your cheeks, and they are the color of these pink shells! And what a pretty green robe!

But Rosebud did not tell Grump where she came from. Rupert had told her it would not be well for the old woman to find it out. For she might take her to Magnus, in hopes of a reward.

Rosebud very soon became accustomed to the life of the shore, could run about on the sands barefoot, and lift her basketful with the rest. She never grew weary of watching the sea when the wind was high, or of picking up shells in the sands, or of being rowed about in the little boats by Grump, in the calm summer afternoons when work was over. Still, she had many sad hours, and would have had many more, only for the company of Grump, who was always full of talk, and ready to help.

"O, if I only had a white face," said he one day. "A white face is so pretty. Would granny be very angry, Rosebud, if I washed my face again?"

Rosebud laughed at this.

"And why should your granny be angry?" she asked.

"Bess took some soap one day," said he, "and scrubbed my face, and it turned very red, and then

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very white, and granny came home from the town, and she beat me for it with her cane, and shut me up for a great many days. It was very long ago, but I have not forgotten."

"Never mind," said Rosebud; "if shut up, you can still hear the dashing of the waves, and I will sit and sing beneath your window. And you would have no wood to fetch. Come, here is a spring, and pray be in haste."

Then Grump began scrubbing. And his face first became red and then white, and at last a beautiful red and white. His eyes were blue, like Rosebud's, but darker. There was a color in his cheeks, like Rosebud's, but brighter. His curls were shorter than Rosebud's, and thicker and browner, and were pushed back from his broad white forehead, while hers drooped in ringlets about her face. He had a round, rosy mouth, and two pretty rows of white teeth, the same as Rosebud.

"Now, that is good," cried Rosebud. "And you look much too pretty to be called Grump. I must think of some nicer name than that for so nice a boy. What shall I call you?"

"Call me something that goes well with Rosebud," said Grump; "for now that you are come, I shall work with you more than anybody, and play with you more than anybody, for I like you more than anybody. Rosebud, I like you very much indeed."

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"That is very kind of you," said Rosebud. "I wonder what we shall call you. What does go well with Rosebud?"

Grump could n't think of anything that went so much with rosebuds as thorns. But that would not do, for Rosebud said he was not in the least like a thorn. At length she remembered a very pretty song she had heard about the rose and the myrtle. Suppose he should be called Myrtle. How would he like that? O, very much, very much indeed. And thus it was agreed that he should be called Myrtle.

But granny did not shut the boy up or even notice him at all. She probably had other matters to trouble her. For every day she came home very cross from the town, and sat crouching in the corner, muttering, and poking the ashes with her cane. Perhaps some prisoner had escaped from her stone cage. Or perhaps she had heard that the owners of the stolen jewels she had hidden were in search of them. No one could tell.

So Myrtle grew cleaner and prettier and happier every day. And strangers, walking upon the beach, often stopped to wonder at the strange loveliness of the little barefoot boy and girl, as they ran pattering along the sands with their wood-baskets. Rosebud, with her pleasant face and gentle ways, soon became a favorite with the children of the

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shore. They were all eager to play with her, to help her pick up wood and moss among the rocks, to show her where the birds built, and often coaxed her to their huts, that the family at home might know this lovely little stranger. Thus she never lacked for company.

But, as the summer wore away, she sickened for home and friends, and in the midst of the happy children felt all, all alone. And one day, one calm, bright summer day, when she and Myrtle were floating about in their little boat, which scarcely moved, so still was the water, she told him her whole history, — told it with sobs and tears and broken words, which caused Myrtle to sigh and weep too, although he strove to talk bravely, and promised Rosebud that, when he was only one year older, they would set out together to seek her friends or to learn their fate. He himself was tired of their gloomy little hut.

The hut, indeed, was but a cheerless home. For as months passed, and still Rupert did not appear, the old woman became angry that Rosebud should be left so long, and no money sent. And she was cruel to the child, and laid tasks upon her too heavy to bear. Bess and Judy, seeing that Rosebud was better liked than themselves, became envious. And they, too, gave her rough words and sometimes blows.

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"You pink-faced thing, you! You eat our bread!" they cried.

But not when Myrtle was by. They did not dare. Her brave defender was Myrtle; for he believed the whole world could not produce another so good, so kind, so lovely as their Rosebud.

Indeed, from the very first, this boy had seemed to consider himself bound to shield from all harm the delicate, gentle child, who had come among them. He performed her rougher tasks, he made his sisters afraid to ill-use her, and even one day faced the old woman herself, and, when she was about to strike Rosebud, caught the staff from her hand!

So, when he was by, Bess and Judy did not dare show their ill temper. Neither did they dare give him any other name than Myrtle when within his reach. But sometimes, when they were safe behind granny, they would call him "Grump." Or, if he were off a little way from the shore, in his boat, they would sit upon the rocks, calling out, "Grump! Grump! how is your health, Grump!"

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CHAPTER IX.

THE FLOWER-GARDEN.

ONE day Myrtle met Rosebud coming from the fishermen's huts, looking quite sorrowful.

"Pretty little Rosebud," said he, "what troubles you, I pray?"

"Alas!" said Rosebud, "I have now nothing to bestow. I have seen a little lame child, and a poor, suffering, sick young maiden, and a pale woman, dressed all in black, who weeps every day. And I have nothing to bestow. At the palace were so many beautiful things, and gold in plenty. The wood-cutters' children were so pleased when I brought them gifts! Now I have nothing! Not even a flower! But, Myrtle," she cried, "we will plant flowers! and they will grow! And we will gather such sweet nosegays! Nosegays and garlands for everybody! for all love flowers. Flowers such as I plucked in my own garden. Bright, blooming, fragrant flowers!" she continued, mournfully, her voice growing every moment fainter and more sorrowful. Myrtle feared she was going to cry, and so made haste to answer.

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"But we have no seeds. And, besides, winter is coming; flowers die in the winter."

"True," said Rosebud; "we will wait till spring. The rich man, who lives behind the hill yonder, has a fine garden. I have looked through at the beds of flowers, often; and I shall beg seeds from the gardener."

"But the dog!" cried Myrtle. "His great, black, barking dog! he might tear you in pieces!"

"But I shall pat his head," said Rosebud; "and I shall say, 'Good doggie!' It is not wise to be always afraid."

Winter was now approaching. Storms were frequent, cold winds blew, the sea became rough, and the high waves came roaring, tumbling, foaming to the shore. Snow fell, fishing-boats were hauled up out of reach of the tide, and soon the beach was covered with cakes of ice. The children were often compelled to remain for days and weeks inside the hut.

For employment, Rosebud began to make various things of the shells collected in summer. The sick girl had taught her. Beautiful shells they were; pink, yellow, purple, and white, and very pretty boxes, baskets, vases they made. Even Bess and Judy begged to learn, and Myrtle helped too.

"And now we have something to bestow!" cried

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Rosebud, one day. "This, now, shall be for the little lame child. She will look up so pleasantly, with her soft brown eyes! And the pale woman in black, who is weeping always, she shall have this small, pure white basket. Perhaps she may smile for once."

"No!" cried the old woman, looking up from the ashes, — "no, I say! They shall be sold, — sold in the town! Can you tell me where your bread is to come from?"

So all the pretty things were taken to the town and sold. And the old woman, finding they brought money, compelled them to work every stormy day until the shells were gone. But whenever it was possible to leave the house they were made to pick up drift-wood as usual. Bitter cold work it was, creeping among the ice-cakes and over the slippery rocks!

The days when granny was away were happy days for them. They could then sing their songs, tell their stories, play their plays, and invite to their hut the little children of the shore, without fearing blows from the old staff.

In the summer Rosebud had taken very little notice of the doings of granny. She only knew, that, although appearing quite lame, she went often to the town; that when at home she did little but poke in the ashes and smoke her pipe; and now Rosebud

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began to wonder how she fed them all. She spoke of this to Myrtle, but he only shook his head, and said granny would not bear to be questioned, and that she would be very sorry if she made the old woman angry.

Now, as Rosebud had no wish to make the old woman angry, she kept her mouth shut, but opened her eyes very wide, and wondered why granny muttered so much to herself, and fell asleep often in her chair, and, when asleep, muttered strange things, and whose were the voices she heard evenings, when all the children were in bed? — gruff men's voices.

