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Prince Prigio's Son

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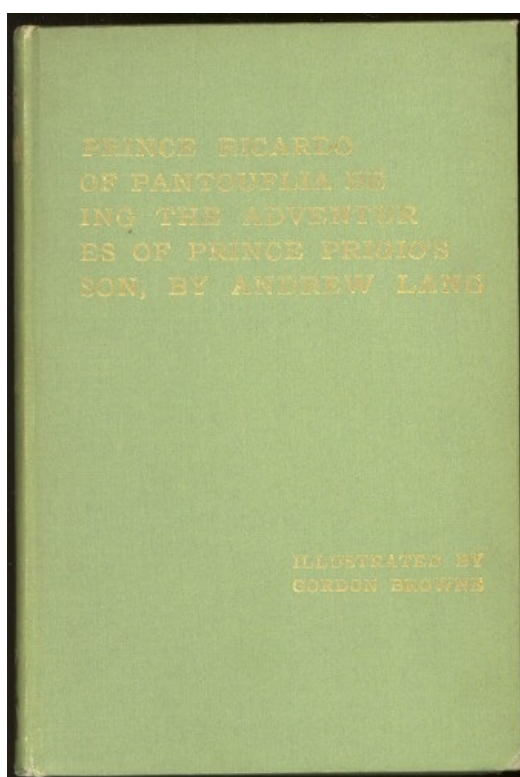
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THE ADVENTURES OF PRINCE PRIGIO'S SON ***

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PRINCE RICARDO OF PANTOUFLIA

BEING THE ADVENTURES OF PRINCE
PRIGIO'S SON, BY ANDREW LANG
AUTHOR OF PRINCE PRIGIO

ILLUSTRATED BY
GORDON BROWNE

PUBLISHED AT BRISTOL BY J. W. ARROWSMITH,
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DEDICATION.
To Guy Campbell.

My dear Guy,

You wanted to know more about Prince Prigio, who won the Lady Rosalind, and killed the Firedrake and the Remora by aid of his Fairy gifts. Here you have some of his later adventures, and you will learn from this story the advantages of minding your book.

Yours always,
A. Lang.



Introductory. Explaining Matters.

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There may be children whose education has been so neglected that they have not read *Prince Prigio*. As this new story is about Prince Prigio's son, Ricardo, you are to learn that Prigio was the child and heir of Grogno, King of Pantouflia. The fairies gave the little Prince cleverness, beauty, courage; but one wicked fairy added, "You shall be *too* clever." His mother, the queen, hid away in a cupboard all the fairy presents,—the Sword of Sharpness, the Seven-League Boots, the Wishing Cap, and many other useful and delightful gifts, in which her Majesty did not believe! But after Prince Prigio had become universally disliked and deserted, because he was so very clever and conceited, he happened to find all the fairy presents in the old turret chamber where they had been thrown. By means of these he delivered his country from a dreadful Red-Hot Beast, called the Firedrake, and, in addition to many other triumphs, he married the good and beautiful Lady Rosalind. His love for her taught him not to be conceited, though he did not cease to be extremely clever and fond of reading.

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When this new story begins the Prince has succeeded to the crown, on the death of King Grogno, and is unhappy about his own son, Prince Ricardo, who is not clever, and who hates books! The story tells of Ricardo's adventures: how he tried to bring back Prince Charlie to England, how he failed; how he dealt with the odious old Yellow Dwarf; how he was aided by the fair magician, the Princess Jaqueline; how they both fell into a dreadful trouble; how King Prigio saved them; and how Jaqueline's dear and royal papa was discovered; with the end of all these adventures. The moral of the story will easily be discovered by the youngest reader, or, if not, it does not much matter.

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CHAPTER I. The Troubles of King Prigio.

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"I'm sure I don't know what to do with that boy!" said King Prigio of Pantouflia.

"If *you* don't know, my dear," said Queen Rosalind, his illustrious consort, "I can't see what is to be done. You are so clever."

The king and queen were sitting in the royal library, of which the shelves were full of the most delightful fairy books in all languages, all equally familiar to King Prigio. The queen could not read most of them herself, but the king used to read them aloud to her. A good many years had passed—seventeen, in fact—since Queen Rosalind was married, but you would not think it to look at her. Her grey eyes were as kind and soft and beautiful, her dark hair as dark, and her pretty colour as like a white rose blushing, as on the day when she was a bride. And she was as fond of the king as when he was only Prince Prigio, and he was as fond of her as on the night when he first met her at the ball.

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"No, I don't know what to do with Dick," said the king.

He meant his son, Prince Ricardo, but he called him Dick in private.

"I believe it's the fault of his education," his Majesty went on. "We have not brought him up rightly. These fairy books are at the bottom of his provoking behaviour," and he glanced round the shelves. "Now, when *I* was a boy, my dear mother tried to prevent me from reading fairy books, because she did not believe in fairies."

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"But she was wrong, you know," said the queen. "Why, if it had not been for all these fairy presents, the Cap of Darkness and all the rest of them, you never could have killed the Fire-beast and the Ice-beast, and—you never could have married me," the queen added, in a happy whisper, blushing beautifully, for that was a foolish habit of hers.

"It is quite true," said the king, "and therefore I thought it best to bring Dick up on fairy books, that he might know what is right, and have no nonsense about him. But perhaps the thing has been overdone; at all events, it is not a success. I wonder if fathers and sons will ever understand each other, and get on well together? There was my poor father, King Grogno, he wanted me to take to adventures, like other princes, fighting Firedrakes, and so forth; and I did not care for it, till *you* set me on," and he looked very kindly at her Majesty. "And now, here's Dick," the monarch continued, "I can't hold him back. He is always after a giant, or a dragon, or a magician, as the case may be; he will certainly be ploughed for his examination at College. Never opens a book. What does he care, off after every adventure he can hear about? An idle, restless youth! Ah, my poor country, when I am gone, what may not be your misfortunes under Ricardo!"

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Here his Majesty sighed, and seemed plunged in thought.

"But you are not going yet, my dear," said the queen. "Why you are not forty! And young people will be young people. You were quite proud when poor Dick came home with his first brace of gigantic fierce birds, killed off his own sword, and with such a pretty princess he had rescued—dear Jaqueline? I'm sure she is like a daughter to me. I cannot do without her."

p. 17

"I wish she were a daughter-in-law; I wish Dick would take a fancy to marry her," said the king.

"A nicer girl I never saw."

"And so accomplished," added Queen Rosalind. "That girl can turn herself into anything—a mouse, a fly, a lion, a wheelbarrow, a church! I never knew such talent for magic. Of course she had the *best* of teachers, the Fairy Paribanou herself; but very few girls, in our time, devote so many hours to *practice* as dear Jaqueline. Even now, when she is out of the schoolroom, she still practises her scales. I saw her turning little Dollie into a fish and back again in the bath-room last night. The child was delighted."

p. 18

In these times, you must know, princesses learned magic, just as they learn the piano nowadays; but they had their music lessons too, dancing, calisthenics, and the use of the globes.

"Yes, she's a dear, good girl," said the king; "yet she looks melancholy. I believe, myself, that if Ricardo asked her to marry him, she would not say 'No.' But that's just one of the things I object to most in Dick. Round the world he goes, rescuing ladies from every kind of horror—from dragons, giants, cannibals, magicians; and then, when a girl naturally expects to be married to him, as is usual, off he rides! He has no more heart than a flounder. Why, at his age I—"

"At his age, my dear, you were so hard-hearted that you were quite a proverb. Why, I have been told that you used to ask girls dreadful puzzling questions, like 'Who was Cæsar Borgia?' 'What do you know of Edwin and Morcar?' and so on."

p. 19

"I had not seen *you* then," said the king.

"And Ricardo has not seen *her*, whoever she may be. Besides, he can't possibly marry all of them. And I think a girl should consider herself lucky if she is saved from a dragon or a giant, without expecting to be married next day."

"Perhaps; but it is usual," said the king, "and their families expect it, and keep sending ambassadors to know what Dick's intentions are. I would not mind it all so very much if he killed the monsters off his own sword, as he did that first brace, in fair fight. But ever since he found his way into that closet where the fairy presents lie, everything has been made too easy for him. It is a royal road to glory, or giant-slaying made easy. In his Cap of Darkness a poor brute of a dragon can't see him. In his Shoes of Swiftmess the giants can't catch him. His Sword of Sharpness would cut any oak asunder at a blow!"

p. 20

"But you were very glad of them when you made the Ice-beast and the Fire-beast fight and kill each other," said the queen.

"Yes, my dear; but it wanted some wit, if I may say so, to do *that*, and Dick just goes at it hammer and tongs: anybody could do it. It's *intellect* I miss in Ricardo. How am I to know whether he could make a good fight for it without all these fairy things? I wonder what the young rogue is about to-day? He'll be late for dinner, as usual, I daresay. I can't stand want of punctuality at meals," remarked his Majesty, which is a sign that he was growing old after all; for where is the fun of being expected always to come home in time for dinner when, perhaps, you are fishing, and the trout are rising splendidly?

p. 21

"Young people will be young people," said the queen. "If you are anxious about him, why don't you look for him in the magic crystal?"

Now the magic crystal was a fairy present, a great ball of glass in which, if you looked, you saw the person you wanted to see, and what he was doing, however far away he might be, if he was on the earth at all. ^[21]

"I'll just take a look at it," said the king; "it only wants three-quarters of an hour to dinner-time."

His Majesty rose, and walked to the crystal globe, which was in a stand, like other globes. He stared into it, he turned it round and round, and Queen Rosalind saw him grow quite pale as he gazed.

"I don't see him anywhere," said the king, "and I have looked everywhere. I do hope nothing has happened to the boy. He is so careless. If he dropped his Cap of Darkness in a fight with a giant, why who knows what might occur?"

p. 22

"Oh, 'Gio, how you frighten me!" said the queen.

King Prigio was still turning the crystal globe.

"Stop!" he cried; "I see a beautiful princess, fastened by iron chains to a rock beside the sea, in a lonely place. They must have fixed her up as a sacrifice to a sea-monster, like what's-her-name."

This proves how anxious he was, or, being so clever and learned, he would have remembered that her name was Andromeda.

"I bet Dick is not far off, where there is an adventure on hand. But where on earth can he be? . . . My word!" suddenly exclaimed the monarch, in obvious excitement.

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"What is it, dear?" cried the queen, with all the anxiety of a mother.

"Why, the sea where the girl is, has turned all red as blood!" exclaimed the king. "Now it is all being churned up by the tail of a tremendous monster. He is a whopper! He's coming on shore; the girl is fainting. He's out on shore! He is extremely poorly, blood rushing from his open jaws."

He's dying! And, hooray! here's Dick coming out of his enormous mouth, all in armour set with sharp spikes, and a sword in his hand. He's covered with blood, but he's well and hearty. He must have been swallowed by the brute, and cut him up inside. Now he's cutting the beast's head off. Now he's gone to the princess; a very neat bow he has made her. Dick's manners are positively improving! Now he's cutting her iron chains off with the Sword of Sharpness. And now he's made her another bow, and he's actually taking leave of her. Poor thing! How disappointed she is looking. And she's so pretty, too. I say, Rosalind, shall I shout to him through the magic horn, and tell him to bring her home here, on the magic carpet?"

p. 24

"I think not, dear; the palace is quite full," said the queen. But the real reason was that she wanted Ricardo to marry her favourite Princess Jaqueline, and she did not wish the new princess to come in the way.

"As you like," said the king, who knew what was in her mind very well. "Besides, I see her own people coming for her. I'm sorry for her, but it can't be helped, and Dick is half-way home by now on the Shoes of Swiftness. I daresay he will not keep dinner waiting after all. But what a fright the boy has given me!"

At this moment a whirring in the air and a joyous shout were heard. It was Prince Ricardo flying home on his Seven-league Boots.

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"Hi, Ross!" he shouted, "just weigh this beast's head. I've had a splendid day with a sea-monster. Get the head stuffed, will you? We'll have it set up in the billiard-room."

"Yes, Master Dick—I mean your Royal Highness," said Ross, a Highland keeper, who had not previously been employed by a Reigning Family. "It's a fine head, whatever," he added, meditatively.



Prince Ricardo now came beneath the library window, and gave his parents a brief account of his adventure.

"I picked the monster up early in the morning," he said, "through the magic telescope, father."

"What country was he in?" said the king.

"The country people whom I met called it Ethiopia. They were niggers."

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"And in what part of the globe is Ethiopia, Ricardo?"

"Oh! I don't know. Asia, perhaps," answered the prince.

The king groaned.

"That boy will *never* understand our foreign relations. Ethiopia in Asia!" he said to himself, but he did not choose to make any remark at the moment.

The prince ran upstairs to dress. On the stairs he met the Princess Jaqueline.

"Oh, Dick! are you hurt?" she said, turning very pale.

"No, not I; but the monster is. I had a capital day, Jack; rescued a princess, too."

"Was she—was she very pretty, Dick?"

"Oh! I don't know. Pretty enough, I daresay. Much like other girls. Why, you look quite white! What's the matter? Now you look all right again;" for, indeed, the Princess Jaqueline was blushing.

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"I must dress. I'm ever so late," he said, hurrying upstairs; and the princess, with a little sigh, went down to the royal drawing-room.

CHAPTER II. Princess Jaqueline Drinks the Moon.

p. 30



When dinner was over and the ladies had left the room, the king tried to speak *seriously* to Prince Ricardo. This was a thing which he disliked doing very much.

"There's very little use in preaching," his Majesty used to say, "to a man, or rather a boy, of another generation. My taste was for books; I only took to adventures because I was obliged to do it. Dick's taste is for adventures; I only wish some accident would make him take to books. But everyone must get his experience for himself; and when he has got it, he is lucky if it is not too late. I wish I could see him in love with some nice girl, who would keep him at home."

p. 31

The king did not expect much from talking seriously to Dick. However, he began by asking questions about the day's sport, which Ricardo answered with modesty. Then his Majesty observed that, from all he had ever read or heard, he believed Ethiopia, where the fight was, to be in Africa, not in Asia.

"I really wish, Ricardo, that you would attend to your geography a little more. It is most necessary to a soldier that he should know where his enemy is, and if he has to fight the Dutch, for instance, not to start with his army for Central Asia."

"I could always spot them through the magic glass, father," said Dick; "it saves such a lot of trouble. I hate geography."

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"But the glass might be lost or broken, or the Fairies might take it away, and then where are you?"

