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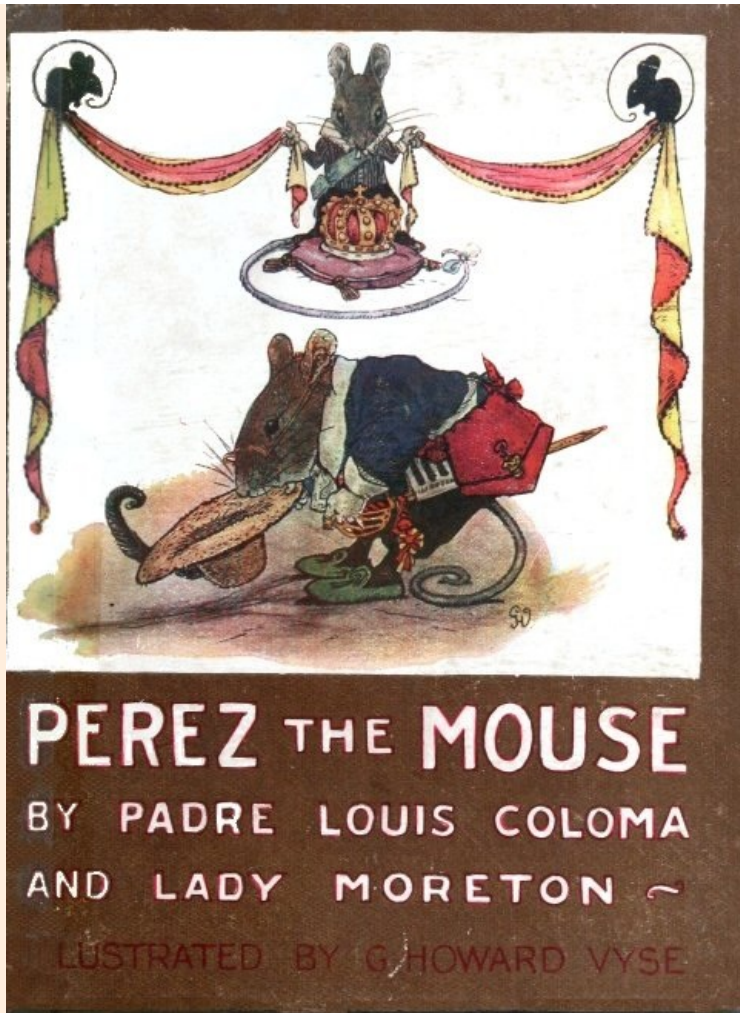
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## PEREZ THE MOUSE



Perez the Mouse took off his hat and made a very low bow

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# PEREZ THE MOUSE

*Adapted from the Spanish of  
Padre Luis Coloma*

BY  
LADY MORETON



*With Illustrations by George Howard Vyse*

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*opp. vi*

King Bubi the First

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## PEREZ THE MOUSE

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**O**NCE upon a time there lived a king called Bubi the First, who was very kind to poor children and mice. For the children he built a factory for making dolls and cardboard horses, for the benefit of the mice he made wise laws to stop cats catching

them, and absolutely forbade the use of mouse-traps. Bubi began to reign when he was only six years old, under the care of his mother, who was very good and clever, and who watched over him and guided his steps, as good children are guided by their Guardian Angel.



opp. 8



The oldest of the Court Doctors

Bubi was a darling little boy, and when on great days they put on his gold crown and his embroidered robes, the gold of his crown was not brighter than his hair nor the ermine of his robes softer than his cheeks and hands. He was just like a little Dresden china figure which had been put to sit on a throne instead of standing on the chimney piece.

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One day while the King was eating his bread and milk, one of his teeth began to wobble. There was a great fuss and the Court doctors arrived in a hurry. \* They were all agreed that His Majesty had begun to change his teeth, and at length they settled to pull out the loose one. They wanted the King to have laughing gas, as he did when his hair was

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cut, as he always fidgeted so, but Bubi was a brave little boy and made up his mind to have it out with nothing. The oldest of the Court doctors tied a bit of red silk round the tooth, and then gave a tweak, and he pulled so cleverly that, while the King was making a face, out came the tooth as round and white as a little pearl.



Then there was another fuss as to what was to be done with it, but Bubi's mother, who, as we have said was a very wise Queen and very loyal to old customs, settled that the King should write a very polite letter and put it with the tooth in an envelope under his pillow that night, which has always been the proper thing to do ever since the world began, and no one has ever known Perez the Mouse forget to come and fetch the tooth and leave a lovely present in its place.



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*opp. 11*



Miss Stilton, the Governess

King Bubi found writing that letter a dreadful task, but he managed really quite well in the end, and only inked all his fingers, the tip of his nose, his left ear, his right shoe and his bib.