And, when tired of wondering at all these, she would wonder about Rupert, and why he never had come for her as he promised, and almost hoped he would not, now that she had become accustomed to her new life, and to Myrtle, and to all the children of the shore, and that there was so much to be done, when winter was over, about the garden. She hoped Rupert would leave her there, at least until the earth had been dug up and the seeds planted, and the plants came up and budded and bloomed, and lovely nosegays had been gathered.

Poor Rupert! Rosebud need neither have feared nor wondered concerning his coming had she known the ill that had befallen him.

It may be remembered that, when Rosebud was

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taken from the palace, she wore a green dress besprinkled with diamonds. Now, on the day in which Rupert had taken her to the hut, while waiting in the wood for the approach of evening, Rosebud, at his request, gave him those diamonds, that he might with them pay the expenses of his journey. And, had he known their real value, all might have gone well with him; but, as he by by no means knew the worth of these jewels, all went ill with him.

For at an inn of some great city he offered one of them for a loaf of bread, two cuts of bacon, and a night's lodging.

"You thief!" cried the innkeeper, and called an officer of justice, who arrested him upon the spot. The unlucky Rupert was stripped of his jewels and thrown into prison, where he was lying, sad and miserable, all the time his little girl was thinking how strange it was that he came not as he had promised.

But, as spring drew near, Rosebud gave up all her thinking and her wondering, and began hoping. She hoped the weather would be mild, hoped granny would let her have a garden, hoped the dog would not bite, hoped the gardener would not refuse the seeds, hoped every one would come up, hoped the high winds would not blow them over, hoped the plants would bud, and the buds would blossom, and

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the blossoms would look lovely, smell sweet, and delight everybody.

The snow now began to melt, and the grass to spring up in the fields above the beach. Leaves came out upon the trees, — red at first, and tender, but soon so bright and green that the birds came back to build among them. The days grew longer, the sun shone higher in the heavens at noonday. The fishermen again launched their boats upon the waters, now no longer dark and ice-bound, but brightly blue, sparkling in the sunlight.

The planting season had come. There was no need of longer putting off their grand project. The ground was already soft. Myrtle thought it better not to ask granny, lest she should say no, but to work in the very early mornings, before the others were stirring. This would not interfere with their daily tasks.

They dug up the ground, and brought basketfuls of soil from beyond the beach; for the hut stood in a barren, sandy spot.

The dog did not bite; he was chained. The gardener was a rough man. When he saw Rosebud coming, he caught up his stick, and cried, "Be off! you —"

But when he looked down into her gentle, pleading face, as it was upturned to him, he left the sentence unfinished, and said, quite mildly, "Do you want anything of me?"

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"Please, sir, some flower-seeds, for my garden, sir," said Rosebud.

"Humph!" cried he. "And what will you pay?"

"I will pay you two shell-baskets," said Rosebud, — "a pink and a white shell-basket; and here they are," — for she had made them that morning to bring.

"Ha!" cried he. "These will please my wife! Here, take the seeds."

And he gave Rosebud her apron full.

And when Myrtle returned with the old fisherman, who had before dawn taken him off to fish in his boat, she ran down to meet him, and to display all these treasures. And long the two sat together upon the rocks, gazing with wonder at the tiny atoms from which such beautiful things were to grow.

The garden was once more dug over, and its surface smoothed. And by the next fine day their seeds were snug in the ground, waiting patiently, as seeds do always, for their time to come up.

Now that the snow was gone and the weather mild, the children of the shore could pat along on the sands again; and, hearing of the wonderful garden, they came often to the hut, to watch the planting of the seeds, and to see what might happen next.

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There was great joy, therefore, along the shore, when the first pale, tender sprouts appeared above the ground, and all came running to see. For never before had there been a flower-bed upon the beach. And as for Rosebud and Myrtle, they could hardly bear to be a single hour away, lest some little green stranger should come to town in their absence.

Those were the days when the pewter platters got but few scrubbings, and when the broom came to but little wear; when the pretty shells were neglected, and the drift-wood was tumbled hastily into the baskets.

O, when would the flowers come? What color? How large? Fragrant? Would they last?

"'T will be a pity to pluck them," said Rosebud, "after they have taken so much pains to grow."

"But then they would die on the stalk, you know," said Myrtle.

And it was therefore agreed that the flowers should be cut off, no matter how lovely.

And many sick people might have been cheered by them, and many a dark room brightened, had not something happened to prevent it all. It was a strange adventure, this that happened to our Rosebud, and should have a chapter by itself.

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CHAPTER X.

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

ONE night Rosebud was awakened in the middle of the night by the moon shining full in her face; and, while lying there awake, she heard a noise of some one moving in the next room. Presently the outer door shut, and the footsteps were heard outside.

Rosebud sprang to her little window, and saw the old woman hobbling away quite fast, and carrying a lighted lantern.

Now Rosebud had, besides a whole heart full of love, two other things very good in their place, namely, great curiosity

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and great courage. The first of these caused her to wonder why granny should carry a lighted lantern on such a bright night, and the second to follow and find out for herself.

Throwing an old cloak about her, she hastened out, and caught sight of the old woman disappearing over the brow of a hill. Running quite fast, she gained the top, and saw granny with her cane fast crossing the meadow beyond.

After the meadow came another hill, then a hollow, then still another hill very steep, and then a wide strip of barren land called "The Plains." Beyond this was the Enchanted Wood. And it was towards this Wood that the old woman directed her steps, — Rosebud following not far behind, her little bare feet never heeding the stones.

But very suddenly granny disappeared. It seemed to Rosebud that the old woman must have sunk into the earth. She came to the very spot where the flutter of her blue blanket had a moment before been seen, but could find no trace of her. It was very near the edge of the wood. But granny could not have entered, for just there the thicket was thorny and tangled, and not even the crack of a twig or the rustle of a leaf had Rosebud heard.

"I am very far from home," thought the little girl, looking round, "and in the middle of the night

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too. But is not the moonlight as safe as the sunlight? It is surely much prettier."

Everything was quiet. The trees seemed holding their branches still for the moon to shine upon them. How they glistened in its rays! only stirring a very little now and then, with a rustle, whispering softly, just to tell what pretty things some passing zephyr had said to them.

But it suddenly occurred to Rosebud that granny might reach home by some other way, and find her room empty. "I will go now," she thought, "and return in the morning."

At the hut all was just as she had left it. She crept softly into bed, and resolved to lie awake until granny's return, but long before daylight was sound asleep.

The next morning, as soon as breakfast was over, and the old woman had taken her staff, pinned on her blue blanket, and hobbled off, Rosebud, without telling Bess or Judy, or even Myrtle, — lest he persuade her to remain at home, — hastened away over hills and plains, until she came to the edge of the Enchanted Wood, where on the night before granny had so suddenly vanished.

While looking about in search of some hidden cavern or grotto, she saw lovely flowers growing among the bushes. These were charming, and would make fine nosegays or most lovely garlands.

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She entered the Wood and rambled on and on, taking any path which offered, and while plucking the lovely flowers, and also the purple berries, forgot that the hours were flying so swiftly; and when at last she became weary, and would have returned, there appeared no way of getting from the Wood. Many paths were tried, but all in vain; and at length, overcome with fatigue, she sank down upon a mossy bank to rest.

But she was hardly seated before she heard, not far off, a voice singing. It was a young girl's voice, very sweet, but full of sadness.

"Alone, alone!
Alas, my true love has gone!
To the wars he is marching on,
And I am alone!"

Looking in the direction of the voice, Rosebud saw, a few yards from her, what seemed to be a pile of rocks surrounded by trees. She stepped softly that way. When quite near, some one spoke — some young girl — in gentle tones, and said, "What do you seek, little one?"

"Only to know who sang so sweetly," replied Rosebud, faintly.

"And if you knew," said the voice, "would you, if you could, do the singer a service?"

"O yes," cried Rosebud, "and with all my heart. But I am only a little girl, — only Rose-

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bud, that lives in a little hut upon the sands, with Bess, and Judy, and Myrtle, and our poor lame granny.

"Does your granny wear a blue blanket?" asked the voice; "and is she a little deaf? and does she mutter to herself, and carry a staff?"

"How did you know all that?" asked Rosebud.