"Oh, *you* would know where to go, or Mr. Belsham."

Now Mr. Belsham was his tutor, from Oxford.

"But I shall not always be here, and when I die—"

"Don't talk of dying, sire," said Dick. "Why, you are not so very old; you may live for years yet. Besides, I can't stand the notion. You must live for ever!"

"That sentiment is unusual in a Crown Prince," thought the king; but he was pleased for all that.

"Well, to oblige you, I'll try to struggle against old age," he said; "but there are always accidents. Now, Dick, like a good fellow, and to please me, work hard all to-morrow till the afternoon. I'll come in and help you. And there's always a splendid evening rise of trout in the lake just now, so you can have your play after your work. You'll enjoy it more, and I daresay you are tired after a long day with the big game. It used to tire me, I remember."

p. 33

"I *am* rather tired," said Dick; and indeed he looked a little pale, for a day in the inside of a gigantic sea-monster is fatiguing, from the heat and want of fresh air which are usually found in such places. "I think I'll turn in; goodnight, my dear old governor," he said, in an affectionate manner, though he was not usually given to many words.

Then he went and kissed his mother and the Princess Jaqueline, whom he engaged to row him on the lake next evening, while he fished.

"And don't you go muffing them with the landing-net, Jack, as you generally do," said his Royal Highness, as he lit his bedroom candle.

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"I wish he would not call me Jack," said the princess to the queen.

"It's better than Lina, my dear," said her Majesty, who in late life had become fond of her little joke; "that always sounds as if someone else was fatter,—and I hope there is not someone else."

The princess was silent, and fixed her eyes on her book.

Presently the king came in, and played a game with Lina at picquet. When they were all going to bed, he said:

"Just come into the study, Lina. I want you to write a few letters for me."

The princess followed him and took her seat at the writing table. The letters were very short. One was to Herr Schnipp, tailor to the king and royal family; another was to the royal swordmaker, another to the bootmaker, another to the optician, another to the tradesman who supplied the august family with carpets and rugs, another to his Majesty's hatter. They were all summoned to be at the palace early next morning. Then his Majesty yawned, apologised, and went to bed. The princess also went to her room, or bower as it was then called, but not to sleep.

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She was unhappy that Dick did not satisfy his father, and that he was so careless, and also about other things.

"And why does the king want all these tailors and hatters so suddenly, telescope-makers and swordmakers and shoemakers, too?" she asked herself, as she stood at the window watching the moon.

"I *could* find out. I could turn myself into a dog or a cat, and go into the room where he is giving his orders. But that is awkward, for when the servants see Rip" (that was the dog) "in two places at once, they begin to think the palace is haunted, and it makes people talk. Besides, I know it is wrong to listen to what one is not meant to hear. It is often difficult to be a magician and a good girl. The temptations are so strong, stronger than most people allow for." So she remained, with the moon shining on her pretty yellow hair and her white dress, wondering what the king intended to do, and whether it was something that Dick would not like.

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"How stupid of me," she said at length, "after all the lessons I have had. Why, I can *drink the moon!*"

Now, this is a way of knowing what anyone else is thinking of and intends to do, for the moon sees and knows everything. Whether it is *quite fair* is another matter; but, at all events, it is not *listening*. And anyone may see that, if you are a magician, like the Princess Jaqueline, a great many difficult questions as to what is right and wrong at once occur which do not trouble other people. King Prigio's secret, why he sent for the tailor and the other people, was his own secret. The princess decided that she would not find it out by turning herself into Rip or the cat (whose name was Semiramis), and, so far, she was quite right. But she was very young, and it never occurred to her that it was just as wrong to find out what the king meant by *drinking the moon* as by listening in disguise. As she grew older she learned to know better; but this is just the danger of teaching young girls magic, and for that very reason it has been given up in most countries.

p. 37

However, the princess did not think about right and wrong, unluckily. She went to the bookcase and took down her *Cornelius Agrippa*, in one great tall black volume, with silver clasps which nobody else could open; for, as the princess said, there are books which it would never do to leave lying about where the servants or anybody could read them. Nobody could undo the clasps, however strong or clever he might be; but the princess just breathed on them and made a sign, and the book flew open at the right place—Book IV., chapter vi., about the middle of page 576.

p. 38

The magic spell was in Latin, of course; but the princess knew Latin very well, and soon she had the magic song by heart. Then she closed the book and put it back on the shelf. Then she threw open the window and drew back the curtains, and put out all the lights except two scented candles that burned with a white fire under a round mirror with a silver frame, opposite the window. And into that mirror the moon shone white and full, filling all the space of it, so that the room was steeped in a strange silver light. Now the whole room seemed to sway gently, waving and trembling; and as it trembled it sounded and rang with a low silver music, as if it were filled with the waves of the sea.

p. 39

Then the princess took a great silver basin, covered with strange black signs and figures raised in the silver. She poured water into the basin, and as she poured it she sang the magic spell from the Latin book. It was something like this, in English:

"Oh Lady Moon, on the waters riding,
On shining waters, in silver sheen,
Show me the secret the heart is hiding,
Show me the truth of the thought, oh Queen!

"Oh waters white, where the moon is riding,
That knows what shall be and what has been,
Tell me the secret the heart is hiding,
Wash me the truth of it, clear and clean!"

As she sang the water in the silver basin foamed and bubbled, and then fell still again; and the princess knelt in the middle of the room, and the moon and the white light from the mirror of the moon fell in the water.

Then the princess raised the basin, and stooped her mouth to it and drank the water, spilling a few drops, and so she *drank the moon* and the knowledge of the moon. Then the moon was darkened without a cloud, and there was darkness in the sky for a time, and all the dogs in the world began to howl. When the moon shone again, the princess rose and put out the two white lights, and drew the curtains; and presently she went to bed.



“Now I know all about it,” she said. “It is clever; everything the king does is clever, and he is so kind that I daresay he does not mean any harm. But it seems a cruel trick to play on poor Ricardo. However, Jaqueline is on the watch, and I’ll show them a girl can do more than people think,”—as, indeed, she could.

After meditating in this way, the princess fell sleep, and did not waken till her maid came to call her.

“Oh! your Royal Highness, what’s this on the floor?” said the faithful Rosina, as she was arranging the princess’s things for her to get up.

“Why, what is it?” asked the princess.

“Ever so many—four, five, six, seven—little shining drops of silver lying on the carpet, as if they had melted and fallen there!”

“They have not hurt the carpet?” said the princess. “Oh dear! the queen won’t be pleased at all. It was a little chemical experiment I was trying last night.”

But she knew very well that she must have dropped seven drops of the enchanted water.

“No, your Royal Highness, the carpet is not harmed,” said Rosina; “only your Royal Highness should do these things in the laboratory. Her Majesty has often spoke about it.”

“You are quite right,” said the princess; “but as there is no harm done, we’ll say nothing about it this time. And, Rosina, you may keep the silver drops for yourself.”

“Your Royal Highness is always very kind,” said Rosina, which was true; but how much better and wiser it is not to *begin* to deceive! We never know how far we may be carried, and so Jaqueline found out.

For when she went down to breakfast, there was the king in a great state of excitement, for him.

“It’s *most* extraordinary,” said his Majesty.

“What is?” asked the queen.

"Why, didn't you notice it? No, you had gone to bed before it happened. But I was taking a walk in the moonlight, on the balcony, and I observed it carefully."

"Observed what, my dear?" asked the queen, who was pouring out the tea.

"Didn't you see it, Dick? Late as usual, you young dog!" the king remarked as Ricardo entered the room.

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"See what, sir?" said Dick.

"Oh, you were asleep hours before, now I think of it! But it was *the* most extraordinary thing, an unpredicted eclipse of the moon! You must have noticed it, Jaqueline; you sat up later. How the dogs howled!"

"No; I mean yes," murmured poor Jaqueline, who of course had caused the whole affair by her magic arts, but who had forgotten, in the excitement of the moment, that an eclipse of the moon, especially if entirely unexpected, is likely to attract very general attention. Jaqueline could not bear to tell a fib, especially to a king who had been so kind to her; besides, fibbing would not alter the facts.

"Yes, I did see it," she admitted, blushing. "Had it not been predicted?"

"Not a word about it whispered anywhere," said his Majesty. "I looked up the almanack at once. It is the most extraordinary thing I ever saw, and I've seen a good many."

p. 46

"The astronomers must be duffers," said Prince Ricardo. "I never thought there was much in physical science of any sort; most dreary stuff. Why, they say the earth goes round the sun, whereas any fool can see it is just the other way on."

King Prigio was struck aghast by these sentiments in the mouth of his son and heir, the hope of Pantouflia. But what was the king to say in reply? The astronomers of Pantouflia, who conceived that they knew a great deal, had certainly been taken by surprise this time. Indeed, they have not yet satisfactorily explained this eclipse of the moon, though they have written volumes about it.

"Why, it may be the sun next!" exclaimed his Majesty. "Anything may happen. The very laws of gravitation themselves may go askew!"

p. 47

At this moment the butler, William, who had been in the queen's family when she was a girl, entered, and announced:

"Some of the royal tradesmen, by appointment, to see your Majesty."

So the king, who had scarcely eaten any breakfast, much to the annoyance of the queen, who was not agitated by eclipses, went out and joined the tailors and the rest of them.

CHAPTER III. The Adventure of the Shopkeepers.

p. 48



Dick went on with his breakfast. He ate cold pastry, and poached eggs, and ham, and rolls, and raspberry jam, and hot cakes; and he drank two cups of coffee. Meanwhile the king had joined the tradesmen who attended by his orders. They were all met in the royal study, where the king made them a most splendid bow, and requested them to be seated. But they declined to sit in his sacred presence, and the king observed that, in that case he must stand up.

p. 49

"I have invited you here, gentlemen," he said, "on a matter of merely private importance, but I must request that you will be entirely silent as to the nature of your duties. It is difficult, I know, not to talk about one's work, but in this instance I am sure you will oblige me."

"Your Majesty has only to command," said Herr Schnipp. "There have been monarchs, in neighbouring kingdoms, who would have cut off all our heads after we had done a bit of secret business; but the merest word of your Majesty is law to your loving subjects."

The other merchants murmured assent, for King Prigio was really liked by his people. He was always good-tempered and polite. He never went to war with anybody. He spent most of the royal income on public objects, and of course there were scarcely any taxes to speak of. Moreover, he had abolished what is called compulsory education, or making everybody go to school whether he likes it or not; a most mischievous and tyrannical measure! "A fellow who can't teach himself to read," said the king, "is not worth teaching."

p. 50

For all these reasons, and because they were so fond of the queen, his subjects were ready to do anything in reason for King Prigio.

Only one tradesman, bowing very deep and blushing very much, said:

"Your Majesty, will you hear me for one moment?"

"For an hour, with pleasure, Herr Schmidt," said the monarch.

"It is an untradesman-like and an unusual thing to decline an order; and if your Majesty asked for my heart's blood, I am ready to shed it, not to speak of anything in the line of my business—namely, boot and shoe making. But keep a secret from my wife, I fairly own to your Majesty that I can *not*."

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Herr Schmidt went down on his knees and wept.



"Rise, Herr Schmidt," said the king, taking him by the hand. "A more honourable and chivalrous confession of an amiable weakness, if it is to be called a weakness, I never heard. Sir, you have been true to your honour and your prince, in face of what few men can bear, the chance of ridicule. There is no one here, I hope, but respects and will keep the secret of Herr Schmidt's confession?"

The assembled shopkeepers could scarcely refrain from tears.

"Long live King Prigio the Good!" they exclaimed, and vowed that everything should be kept

dark.

"Indeed, sire," said the swordmaker, "all the rest of us are bachelors."

"That is none the worse for my purpose gentlemen," said his Majesty; "but I trust that you will not long deprive me of sons and subjects worthy to succeed to such fathers. And now, if Herr Schmidt will kindly find his way to the buttery, where refreshments are ready, I shall have the pleasure of conducting you to the scene of your labours."

p. 54

Thus speaking, the king, with another magnificent bow, led the way upstairs to a little turret-room, in a deserted part of the palace. Bidding the tradesmen enter, he showed them a large collection of miscellaneous things: an old cap or two, a pair of boots of a sort long out of fashion, an old broadsword, a shabby old Persian rug, an ivory spy-glass, and other articles. These were, in fact, the fairy presents, which had been given to the king at his christening, and by aid of which (and his natural acuteness) he had, in his youth, succeeded in many remarkable adventures.

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The caps were the Wishing Cap and the Cap of Darkness. The rug was the famous carpet which carried its owner through the air wherever he wished to go. The sword was the Sword of Sharpness. The ivory glass showed you anyone you wanted to see, however far off. The boots were the Seven-league Boots, which Hop-o'-my-Thumb stole from the Ogre about 1697. There were other valuable objects, but these were the most useful and celebrated. Of course the king did not tell the tradesmen what they were.

"Now, gentlemen," said his Majesty, "you see these old things. For reasons which I must ask you to excuse me for keeping to myself, I wish you to provide me with objects exactly and precisely similar to these, with all the look of age."

The tradesmen examined the objects, each choosing that in his own line of business.

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"As to the sword, sire," said the cutler, "it is an Andrea Ferrara, a fine old blade. By a lucky accident, I happen to have one at home in a small collection of ancient weapons, exactly like it. This evening it shall be at your Majesty's disposal."

"Perhaps, Herr Schnitzler, you will kindly write an order for it, as I wish no one of you to leave the palace, if you can conveniently stay, till your business is finished."

"With pleasure, your Majesty," says the cutler.

"As to the old rug," said the upholsterer, "I have a Persian one quite identical with it at home, at your Majesty's service."

"Then you can do like Herr Schnitzler," who was the cutler.

"And I," said the hatter, "have two old caps just like these, part of a bankrupt theatrical stock."

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"We are most fortunate," said the king.

"The boots, now I come to think of it, are unimportant, at least for the present. Perhaps we can borrow a pair from the theatre."

"As for the glass," said the optician, "if your Majesty will allow me to take it home with me—"

"I am afraid I cannot part with it," said the king; "but that, too, is unimportant, or not very pressing."

Then he called for a servant, to order luncheon for the shopkeepers, and paper for them to write their orders on. But no one was within hearing, and in that very old part of the palace there were no bells.

"Just pardon me for an instant, while I run downstairs," said his Majesty; "and, it seems a strange thing to ask, but may I advise you not to sit down on that carpet? I have a reason for it."