He went to bed very early that evening, and ordered that all the lights should be left in his room. He put the envelope under his pillow and sat up in bed, determined to keep awake to see Perez the Mouse, even if he had to wait all night.

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**P**EREZ the Mouse was a long time coming, so the little King began to make up a little speech to say to him when he did arrive. After a bit Bubi began to open his eyes very wide, fighting against the miller who was trying to make him shut them;



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but they did shut at last, and the little boy slipped down into the warm bed-clothes, his head on the pillow, with one arm over it, as a little bird tucks its head under its wing when it goes to sleep.



Suddenly he felt something very soft just tickling his forehead, and, sitting up quickly, he saw in front of him, standing on the pillow, a tiny little mouse in a straw hat and slippers and big gold spectacles; a red satchel was slung across his back.

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opp. 15

A tiny little mouse in a straw hat and slippers and big gold spectacles

King Bubi stared at him in astonishment, and Perez the Mouse, seeing that His Majesty was awake, took off his hat and made a very low bow, waiting to be spoken to. But the King said nothing, because he had quite forgotten all he had made up to say, and after thinking and thinking he faltered out at last 'Good night.' \* Perez answered with a low bow, 'God give your Majesty a very good one.' \* These civil speeches quite broke the ice, and the King and the mouse became the greatest friends. \* It was easy to see that Perez was a mouse who was accustomed to polite society, and to run about on soft carpets, as he had such very good manners. \* It was wonderful what a lot of things he could talk about which made him a very pleasant companion. \* He had travelled through all the pipes and drains of the capital, and in the Royal Library alone he had eaten up three books in less than a week. \* He talked too about his family.



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He had two quite grown-up daughters, Adelaide and Elvira, and a son, nearly grown up, called Adolphus, who was studying for diplomacy in the drawer where the Minister of State kept his most secret notes. He did not say much about Mrs. Mouse, and the little King somehow fancied that she was rather vulgar.

*opp. 16*



Adolphus studying for Diplomacy

His Majesty listened to all this with his mouth open, from time to time he put out his hand to try and catch Perez by the tail. \* But each time the mouse gave a sort of whisk and placed his tail out of reach, without being in the least rude.

*opp. 17*



Adelaide made Tea

It was getting late, and the King forgot to dismiss him; so Mr. Mouse cleverly hinted that he had to go that same





night to a street not far off to fetch the tooth of a very poor little boy called Giles. It was rather a difficult, dangerous journey, because near there lived a very wicked cat called Don Pedro. The King at once wanted to go too, and begged Perez to take him. The mouse stood thinking it over and twisting his whiskers; the responsibility was very great, and moreover he was obliged to go back to his own house



to fetch the present for little Giles. The King said he would like to go and see the mouse's home, which so much flattered Perez that he at once offered him a cup of tea and agreed to take him to see little Giles. Perez the Mouse lived underneath a grocer's shop, near a big pile of Gruyere cheeses which supplied the whole family with breakfast, dinner and tea. Overjoyed, King Bubi jumped out of bed and began to dress himself, when all at once Perez the Mouse sprang on his shoulder and put the tip of his tail into His Majesty's nose. \* Then a wonderful thing happened, the King sneezed very hard and turned into the most darling little mouse you ever saw. He was all soft and shiny, and had wee green eyes like emeralds. \* Perez the Mouse took him by the paw and disappeared with him down a tiny hole under the bed, which had been hidden by the carpet.

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20

*opp. 18*



The King sneezed very hard and turned into the most darling little mouse you ever saw

The way was dark and sticky, but they scampered along. Sometimes Perez the Mouse stopped at some crossway and looked about before going on, which rather frightened the King and made him feel little shivers right down to the tip of his tail, and he knew that he was afraid, but he

remembered that:

'Fear is natural to the prudent,  
To conquer it is to be courageous,'

so he would not let himself be frightened, which is being really brave.



Once when he heard a tremendous noise, like dozens of motor omnibuses passing over his head, he whispered to ask Perez if that was where Don Pedro lived, but Mr. Mouse said no with his tail, and on they went.

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After going down a gentle slope they came to a big cellar which felt nice and warm and smelt very much of cheese; behind a pile of Gruyere cheese they found themselves face to face with the Huntley and Palmer biscuit tin which was the home of the Perez family. Here they lived as happily as the rat of fable did in the Dutch cheese. Perez the Mouse introduced the King as a foreign tourist who was on a visit to the capital, and the family welcomed him very cordially. The two Miss Mouses were at work with their Governess, Miss Stilton, who was a very learned English mouse, and Mrs. Mouse was embroidering a beautiful smoking cap for her husband, sitting by a bright fire made of raisin stalks.