"Your granny is the keeper of my cage," replied the voice. "She comes by night to bring food for me and my little maid. Come near, Rosebud; you need not be afraid. I am only a young maiden, not so very much bigger than yourself. My uncle is lord of the land here, but not so powerful as my father, my brave father, who has now gone to the wars; for he is king, and rules over the whole country. O, he was loving and kind, and gave to me jewels and fine clothes in plenty! But, ah! he will not let me have my true love till one, two, three years have passed over my head. Yet I can tell you that I am already very old.

"And, Rosebud, before going to the wars he sent me to visit my uncle, that I might forget my true love. And my uncle is a wicked, cruel man, and a tyrant over me; but I am proud and defy him. He persuades my father, in his letters, that I am bad, and will be glad to make him believe this of me. Were I to die, would he grieve for it? Not

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at all; for then he would inherit the kingdom. I sought to escape, and that is why I am here, although he says it is that I may forget. Is this a place to forget? O no. For what says the song?

'When the wind goes sobbing by,
I think my love doth sigh,
Doth sigh for me.

'When the sun is brightly gleaming,
Then I sit, dreaming, dreaming
He smiles on me.

'When the rain-drops tear by tear
Do fall, I think my dear
Doth weep for me.

'When the sea so sadly moans,
I think in mournful tones
He calls for me.'

"But I will escape from here," she said, suddenly ceasing her song. "I will flee to my native home; for there are those who will be my guides when once at liberty. And you will do me a service, Rosebud, as you promised?"

"O yes, indeed!" cried Rosebud; "but how? Where is the door? Where is your little maid? What is your name?"

"My name is Bertha. My little maid is asleep. There is no door, — at least not here. At the edge of the Wood is a mossy gray rock. Behind this

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rock is a flat stone. Beneath that stone commences the long underground passage which will lead you here. But have you courage?"

"O yes!" cried Rosebud, with eagerness; "I will come instantly!"

"That," said Bertha, "you cannot do. Listen now, while I give you instructions. Do you fear the night?"

"No, pretty Bertha," said Rosebud. "For me the night is often more beautiful than the day. I walked behind my granny, last night, a long way in the moonlight, and was not afraid."

And Rosebud then related to Bertha what had happened, and how she had followed the old woman.

"Ah, I see that you have courage!" said Bertha; "you will not fail me. But why do you say 'pretty Bertha'? I can see you, little Rosebud, for there are holes pierced in the rock to let in the light of day, and through one of these I see your face, and a charming face it is; but I am hid from you."

"But your voice is pretty," said Rosebud.

"Do you think that?" asked Bertha; "listen, then, to it, while it instructs you what to do.

"Follow the old woman when she comes at night to the Wood. Watch when she lifts the stone, then follow her through the entrance. Mind the stairs.

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Ten steep stairs. A false step there would throw you down and spoil everything. Once at the bottom, keep close behind your old granny, — it is well for us she is a little deaf, — until she stops at an iron door. Then look narrowly to see from whence she takes the heavy brass key. No more can be done then. Make your way home as quickly as you may, lest she turn and discover you. Does little Rosebud understand thus far?"

"Yes," said Rosebud, "I am to learn where the great brass key is kept."

"Exactly," said Bertha. "Now listen again. When next the old woman goes to the town, you must hasten to the Wood, remove the flat stone, and enter the passage, find your way through, unlock the iron door, — you will know where the key is kept, — then keep on still farther until you come to a second iron door, then call, 'Bertha!' and I will answer. Then, Rosebud, I and my little maid will be free, and shall fly far from here!"

"But where?" asked Rosebud. "Will you not be discovered? and will not your bad uncle punish you?"

"Never fear that!" cried Bertha. "Are there no boats? We can manage an oar.

'Softly, softly dips the oar,
Farther, farther from the shore
We go, we go, we cheerily go!

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O the sea, the rippling sea!
The bright, the glancing waves for me!
Go build me a boat
All lightly to float,
And away o'er the waters so free
We 'll row, we 'll row, we 'll cheerily row!'

"Yes, little Rosebud, a boat! Are there no boats upon the shore?"

"Many boats," said Rosebud. "O, very many boats!"

"All will then be well," said Bertha. "My father taught me to row, and to ride, and to hunt, and to aim the bow. We shall reach our native home, for with gold can be bought a trusty guide. All will go well. And now, sweet Rosebud, farewell. Be cautious, but at the same time be brave. Tell no one what has happened to-day. Adieu!"

Rosebud promised most faithfully, then bade adieu to Bertha, and ran hastily along the first path which offered; but soon found herself again bewildered among thickets of tangled vines and thorny bushes, through which no way seemed to open.

Still it was a pleasant spot. Flowering shrubs were growing there, and berries in plenty. A little brook fell over some rocks near by, and Rosebud stooped to drink of its waters. Squirrels ran nimbly up the trees, peeping out with their bright eyes from among the leaves. While watching these, as

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they hopped so nimbly from bough to bough, she perceived, sitting upon the lower branch of a tree, a fine-feathered bird, seemingly so tame that she stepped nearer to examine its bright wings. But on her approach it flew slowly to the next tree; and then, as Rosebud followed, it again flew, and alighted on a tall bush, a little farther on.

"Bird, I must have you!" cried Rosebud; "and Myrtle must make for you a cage, a painted cage! O you pretty bird! You fine-feathered bird! Ah, you stop! You are not afraid! Come,

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now!" And she reached forward, hand extended, to grasp it.

But the bird still flew a little farther, and a little farther, now in this direction, now in that, and she was upon the point of giving it up altogether, when it began to sing so charmingly!

"O, now I cannot leave you!" she cried. And so kept on and on, until she felt at last that the power of turning away from it was gone, and that, wherever the bird led, there must she follow.

A long while he flew, and most charmingly he sang the while. But Rosebud grew very weary, and was about to sink down upon the grass in despair of ever again finding her way home, when, looking around her, she found herself quite near the spot where she had entered the Wood in the morning.

"And now, fair bird, won't you go home with me?" she cried; but the fine-feathered bird had flown.

Rosebud then searched out the mossy gray rock and the flat stone, which she found herself quite able to move.

But it was now long past noon.

"I must wait no longer," she said, "for Bess and Judy and Myrtle will be wondering what has befallen me."

Arrived home, she was greeted with joy by Myr-

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tle, and with endless questions from all. To which her only answer was, that she had found berries in plenty, also lovely flowers, and had seen a fine-feathered bird which sang sweetly.

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CHAPTER XI.

MEETING AND PARTING.

THE next night Rosebud lay awake, anxiously waiting for the hour when granny should go forth with her lantern. Her heart beat quickly at the thought of what must that night be done, of all that Bertha expected from her, and she only a little girl, only Rosebud.

But courage was by no means wanting. And, besides, she was very curious to see the sweet singer, —the pleasant-voiced maiden, who, she felt sure, must be wondrously beautiful.

At length footsteps were heard in the next room, the outer door closed, and Rosebud could see from her window the old woman hobbling away to the Wood. She followed, well wrapped in her cloak. Everything was the same as before,—the dew upon the grass, the stillness, the brightness, all the same. Having reached the Wood, Rosebud watched very closely where the old woman disappeared, and entered, behind her, the opening of which Bertha had spoken. She remembered the ten stone stairs, counted them one by one, and reached the bottom in safety.

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Granny was making her way along the passage; at length she paused, and set down the lantern. Stooping over, she removed a stone from the wall near the ground; from behind this stone she drew out a heavy brass key, with which she proceeded to open the iron door.

Rosebud felt a strong desire to follow still farther, and, if possible, get just one glimpse of the mysterious singer and her little maid, but deemed it wiser to follow Bertha's directions and return home at once.

Not many days after, granny, one fine morning, took her staff and her bundle, and started for the town. "Now," thought Rosebud, "now, if ever, must I fulfil my promise."

And when Myrtle had gone off for a day's fishing, as granny now often compelled him to do; and when she had piled up her drift-wood, and scrubbed the platters, and sanded the floor, and looked at her plants, and driven the geese to water, — she hastened away over hills and valleys to the Wood, as she had often done before.

The flat stone was soon found, and, after some exertion, removed. Carefully descending the ten steep stairs, she found herself in the narrow passage below. If she had but thought of the lantern! But it was now too late for that.

With both hands extended, she groped along the

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passage to the iron door. Here, stooping down, she soon found the loose stone. The heavy brass key was drawn forth, and applied to the lock. But, although it turned freely, the door would not open. What was now to be done? There was no time to lose. Suppose some chance traveller were to find the entrance? or suppose granny herself should happen that way?