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In fact, he was afraid that someone might sit down on it, and wish he was somewhere else, and be carried away, as was the nature of the carpet.

King Prigio was not absent a minute, for he met William on the stairs; but when he came back, there was not one single person in the turret-room!

"Where on earth are they?" cried the king, rushing through all the rooms in that part of the castle. He shouted for them, and looked everywhere; but there was not a trace of tailor, hatter, optician, swordmaker, upholsterer.

The king hastened to a window over the gate, and saw the sentinels on duty.

"Hi!" he called.

And the sentinels turned round, looked up, and saluted.

"Have you seen anyone go out?" he cried.

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"No one, sire," answered the soldiers.

The king, who began to guess what had happened, hurried back to the turret-room.

There were all the tradesmen with parcels under their arms.

“What means this, gentlemen?” said his Majesty, severely. “For what reason did you leave the room without my permission?”

They all knelt down, humbly imploring his compassion.

“Get up, you donkeys!” said the king, forgetting his politeness. “Get up, and tell me where you have been hiding yourselves.”

The hatter came forward, and said:

“Sire, you will not believe me; indeed, I can scarcely believe it myself!”

“Nor none of us can’t,” said the swordmaker. “We have been home, and brought the articles. All orders executed with punctuality and dispatch,” he added, quoting his own advertisement without thinking of it.

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On this the swordmaker took out and exhibited the Andrea Ferrara blade, which was exactly like the Sword of Sharpness.

The upholsterer undid his parcel, and there was a Persian rug, which no one could tell from the magical carpet.

The hatter was fumbling with the string of his parcel, when he suddenly remembered, what the king in his astonishment had not noticed, that he had a cap on himself. He pulled it off in a hurry, and the king at once saw that it was his *Wishing Cap*, and understood all about the affair. The hatter, in his absence, had tried on the *Wishing Cap*, and had wished that he himself and his friends were all at home and back again with their wares at the palace. And what he wished happened, of course, as was natural. In a moment the king saw how much talk this business would produce in the country, and he decided on the best way to stop it.

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Seizing the *Wishing Cap*, he put it on, wished all the tradesmen, including the shoemaker, back in the town at their shops, and also wished that none of them should remember anything about the whole affair.

In a moment he was alone in the turret-room. As for the shopkeepers, they had a kind of idea that they had dreamed something odd; but, as it went no further, of course they did not talk about it, and nobody was any the wiser.

“Owl that I am!” said King Prigio to himself. “I might have better wished for a complete set of sham fairy things which would not work. It would have saved a great deal of trouble; but I am so much out of the habit of using the cap, that I never thought of it. However, what I have got will do very well.”

Then, putting on the *Cap of Darkness*, that nobody might see him, he carried all the *real* fairy articles away, except the *Seven-league Boots*, to his own room, where he locked them up, leaving in their place the sham *Wishing Cap*, the sham *Cap of Darkness*, the sham *Sword of Sharpness*, and the carpet which was not a magic carpet at all.

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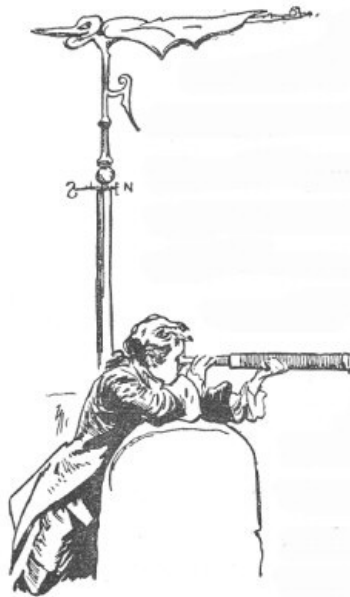
His idea was, of course, that Ricardo would start on an expedition confiding in his fairy things, and he would find that they did not act. Then he would be left to his own cleverness and courage to get him out of the scrape. That would teach him, thought the king, to depend on himself, and to set a proper value on cleverness and learning, and minding his book.

Of course he might have locked the things up, and forbidden Ricardo to touch them, but that might have seemed harsh. And, as you may easily imagine, with all the powers at his command, the king fancied he could easily rescue Ricardo from any very serious danger at the hands of giants or magicians or monsters. He only wanted to give him a fright or two, and make him respect the judgment of older and wiser people than himself.

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CHAPTER IV. Two Lectures.

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For several days Prince Ricardo minded his books, and, according to his tutors, made considerable progress in polite learning. Perhaps he ought not to be praised too highly for this, because, in fact, he saw no means of distinguishing himself by adventures just at that time. Every morning he would climb the turret and sweep the horizon, and even *much* beyond the horizon, with the ivory spy-glass. But look as he would, he saw no monsters preying on human-kind anywhere, nor princesses in distress. To be sure he saw plenty of poor people in distress, and, being a good-hearted, though careless, lad, Dick would occasionally fly off with the Purse of Fortunatus in his pocket, and give them as much money as they needed—it cost him nothing. But this was not the kind of adventure which he enjoyed. Dragons for his money!

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One day the Princess Jaqueline took a curious plan of showing Ricardo how little interest, after all, there is in performing the most wonderful exploits without any real difficulty or danger. They were drifting before a light breeze on a hill lake; Ricardo was fishing, and Jaqueline was sculling a stroke now and then, just to keep the boat right with the wind. Ricardo had very bad sport, when suddenly the trout began to rise all over the lake. Dick got excited, and stumbled about the boat from stern to bow, tripping over Jaqueline's feet, and nearly upsetting the vessel in his hurry to throw his flies over every trout he saw feeding.

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But, as too often occurs, they were taking one particular fly which was on the water, and would look at nothing else.

"Oh, bother them!" cried Ricardo. "I can't find a fly in my book in the least like that little black one they are feeding on!"

He tried half-a-dozen different fly-hooks, but all to no purpose; he lost his temper, got his tackle entangled in Jaqueline's hair and then in the landing-net; and, though such a big boy, he was nearly crying with vexation.

The Princess Jaqueline, with great pains and patience, disentangled the casting line, first from her hair, which Ricardo was anxious to cut (the great stupid oaf,—her pretty hair!) then from the landing-net; but Dick had grown sulky.

"It's no use," he said; "I have not a fly that will suit. Let's go home," and he threw a tin can at a rising trout.

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"Now, Dick," said Jaqueline, "you know I can help you. I did not learn magic for nothing. Just you look the other way for a minute or two, and you will find the right fly at the end of your line."

Dick turned his head away (it is not proper to look on at magical arts), and then in a moment, saw

the right hook on his cast; but Jaqueline was not in the boat. She had turned herself into an artificial fly (a small black gnat), and Dick might set to his sport again.

"What a trump that girl is," he said aloud. "Clever, too!" and he began casting. He got a trout every cast, great big ones, over a pound, and soon he had a basketful. But he began to feel rather bored.

"There's not much fun taking them," he said, "when they are so silly."

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At that very moment he noticed that the fly was off his cast, and Jaqueline was sitting at the oars.

"You see, Ricardo," she said, "I was right after all. There is not much pleasure in sport that is easy and certain. Now, apply this moral to dragon-killing with magic instruments. It may be useful when one is obliged to defend oneself, but surely a prince ought not to give his whole time to nothing else!"

Dick had no answer ready, so he only grumbled:

"You're always preaching at me, Jack; everybody always is. I seem to have been born just to be preached at."

Some people are; and it does grow rather tedious in the long run. But perhaps what Jaqueline said may have made some impression on Ricardo, for he stuck to his books for weeks, and was got into decimal fractions and Euclid.

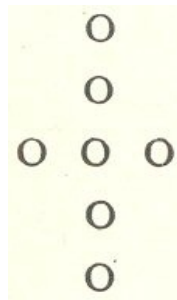
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All this, of course, pleased the king very much, and he began to entertain hopes of Ricardo's becoming a wise and learned prince, and a credit to his illustrious family.

Things were not always to go smoothly, far from it; and it was poor Jaqueline who fell into trouble next. She had been very ready to lecture Dick, as we saw, and took a good deal of credit to herself for his steadiness. But one day King Prigio happened to meet Jaqueline's maid, Rosina, on the stairs; and as Rosina was a pretty girl, and the king was always kind to his dependents, he stopped to have a chat with her.

"Why, Rosina, what a pretty little silver cross you are wearing," he said, and he lifted a curious ornament which hung from a chain on Rosina's neck. It consisted of seven drops of silver, set like this:

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"May I look at it?" his Majesty asked, and Rosina, all in a flutter, took it off and gave it to him. "H'm!" said the king. "Very curious and pretty! May I ask you where you got this, Rosina?"



Now Rosina generally had her answer ready, and I am very sorry to say that she did not always speak the truth when she could think of anything better. On this occasion she was anxious to think of something better, for fear of getting Jaqueline into a scrape about the chemical experiment in her bedroom. But Rosina was fluttered, as we said, by the royal kindness, and she

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could think of nothing but to curtsy, and say:

"Please, your Majesty, the princess gave me the drops."

"Very interesting," said the king. "There is a little white moon shining in each of them! I wonder if they shine in the dark?"

He opened the door of a cupboard which had no windows, where the housemaid kept her mops and brooms, and shut himself in. Yes, there was no mistake; the darkness was quite lighted up with the sheen of the seven little moons in the silver. The king looked rather grave.

"If you can trust me with this cross till to-morrow, Rosina, I should like to have it examined and analysed. This is no common silver."

Of course Rosina could only curtsy, but she was very much alarmed about the consequences to her mistress.

After luncheon, the king asked Jaqueline to come into his study, as he often did, to help him with his letters. When they had sat down his Majesty said:

"My dear Jaqueline, I never interfere with your pursuits, but I almost doubt whether *Cornelius Agrippa* is a good book for a very young lady to read. The Fairy Paribanou, I am sure, taught you nothing beyond the ordinary magical accomplishments suited to your rank; but there are a great many things in the *Cornelius* which I think you should not study till you are older and wiser."

"What does your Majesty mean?" said poor Jaqueline, feeling very uncomfortable; for the king had never lectured her before.

"Why," said his Majesty, taking the silver cross out of his pocket, "did you not give this to Rosina?"

"Yes, sire, I did give her the drops. She had them made up herself."

"Then give it back to her when you see her next. I am glad you are frank, Jaqueline. And you know, of course, that the drops are not ordinary silver? They are moon silver, and that can only be got in one way, so far as I know, at least—when one spills the water when he, or she, is drinking the moon. Now, there is only one book which tells how that can be done, and there is only one reason for doing it; namely, to find out what is some other person's secret. I shall not ask you *whose* secret you wanted to find out, but I must request you never to do such a thing again without consulting me. You can have no reason for it, such as a great king might have whose enemies are plotting against his country."

"Oh, sire, I will tell you everything!" cried Jaqueline.

"No, don't; I don't want to know. I am sure you will make no use of your information which you think I should not approve of. But there is another thing—that eclipse of the moon! Oh, Jaqueline, was it honourable, or fair to the astronomers and men of science, to say nothing about it? Their European reputations are seriously injured."

Poor Jaqueline could only cry.

"Never mind," said his Majesty, comforting her. "There is no great harm done yet, and perhaps they would not believe you if you did explain; but just think, if some people ceased to believe in Science, what would they have left to believe in? But you are young, of course, and cannot be expected to think of everything."

"I never thought about it at all," wept Jaqueline.

"'Evil is wrought by want of thought,'" said the king, quoting the poet. "Now run away, dry your tears, and I think you had better bring me that book, and I'll put it back in one of the locked-up shelves. Later, when you are older, we shall see about it."

The princess flew to her room, and returned with her book. And the king kissed her, and told her to go and see if her Majesty meant to take a drive.

"I'll never deceive him again, never . . . unless it is *quite* necessary," said the princess to herself. "Indeed, it is not so easy to deceive the king. What a lot he has read!"

In fact, King Prigio had been very studious when a young man, before he came to the throne.

"Poor child!" thought the king. "No doubt she was trying her fortune, wondering if Ricardo cares for her a little. Of course I could not let her tell me *that*, poor child!"

In this guess, as we know, his Majesty was mistaken, which seldom happened to him.

"I wonder who she is?" the king went on speaking to himself. "That great booby, Ricardo, saved her from wild birds, which were just going to eat her. She was fastened to a mountain top, but *where?* that's the question. Ricardo never has any notion of geography. It was across the sea, he noticed *that*; but which sea,—Atlantic, Pacific, the Black Sea, the Caspian, the Sea of Marmora, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, the German Ocean, the Mediterranean? Her ornaments were very peculiar; there was a broad gold sun on her breast. I must look at them again some day. She said she was being sacrificed to wild birds (which her people worshipped), because there was some famine, or war, or trouble in the country. She said she was a Daughter of the Sun; but

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that, of course, is absurd, unless—By Jove! I believe I have it,” said the king, and he went into the royal library and was looking for some old Spanish book, when his secretary came and said that the Russian Ambassador was waiting for an interview with his Majesty.

“Dismal old Muscovite!” sighed the king. “A monarch has not a moment to himself for his private studies. Ah, Prigio! why wert thou not born to a private station? But Duty before everything,” and wreathing his royal countenance in smiles, his Majesty prepared to give Count Snoreonski an audience.

It was all about the attitude of Pantouflia in the event of a Polish invasion of Russia. The king reassured Count Snoreonski, affirming that Pantouflia, while deeply regretting the disturbed relations between two States in whose welfare she was deeply interested, would ever preserve an attitude of benevolent neutrality, unless her own interests were threatened. p. 82

“I may give your message to my august mistress, the Czarina?” said the ambassador.

“By all means, adding an expression of my tender interest in her Majesty’s health and welfare,” said the king, presenting the count at the same time with a magnificent diamond snuffbox containing his portrait.

The old count was affected to tears, and withdrew, while King Prigio said:

“I have not lost a day; I have made an amiable but very stupid man happy.”

Such are, or rather such were, the toils of monarchs!

CHAPTER V. Prince Ricardo Crosses the Path of History.

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“I say, Jack,” said Prince Ricardo one morning, “here’s a queer letter for me!”

King Prigio had gone to a distant part of his dominions, on business of importance, and the young people were sitting in the royal study. The letter, which Ricardo handed to Jaqueline, was written on a great broad sheet of paper, folded up without any envelope, as was the custom then, and was sealed with a huge seal in red wax. p. 84

“I don’t know the arms,” Ricardo said.

“Oh, Ricardo, how you *do* neglect your Heraldry! Old Green Stocking is in despair over your ignorance.”