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This happy family party delighted King Bubi. \* Adelaide and Elvira made tea and poured out some into lovely wee cups made out of the skins of white beans. \* Then they had a little music. Adelaide sang Desdemona's song, 'O Willow Willow,' in a way which much pleased the King, and Elvira recited about a little mouse who was ill of fever, and a naughty kitten who wanted to pounce on it. After this Adolphus came in from the Jockey Club where, to the sorrow of his father and mother, he wasted all his time playing cards with the mice from the foreign embassies.

23



Perez the Mouse stopped at some crossway

King Bubi would willingly have stayed longer, but Perez, who had slipped away, came back with his satchel on his back and said it was time to start. \* So the King said goodbye very politely, and Mrs. Mouse gave him a kiss on each cheek in her homely way. \* Adelaide put out a paw in a lackadaisical fashion, and Elvira shook hands like a pump handle, while Miss Stilton made him a beautiful cheese of a curtsey, and then stared at him through her eyeglass until he was out of sight. \* Adolphus, too, was very gushing, and conducted him as far as the lid of the tin, and offered to introduce him at the Polo Club, for which the King thanked him very much, thinking all the time that, though he might be a very smart young mouse, he was rather a bore. Then Bubi and Perez the Mouse again began their scamper with such a quantity of precautions that the King was astonished.





Mrs. Mouse was embroidering a beautiful smoking cap for her husband

In front of them went a regiment of ferocious mice, soldiers whose bayonets made of fine needles gleamed in the darkness. Behind them came a second regiment, also armed to the teeth.

25

Perez the Mouse then confessed that he would not have undertaken this expedition without these soldiers to protect the person of the young monarch.



All of a sudden King Bubi saw the guard in front had disappeared down a little hole, through which came a faint light.

opp. 25



Adolphus playing cards at the Jockey Club

This was the moment of danger. Perez the Mouse, slowly



wagging his tail from side to side, put his head very cautiously through the hole and looked around; he then went back two steps, and finally, suddenly seizing the King's paw, dashed through the hole like an arrow, crossed a big kitchen, and disappeared through another hole on the opposite side near the range. As one sees telegraph posts out of the train so Bubi saw that kitchen. By the hearth, in the glow of the fire, lay an enormous cat, the dreadful Don Pedro, its great whiskers heaving up and down as it breathed.



The guards silently formed up, from hole to hole, ready to fire, to protect the King's route from the sleeping cat. It was all very grand and imposing. An ugly old woman sat in a chair, also asleep, with her knitting on her knee.

27

Once through the hole the danger was over, and they had only to get upstairs, as this was where little Giles lived. Everything was open in his poor room, which was all cracks and draughts.



King Bubi scrambled on to the arm of a seatless chair, the only one in the room, and from there could see a picture of poverty such as he had never dreamt of.



The sloping roof joined the floor, so that on one side a man could not have stood upright, and through the holes the cold air of dawn was coming, while icicles hung from the roof. The only furniture besides the chair was an empty bread basket hanging up, and in a corner a bed of straw and rags, on which little Giles and his mother were lying fast asleep.

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Perez the Mouse drew nearer, taking the King by the paw, and they could see how little Giles was huddled up in the rags, and how he was cuddled up against his mother for warmth, and it made the King so unhappy that he began to cry.





The Guards silently formed up ready to fire

Why had he never known that people were so poor? How was it that he had never been told that children were hungry and had to sleep on horrid beds? He did not want any blankets on his cot till every child in his kingdom had plenty of bed-clothes to keep them warm.

29

opp. 29



Ferocious mice . . . . armed to the teeth

Perez the Mouse brushed away a tear with his paw and then tried to comfort the King by showing him the bright gold coin he was going to put under little Giles' pillow in exchange for his first tooth.



Just then Giles' mother woke and sat up in bed and looked at her little boy, who was still asleep. It was becoming light, and she had to earn some money by washing clothes in the

river. \* She caught the sleeping Giles in her arms and made him kneel down under a picture of the Infant Christ which was pinned to the wall near the bed.

The King and Perez the Mouse knelt down too, and so did the soldier mice who were waiting in the empty bread basket. The child began to pray, 'Our Father which art in Heaven.'

Bubi started and looked at Perez the Mouse, who understood his astonishment, and fixed his piercing eyes on him, but never said a single word.



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**O**N the return journey they were silent and preoccupied, and half an hour later the King was home in his nursery with Perez the Mouse, who again put the tip of his tail into Bubi's nose and made him sneeze. All at once he found himself safely back again in his own warm little cot, with the Queen's arms round him, who woke him, as she always did, with a kiss.