Again she grasped the key, again it turned in the lock, and again the door would not open.

"Bertha! Bertha!" she called. But Bertha could not hear.

When almost ready to give up in despair, she heard, not far off, a sound like the warbling of a bird, and could very clearly distinguish these words: —

"Courage, maiden, never fear,
All is well, no danger near;
To the left now turn the key,
Three times three, three times three."

With new courage Rosebud began turning the key to the left, and at the ninth turning the door swung slowly open.

But there was yet a long way to travel. A long, long way it seemed to Rosebud. But she thought of her promise to the sorrowful maiden, and kept bravely on.

Presently she heard voices singing, and knew then that the end of the long passage was near. She called aloud, "Bertha! Bertha!"

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"Is it you? Is it Rosebud?" cried a voice. "Hasten, there is yet another iron door."

"But how shall I enter?" called out Rosebud.

"Feel for the bolt. You can easily slip the bolt," said Bertha.

The bolt yielded readily, the door flew open, and Rosebud felt herself embraced with kisses and with tears of joy.

For all the dim light, Rosebud could easily perceive how beautiful was her new friend. And she stood gazing, like one entranced, at her dark, flashing eyes, her black, braided hair, and her rosy red cheeks. Upon her head was a small velvet cap of scarlet, and the facings of her dark velvet jacket were of the same color. She was but little taller than Rosebud, but was straight and well formed, and the long, dark braids of hair hung below her waist. A small plume, fastened to the little cap by a cluster of jewels, drooped gracefully at one side. Her face wore a merry look in spite of her troubles, and when she smiled — O, Rosebud thought nothing could be more beautiful than her smile!

"This is my dear little maid," said she, — "my faithful, loving little maid, who will never desert me."

The little maid now came forward, and was, so Rosebud thought, almost as charming as her mistress. She was certainly as ready to escape, and in any way Bertha might choose.

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It was arranged that Rosebud should leave them, and return to the hut, lest some one should come out in search of her. Late in the afternoon Bertha and her little maid would venture forth, taking care to lock the door behind them, and leave the great brass key in its place. They would remain concealed in the wood until evening, and would then proceed with all haste to the shore, where Rosebud promised to meet them and guide them to a boat.

That night there was no sleep for Rosebud. The moment that granny left the hut with her lantern, she arose and stepped out softly upon the sands. The stars were out, but the moon had not yet risen, — which, for those who wished to remain hid, was all the better. Rosebud walked timidly down to the water's edge, her little heart beating quickly, for she knew that Bertha and her little maid were then on their way to the shore. She sat down upon the rocks to wait. The time seemed long. Had harm befallen them? Perhaps they were lost in the woods, or had met with robbers, or granny had found them.

But as Rosebud sat there upon the rocks, listening to the dash of the waves, fearing she knew not what, though hoping all would be well, she heard footsteps near, and at the same moment a low, sweet voice singing, —

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"Go build me a boat,
All lightly to float
And away o'er the waters so free
We 'll row, we 'll row,
We 'll cheerily row."

Rosebud sprang to meet them.

"Safe?" she whispered.

"Safe!" cried Bertha. "Where is the boat?"

"This way," said Rosebud; "come with me."

Bertha threw her arm about Rosebud, and, as they thus walked along upon the sands, listening to the rush of the night breeze through the tall beach-grass, and to the never-ending song of the sea, the stars twinkling down upon them all the while, she put to her many questions. Was granny really her grandmother? How long had they lived there? Who were her parents? Where were they? Why was she not with them?

And Rosebud told Bertha her whole history, — weeping as she spoke of her father and mother, and told how they had loved her. And Bertha wept too, and begged that Rosebud would go with her, and be her own dear sister.

But no, Rosebud said, when Rupert came, she might, perhaps, obtain from him some tidings of her parents. She must wait for Rupert. But if, after long waiting, Rupert came not, then she and Myrtle together would seek in distant lands to learn their fate.

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Then Bertha promised that her father should send a great army to take the wicked Magnus, and to rescue the good King Brondé and his Lily Queen.

In the boat they selected were lines, hooks, leads, and a heavy sea-coat. These were left upon the rocks, and in the pocket of the heavy sea-coat Bertha placed two rings containing jewels of value, that the owner of the boat might suffer no loss.

Bertha then embraced Rosebud, kissing her many

times. "My dear Rosebud," said she, "your sweet face draws my whole heart to you. I grieve that

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we must now part, and you be left here so sad and lonely. May my dearest hopes perish if I do not yet render you good service! But see! the moon is rising. One more kiss! Farewell!"

They launched their boat, and, stepping in, pushed boldly off from shore. The rising moon threw its beams across the sea. Each little wave danced and sparkled in the light.

Farther, farther away sped the boat; and Rosebud, listening to the dash of the oars, could faintly distinguish the words of Bertha's farewell, which was a reply to Rosebud's question, whether they were not afraid to sail away thus alone.

"O, not alone.
The moon shall guide me o'er the sea;
The little stars are friends to me;
And the dancing waves, so light and free,
O, they shall bear me company!
Farewell, now fare thee well!"

Fainter and fainter grew the music. The boat was now but a speck upon the waters.

And thus did Bertha and her little maiden float away in the moonlight out upon the wide sea!

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CHAPTER XII.

THE CHILDREN IN TROUBLE.

WHEN the little boat could no longer be seen, Rosebud went sorrowfully back to the hut and to her bed. And there she lay, trembling, expecting every moment the return of the old woman. But day dawned; the sun rose, the children also; and still she had not appeared.

What had become of granny?

Rosebud and Myrtle permitted themselves to linger long about the flower-garden. Many of the plants had budded, a few had bloomed. Rosebud bent over them, touching tenderly their soft green leaves, and persuading them, so Myrtle affirmed, to grow faster, and even, as he further declared, whispering to them of what pretty color they should tint their blossoms!

The children of the shore, with their baskets, had gathered around to talk with Rosebud, to wonder at the growth of the plants, and to admire all they saw. Every child must examine every flower that had bloomed, marvel at its beauty, and all were longing for the next buds to open.

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While they were thus assembled, talking earnestly, granny suddenly appeared among them.

Her dress was torn, the blue blanket had fallen from her head, the gray locks streamed about her withered face, and her eyes glared fiercely. The children with looks of affright shrank from the old woman. Coming near them, she shook her fist angrily at Rosebud.

"And is it thus you work when I am away?" she cried. "I 'll teach you!"

And with that she hobbled in among the flowers, and began beating them with her staff, pulling them up, and throwing them far and wide. In a few moments the pretty garden was destroyed!

Poor Rosebud! she had loved them so! It seemed as if those were parts of herself which were thus cruelly tossed upon the sands. So much had she lived with them, caressed them, talked to them, that they were to her almost like living beings.

But not a word did she say, neither did one of the rest dare speak to the old woman in her fury.

"Be off! Be off now! the whole pack of you! Take your baskets and be gone, I say!" she cried, stamping her foot with rage.

Mournfully the little group moved toward the shore, Myrtle and Rosebud among them. For they dared not stay, even to witness the death of their flowers.

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When they returned at noon, granny was again absent. But there lay the flowers, their tender green leaves, with a few bright blossoms, drooping, scorching, dying in the noonday sun.

Rosebud bent over them, hoping some might be found which, if replanted, would yet live. But no, the scorching heat had done its work.

Sorrowfully then they gathered up the remains of the dear plants which had given them so much delight, and buried them, with some tears, in the same spot they had blessed with their short-lived beauty, — the spot now saddened by their cruel death.

Even their fear of the angry old woman could not prevent the children of the shore from gathering there when they knew what Myrtle and Rosebud were doing; and they looked so mournful when the flowers one after another were covered with the dark earth!

"The funeral of the flowers!" said one little child, sadly, as she smoothed the surface with her hand.

This same little child, during the afternoon, begged of a countryman seeds of pretty grasses, which were strewn thickly over the spot.

Even Bess and Judy were sorry for Rosebud. For as the sun warms the hard rock, and melts the

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cold ice, so had the sunshine of Rosebud's sweet face warmed and melted their hearts. If you rudely strike a little bird, it will but droop its head; and, if you crush a flower, it will but wither and fade. So when these two girls gave to Rosebud spiteful words, or even blows, she did but droop her head and look sorrowful. For the love-flame had never yet grown dim in her heart. It burned clear and bright, purifying her whole nature.