Now Green Stocking was the chief herald of Pantouflia, just like Blue Mantle in England.

“Why, these are the Royal Arms of England, you great ignorant Dick!”

“But Rome isn’t in England, is it?—and the post-mark is ‘Roma’: that’s Rome in some lingo, I expect. It is in Latin, anyhow, I know. *Mortuus est Romæ*—‘He died at Rome.’ It’s in the Latin Grammar. Let’s see what the fellow says, anyhow,” added Ricardo, breaking the seal.

“He begins, ‘Prins and dear Cousin!’ I say, Jaqueline, he spells it ‘Prins;’ now it is P-R-I-N-C-E. He *must* be an ignorant fellow!”

"People in glass houses should not throw stones, Dick," said Jaqueline.

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"He signs himself 'Charles, P. W.,'" said Ricardo, looking at the end. "Who on earth can he be? Why does he not put 'P. W. Charles,' if these are his initials? Look here, it's rather a long letter; you might read it to us, Jack!"

The princess took the epistle and began:

"How nice it smells, all scented! The paper is gilt-edged, too."

"Luxurious beggar, whoever he is," said Ricardo.

"Well, he says: 'Prins and dear Cousin,—You and me' (oh, what grammar!) 'are much the same age, I being fifteen next birthday, and we should be better *ackwainted*. All the world has herd of the fame of Prins Ricardo, whose name is *feerd*, and his *sord* dreded, wherever there are Monsters and Tirants. Prins, you may be less well informed about my situation. I have not killed any Dragguns, there being nun of them here; but I have been *under fiar*, at Gaeta.' Where's Gaeta, Dick?"

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"Never heard of it," said Ricardo.

"Well, it is in Italy, and it was besieged lately. He goes on: 'and I am told that I did not misbehave myself, nor disgrace *the blud of Bruce*.'"

"I've heard of Robert Bruce," said Dick; "he was the man who did not kill the spider, but he cracked the head of Sir Harry Bohun with one whack of his axe. I remember *him* well enough."

"Well, your correspondent seems to be a descendant of his."

"That's getting more interesting," said Dick. "I wish my father would go to war with somebody. With the Sword of Sharpness I'd make the enemy whistle! Drive on, Jack."

"As a prins in distress, I apeal to your valler, so renouned in Europe. I am kept out of my own; my royal father, King Gems,'—well, this is the worst spelling I ever saw in my life! He means King *James*,—'my royal father, King Gems, being druv into exile by a crewl Usurper, the Elector of Hannover. King Gems is *old*, and likes a quiet life; but I am determind to make an effort, if I go alone, and Europe shall here of Prince Charles. Having heard—as who has not?—of your royal Highness's courage and sordsmanship, I throw myself at your feet, and implore you to asist a prins in distres. Let our sords be drawn together in the caus of freedom and an outraged country, my own.

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"I remain,
"Prins and dear Cuzen,
"CHARLES, P. W."

"P. W. means Prince of Wales," added Jaqueline. "He is turned out of England you know, and lives at Rome with his father."

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"I like that chap," said Prince Ricardo. "He does not spell very well, as you say, but I sometimes make mistakes myself; and I like his spirit. I've been looking out for an adventure; but the big game is getting shy, and my sword rusts in his scabbard. I'll tell you what, Jack—I've an idea! I'll put him on the throne of his fathers; it's as easy as shelling peas: and as for that other fellow, the Elector, I'll send him back to Hanover, wherever that may be, and he can go on electing, and polling his vote in peace and quietness, at home. Just wait till I spot the places."

The prince ran up to the turret, fetched the magic spy-glass, and looked up London, Rome, and Hanover, as you would in a map.

"Well, Dick, but how do you mean to do it?"

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"Do it?—nothing simpler! I just take my Seven-league Boots, run over to Rome, pick up Prince Charles, put him on the magic carpet, fly to London, clap the Cap of Darkness on him so that nobody can see him, set him down on the throne of his fathers; pick up the Elector, carry him over to his beloved Hanover, and the trick is done—what they call a bloodless revolution in the history books."

"But if the English don't like Prince Charles when they get him?"

"Like him? they're sure to like him, a young fellow like that! Besides, I'll take the sword with me in case of accidents."

"But, Dick, it is your father's rule that you are never to meddle in the affairs of other countries, and never to start on an expedition when he is not at home."

"Oh, he won't mind this time! There's no kind of danger; and I'm sure he will approve of the *principle* of the thing. Kings must stick up for each other. Why, some electing characters might come here and kick *us* out!"

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"Your father is not the sort of king who is kicked out," said Jaqueline.

But there was no use in talking to Dick. He made his simple preparations, and announced that he would be back in time for luncheon.

What was poor Jaqueline to do? She was extremely anxious. She knew, as we saw, what King Prigio had intended about changing the fairy things for others that would not work. She was certain Dick would get himself into a scrape; how was she to help him? She made up her mind quickly, while Dick was putting his things together. She told the queen (it was the nearest to the truth she could think of) that she "was going for a turn with Dick." Then she changed herself into a mosquito—a kind of gnat that bites—and hid herself under a fold of Dick's coat. Of course he knew nothing about her being there. Then he started off in his Seven-league Boots, and before you could say "Jack Robinson" he was in Rome, in the grounds of a splendid palace called the Villa Borghese.

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There he saw an elderly gentleman, in a great curled wig, sound asleep on a seat beneath a tree. The old gentleman had a long, pale, melancholy face, and across his breast was a broad blue ribbon with a star. Ah! how changed was King James from the handsome Prince who had loved fair Beatrix Esmond, thirty years ago! Near him were two boys, not quite so old as Prince Ricardo. The younger was a pretty dark boy, with a funny little roundabout white wig. He was splendidly dressed in a light-blue silk coat; a delicate little lace scarf was tied round his neck; he had lace ruffles falling about his little ringed hands; he had a pretty sword, with a gold handle set with diamonds—in fact, he was the picture of a little dandy. The other lad had a broad Scotch bonnet on, and no wig; beautiful silky yellow locks fell about his shoulders. He had laid his sword on the grass. He was dressed in tartan, which Ricardo had never seen before; and he wore a kilt, which was also new to Ricardo, who wondered at his bare legs—for he was wearing shoes with no stockings. In his hand he held a curious club, with a long, slim handle, and a head made heavy with lead, and defended with horn. With this he was aiming at a little white ball; and suddenly he swung up the club and sent the ball out of sight in the air, over several trees.

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Prince Ricardo stepped up to this boy, took off his cap, and said:

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"I think I have the honour of addressing the Prince of Wales?"

Prince Charles started at the sight of a gentleman in long riding-boots, girt with a broadsword, which was not then generally worn, and carrying a Persian rug under his arm.

"That is what I am called, sir," he said, "by those who give me the title which is mine by right. May I inquire the reason which offers me the pleasure of this unexpected interview?"

"Oh, I'm Ricardo of Pantouflia!" says Dick. "I had a letter from you this morning, and I believe you wanted to see me."

"From Pantouflia, sir," said Prince Charles; "why, that is hundreds of leagues away!"

"It is a good distance," said Dick; "but a mere step when you wear Seven-league Boots like mine."

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"My dear prince," said Charles, throwing himself into his arms with rapture, and kissing him in the Italian fashion, which Dick did not half like, "you are, indeed, worthy of your reputation; and these are the celebrated Seven-league Boots? Harry," he cried to his brother, "come here at once and let me present you to his Royal Highness, our illustrious ally, Prince Ricardo of Pantouflia. The Duke of York—Prince Ricardo of Pantouflia. Gentlemen, know each other!"

The prince bowed in the most stately manner.

"I say," said Dick, who was seldom at all up to the standard of royal conversation, "what's that game you were playing? It's new to me. You sent the ball a tremendous long shot."

"The game is called golf, and is the favourite pastime of my loyal Scottish subjects," said Prince Charles. "For that reason, that I may be able to share the amusements of my people, whom I soon hope to lead to a glorious victory, followed by a peaceful and prosperous reign, I am acquiring a difficult art. I'm practising walking without stockings, too, to harden my feet," he said, in a more familiar tone of voice. "I fancy there are plenty of long marches before me, and I would not be a spear's length behind the hardiest Highlander."

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"By Jove! I respect you," said Dick, with the greatest sincerity; "but I don't think, with me on your side, you will need to make many marches. It will all be plain sailing."

"Pray explain your plan," said Prince Charles. "The task of conquering back the throne of my fathers is not so simple as you seem to suppose."

"I've done a good many difficult things," said Dick, modestly.

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"The conqueror of the magician, Gorgonzola, and the Giant Who never Knew when he had Enough, need not tell me that," said Prince Charles, with a courteous allusion to two of Ricardo's most prodigious adventures.

"Oh! I've very little to be proud of, really," said Dick, blushing; "anyone could do as much with my fairy things, of which, no doubt, you have heard. With a Sword of Sharpness and a Cap of Darkness, and so forth, you have a great pull over almost anything."

"And you really possess those talismans?" said the prince.

"Certainly I do. You see how short a time I took in coming to your call from Pantouflia."

"And has Holy Church," asked the Duke of York, with anxiety, "given her sanction and her blessing to those instruments of an art, usually, in her wisdom, forbidden?"

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"Oh, never mind Holy Church, Harry!" said Prince Charles. "This is *business*. Besides, the English are Protestants."

"I pray for their conversion daily," said the Duke of York.

"The end justifies the means, you know," answered Prince Charles. "All's fair in love and war."

"I should think so," said Ricardo, "especially against those brutes of Electors; they give trouble at home sometimes."

"You, too, are plagued with an Elector?" asked Prince Charles.

"An Elector? thousands of them!" answered Dick, who never could understand anything about politics.

Prince Charles looked puzzled, but requested Dick to explain his great plan.

They sat down on the grass, and Ricardo showed them how he meant to manage it, just as he had told Jaqueline. As he said, nothing could be simpler. p. 98

"Let's start at once," he said, and, inducing Prince Charles to sit down on the magic carpet, he cried:

"England! St. James's Palace!"

But nothing happened!

The carpet was not the right magic carpet, but the one which King Prigio had put in its place.

"Get on! England, I said!" cried Dick.

But there they remained, under the chestnut tree, sitting on the carpet above the flowery grass.



Prince Charles leaped to his feet; his face like fire, his eyes glowing.

"Enough of this fooling, sir!" he said. "It is easy, but cowardly, to mock at an unfortunate prince. Take your carpet and be off with you, out of the gardens, or your shoulders shall taste my club." p. 101

"There has been some mistake," Ricardo said; "the wrong carpet has been brought by accident, or the carpet has lost its power."

"In this sacred city, blessed by the presence of his Holiness the Pope, and the relics of so many martyrs and saints, magic may well cease to be potent," said the Duke of York.

"Nonsense! You are an impostor, sir! Leave my presence!" cried Prince Charles, lifting his golf-club.

Dick caught it out of his hand, and broke across his knee as fine a driver as ever came from Robertson's shop at St. Andrew's.

"The quarrels of princes are not settled with clubs, sir! Draw and defend yourself!" he said, kicking off his boots and standing in his socks on the grass.

Think of the horror of poor Jaqueline, who witnessed this terrible scene of passion from a fold in Prince Ricardo's dress! What could the girl do to save the life of two princes, the hopes of one nation, and of a respectable minority in another? p. 102

In a moment Prince Charles's rapier was shining in the sunlight, and he fell on guard in the most elegant attitude, his left hand gracefully raised and curved.

Dick drew his sword, but, as suddenly, threw it down again.

"Hang it!" he exclaimed, "I can't hit you with *this*! This is the Sword of Sharpness; it would cut through your steel and your neck at a touch."

He paused, and thought.

"Let me beseech your Royal Highness," he said to the Duke of York, who was in a terrible taking,

“to lend your blade to a hand not less royal than your own.”

“Give him it, Hal!” said Prince Charles, who was standing with the point of his sword on the ground, and the blade bent. “He seems to believe in his own nonsense.”

p. 103

The duke yielded his sword; Dick took it, made a flourish, and rushed at Prince Charles.

Now Ricardo had always neglected his fencing lessons. “Where’s the good of it,” he used to ask, “all that stamping, and posture-making, and ha-ha-ing? The Sword of Sharpness is enough for *me*.”

But now he could not, in honour, use the Sword of Sharpness; so on he came, waving the rapier like a claymore, and made a slice at Prince Charles’s head.

The prince, very much surprised, parried in prime, riposted, and touched Dick on the hand.

At this moment the Princess Jaqueline did what she should have thought of sooner. She flew out of Dick’s coat, and stung old King James on his royal nose. The king wakened, nearly crushed the princess (so dangerous is the practice of magic to the artist), and then leaped up, and saw Dick’s blade flying through the air, glittering in the sun. The prince had disarmed him.

p. 104

“Hullo! what’s all this? *À moi, mes gardes!*” cried the old king, in French and English; and then he ran up, just in time to hear Prince Charles say:

“Sir, take your life! I cannot strike an unarmed man. A prince you may be, but you have not learned the exercises of gentlemen.”

“What is all this, Carluccio?” asked the old king. “Swords out! brawling in my very presence! blood drawn!” for Dick’s hand was bleeding a good deal.

Prince Charles, as briefly as possible, explained the unusual nature of the circumstances.

“A king must hear both sides,” said King James. “What reply have you, sir, to make to his Royal Highness’s statements?”

p. 105

“The carpet would not work, sir,” said Dick. “It never happened before. Had I used my own sword,” and he explained its properties, “the Prince of Wales would not be alive to tell his story. I can say no more, beyond offering my apology for a disappointment which I could not have foreseen. A gentleman can only say that he is sorry. But wait!” he added; “I can at least prove that my confidence in some of my resources is not misplaced. Bid me bring you something—anything—from the ends of the earth, and it shall be in your hands. I can’t say fairer.”

King James reflected, while Prince Ricardo was pulling on the Seven-league Boots, which he had kicked off to fight more freely, and while the Duke of York bandaged Dick’s hand with a kerchief.

“Bring me,” said his Majesty, “Lord Lovat’s snuff-mull.”

p. 106

“Where does he live?” said Dick.

“At Gortuleg, in Scotland,” answered King James.

Dick was out of sight before the words were fairly spoken, and in ten minutes was back, bearing a large ram’s-horn snuff-box, with a big cairngorm set in the top, and the Frazer arms.

“Most astonishing!” said King James.