32

*opp. 32*

The Order of the Golden Fleece



At first he thought it had all been a dream; but when he looked for the letter he had put under his pillow, he

found it was gone, and in its place was a case with the Order of the Golden Fleece in diamonds, a magnificent present from the generous Perez the Mouse in exchange for his first tooth. (Perhaps I had better explain to English children that in King Bubi's country the Order of the Golden Fleece is like our Order of the Garter, the greatest honour the King can give.)



*opp. 33*



The King and Perez the Mouse knelt down too

The little King, however, paid no attention to his beautiful present, and let it lie unnoticed on the bed, while, leaning on his elbow, he lay very busy thinking. \* Then, suddenly, he asked the Queen in a very solemn voice, 'Mama! Why do poor children say the same prayer as I do, "Our Father which art in Heaven"?' The Queen answered, 'Because He is as much their Father as He is yours.' Then said the King thoughtfully, 'We must be brothers.' 'Yes, my darling, they are your brothers,' answered the Queen. \* Bubi's eyes were filled with astonishment, and, in a choky voice, he asked, 'Then why am I a King and have everything I want, while they are poor and have nothing?'

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The Queen gave him a squeeze, and, kissing him again on his forehead, said, 'Because you are the eldest brother, which is what being King really means. \* You understand, darling? God has given you everything in order that your younger brothers should want for nothing.' 'I never knew this before,' said Bubi, shaking his head, and, without thinking any more about his present, he began to say his prayers, as he did

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every morning; and, as he prayed, it seemed to him that all the poor little boys in the kingdom came round him with their hands clasped, and that he, the eldest brother, spoke for them all when he prayed 'Our Father which art in Heaven.'

King Bubi grew up to be a great ruler. \* He always asked God's help in all he did, and returned thanks for his happiness, ever saying, speaking for all his subjects, poor and rich, good and bad, 'Our Father which art in Heaven'; and when he died, a very old man, and his good soul arrived at the gates of Heaven, he knelt down and prayed as usual, 'Our Father.' And, as he prayed, the gates were opened wide by thousands of poor little children to whom he had been King, that is to say, eldest brother here on earth.



The dreadful Don Pedro



**T**HE Spanish story which was written, once upon a time, to amuse a real little boy King, ends here; but I cannot help adding that it does seem a pity not to try and get Perez the Mouse to come to England. \* The only way to manage this will be to take great pains over your copies and spelling, so that when your first tooth comes out you will be able to write a nice, tidy, polite letter to him. If you put it under your pillow at night I am nearly sure you will find it gone and a present in its place in the morning. Perhaps you may even feel the same little soft tickle on your forehead that King Bubi did; but I do not promise for certain that you will see kind Mr. Mouse, because he is rather shy.



39

A.M.M.



40

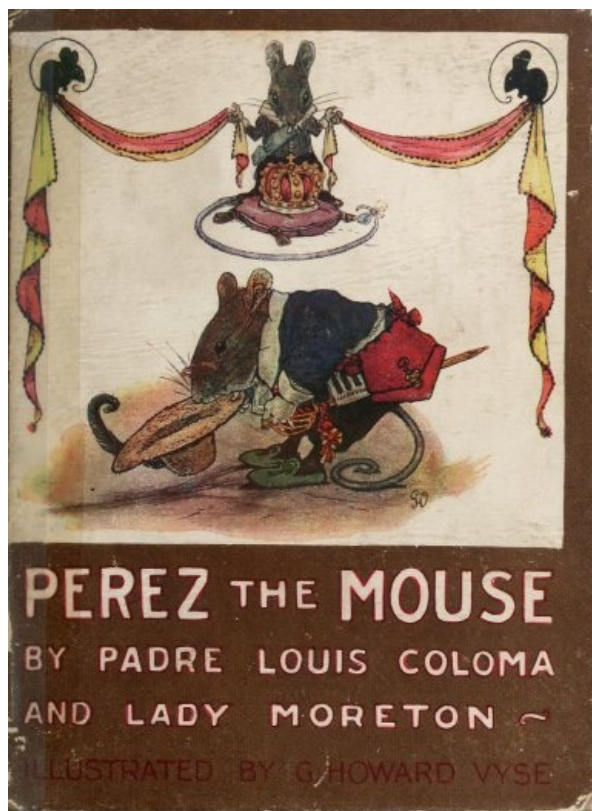


*opp. 40*



Elvira recited

Unretouched Cover:



King “Bubi” was Alfonso XIII of Spain (1886-1941). The story was written at his mother’s request in 1894.

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PEREZ THE MOUSE \*\*\*

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