And thus it came about that Bess and Judy were at last melted to kindness. They had long ceased to give spiteful words to one who never returned them, and would now as soon have thought of striking a bird or a flower as this loving, gentle child who had come among them.

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And in this time of her trouble they were even willing to do something to comfort her. At twilight, just after the seeds were sown over the grave of the flowers, they came, bringing two little feeble plants, which they had found in a moist spot, under the shelter of a rock. The damp earth still clung to their roots. These were replanted in a hidden corner, and watered daily. One died. The other lived and grew and blossomed. And its flower was a delicate white lily.

Myrtle, one morning, found Rosebud bending sadly over this flower, scarcely raising her eyes at his approach.

"I think it must," said she, at last, looking up, and smiling through her tears.

"Must what?" asked Myrtle.

"Must mean," said Rosebud, "that she is yet alive."

Great was the surprise of the old woman at finding the cage empty, her bird flown. The bolt was secured, the iron door locked, the key safe, nothing out of the way except — the prisoners.

Thinking they must be concealed near, she looked in the woods about, beat the bushes, got tangled in the thicket, scratched by the briers, tore her garments, but did not give up the search until long after sunrise in the morning.

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It was from this vain search, that, weary, angry, and much alarmed for her own safety, she arrived home to find the children gathered about the flower-garden, as has been told.

And there was very good reason to be alarmed; for the Governor of the land, as soon as he knew of Bertha's escape, sent his officers, bidding them to seize the old woman, and to throw her into that very same rocky cage. The children were in dismay at seeing granny carried off in such a manner. None could guess the reason except Rosebud; and she told only Myrtle. It was one pleasant day, when they were off sailing, that she related to him the whole history.

They often went sailing in the little boat, that they might talk together of Rosebud's parents, and the palace, and Rupert. Myrtle said that Rupert's coming should no longer be looked for, and that, if Rosebud's father was a king, why, then, she was a princess. Did any one ever hear of a princess picking up drift-wood, or going barefoot, or living in a hut? It was quite time they set forth upon their travels in search of her home. Could n't she tell in what direction to go? or how far? or anything at all about it?

No, Rosebud only knew that they travelled fast, and for many, many days, and not always in one direction; for one very bright star which she

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came to know, and to watch for, on the journey, shone some nights on her right, and at others on her left.

But however that might be, she said, they must go. "Yes," said Myrtle, "that certainly is quite plain. And we will go as little pedlers, selling our shell-work; or perhaps as little singers, singing our songs. And at every great town we will ask, 'Who is the king of this country?' 'Can you tell us any news of the Good King Brondé?' We will begin at once to collect the shells. And as we journey along we shall rest often in the shade of the trees, by the wayside, or on some flowery bank, and there make our shell-work."

Thus all was well arranged.

But before they were quite ready to begin this pleasant journey, something very unexpected happened to Rosebud; very unexpected, but very good. Indeed, had she been allowed her choice of all the delightful things that might happen, she could have chosen nothing more delightful than this.

But now, while Myrtle and Rosebud are so busy with their shells and with their wise plans, it will, perhaps, be well to inquire concerning the Good King Brondé and his Lily Queen, and whether they reached home in safety.

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE WHITE LAMB.

KING BRONDÉ and his court reached the end of their homeward journey in safety.

They arrived safely, but to find their palace in disorder, its beauty spoiled, its treasures stolen, its walks, gardens, statues, fountains destroyed.

The good king and queen, however, thought only of Rosebud. Their well-beloved child, — was she living? And, if yet alive, into whose hands had she fallen? Messengers were sent far and near throughout the kingdom. Large rewards were offered, but all in vain. And at the approach of winter they gladly removed to their city palace, away from all which so sadly reminded them of that unhappy day on which she was taken from them.

Now, although it would seem that every possible means had been tried, and though many weary months had passed, yet the Lily Queen still hoped that her dear child might be restored to her. And, during the winter every seer, fortune-teller, witch, or wizard who dwelt in the city, or who wandered that way, had been consulted. But all had failed to give true directions for discovering the lost one.

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Thus, mid hopes and fears, the winter and spring passed wearily by.

As summer came on, the queen walked much by herself in the gardens of the palace, that she might, undisturbed, mourn for her lost darling. Sleepless nights and much weeping had made her a Pale Lady indeed. Her strength was failing, her step feeble. Still, however, she continued her daily walks.

And one day, while wandering in the Orange-Grove, she saw, in the path before her, a white lamb.

"Pretty creature!" she cried, "you are pure and innocent as my own lost lamb!"

And she followed it to the end of the walk, and so beyond the palace walls, into a cedar-grove.

Here, close by a ruined hovel, which some poor fagot-gatherer had deserted, the lamb disappeared. He seemed to have entered the hovel. But, upon stepping inside the door, she saw only an aged woman, dressed in dark, flowing robes, who scarcely raised her eyes from the ground.

"I seek," said the queen, "a white lamb."

"The Pale Lady," said the aged woman, still without raising her eyes, — "the Pale Lady seeks, not a lamb, but a sweet flower. Grief lies heavy at her heart. Threads of white are among her once fair locks. Her eye is sunken, her strength gone. All night her tears flow, and the day brings only weariness.

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"No joy, no joy for her;
Sorrow and tears abound.
No smile, no smile for her
Until the lost be found.
But the Wanderer shall return;
The lost shall yet be found;
Then for the sorrowing one
Shall joy and smiles abound!"

The queen sprang forward, her hands clasped, her whole face lighted up with joy.

"Tell me!—tell me where is my child!" she cried.

The aged woman made no reply. Slowly raising her head, she gazed long and earnestly in one direction. It seemed as if her pale, filmy blue eye were fixed upon some object or objects far, far away. Her head bent forward, her right arm slowly raised itself, while the forefinger seemed pointing to something in the dim distance.

At length she spoke. The words came slowly, and there was an intent expression upon her face, as if she were listening to indistinct sounds.

"I hear the distant moaning of the sea. I hear the dash of waves upon the shore. I see the tall beach-grass bending in the breeze. Shells lie upon the sands,—pink, purple, and white. Their gleaming is beautiful in the sunlight. White-sailed ships go by. A boat is tossing upon the waves. A noble boy pulls the oar. Brave and handsome as a young

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prince. How boldly he guides the boat! It touches the shore. A little girl runs smiling to meet him! Her fair curls stream in the wind. Her teeth are like pearls; her eye is like the violet; her cheek like the rose. Gayly flutter her green robes. The boy is glad to see the little girl, running to meet him. He calls out to her, 'Rosebud! Rosebud!'"

The queen had stood, bending forward, her eyes fastened upon the withered face before her, hardly daring to breathe, lest some precious word be lost. Her excitement grew every moment more intense, and when the last word, "Rosebud!" was spoken, she uttered a cry of joy, and sank, half fainting, to the ground.

Upon recovering, the Lily Queen found herself alone in the hovel. No dark-robed old woman or pretty white lamb was to be seen. Neither could it be told how long she had lain there.

But she felt sure that, during the time, a form had bent over her, and spoken these words: —

"Travel towards the setting sun, as far as the shores of Silver Lake. From this lake flows a stream. Follow this stream to the sea."

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CHAPTER XIV.

A LONG JOURNEY.

KING BRONDÉ had been so often disappointed, that he was, at first, unwilling to set forth upon so very doubtful a journey; and especially as no person could be found who could tell in what direction lay this unknown Silver Lake.

In order, however, to divert the mind of the queen, he laid aside his doubts, and commanded that preparations for travelling be made at once.

The grand state coach, all covered with gold and silver, and drawn by twenty white horses, was got in readiness, and also other magnificent coaches; for many lords and nobles of the court were to go in attendance, and also a band of soldiers.

On they travelled, for days and weeks. Many gave up all hope, and spoke of returning. Beautiful lakes had they passed, but thus far not one bearing the name Silver Lake had been found. And the king said one day: —

"My dear Lily Queen, this Silver Lake, with its stream flowing to the sea, — was it not all a dream? Shall we chase a vision? Let us return, and no longer cherish vain hopes."

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The queen, however, would not be persuaded. A little farther, she said, and yet a little farther; but at last agreed, that if, by the morrow's sunset, no Silver Lake was found, they would then return.

The morrow was past. Bravely had they travelled on, and, just as the sun went down, were ready to halt in a poor little village.