“A miracle!” said the Duke of York.

“You have entirely cleared your character,” said the king. “Your honour is without a stain, though it is a pity about the carpet. Your nobility in not using your magical sword, under the greatest provocation, reconciles me to this fresh blighting of my hopes. All my allies fail me,” said the poor king with a sigh; “you alone have failed with honour. Carluccio, embrace the prince!”

They fell into each other’s arms.

p. 107

“Prince,” said Dick, “you have taught me a lesson for which I shall not be ungrateful. With any blade a gentleman should be able to hold his own in fair fight. I shall no longer neglect my fencing lessons.”

“With any blade,” said Prince Charles, “I shall be happy to find Prince Ricardo by my side in a stricken field. We shall not part till I have induced you to accept a sword which I can never hope to draw against another adversary so noble. In war, my weapon is the claymore.”

Here the prince offered to Ricardo the ruby-studded hilt of his rapier, which had a beautiful white shark-skin sheath.

“You must accept it, sir,” said King James; “the hilt holds the rubies of John Sobieski.”

“Thank you, prince,” said Ricardo, “for the weapon, which I shall learn to wield; and I entreat you to honour me by receiving this fairy gift—which *you* do not need—a ring which makes all men faithful to the wearer.”

p. 108

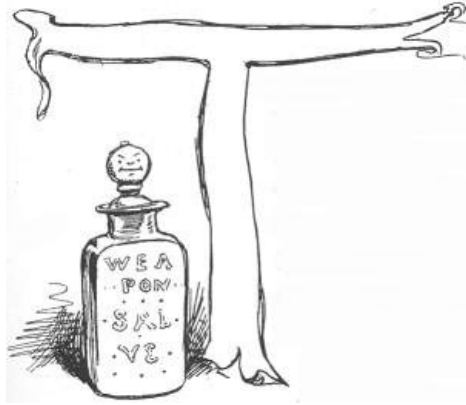
The Prince of Wales bowed, and placed the talisman on his finger.

Ricardo then, after a few words of courtesy on both parts, picked up his useless carpet, took his farewell of the royal party, and, with Jaqueline still hidden under his collar, returned at full speed, but with a heavy heart, to Pantouflia, where the palace gong was just sounding for luncheon.

Ricardo never interfered in foreign affairs again, but his ring proved very useful to Prince Charles, as you may have read in history.

CHAPTER VI. Ricardo's Repentance.

p. 109



The queen, as it happened fortunately, was lunching with one of the ladies of her Court. Ricardo did not come down to luncheon, and Jaqueline ate hers alone; and very mournful she felt. The prince had certainly not come well out of the adventure. He had failed (as all attempts to restore the Stuarts always did); he had been wounded, though he had never received a scratch in any of his earlier exploits; and if his honour was safe, and his good intentions fully understood, that was chiefly due to Jaqueline, and to the generosity of King James and Prince Charles.

p. 110

"I wonder what he's doing?" she said to herself, and at last she went up and knocked at Ricardo's door.

"Go away," he said; "I don't want to see anybody. Who is it?"

"It's only me—Jaqueline."



"Go away! I want nobody."

"Do let me in, dear Dick; I have good news for you," said the princess.

"What is it?" said Ricardo, unlocking the door. "Why do you bother a fellow so?"

He had been crying—his hand obviously hurt him badly; he looked, and indeed he was, very sulky.

"How did you get on in England, Dick?" asked the princess, taking no notice of his bandaged hand.

p. 113

"Oh, don't ask me!" said Ricardo. "I've not been to England at all."

"Why, what happened?"

"Everything that is horrid happened," said Dick; and then, unable to keep it any longer to himself, he said: "I've failed to keep my promise; I've been insulted, I've been beaten by a fellow younger than myself; and, oh! how my hand does hurt, and I've got such a headache! And what am I to say to my mother when she asks why my arm is in a sling? and what will my father say? I'm quite broken down and desperate. I think I'll run away to sea;" and indeed he looked very wild and miserable.

"Tell me how it all happened, Dick," said the princess; "I'm sure it's not so bad as you make out. Perhaps I can help you." p. 114

"How can a girl help a man?" cried Dick, angrily; and poor Jaqueline, remembering how she *had* helped him, at the risk of her own life, when King James nearly crushed her in the shape of a mosquito, turned her head away, and cried silently.

"I'm a beast," said Dick. "I beg your pardon, Jack dear. You are always a trump, I will say; but I don't see what you can do."

Then he told her all the story (which, of course, she knew perfectly well already), except the part played by the mosquito, of which he could not be aware.

"I was sure it was not so bad as you made it out, Dick," she said. "You see, the old king, who is not very wise, but is a perfectly honourable gentleman, gave you the highest praise." She thought of lecturing him a little about disobeying his father, but it did not seem a good opportunity. Besides, Jaqueline had been lectured herself lately, and had not enjoyed it. p. 115

"What am I to say to my mother?" Dick repeated.

"We must think of something to say," said Jaqueline.

"I can't tell my mother anything but the truth," Ricardo went on. "Here's my hand, how it does sting! and she must find out."

"I think I can cure it," said Jaqueline. "Didn't you say Prince Charles gave you his own sword?"

"Yes, there it is; but what has that to do with it?"

"Everything in the world to do with it, my dear Dick. How lucky it is that he gave it to you!"

And she ran to her own room, and brought a beautiful golden casket, which contained her medicines. p. 116

Taking out a small phial, marked (in letters of emerald):

"WEAPON SALVE,"

the princess drew the bright sword, extracted a little of the ointment from the phial, and spread it on a soft silk handkerchief.

"What are you going to do with the sword?" asked Ricardo.

"Polish it a little," said Jaqueline, smiling, and she began gently to rub, with the salve, the point of the rapier.

As she did so, Ricardo's arm ceased to hurt, and the look of pain passed from his mouth.

"Why, I feel quite better!" he said. "I can use my hand as well as ever."

Then he took off the stained handkerchief, and, lo, there was not even a mark where the wound had been! For this was the famous Weapon Salve which you may read about in Sir Kenelm Digby, and which the Lady of Branhholme used, in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. But the secret of making it has long been lost, except in Pantouflia. p. 117

"You are the best girl in the world, Jaqueline," said Ricardo. "You may give me a kiss if you like; and I won't call you 'Jack,' or laugh at you for reading books, any more. There's something in books after all."

The princess did not take advantage of Dick's permission, but advised him to lie down and try to sleep.

"I say, though," he said, "what about my father?"

"The king need never be told anything about it," said Jaqueline, "need he?"

"Oh, that won't do! I tell my father everything; but then, I never had anything like this to tell him before. Don't you think, Jaqueline, you might break it to him? He's very fond of you. Just tell him what I told you; it's every word of it true, and he ought to know. He might see something about it in the *Mercure de France*." p. 118

This was the newspaper of the period.

"I don't think it will get into the papers," said Jaqueline, smiling. "Nobody could tell, except the king and the princes, and they have reasons for keeping it to themselves."

"I don't trust that younger one," said Dick, moodily; "I don't care for that young man. Anyway, my father *must* be told; and, if you won't, I must."

"Well, I'll tell him," said Jaqueline. "And now lie down till evening."

After dinner, in the conservatory, Jaqueline told King Prigio all about it.

His Majesty was very much moved.

"What extraordinary bad luck that family has!" he thought. "If I had not changed the rug, the merest accident, Prince Charles would have dined at St. James's to-night, and King George in Hanover. It was the very nearest thing!"

p. 119

"This meddling with practical affairs will never do," he said aloud.

"Dick has had a lesson, sire," said the princess. "He says he'll never mix himself up with politics again, whatever happens. And he says he means to study all about them, for he feels frightfully ignorant, and, above all, he means to practise his fencing."

These remarks were not part of the conversation between Ricardo and Jaqueline, but she considered that Dick *meant* all this, and, really, he did.

"That is well, as far as it goes," said the king. "But, Jaqueline, about that mosquito?" for she had told him this part of the adventure. "That was a very convenient mosquito, though I don't know how Dick was able to observe it from any distance. I see *your* hand in that, my dear, and I am glad you can make such kind and wise use of the lessons of the good Fairy Paribanou. Jaqueline," he added solemnly, laying his hand on her head, "You have saved the honour of Pantouflia, which is dearer to me than life. Without your help, I tremble to think what might have occurred."

p. 120

The princess blushed very much, and felt very happy.

"Now run away to the queen, my dear," said his Majesty, "I want to think things over."

He did think them over, and the more he thought the more he felt the inconvenience attending the possession of fairy things.

"An eclipse one day, as nearly as possible a revolution soon after!" he said to himself. "But for Jaqueline, Ricardo's conduct would have been blazed abroad, England would have been irritated. It is true she cannot get at Pantouflia very easily; we have no sea-coast, and we are surrounded by friendly countries. But it would have been a ticklish and discreditable position. I must really speak to Dick," which he did next morning after breakfast.

p. 121

"You have broken my rules, Ricardo," he said. "True, there is no great harm done, and you have confessed frankly; but how am I to trust you any longer?"

"I'll give you my sacred word of honour, father, that I'll never meddle with politics again, or start on an expedition, without telling you. I have had enough of it. And I'll turn over a new leaf. I've learned to be ashamed of my ignorance; and I've sent for Francalanza, and I'll fence every day, and read like anything."

"Very good," said the king. "I believe you mean what you say. Now go to your fencing lesson."

p. 122

"But, I say, father," cried Ricardo, "was it not strange about the magic carpet?"

"I told you not to trust to these things," said the king. "Some enchanter may have deprived it of its power, it may be worn out, someone may have substituted a common Persian rug; anything may happen. You *must* learn to depend on yourself. Now, be off with you, I'm busy. And remember, you don't stir without my permission."

The prince ran off, and presently the sounds of stamping feet and "*un, deux; doublez, dégagez, vite; contre de carte,*" and so forth, might be heard over a great part of the royal establishment.

CHAPTER VII. Prince Ricardo and an Old Enemy.

p. 123



"There is one brute I wish I could get upsides with," said Ricardo, at breakfast one morning, his mouth full of sardine.

"Really, Ricardo, your language is most unprincely," said his august father; "I am always noticing it. You mean, I suppose, that there is one enemy of the human race whom you wish to abolish. What is the name of the doomed foe?"

p. 124

"Well, he is the greatest villain in history," said Ricardo. "You must have read about him, sir, the Yellow Dwarf."

"Yes, I have certainly studied what is told us about him," said the king. "He is no favourite of mine."

"He is the only one, if you notice, sir, of all the scoundrels about whom our ancestors inform us, who escaped the doom which he richly merited at the sword of a good knight."

You may here remark that, since Dick took to his studies, he could speak, when he chose, like a printed book, which was by no means the case before.

"If you remember, sir, he polished off—I mean, he slew—the King of the Golden Mines and the beautiful, though frivolous, Princess Frutilla. All that the friendly Mermaid could do for them was to turn them into a pair of beautiful trees which intertwine their branches. Not much use in *that*, sir! And nothing was done to the scoundrel. He may be going on still; and, with your leave, I'll go and try a sword-thrust with him. Francalanza says I'm improving uncommon."

p. 125

"You'll take the usual Sword of Sharpness," said his Majesty.

"What, sir, to a dwarf? Not I, indeed: a common small sword is good enough to settle *him*."

"They say he is very cunning of fence," said the king; "and besides, I have heard something of a diamond sword that he stole from the King of the Golden Mines."

"Very likely he has lost it or sold it, the shabby little miscreant; however, I'll risk it. And now I must make my preparations."

The king did not ask what they were; as a rule, they were simple. But, being in the shop of the optician that day, standing with his back to the door, he heard Dick come in and order a pair of rose-coloured spectacles, with which he was at once provided. The people of Pantouflia were accustomed to wear them, saying that they improved the complexions of ladies whom they met, and added cheerfulness to things in general.

p. 126

"Just plain rose-coloured glass, Herr Spex," said Dick, "I'm not short-sighted."

"The boy is beginning to show some sense," said the king to himself, knowing the nature and the difficulties of the expedition.

Ricardo did not disguise his intention of taking with him a Dandie Dinmont terrier, named Pepper, and the king, who understood the motive of this precaution, silently approved.

"The lad has come to some purpose and forethought," the king said, and he gladly advanced a considerable sum for the purchase of crocodiles' eggs, which can rarely be got quite fresh. When Jaqueline had made the crocodiles' eggs, with millet-seed and sugar-candy, into a cake for the Dwarf's lions, Ricardo announced that his preparations were complete.

p. 127

Not to be the mere slave of custom, he made this expedition on horseback, and the only magical thing he took with him was the Cap of Darkness (the one which would not work, but he did not know that), and this he put in his pocket for future use. With plenty of egg sandwiches and marmalade sandwiches, and cold minced-collop sandwiches, he *pricked forth* into the wilderness, making for the country inhabited by the Yellow Dwarf. The princess was glad he was riding, for

she privately accompanied him in the disguise of a wasp; and a wasp, of course, could not have kept up with him in his Seven-league Boots.

p. 128

“Hang that wops!” said Prince Ricardo several times, buffeting it with his pocket-handkerchief when it buzzed in his ear and round his horse’s head.



Meanwhile, King Prigio had taken his precautions, which were perfectly simple. When he thought Ricardo was getting near the place, the king put on his Wishing Cap, sat down before the magic crystal ball, and kept his eye on the proceedings, being ready to wish the right thing to help Ricardo at the right moment. He left the window wide open, smoked his cigar, and seemed the pattern of a good and wise father watching the conduct of a promising son.

The prince rode and rode, sometimes taking up Pepper on his saddle; passing through forests, sleeping at lonely inns, fording rivers, till one day he saw that the air was becoming Yellow. He knew that this showed the neighbourhood of Jaunia, or Daunia, the country of the Yellow Dwarf. He therefore drew bridle, placed his rose-coloured spectacles on his nose and put spurs to his horse, for the yellow light of Jaunia makes people melancholy and cowardly. As he pricked on, his horse stumbled and nearly came on its nose. The prince noticed that a steel chain had been drawn across the road.

p. 131

“What caitiff has dared!” he exclaimed, when his hat was knocked off by a well-aimed orange from a neighbouring orange-tree, and a vulgar voice squeaked:

“Hi, Blinkers!”

There was the Yellow Dwarf, an odious little figure, sitting sucking an orange in the tree, swinging his wooden shoes, and grinning all over his wrinkled face.

“Well, young Blinkers!” said the Dwarf, “what are you doing on my grounds? You’re a prince, by your look. Yah! down with kings! I’m a man of the people!”

p. 132

“You’re a dwarf of the worst description, that’s what *you* are,” said Ricardo; “and let me catch you, and I’ll flog the life out of you with my riding-whip!”

The very face of the Dwarf, even seen through rose-coloured spectacles, made him nearly ill.

“Yes, when you can catch me,” said the Dwarf; “but that’s not to-day, nor yet to-morrow. What are you doing here? Are you an ambassador, maybe come to propose a match for me? I’m not proud, I’ll hear you. They say there’s a rather well-looking wench in your parts, the Princess Jaqueline—”

“Mention that lady’s name, you villain,” cried Dick, “and I’ll cut down your orange-tree!” and he wished he had brought the Sword of Sharpness, for you cannot prod down a tree with the point of a rapier.

p. 133

“Fancy her yourself?” said the Dwarf, showing his yellow teeth with a detestable grin; while Ricardo turned quite white with anger, and not knowing how to deal with this insufferable little monster.

“I’m a widower, I am,” said the Dwarf, “though I’m out of mourning,” for he wore a dirty clay-coloured Yellow jacket. “My illustrious consort, the Princess Frutilla, did not behave very nice, and I had to avenge my honour; in fact, I’m open to any offers, however humble. Going at an alarming sacrifice! Come to my box” (and he pointed to a filthy clay cottage, all surrounded by thistles, nettles, and black boggy water), “and I’ll talk over your proposals.”

“Hold your impudent tongue!” said Dick. “The Princess Frutilla was an injured saint; and as for the lady whom I shall not name in your polluting presence, I am her knight, and I defy you to deadly combat!”

p. 134

We may imagine how glad the princess was when (disguised as a wasp) she heard Dick say he was her knight; not that, in fact, he had thought of it before.

"Oh! you're for a fight, are you?" sneered the Dwarf. "I might tell you to hit one of your own weight, but I'm not afraid of six of you. Yah! mammy's brat! Look here, young Blinkers, I don't want to hurt you. Just turn old Dobbin's head, and trot back to your mammy, Queen Rosalind, at Pantouflia. Does she know you're out?"

"I'll be into *you*, pretty quick," said Ricardo. "But why do I bandy words with a miserable peasant?"

"And don't get much the best of them either," said the Dwarf, provokingly. "But I'll fight, if you will have it." p. 135

The prince leaped from his horse, leaving Pepper on the saddle-bow.

No sooner had he touched the ground than the Dwarf shouted:

"Hi! to him, Billy! to him, Daniel! at him, good lions, at him!" and, with an awful roar, two lions rushed from a neighbouring potato-patch and made for Ricardo. These were not ordinary lions, history avers, each having two heads, each being eight feet high, with four rows of teeth; their skins as hard as nails, and bright red, like morocco. [135]

The prince did not lose his presence of mind; hastily he threw the cake of crocodiles' eggs, millet-seed, and sugar-candy to the lions. This is a dainty which lions can never resist, and running greedily at it, with four tremendous snaps, they got hold of each other by their jaws, and their eight rows of teeth were locked fast in a grim and deadly *struggle for existence!* p. 136

The Dwarf took in the affair at a glance.

"Cursed be he who taught you this!" he cried, and then whistled in a shrill and vulgar manner on his very dirty fingers. At his call rushed up an enormous Spanish cat, ready saddled and bridled, and darting fire from its eyes. To leap on its back, while Ricardo sprang on his own steed, was to the active Dwarf the work of a moment. Then clapping spurs to its sides (his spurs grew naturally on his bare heels, horrible to relate, like a cock's spurs) and taking his cat by the head, the Dwarf forced it to leap on to Ricardo's saddle. The diamond sword which slew the king of the Golden Mines—that invincible sword which hews iron like a reed—was up and flashing in the air!

At this very moment King Prigio, seeing, in the magic globe, all that passed, and despairing of Ricardo's life, was just about to wish the dwarf at Jericho, when through the open window, with a tremendous whirr, came a huge vulture, and knocked the king's wishing cap off! Wishing was now of no use. p. 137

This odious fowl was the Fairy of the Desert, the Dwarf's trusted ally in every sort of mischief. The vulture flew instantly out of the window; and ah! with what awful anxiety the king again turned his eyes on the crystal ball only a parent's heart can know. Should he see Ricardo bleeding at the feet of the abominable dwarf? The king scarcely dared to look; never before had he known the nature of fear. However, look he did, and saw the dwarf un-catted, and Pepper, the gallant Dandie Dinmont, with his teeth in the throat of the monstrous Spanish cat.

No sooner had he seen the cat leap on his master's saddle-bow than Pepper, true to the instinct of his race, sprang at its neck, just behind the head—the usual place,—and, with an awful and despairing mew, the cat (Peter was its name) gave up its life. p. 138

The dwarf was on his feet in a moment, waving the diamond sword, which lighted up the whole scene, and yelling taunts. Pepper was flying at his heels, and, with great agility, was keeping out of the way of the invincible blade.

"Ah!" screamed the Dwarf as Pepper got him by the ankle. "Call off your dog, you coward, and come down off your horse, and fight fair!"

At this moment, *bleeding yellow blood*, dusty, mad with pain, the dwarf was a sight to strike terror into the boldest.

Dick sprang from his saddle, but so terrific was the appearance of his adversary, and so dazzling was the sheen of the diamond sword, that he put his hand in his pocket, drew out, as he supposed, the sham Cap of Darkness, and placed it on his head. p. 139

"Yah! who's your hatter?" screamed the infuriated dwarf. "*I see you!*" and he disengaged, fainted in carte, and made a lunge in seconde at Dick which no mortal blade could have parried. The prince (thanks to his excellent training) just succeeded in stepping aside, but the dwarf recovered with astonishing quickness.

"Coward, *lâche*, poltroon, runaway!" he hissed through his clenched teeth, and was about to make a thrust in tierce which must infallibly have been fatal, when the Princess Jaqueline, in her shape as a wasp, stung him fiercely on the wrist.

With an oath so awful that we dare not set it down, the dwarf dropped the diamond sword, sucked his injured limb, and began hopping about with pain. p. 140

In a moment Prince Ricardo's foot was on the blade of the diamond sword, which he passed thrice through the body of the Yellow Dwarf. Squirming fearfully, the little monster expired, his last look a defiance, his latest word an insult:

"Yah! Gig-lamps!"

Prince Ricardo wiped the diamond blade clean from its yellow stains.



“Princess Frutilla is avenged!” he cried. Then pensively looking at his fallen foe, “Peace to his ashes,” he said; “he died in harness!”

Turning at the word, he observed that the two lions were stiff and dead, locked in each other’s gory jaws!

At that moment King Prigio, looking in the crystal ball, gave a great sigh of relief.

“All’s well that ends well,” he said, lighting a fresh cigar, for he had allowed the other to go out in his excitement, “but it was a fight! I am not satisfied,” his Majesty went on reflecting, “with this plan of changing the magical articles. The first time was of no great importance, and I could not know that the boy would start on an expedition without giving me warning. But, in to-day’s affair he owes his safety entirely to himself and Pepper,” for he had not seen the wasp. “The Fairy of the Desert quite baffled me: it was terrible. I shall restore the right fairy things to-night. As to the Fairy of the Desert,” he said, forgetting that his Wishing Cap was on, “I wish she were dead!”

p. 143

A hollow groan and the sound of a heavy body falling interrupted the king. He looked all about the room, but saw nothing. He was alone!

“She must have been in the room, invisible,” said the king; and, of course, she has died in that condition. “But I must find her body!”

p. 144

The king groped about everywhere, like a blind man, and at last discovered the dead body of the wicked fairy lying on the sofa. He could not see it, of course, but he felt it with his hands.

“This is very awkward,” he remarked. “I cannot ring for the servants and make them take her away. There is only one plan.”

So he wished she were in her family pyramid, in the Egyptian desert, and in a second the sofa was unoccupied.

“A very dangerous and revengeful enemy is now removed from Ricardo’s path in life,” said his Majesty, and went to dress for dinner.

Meanwhile Ricardo was riding gaily home. The yellow light of Jaunia had vanished, and pure blue sky broke overhead as soon as the dauntless Dwarf had drawn his latest breath. The poor, trembling people of the country came out of their huts and accompanied Dick, cheering, and throwing roses which had been yellow roses, but blushed red as soon as the Dwarf expired. They attended him to the frontiers of Pantouflia, singing his praises, which Ricardo had the new and inestimable pleasure of knowing to be deserved.

p. 145

“It was sharp work,” he said to himself, “but much more exciting and glorious than the usual business.”

On his return Dick did not fail to mention the wasp, and again the king felt how great was his debt to Jaqueline. But they did not think it well to trouble the good queen with the dangers Dick had encountered.

CHAPTER VIII.

p. 146

The Giant who does not know when he has had Enough.

[146]



One morning the post brought a truly enormous letter for Dick. It was as broad as a table-cloth, and the address was written in letters as long as a hoop-stick. "I seem to know that hand," said Ricardo; "but I thought the fingers which held the pen had long been cold in death."

He opened, with his sword, the enormous letter, which was couched in the following terms:

p. 147

"The Giant as does not know when he has had *enuf*, presents his compliments to Prince Ricardo; and I, having recovered from the effects of our little recent *rally*, will be happy to meet you in the old place for a return-match. I not being handy with the pen, the Giant hopes you will excuse mistakes and bad writing."

Dick simply gazed with amazement.

"If ever I thought an enemy was killed and done for, it was that Giant," said he. "Why, I made mere mince-collops of him!"

However, he could not refuse a challenge, not to speak of his duty to rid the world of so greedy and odious a tyrant. Dick, therefore, took the usual things (which the king had secretly restored), but first he tried them—putting on the Cap of Darkness before the glass, in which he could not see himself. On second thoughts, he considered it unfair to take the cap. All the other articles were in working order. Jaqueline on this occasion followed him in the disguise of a crow, flying overhead.

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On reaching the cavern—a huge tunnel in the rock—where the Giant lived, Ricardo blew a blast on the horn which hung outside, and in obedience to a written notice, knocked also with a mace provided by the Giant for that purpose. Presently he heard heavy footsteps sounding along the cavern, and the Giant came out. He was above the common height for giants, and his whole face and body were seamed over with little red lines, crossing each other like tartan. These were marks of encounters, in which he had been cut to bits and come together again; for this was his peculiarity, which made him so dangerous. If you cut off his head, he went on just as before, only without it; and so about everything else. By dint of magic, he could put his head on again, just as if it had been his hat, if you gave him time enough. On the last occasion of their meeting, Ricardo had left him in a painfully scattered condition, and thought he was done for. But now, except that a bird had flown away with the little finger of his left hand and one of his ears, the Giant was as comfortable as anyone could be in his situation.

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"Mornin' sir," he said to Dick, touching his forehead with his hand. "Glad to see you looking so well. No bad feeling, I hope, on either side?"

"None on mine, certainly," said Ricardo, holding out his hand, which the Giant took and shook; "but Duty is Duty, and giants must go. The modern world has no room for them."

"That's hearty," said the Giant; "I like a fellow of your kind. Now, shall we toss for corners?"

"All right!" said Dick, calling "Heads" and winning. He took the corner with the sun on his back and in the Giant's face. To it they went, the Giant aiming a blow with his club that would have felled an elephant.

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Dick dodged, and cut off the Giant's feet at the ankles.

"First blood for the prince!" said the Giant, coming up smiling. "Half-minute time!"

He occupied the half-minute in placing the feet neatly beside each other, as if they had been a pair of boots.

Round II.—The Giant sparring for wind, Ricardo cuts him in two at the waist.

The Giant folded his legs up neatly, like a pair of trousers, and laid them down on a rock. He had now some difficulty in getting rapidly over the ground, and stood mainly on the defensive, and on his waist.

Round III.—Dick bisects the Giant. Both sides now attack him on either hand, and the feet kick him severely.

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“No kicking!” said Dick.

“Nonsense; all fair in war!” said the Giant.

But do not let us pursue this sanguinary encounter in all its *horrible details*.

Let us also remember—otherwise the scene would be too painful for an elegant mind to contemplate with entertainment—that the Giant was in excellent training, and thought no more of a few wounds than you do of a crack on the leg from a cricket-ball. He well deserved the title given him by the Fancy, of “The Giant who does not Know when he has had Enough.”

* * * * *

The contest was over; Dick was resting on a rock. The lists were strewn with interesting but imperfect fragments of the Giant, when a set of double teeth of enormous size flew up out of the ground and caught Ricardo by the throat! In vain he strove to separate the teeth, when the crow, stooping from the heavens, became the Princess Jaqueline, and changed Dick into a wren—a tiny bird, so small that he easily flew out of the jaws of the Giant and winged his way to a tree, whence he watched the scene.

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But the poor Princess Jaqueline!

To perform the feat of changing Dick into a bird she had, of course, according to all the laws of magic, to resume her own natural form!

There she stood, a beautiful, trembling maiden, her hands crossed on her bosom, entirely at the mercy of the Giant!

No sooner had Dick escaped than the monster began to *collect himself*; and before Jaqueline could muster strength to run away or summon to her aid the lessons of the Fairy Paribanou, the Giant who never Knew when he had Enough was himself again. A boy might have climbed up a tree (for giants are no tree-climbers, any more than the grizzly bear), but Jaqueline could not climb. She merely stood, pale and trembling. She had saved Dick, but at an enormous sacrifice, for the sword and the Seven-league Boots were lying on the trampled grass. He had not brought the Cap of Darkness, and, in the shape of a wren, of course he could not carry away the other articles. Dick was rescued, that was all, and the Princess Jaqueline had sacrificed herself to her love for him.

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The Giant picked himself up and pulled himself together, as we said, and then approached Jaqueline in a very civil way, for a person of his breeding, head in hand.

“Let me introduce myself,” he said, and mentioned his name and titles. “May I ask what *you* are doing here, and how you came?”

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Poor Jaqueline threw herself at his feet, and murmured a short and not very intelligible account of herself.

“I don’t understand,” said the Giant, replacing his head on his shoulders. “What to do with you, I’m sure I don’t know. ‘*Please don’t eat me,*’ did you say? Why, what do you take me for? I’m not in that line at all; low, *I call it!*”

Jaqueline was somewhat comforted at these words, dropped out of the Giant's lips from a considerable height.