The sky was all aglow with the brilliant hues of sunset. In the west lay clouds of purple and gold, and of all radiant colors. The Lily Queen gazed mournfully at this fine show. For the morrow was now past, the sunset hour had come, and she could no longer ask to continue the journey. This last hope, then, was gone.

But while her gaze was fixed upon a broad, high hill, which stood darkly up against the western sky, she perceived, advancing steadily over it, a long procession or company of people. Perhaps, thought she, a troop of hostile soldiers, or perhaps some robber band to waylay us. She distinctly saw plumes waving, also banners streaming, and heard the sound of music.

She hastened to the king. He and his attendants were already alarmed, and were watching, with some anxiety, the oncoming of this host. The soldiers, well armed, stood ready to receive them.

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Nearer and nearer they come. Now down the sides of the hill; now along the plain; and now they enter the streets of the village. Troops of horsemen ride in advance. In the midst of these is a grand chariot, decked out with costly trappings.

Inside this chariot sits a royally dressed person, who has a noble countenance, and who wears a crown. By his side is a sprightly young maiden, with sparkling black eyes and a merry face. Upon her head is a red velvet cap and plume, from beneath which hang long braids of shining hair. She also wears a velvet jacket, with scarlet facings.

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This bright-eyed maiden is Bertha. She has persuaded her father to make inquiries concerning the good King Brondé, and they are now on their way to his kingdom with trains of armed attendants.

Who can describe the raptures of the Lily Queen as she held in her arms one who had, not so very long before, embraced her darling child? — one who could relate all that happened to her after the day when they were parted. Then came endless questions.

Where was Rosebud now? Was she well? Was she sorrowful? Was she in distress? And, above all, could Bertha guide them to her?

No. Not directly. Bertha was ignorant of both the name and the situation of that little village by the shore.

Did she know of Silver Lake?

O yes! Certainly, she knew of Silver Lake.

"Come," said she, "to the top of yonder hill, which looms so darkly against the sunset brightness."

All therefore proceeded to the top of this broad hill, and there, far below, they beheld a sheet of water, so smooth, so silvery, and so fair, that it seemed a round piece of silver, just dropped from the sky.

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"But where is the stream which flows to the sea?" asked the king.

The stream which flowed to the sea was, at first, only a little brook. It ran out from the lake, beneath mosses and bending grass; hid itself, for a long way, among thick, overhanging bushes, but at length came dancing out into the sunshine, and went its way through meadow and wood singing its own happy song.

And soon it was joined by other little singing brooks, all going the same way. Thus it happened that, after travelling many miles, the small stream became a river, and flowed to the sea.

But by no means in a direct course, or always by pleasant ways. It ran here and there, doubling, curving, winding, now through tangled forests, now sweeping around the base of a mountain, now leaping a precipice or dashing itself against the ragged rocks, thus leading our travellers a tiresome and oftentimes a dangerous journey; for there were mountains to climb, roads to cut through the forest, and frequently a hasty bridge to be thrown across a stream.

And one night while resting in a small village they narrowly escaped a great danger; for, without the assistance of the king, — Bertha's father, — they must have all been taken prisoners. This danger was from Magnus, King Brondó's old enemy.

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Having, by means of his great strength, escaped from prison, he had again rallied around him a powerful band. He then sent out spies, and, having learned from them of King Brondé's journey, he resolved to surprise and attack him by night. It was Bertha who discovered their approach. She was sitting late at the window, looking at the moon and the hurrying clouds, and thinking of her true love away at the wars, when her eye caught from afar the gleaming of steel in the moonlight, and she presently saw armed men winding around the foot of a hill. She quickly gave the alarm, and all placed themselves in readiness for whatever might come.

Now Magnus had supposed that Brondé's party would be easily taken. Intending a surprise, he was himself surprised at being so far outnumbered, and fled in dismay, with all his band.

But a shower of sharp-pointed arrows was sent in among them. Many of his men were seen to fall; and Magnus himself received wounds, of which a few years after he died.

And now, dreading another attack, a watch was set every night. They were not, however, again molested. All went well with them. Full of hope, they kept bravely on, and at length arrived, one beautiful morning, at the top of a high hill, from whence could be heard the distant moaning of the sea.

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Bertha begged the Queen to calm herself, and to remember that even if they found the little fishing-hamlet, it was by no means sure that Rosebud would still be living there. Rupert might have come for her, or else she and Myrtle might have begun their travels in search of her home, as they had planned.

The queen only answered by a sign to go on faster, faster!

On arriving at the summit of the next hill, the sea, the broad blue sea, lay spread before them. Its waves came dashing upon the sandy shores below.

They saw the white-sailed ships go by, and the little boats tossing upon the waters, near the shore. One is guided by a boy. There are children sitting on the rocks. A little girl runs down to the water's edge.

King Brondé and the queen dared no longer look. Unable to speak or hardly to breathe, they sank back among the cushions, and there awaited in silence what might be the fulfilment, or might be the destruction, of their hopes.

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CHAPTER XV.

TEARS AND SMILES.

NOW it happened that on this very day Myrtle and Rosebud had planned a visit to the town. Myrtle said they would first try their luck there, as little pedlers, before venturing farther. He would rise before daybreak and go out with the boat, and if he made a good catch, they would take, besides the shell-work, fresh fish, to sell by the way. Long before the girls were stirring, therefore, he was far out upon the waters.

Bess and Judy were full of wonder at the courage of Rosebud, in daring to venture upon so long a journey. Never in their lives had they seen the town. They were, however, quite ready to help; prepared the breakfast, tidied the hut, drove the geese to water, and assisted in packing the shell-baskets.

When all was in readiness, the three went out to sit upon the rocks and there await the coming of Myrtle. The children of the shore, with their baskets, gathered around them; for all had heard of the coming journey to the town.

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Presently the boat appeared in sight. On it came, bounding over the waves, and rapidly approached the shore. All the children stood still, watching the little boat, and admiring the skill with which Myrtle directed its course.

All but Rosebud. She, as was her custom, ran down to meet him at the water's edge, her fair curls streaming, her green robes fluttering in the wind. She laughed aloud and clapped her hands, while waiting for Myrtle to call to her from the boat.

"Rosebud! Rosebud!" he cried, at last, as the boat touched the shore, "such a catch of fish! we will take some to the town, and spread some to dry on the rocks, and some we will —"

But here he was interrupted by loud cries from the children, who came running to them, calling out, that there were, O so many horses, and soldiers, and coaches larger than their hut, all covered with gold and silver, and great lords in purple and scarlet with gay feathers and jewels, all sparkling and shining! Rosebud and Myrtle must run quick! Quick!

But there was no need to run far, for all these wonders were speedily drawing near. A few moments, and soldiers, chariots, and horses covered the sands.

The great state coach of King Brondé was in advance of all the rest. Its door flew open, and Rosebud, with a cry of joy, sprang forward.

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Rosebud, the lonely wanderer, Rosebud, the long-lost child, was in the arms of her mother!

Then from the great company assembled there arose a shout both long and loud, which made the heavens ring. And in the midst of all could be heard and seen Bertha, clapping her hands and dancing for joy.

It was a long time before the happy family within the coach could do more than to embrace one another, and to weep tears of happiness. But at length King Brondé desired to be conducted to the hut, which had for so long been the home of his child.

A portion of the doorway was hewn down, and into that humble dwelling King Brondé entered, and there sat down with the Lily Queen and with Rosebud, while all the children of the shore stood outside lost in wonder, answering, as best they might, the various questions put to them by the lords and nobles.

King Brondé, having learned the character of the old woman, ordered the hut to be searched, and in the cellar were found concealed many costly jewels. These he commanded should be carefully packed and taken to his palace, and there kept until the old woman could be brought and made to tell who were their rightful owners.

This being settled, King Brondé and his queen were eager to set out for their own kingdom. But

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Rosebud would first bid farewell to the children of the shore; and also to Bess and Judy, who were weeping bitterly. What could they do without Rosebud? She had been so gentle with them, and so kind. Must they lose that sunny smile? The hut would be dark and lonely now!

The other children were standing sorrowfully by; and when Rosebud would have bidden them farewell, they with one accord burst into tears.

Poor Rosebud, she must needs weep too! For they had loved her, and she had loved them, every one.

But where was Myrtle? Had any one seen Myrtle? All began to look about and to inquire. But no one had seen him, since he first leaped ashore with his basket of fish.

At length one little girl whispered to Rosebud, pointing at the same time to a clump of bushes at a little distance.

And there she found him, lying upon the ground, crying as if his very heart would break.

Rosebud begged him not to cry, but to arise, come to the hut, and see her father and mother, — her father and mother, of whom they had so often talked. They need not be little pedlers, now.

But he would not be persuaded, and Rosebud returned sorrowfully to the hut.

"But who is this Myrtle?" asked King Brondé.

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Then Rosebud told how good Myrtle was, and how they had played together, and sailed together, and of their plans, and of all his kindness to her ever since she came to the shore.

"And why not take Myrtle?" asked the Lily Queen; "surely our coach is big enough to hold him, and surely our palace is big enough to receive him, and surely our hearts are big enough to love one who has been so good to our Rosebud!"

"Very true!" cried King Brondé.

Rosebud flew once more to the clump of bushes. "Myrtle! Myrtle!" she cried, "you are to go with us! to go! to go! to go! In my father's coach! And live in my father's palace! Myrtle! do you hear?"

No wonder she asked, "Do you hear?" For the poor boy was so overwhelmed, first by his grief, and then by his joy, that he seemed to have lost all power of speech and motion.

But Rosebud urged him to rise, and then led him to the same spot where she had once advised him to wash his face in the spring. And here she bade him bathe his swollen eyes, and smooth his hair, that the king and queen might see what a handsome Myrtle he was.

But alas! so red was his face and so inflamed by weeping, that she was obliged to tell them this herself. And they were quite ready to believe it.

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King Brondé now gave Rosebud money to distribute among her late companions, and there was not one who did not get a bright gold piece, or who did not preserve it carefully as a remembrance of one they had loved so well. Bess and Judy, at Rosebud's request, were given in charge to some of the attendants, that they might also be taken home, and provided for in a comfortable manner.

All now being ready, the joyful party entered the coach. Drums beat, bugles played, the twenty white horses arched their proud necks and stepped gayly off to the sound of the music. And side by side with the great state coach came another royal chariot, wherein sat Bertha, smiling-faced Bertha, with her father the king. Behind followed all their lords, nobles, attendants, and bands of soldiers, — a numerous train.

The children of the shore stood watching till the last plume of the last soldier disappeared, then turned sorrowfully toward their homes.

Who can speak of the happiness of that homeward journey? When the Lily Queen could spare Rosebud from her own embrace, King Brondé would sit for hours with her clasped in his arms, looking down into her face, and stroking her hair softly and tenderly, as if each touch conveyed a blessing. And

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as for Myrtle, so great was his joy, that he scarcely knew whether he were waking or dreaming. So he rolled himself up in one corner of the coach, gazing at the pale Lily Queen, and the big handsome King Brondé in his royal robes and his golden crown, and wondered how long they would let the poor little fisher-boy stay in their palace.

Thus this great company journeyed home. As soon as the towers of the city came in sight, King Brondé ordered a bright flag to be raised, for this was the signal agreed upon in case the search should prove successful. As they drew nearer, troops of mounted soldiers came out to meet them; also bands of music and a great multitude of lords and ladies of the court, in their fine gilded coaches, all in grand array. Also one hundred young nobles, in shining steel armor, and all mounted upon jet black horses, whose trappings were of pure gold.

Like a triumphal procession they entered the city, bugles playing, trumpets sounding, drums beating, banners streaming, horses prancing, plumes waving, and were met by the people with wild huzzas. And years and years after, mothers related to their children the story of the wonderful day when good King Brondé brought home his lost child.

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CHAPTER XVI.

A DISCOVERY.

YEARS passed by, and happy years they were. Rosebud, as she grew older, was the same sweet-voiced, kindly maiden, winning love from all. People gazing at her beaming face asked themselves often what it was that so charmed them there. This which they could not name was the love-light, which shone through her eyes and lighted up her countenance; for the holy fire burned always in her heart, making her whole life pure and bright. The idol of the court, praised, petted, flattered, still was she not spoiled. Ah, Rosebud was far too modest, too humble for that. Real love not only brightens, but purifies, keeping away all evil.

As King Brondé had no son, he adopted Myrtle for his own. He provided for him the best instructors, and treated him in all things as if he were really his child.

And the youth grew up, stately and handsome as a young prince. He mingled freely with the young nobles of the court, and, by his gentle bearing and his true manliness, became a favorite with every one.

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Bess and Judy were established in a handsome house of their own, and every day had cause to bless the good King Brondé and his Lily Queen.

Thus, as was before observed, the years flew happily on. But when years fly on, though never so happily, they carry us along with them. And the happy years that were flying on at the palace were taking King Brondé and his queen towards old age, were taking Myrtle out of his childhood, and changing our Rosebud to a full-blown rose.

And when Myrtle was no longer a child, he began to think. And when he began to think, he thought how wonderful it was that he should have thus been brought from a hut to a palace, changed from a fisher-boy to the son of a king.

And he thought, also, that he should like to be still more a son to him, and to marry Rosebud for his wife, if King Brondé were willing, but was afraid to ask. For were there not plenty of young lords, and also real princes, who came to visit the court? King Brondé might prefer one of these. Rosebud herself might. He was not sure, after all, that he would not rather they two were still living at the hut, for when they were children of the shore she liked him better than any. But these, he felt, were selfish thoughts, and must never come again.

Still, if selfish thoughts might be kept away, serious, anxious thoughts could not; and these came

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often to cloud his face, and to make Rosebud wonder why Myrtle appeared so thoughtful, so troubled.

Now it happened, one lovely afternoon, when the king and his court were at the summer palace, near Long Forest, that Myrtle was walking in the gardens with Rosebud. These same anxious thoughts were present in his mind. They clouded his face, and gave to his voice a sorrowful tone.

"Where are your thoughts?" asked Rosebud, "and why are you so troubled?"

"I will tell you," said Myrtle, after a few moments of silence,—"I will tell you, first, where are my thoughts, and next, why I am so troubled. My thoughts are far away at the sea-shore, by a little spring, where a little girl once declared that the rose and the myrtle went well together. I fear she may not think so always. That is why I am so troubled."

Rosebud looked down, and walked silently on by his side, until they came to a rosebush, bearing a rose, not quite fully blown, which she plucked. A little farther on they passed the queen's fine myrtle-arbor. From this she cut a sprig and intwined it with the rose. The two, thus joined, she placed in his hand. He knew then that the little girl still believed that the rose and the myrtle went well together.

At a little distance they saw, walking towards

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them, the king and his queen. As they met, Myrtle held out to the king the pretty token he had just

received from Rosebud, — held it out doubtfully, as if fearing his displeasure.

But the king smiled, remembering, no doubt, the long ago when he himself had loved a king's daughter; and the queen smiled; and Rosebud smiled. Why, then, should not Myrtle smile, too? And then the good King Brondé opened wide his arms, clasped them both to his heart, gave them his blessing, and wished they might live as happily together as had he and his beloved Lily Queen.

Not long after this came the wedding. And such a wedding was surely never known before.

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The kings of all the countries round about came with their queens, and their courts, and their mounted guards, and their bands of music, and their waving banners. There were illuminations in the cities, and fires blazed upon the mountain-tops. Prisoners were released, and gold and silver thrown by handfuls to the poor. Tables were spread in the streets, that everybody might feast.

Happy they who could obtain entrance into the palace. Happier still they who were admitted into that grand apartment where the marriage rites were performed. Happiest of all they who obtained a glimpse of the charming bride.

She wore, at Myrtle's request, a robe of the very palest green, which was besprinkled with diamonds. Upon her fair curls rested a coronet of rosebuds, every leaf of which was a separate jewel.

But nothing was so lovely, so charming to all, as her own sweet face, expressing, as might plainly be seen, the most perfect love and the most perfect happiness.

All her old friends were present. Bess and Judy were there, side by side with her own sisters. The wood-cutter's children were there, the little boy and girl whom Rosebud saved from the boat. The wood-cutter himself was there. For his services on the day and night of the lion hunt, in Long Forest, he had been well rewarded, and he now lived on a

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fine estate, with gold in plenty, and servants to command.