"But they call you 'The Giant who does not Know when he has had Enough,'" said Jaqueline.

"And proud of the title: not enough of fighting. Of *punishment* I am a glutton, or so my friends are pleased to say. A brace of oxen, a drove of sheep or two, are enough for me," the Giant went on complacently, but forgetting to mention that the sheep and the oxen were the property of other people. "Where am I to put you till your friends come and pay your ransom?" the Giant asked again, and stared at Jaqueline in a perplexed way. "I can't take you home with me, that is out of the question. I have a little woman of my own, and she's not very fond of other ladies; especially, she would like to poison them that have good looks."

p. 157

Now Jaqueline saw that the Giant, big as he was, courageous too, was afraid of his wife!

"I'll tell you what I'll do; I'll hand you over to a neighbour of mine, who is a bachelor."

"A bachelor giant; would that be quite proper?" said Jaqueline, trying to humour him.

"He's not a giant, bless you; he's a queer fellow, it is not easy to say what he is. He's the Earthquaker, him as shakes the earth now and then, and brings the houses about people's ears."

p. 158

Jaqueline fairly screamed at hearing this awful news.

"Hush! be quiet, do!" said the Giant. "You'll bring out my little woman, and she is not easy to satisfy with explanations when she finds me conversing with a lady unbeknown to her. The Earthquaker won't do you any harm; it's only for safe keeping I'll put you with him. Why, he don't waken, not once in fifty years. He's quite the dormouse. Turns on his bed now and then, and things upstairs get upset, more or less; but, as a rule, a child could play with him. Come on!"

Then, taking Jaqueline up on one hand, on which she sat as if on a chair, he crossed a few ranges of mountains in as many strides. In front was one tall blue hill, with a flattened peak, and as they drew near the princess felt a curious kind of wind coming round her and round her. You have heard of whirlpools in water; well, this was just like a whirlpool of air. Even the Giant himself could hardly keep his legs against it; then he tossed Jaqueline up, and the airy whirlpool seized her and carried her, as if on a tide of water, always round and round in narrowing circles, till she was sucked down into the hollow hill. Even as she went, she seemed to remember the hill, as if she had dreamed about it, and the shape and colour of the country. But presently she sank softly on to a couch, in a beautifully-lighted rocky hall. All around her the floor was of white and red marble, but on one side it seemed to end in black nothing.

p. 159

Jaqueline, after a few moments, recovered her senses fully, and changing herself into an eagle, tried to fly up and out. But as soon as she was in the funnel, the whirlpool of air always sucking down and down, was too strong for her wings. She was a prisoner in this great gleaming hall, ending in black nothingness. So she resumed her usual form, and walking to the edge of the darkness, found that it was not empty air, but something black, soft, and strong—something living. It had no form or shape, or none that she could make out; but it pulsed with a heart. Jaqueline placed her foot on this curious thing, when a voice came, like thunder heard through a feather-bed:

p. 160

"Not near time to get up yet!" and then there was a snore, and the great hall rocked like a ship at sea.

It was the Earthquaker!

The habits of this monstrous animal are very little known, as, of course, he never comes above ground, or at least very seldom, when he makes tracks like a dry river-bed across country. We are certain that there *are* Earthquakers, otherwise how can we account for earthquakes? But how to tackle an Earthquaker, how to get at him, and what to do with him when you have got at him, are questions which might puzzle even King Prigio.

p. 161

It was not easy to have the better of an enchantress like Jaqueline and a prince like Ricardo. In no ordinary circumstances could they have been baffled and defeated; but now it must be admitted that they were in a very trying and alarming situation, especially the princess. The worst of it was, that as Jaqueline sat and thought and thought, she began to remember that she was back in her own country. The hills were those she used to see from her father's palace windows when she was a child. And she remembered with horror that once a year her people used to send a beautiful girl to the Earthquaker, by way of keeping him quiet, as you shall hear presently. And now she heard light footsteps and a sound of weeping, and lo! a great troop of pretty girls passed, sweeping in and out of the halls in a kind of procession, and looking unhappy and lost.

p. 162

Jaqueline ran to them.

"Where am I? who are you?" she cried, in the language of her own country, which came back to her on a sudden.

"We are nurses of the Earthquaker," they said. "Our duty is to sing him asleep, and every year he must have a new song; and every year a new maiden must be sent down from earth, with a new sleepy song she has learned from the priests of Manoa, the City of the Sun. Are you the new singer?"

"No, I'm *not*," said Jaqueline. "I don't know the priests of Manoa; I don't know any new sleepy song. I only want to find the way out."

"There is no way, or we should have found it," said one of the maidens; "and, if you are the wrong girl, by the day after to-morrow they must send the right one, otherwise the Earthquaker will waken, and shake the world, and destroy Manoa, the City of the Sun." Then they all wept softly in the stillness. "Can we get anything to eat here?" asked poor Jaqueline, at last. p. 163

She was beginning to be very hungry, and however alarmed she might be, she felt that dinner would not be unwelcome. The tallest of the maidens clapped her hands, and immediately a long table was spread by unseen sprites with meringues and cold chicken, and several sorts of delicious ices.

We shall desert Jaqueline, who was rather less alarmed when she found that she was not to be starved, at all events, and return to Prince Ricardo, whom we left fluttering about as a little golden-crested wren. He followed the Giant and Jaqueline into the whirlpool of air as far as he dared, and when he saw her vanish down the cone of the hill, he flew straight back to Pantouflia. p. 164

CHAPTER IX. Prigio has an Idea.

p. 165



A weary and way-worn little bird was Prince Ricardo when he fluttered into the royal study window, in the palace of Pantouflia. The king was out at a council meeting; knowing that Ricardo had the right things, all in good order, he was not in the least anxious about him. The king was out, but Semiramis was in—Semiramis, the great grey cat, sitting on a big book on the top of the library steps. Now Semiramis was very fond of birds, and no sooner did Ricardo enter and flutter on to a table than Semiramis gathered herself together and made one fell spring at him. She just caught his tail feather. In all his adventures the prince had never been in greater danger. He escaped, but no more, and went flying round the ceiling, looking for a safe place. Finally he perched on a chandelier that hung from the roof. Here he was safe; and so weary was he, that he put his head under his wing and fell fast asleep. He was awakened by the return of the king, who threw himself on a sofa and exclaimed: p. 166

"Oh, that Prime Minister! his dulness is as heavy as lead; much heavier, in fact!"

Then his Majesty lit a cigar and took up a volume; he certainly was a sad bookworm.

Dick now began to fly about the room, brushing the king's face and trying to attract his notice.

"Poor little thing!" said his Majesty.

And Dick alighted, and nestled in his breast. p. 167

On seeing this, Semiramis began to growl, as cats do when they are angry, and slowly approached his Majesty.

"Get out, Semiramis!" said the king; and lifting her by the neck, he put her out of the room and shut the door, at which she remained scratching and mewing.

Dick now crept out of the royal waistcoat, flew to the king's ear, twittered, pointed out of the window with one claw, and, lying down on his back, pretended to be dead. Then he got up again, twittered afresh, pointed to the Wishing Cap, and, finally, convinced the king that this was no common fowl.

"An enchanted prince or princess," said Prigio, "such as I have often read of. Who can it be? Not Jaqueline; she could change herself back in a moment. By the way, where *is* Jaqueline?"

He rang the bell, and asked the servant to look for the princess.

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Semiramis tried to come in, but was caught and shut up downstairs.

After doing this, the man replied that her Royal Highness had not been in the palace all day.

The king rushed to the crystal ball, looked all the world over; but no princess! He became very nervous, and at that moment Dick lighted on the crystal ball, and put his claw on the very hill where Jaqueline had disappeared. Then he cocked his little eye at the king.

"Nay, she is somewhere in the unknown centre of South America," said his Majesty; "somewhere behind Mount Roraima, where nobody has ever been. I must look into this."

Then he put on the Wishing Cap, and wished that the bird would assume his natural shape if he was under enchantment, as there seemed too good reason to believe.

p. 171

Instantly Dick stood before him.



"Ricardo!" cried the king in horror; "and in this disguise! Where have you been? What have you done with Jaqueline? Where are the Seven-league Boots? Where is the Sword of Sharpness? Speak! Get up!" for Dick was kneeling and weeping bitterly at the royal feet.

"All lost!" said Dick. "Poor Jaqueline! she was the best girl, and the prettiest, and the kindest. And the Earthquaker's got her, and the Giant's got the other things," Dick ended, crying bitterly.

"Calm yourself, Ricardo," said his Majesty, very pale, but calm and determined. "Here, take a glass of port, and explain how all this happened."

Dick drank the wine, and then he told his miserable story.

"You may well sob! Why didn't you use the Cap of Darkness? Mere conceit! But there is no use in crying over spilt milk. The thing is, to rescue Jaqueline. And what are we to say to your mother?"

p. 172

"That's the worst of it all," said Dick. "Mother will break her heart."

"I must see her at once," said the king, "and break it to her."

This was a terrible task; but the queen had such just confidence in her Prigio that she soon dried her tears, remarking that Heaven would not desert Jaqueline, and that the king would find a way out of the trouble.

His Majesty retired to his study, put his head in his hands, and thought and thought.

"The thing is, of course," he said, "to destroy the Earthquaker before he wakens; but how? What can kill such a monster? Prodding him with the sword would only stir him up and make him more vicious. And I know of no other beast we can set against him, as I did with the Fire-beast and the Ice-beast, when I was young. Oh, for an idea!"

p. 173

Then his mind, somehow, went back to the Council and the ponderous stupidity of the Prime Minister.

"Heavier than lead," said the king. "By George! I have a plan. If I could get to the place where they keep the Stupidity, I could carry away enough of it to flatten out the Earthquaker."

Then he remembered how, in an old Italian poem, he had read about all the strange lumber-room of odd things which is kept in the moon. That is the advantage of reading: *Knowledge is Power*; and you mostly get knowledge that is really worth having out of good old books which people do not usually read.

"If the Stupidity is kept in stock, up in the moon, and comes from there, falling naturally down on the earth in small quantities, I might obtain enough for my purpose," thought King Prigio. "But—how to get to the moon? There are difficulties about that."

p. 174

But difficulties only sharpened the ingenuity of this admirable king.

"The other fellow had a Flying Horse," said he.

By "the other fellow" King Prigio meant an Italian knight, Astolfo, who, in old times, visited the moon, and there found and brought back the common sense of his friend, Orlando, as you may read in the poem of Ariosto.

"Now," reasoned King Prigio, "if there is a Flying Horse at all, he is in the stables of the King of Delhi. I must look into this."

Taking the magic spy-glass, the king surveyed the world from China to Peru, and, sure enough, there was the famous Flying Horse in the king's stable at Delhi. Hastily the king thrust his feet into the Shoes of Swiftmess—so hastily, indeed, that, as the poet says, he "madly crammed a left-hand foot into a right-hand shoe." But this, many people think, is a sign of good luck; so he put the shoes on the proper feet, and in a few minutes was in the presence of the Great Mogul.

p. 175

The monarch received him with some surprise, but with stately kindness, and listened to Prigio while he explained what he wanted.

"I am only too happy to assist so adventurous a prince," remarked the Great Mogul. "This is like old times! Every horse in my stable is at your service, but, as you say, only the Flying Horse is of any use to you in this expedition."

He clapped his hands, the Grand Vizier appeared, and the king gave orders to have the Flying Horse saddled at once. He then presented King Prigio with a large diamond, and came down into the courtyard to see him mount.

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"He's very fresh," said the groom who held the bridle; "has not been out of the stable for three hundred years!"

Prigio sprang into the saddle among the salaams of the dusky multitude, and all the ladies of the seraglio waved their scented handkerchiefs out of the windows.

The king, as he had been instructed, turned a knob of gold in the saddle of the Flying Horse, then kissed his hand to the ladies, and, giving the steed his head, cried, in excellent Persian:

"To the moon!"

Up flew the horse with an easy action, and the king's head nearly swam with the swiftness of the flight. Soon the earth below him was no bigger than a top, spinning on its own axis (see Geography books for this), and, as night fell, earth was only a great red moon.

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Through the dark rode King Prigio, into the silver dawn of the moon. All now became clear and silvery; the coasts of the moon came into sight, with white seas breaking on them; and at last the king reached the silver walls, and the gate of opal. Before the gate stood two beautiful ladies.

One was fair, with yellow locks, the colour of the harvest moon. She had a crown of a golden snake and white water-lilies, and her dress now shone white, now red, now golden; and in her hand was the golden pitcher that sheds the dew, and a golden wand. The other lady was as dark as night—dark eyes, dark hair; her crown was of poppies. She held the ebony Wand of Sleep. Her dress was of the deepest blue, sown with stars. The king knew that they were the maidens of the bright and the dark side of the moon—of the side you see, and of the side that no one has ever seen, except King Prigio. He stopped the Flying Horse by turning the other knob in the saddle, alighted, and bowed very low to each of the ladies.

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“Daring mortal! what make you here?” they asked.

And then the king told them about Jaqueline and the Earthquaker, and how he needed a great weight of Stupidity to flatten him out with.

The ladies heard him in silence, and then they said:

“Follow us,” and they flew lightly beside the Flying Horse till they had crossed all the bright side of the moon, above the silver palaces and silver seas, and reached the summit of the Mountains of the Moon which separate the bright from the dark side.

“Here I may go no further,” said the bright lady; “and beyond, as you see, all is darkness and heavy sleep.”

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Then she touched Prigio with her golden wand with twisted serpents, and he became luminous, light raying out from him; and the dark lady, too, shone like silver in the night: and on they flew, over black rocks and black rivers, till they reached a huge mountain, like a mountain of coal, many thousand feet high, for its head was lost in the blackness of darkness. The dark Moon-Lady struck the rock with her ebony wand, and said, “Open!” and the cliffs opened like a door, and they were within the mountain.

“Here,” said the dark lady, “is the storehouse of all the Stupidity; hence it descends in showers like Stardust on the earth whenever this mountain, which is a volcano, is in eruption. Only a little of the Stupidity reaches the earth, and that only in invisible dust; yet you know how weighty it is, even in that form.”

p. 182

“Indeed, madam,” said the king, “no one knows it better than I do.”

“Then make your choice of the best sort of Stupidity for your purpose,” said the dark lady.

And in the light which flowed from their bodies King Prigio looked round at the various kinds of Solid Stupidity. There it all lay in masses—the Stupidity of bad Sermons, of ignorant reviewers, of bad poems, of bad speeches, of dreary novels, of foolish statesmen, of ignorant mobs, of fine ladies, of idle, naughty boys and girls; and the king examined them all, and all were very, very heavy. But when he came to the Stupidity of the Learned—of dull, blind writers on Shakspeare, and Homer, and the Bible—then King Prigio saw that he had found the sort he wanted, and that a very little of it would go a long way. He never could have got it on the saddle of the Flying Horse if the dark lady had not touched it with her ebony wand, and made it light to carry till it was wanted for his purpose. When he needed it for use, he was to utter a certain spell, which she taught him, and then the lump would recover its natural weight. So he easily put a great block on his saddle-bow, and he and the dark lady flew back till they reached the crest of the Mountains of the Moon. There she touched him with her ebony wand, and the silver light which the bright lady had shed on him died from his face and his body, and he became like other men.

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“You see your way?” said the dark lady, pointing to the bright moon of earth, shining far off in the heavens.

Then he knelt down and thanked her, and she murmured strange words of blessing which he did not understand; but her face was grave and kind, and he thought of Queen Rosalind, his wife.

p. 184

Then he jumped on the Flying Horse, galloped down and down, till he reached his palace gate; called for Ricardo, set him behind him on the saddle, and away they rode, above land and wide seas, till they saw the crest of the hollow hill, where Jaqueline was with the Earthquaker. Beyond it they marked the glittering spires and towers of Manoa, the City of the Sun; and “Thither,” said King Prigio, who had been explaining how matters stood, to Ricardo, “we must ride, for I believe they stand in great need of our assistance.”

“Had we not better go to Jaqueline first, sir?” said Ricardo.

“No,” said the king; “I think mine is the best plan. Manoa, whose golden spires and pinnacles are shining below us, is the City of the Sun, which Sir Walter Raleigh and the Spaniards could never find, so that men have doubted of its existence. We are needed there, to judge by that angry crowd in the marketplace. How they howl!”

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CHAPTER X. The End.

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It was on a strange sight that the king and Ricardo looked down from the Flying Horse. Beneath them lay the City of Manoa, filling with its golden battlements and temples a hollow of the mountains. Here were palaces all carved over with faces of men and beasts, and with twisted patterns of serpents.

The city walls were built of huge square stones, and among the groves towered pyramids, on which the people did service to their gods. From every temple top came the roar of beaten drums, great drums of serpentskin.

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But, in the centre of the chief square of the town, was gathered a wild crowd of men in shining copper armour and helmets of gold and glittering dresses of feathers. Among them ran about priests with hideous masks, crying them on to besiege and break down the royal palace. From the battlements of the palace the king's guardsmen were firing arrows and throwing spears. The mob shot arrows back, some of them tipped with lighted straw, to burn the palace down.

But, in the very centre of the square, was a clear space of ground, on which fell the shadow of a tall column of red stone, all carved with serpents and faces of gods. Beside it stood a figure horrible to see: a man clothed in serpent skins, whose face was the grinning face of a skull; but the skull was shining black and red in patches, and a long white beard flowed from beneath it. This man, mounted on a kind of altar of red stone, waved his hand and yelled, and seemed to point to the shadow of the column which fell across the square.

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The people were so furious and so eager that they did not, at first, notice King Prigio as he slowly descended. But at last the eyes within the skull looked up and saw him, and then the man gave a great cry, rent his glittering dress of serpentskin, and held up his hands.

Then all the multitude looked up, and seeing the Flying Horse, let their weapons fall; and the man of the skull tore it from his face, and knelt before King Prigio, with his head in the dust.

"Thou hast come, oh, Pachacamac, as is foretold in the prophecy of the Cord of the Venerable Knots! Thou hast come, but behold the shadow of the stone! Thou art too late, oh Lord of the Earth and the Sea!"

p. 189

Then he pointed to the shadow, which, naturally, was growing shorter, as the sun drew near mid-day.

He spoke in the language of the ancient Incas of Peru, which of course Prigio knew very well; and he also knew that Pachacamac was the god of that people.

"I have come," Prigio said, with presence of mind, "as it has been prophesied of old."

"Riding on a beast that flies," said the old priest, "even as the oracle declared. Glory to Pachacamac, even though we die to-day!"

"In what can I help my people?" said Prigio.

"Thou knowest; why should we instruct thee? Thou knowest that on midsummer-day, every year, before the shadow shrinks back to the base of the *huaca* ^[190] of Manoa, we must offer a maiden to lull the Earthquaker with a new song. Lo, now the shadow shrinks to the foot of the *huaca*, and the maid is not offered! For the lot fell on the daughter of thy servant the Inca, and he refuses to give her up. One daughter of his, he says, has been sacrificed to the sacred birds, the *Cunturs*: the birds were found slain on the hill-top, no man knows how; but the maiden vanished."

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"Why, it must have been Jaqueline. I killed the birds," said Ricardo, in Pantouflian.

"Silence, not a word!" said the king, sternly.

"And what makes you bear arms against the Inca?" he asked the old man.

"We would slay him and her," answered the priest; "for, when the shadow shrinks to the foot of the stone, the sun will shine straight down into the hollow hill of the Earthquaker, and he will waken and destroy Manoa and the Temples of the Sun."

p. 191

"Then wherefore would you slay them, when you must all perish?"

"The people, oh Pachacamac, would have revenge before they die."

"Oh, folly of men!" said the king, solemnly; then he cried: "Lead me to the Inca; this day you shall not perish. Is it not predicted in the Cord of the Venerable Knots that I shall slay this monster?"

"Hasten, oh Pachacamac, for the shadow shortens!" said the priest.

"Lead me to the Inca," answered Prigio.

At this the people arose with a great shout, for they, too, had been kneeling; and, sending a flag of truce before King Prigio, the priest led him into the palace. The ground was strewn with bodies of the slain, and through them Prigio rode slowly into the courtyard, where the Inca was sitting in the dust, weeping and throwing ashes on his long hair and his golden raiment. The king bade the priest remain without the palace gates; then dismounted, and, advancing to the Inca, raised him and embraced him.

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"I come, a king to a king," he said. "My cousin, take courage; your sorrows are ended. If I do not slay the Earthquaker, sacrifice me to your gods."

"The Prophecy is fulfilled," said the Inca, and wept for joy. "Yet thou must hasten, for it draws near to noon."

Then Prigio went up to the golden battlements, and saying no word, waved his hand. In a moment the square was empty, for the people rushed to give thanks in the temples.

"Wait my coming, my cousin," said Prigio to the Inca; "I shall bring you back the daughter that was lost, when I have slain your enemy."

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The Inca would have knelt at his feet; but the king raised him, and bade him prepare such a feast as had never been seen in Manoa.

"The lost are found to-day," he said; "be you ready to welcome them."

Then, mounting the Flying Horse, with Dick beside him, he rose towards the peak of the hill where the Earthquaker had his home. Already the ground was beginning to tremble; the Earthquaker was stirring in his sleep, for the maiden of the new song had not been sent to him, and the year ended at noon, and then he would rise and ruin Manoa.

The sun was approaching mid-day, and Prigio put spurs to the Flying Horse. Ten minutes more, and the sun would look straight down the crater of the hollow hill, and the Earthquaker would arouse himself when the light and the heat fell on his body.

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Already the light of the sun shone slanting half-way down the hollow cone as the whirlpool of air caught the Flying Horse, and drew him swiftly down and down to the shadowy halls. There knelt and wept the nurses of the Earthquaker on the marble floor; but Jaqueline stood a little apart, very pale, but not weeping.

Ricardo had leaped off before the horse touched the ground, and rushed to Jaqueline, and embraced her in his arms; and, oh! how glad she was to see him, so that she quite forgot her danger and laughed for joy.

"Oh! you have come, you have come; I knew you would come!" she cried.

Then King Prigio advanced, the mighty weight in his hand, to the verge of the dreadful gulf of the Earthquaker. The dim walls grew radiant; a long slant arm of yellow light touched the black body of the Earthquaker, and a thrill went through him, and shook the world, so that, far away, the bells rang in Pantouflia. A moment more, and he would waken in his strength; and once awake, he would shatter the city walls and ruin Manoa. Even now a great mass of rock fell from the roof deep down in the secret caves, and broke into flying fragments, and all the echoes roared and rang.

p. 195

King Prigio stood with the mighty mass poised in his hands.

"Die!" he cried; and he uttered the words of power, the magic spell that the dark Moon Lady had taught him.

Then all its invincible natural weight came into the mass which the king held, and down it shot full on the body of the Earthquaker; and where that had been was nothing but a vast abyss, silent, empty, and blank, and bottomless.

Far, far below, thousands of miles below, in the very centre of the earth, lay the dead Earthquaker, crushed flat as a sheet of paper, and the sun of midsummer-day shone straight down on the dreadful chasm, and could not waken him any more for ever.

p. 196

The king drew a long breath.

"Stupidity has saved the world," he said; and, with only strength to draw back one step from the

abyss, he fell down, hiding his face in his hands.

But Jaqueline's arms were round his neck, and the maidens brought him water from an ice-cold spring; and soon King Prigio was himself again, and ready for anything. But afterwards he used to say that the moment when the Earthquaker stirred was the most dreadful in his life.

Now, in Manoa, where all the firm foundations of the city had trembled once, when the sun just touched the Earthquaker, the people, seeing that the shadow of the sacred column had crept to its foot, and yet Manoa stood firm again, and the Temple of the Sun was not overthrown, raised such a cry that it echoed even through the halls within the hollow hill.

p. 197

Who shall describe the joy of the maidens, and how often Jaqueline and Ricardo kissed each other?

"You have saved me!" she cried to the king, throwing her arms round him again. "You have saved Manoa!"

"And *you* have saved the Hope of Pantouflia, not once or twice," said his Majesty, grandly.

And he told Dick how much he had owed to Jaqueline, in the fight with the Yellow Dwarf, and the fight with the Giant, for he did not think it necessary to mention the affair at Rome.

Then Dick kissed Jaqueline again, and all the maidens kissed each other, and they quite cried for gladness.

p. 198

"But we keep his Majesty the Inca waiting," said Prigio. "Punctuality is the courtesy of kings. You ladies will excuse me, I am sure, if I remove first from the dungeon her whom we call the Princess Jaqueline. The Inca, her father, has a claim on us to this preference."

Then placing Jaqueline on the saddle, and leaving Dick to comfort the other young ladies, who were still rather nervous, the king flew off to Manoa, for the wind, of course, died with the death of the Earthquaker.

I cannot tell you the delight of all Manoa, and of the Inca, when they saw the Flying Horse returning, and recognised their long-lost princess, who rushed into the arms of her father. They beat the serpent drums, for they had no bells, on the tops of the temples. They went quite mad with delight: enemies kissed in the streets; and all the parents, without exception, allowed all the young people who happened to be in love to be married that very day. Then Prigio brought back all the maidens, one after the other, and Dick last; and he fell at the Inca's feet, and requested leave to marry Jaqueline.

p. 199

But, before that could be done, King Prigio, mounted on the palace balcony, made a long but very lucid speech to the assembled people. He began by explaining that he was not their God, Pachacamac, but king of a powerful country of which they had never heard before, as they lived very much withdrawn in an unknown region of the world. Then he pointed out, in the most considerate manner, that their religion was not all he could wish, otherwise they would never sacrifice young ladies to wild birds and Earthquakers. He next sketched out the merits of his own creed, that of the Lutheran Church; and the Inca straightway observed that he proposed to establish it in Manoa at once.

p. 200

Some objection was raised by the old priest in the skull mask; but when the Inca promised to make him an archbishop, and to continue all his revenues, the priest admitted that he was perfectly satisfied; and the general public cheered and waved their hats with emotion. It was arranged that the Inca, with his other daughters, should visit Pantouflia immediately, both because he could not bear to leave Jaqueline, and also because there were a few points on which he felt that he still needed information. The Government was left in the hands of the archbishop, who began at once by burning his skull mask (you may see one like it in the British Museum, in the Mexican room), and by letting loose all the birds and beasts which the Manoans used to worship.

p. 201

So all the young people were married in the Golden Temple of the Sun, and all the Earthquaker's nurses who were under thirty were wedded to the young men who had been fond of them before they were sent into the hollow hill. These young men had never cared for any one else. Everybody wore bridal favours, all the unengaged young ladies acted as bridesmaids, and such a throwing of rice and old shoes has very seldom been witnessed. As for the happy royal pair, with their fathers, and the other princess (who did not happen to be engaged), back they flew to Pantouflia.

And there was Queen Rosalind waiting at the palace gates, and crying and laughing with pleasure when she heard that the wish of her heart was fulfilled, and Jaqueline was to be her daughter.

p. 202

"And, as for the Earthquaker," said her Majesty, "I never was really anxious in the least, for I knew no beast in the world was a match for *you*, my dear."

So, just to make everything orderly and correct, Ricardo and Jaqueline were married over again, in the Cathedral of Pantouflia. The marriage presents came in afterwards, of course, and among them, what do you think? Why, the Seven-League Boots and the Sword of Sharpness, with a very polite note of extraordinary size:

"The Giant who does not Know when he has had Enough presents his hearty

congratulations to the royal pair, and begs to lay at their feet the Seven-league Boots (they not fitting me) and the Sword which Prince Ricardo left in the Giant's keeping recently. The Giant hopes *no bad blood*; and I am,

p. 203

“Yours very faithfully,
“THE G., &c.

“P.S.—His little woman sends her congratulations.”

So you see the Giant was not such a bad sort of fellow after all, and Prince Ricardo always admitted that he never met a foe more gallant and good-humoured.

With such a clever wife, Ricardo easily passed all his examinations; and his little son, Prince Prigio (named after his august grandfather), never had to cry, “Mamma, mamma, father's plucked again.”

So they lived happily in a happy country, occasionally visiting Manoa; and as they possessed the magical Water o Life from the Fountain of Lions, I do not believe that any of them ever died at all, but that Prigio is still King of Pantouflia.

p. 204

“No need such kings should ever die!”



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Footnotes:

[21] You can buy these glasses now from the Psychological Society, at half-a-crown and upwards.

[135] See the works of D'Aulnoy.

[146] This Giant is mentioned, and his picture is drawn, in an old manuscript of about 1875.

[190] *Huaca*, sacred stone.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PRINCE RICARDO OF PANTOUFLIA: BEING
THE ADVENTURES OF PRINCE PRIGIO'S SON ***

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