Even Rupert was present. For when released from prison, he sought the old woman's hut, and after learning from the fishermen all that had happened, he went immediately to King Brondé's dominions, and obtained employment in the grounds of the palace, that he might be always near Rosebud. At her request, he was made head-gardener of her flower-beds, and brought her every morning a fresh nosegay; and was welcomed with smiles, which, it may be remembered, was a part of the nice little plan he had laid when acting as guide.

Bertha, too, was there, the dark-eyed, bright-faced Bertha; and charming enough she looked too, in her bright colors, and her little jewelled cap. And happy enough, too; for the lover came safely back from the wars, and that same lover, now her husband, was by her side, and as happy as herself.

The Green Fairy, too, was there, though no one knew it, in the form of a fine-feathered bird, perched high on the top of a marble column. Somebody else, too, was there, who will shortly speak for herself.

After the marriage ceremony had been performed, the whole company repaired to the most spacious hall in the palace, where was served up a sumptuous banquet. The tables were loaded with dishes of

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solid gold, and with crystal ornaments. Sweetmeats, cordials, and spices of richest fragrance were brought from the remotest corners of the earth. Players of musical instruments, hidden from sight, sent forth their softest, sweetest strains.

Roses were everywhere, — roses and myrtle; in rich vases upon the table, among the decorations of the walls, in hanging-baskets, in the hands of marble statues, festooned from the ceiling, wreathed about the white columns. Roses and myrtle everywhere. The air was filled with their fragrance. And everybody said, how beautiful were the myrtle and the rose together.

At the close of the banquet, King Brondé observed that the great king who sat at his left hand appeared sad and downcast; that, although striving to be gay with the rest, yet he often turned aside to wipe away a tear.

"What is your grief?" asked King Brondé; "what great sorrow dwells in your heart, that will make itself felt, even at this bridal feast?"

"I can tell you that!" cried a strange voice at his side.

King Brondé turned and saw, standing quite near him, a little old woman, holding a staff, and wearing a blue blanket pinned over her head.

"And who are you?" cried King Brondé. "By what means gained you entrance here? And what

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should one like you know of the troubles of a great king?"

"The great king has but one trouble," she replied, "and that shall soon be taken away. Listen, now, and you shall hear a true story.

"Many years ago I lived, with my grandchildren, in a cabin by a lonely wood. One stormy night a woman, a coarse-featured woman, came to my door, bringing a young child, which she had stolen for the sake of the jewels he wore.

"This woman offered me one half, provided I would allow them to remain hidden there, until her strength returned, when she would go on with her journey.

"I accepted this offer, thinking she would soon be gone, and that the jewels would make me rich."

"You thief! wretch!" cried King Brondé.

"True, both true," answered the old woman; "but permit me to go on with the story; for not many days are left me, and I would do one good act before I die.

"The woman never recovered her strength. She died there, in my cabin. Before her death she confessed to me that this stolen child was the son of the king. She had enticed him from his attendants, while they were walking with him, in the grounds belonging to the palace.

"I dared not remain in the country with the child,

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for if he were found in my hands it would be certain death to me. I therefore fled with him and my two grandchildren into another kingdom, where I dwelt in a little hut by the sea.

"The boy grew up, fair, and with a true princely look. I compelled him, until all danger of pursuit was over, to go meanly clad and dirty, lest his beauty should attract the notice of some passing traveller.

"And now, when all are making bridal presents, I come also with a gift to the bridegroom. I present to him a father. Great king, you have no longer a trouble: this is your lost boy."

After the rejoicing, the happy weeping, the embracing, and all the deep excitement caused by the old woman's story, had somewhat abated, orders were given to bring forth the jewels, which were brought from the hut, that she might declare who were their rightful owners.

And among these was the king's signet ring, which he had heedlessly given his boy to play with on the morning of the day when he was stolen. This signet ring the old woman had never dared offer for sale.

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CHAPTER XVII.

KING MYRTLE AND QUEEN ROSEBUD.

THUS it came about that Myrtle was, after all, a true prince; and his now happy father, having passed so many childless years, begged that the young couple might spend at least one half the time at his court. This request was cheerfully granted.

And after the death of King Brondé and his Lily Queen, which was not until they had reached a good old age, Rosebud gave up her share of the kingdom to her two sisters, that she might dwell always with Myrtle in his own country.

Thus the two sisters reigned together. The eldest, with her beauty and her grace, was an ornament to the court, and drew together the lively and the gay; while the second, with her great wisdom, sat in council with the nobles and managed with rigor the affairs of state; and their reign was called ever after "The Reign of the Two Queens."

The old woman died, soon after telling her story, at the house of Bess and Judy, and was buried, as she herself had requested, with the blue blanket upon her head, and her staff beside her.

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After the father of Myrtle died, he and Rosebud became king and queen, and reigned in his stead.

Their first act was to purchase from the king of the country adjoining their own the tract of land which contained the little fishing hamlet by the sea; and there, by the side of the old hut, they reared a splendid palace. The hut was preserved, standing exactly as it stood in their childhood; and the little garden-spot behind — the grave of their short-lived flowers — was planted with lilies, an affectionate tribute to the memory of the Lily Queen.

The waters of the spring where Myrtle, with fear and trembling, once dared to wash his face were made to gush up through a marble fountain, around which the rose and the myrtle grew well together.

Their old companions were well cared for; and they loved their king and queen just as well as when they were children of the shore with themselves; for the good queen loved her people, and never ceased to labor for their happiness. The holy fire had never grown dim; and Myrtle, the noble-hearted Myrtle, thought and acted always with his beloved queen. In all things they went hand in hand and heart in heart; and dwellers upon the remotest borders of their kingdom found reason to bless the reign of King Myrtle and Queen Rose.

The story is ended, but there is one thing which some might care to know.

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One day, as the king and queen were sitting in their private chamber, talking of the long ago, the king said: "My dear Rosebud, why was it that the Green Fairy, as she must have had the power, did not find some way of informing your parents where you were hidden, or did not come to your rescue?"

"She is here," said a voice near them, — "she is here to answer for herself."

They turned quickly, and there, in her own proper form, stood the Green Fairy, who spoke as follows: —

"The Green Fairy," said she, "wished to prove whether the child Rosebud could be as gentle, as sweet-tempered, when in poverty, and exposed to harsh treatment, as when living in a palace, the idol of a court. The little fisher-boy may answer that question for himself."

But the Green Fairy was not so entirely neglectful of the little girl. Something she could tell of a fine-feathered bird, which guided her through the woods. Something, too, of a bird-song, heard by a little girl standing alone in a dark passage.

"To the left now turn the key,
Three times three, three times three."

Also of hopeful words, murmured softly from a tall flowering shrub, to a child who lay one night in the forest, looking up at the stars twinkling through the trees.

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"Be of good cheer
O maiden dear;
No longer fear,
For help is near."

And something she could tell, too, of a white lamb and of an aged woman with pale blue eyes and dark flowing robes, who whispered to the Lily Queen of Silver Lake, and the stream which flowed to the sea.

She was at the wedding, too, looking down from above, to see that all went well with the happy ones below. Like this!

And, changing to a beautiful bird, she flew to the top of a marble column.

And while they were gazing, she began to fly slowly around the apartment, and disappered at last through an open window. But still they heard her voice singing to them her last farewell: —

"Farewell, farewell, most noble king!
Farewell, farewell, O gracious queen!
For other lands I 'm on the wing,
No more you 'll see the Fairy Green.
Long may you live, all hearts to bless,
Long may you know true happiness!"

Cambridge: Electrotyped and Printed by Welch, Bigelow, & Co.

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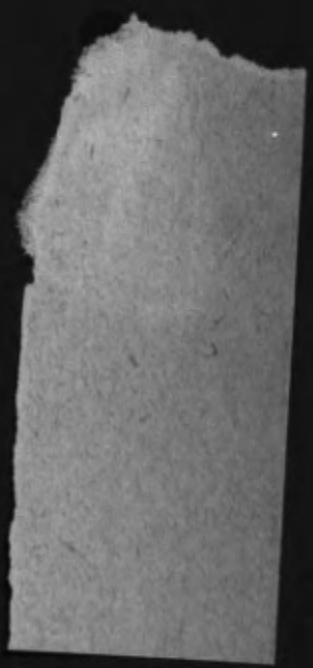

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THE

ENTERTAINING STORY

OF

KING BRONDÉ,

His Lily and his Rosebud.

Mrs. Abby Morton

By ~~ANNA~~ M. DIAZ.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY W. L. SHEPPARD.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
1869.

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