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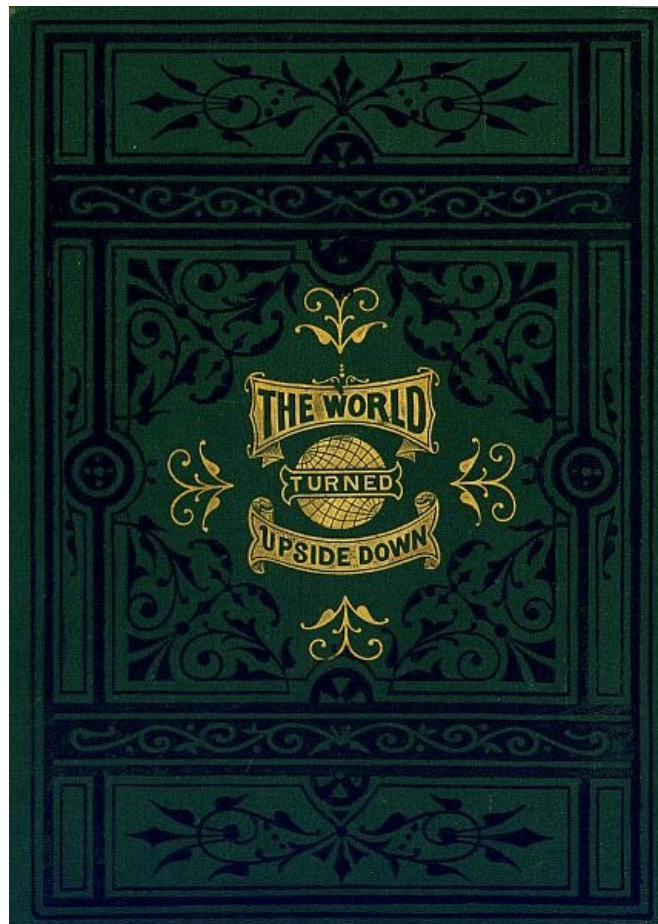
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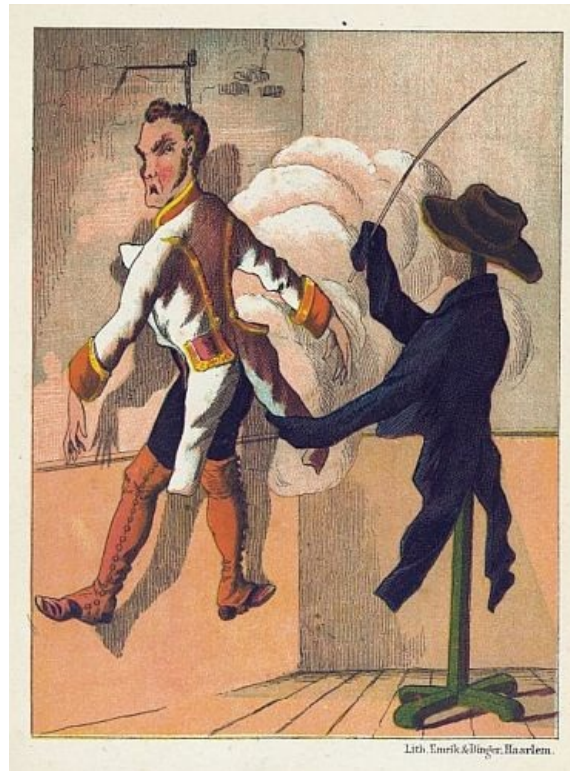
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN ***





THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN.

BY E. C. CLAYTON.

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THE FOOLISH COAT.

THE Coat was in a downright rage.

"To be beaten, and caned, and cuffed, and shaken, two or three times a-day," cried he, whisking his tails about like an angry lion, "I say it's a shame."

"If you were not well thrashed," said the Cane, "you'd soon get thick with dust, and *then* I'd like to know how you'd look."

"So *I* say," remarked the Hat.

"It's all very well for you to talk, Mr. Cane," said the Coat, still more in a rage. "Nobody ever hits you, and if they did, you could hit back. And as for you, Mr. Hat, nobody ever thinks of punching you, except in fun. You have a nice soft brush all to yourself."

"Well, are you not brushed as well?" asked the Hat.

"I don't mind being brushed," said the Coat, "but the next time Mr. Valet comes along, and hits me, I'll—I'll—" then he growled something to himself, whisked his tails, and added, "*See* if I don't."

In came the Valet, and bustled about. The Coat eyed him, and when he came close, caught him up with *such* a clutch.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" cried the Valet. "What are you doing?"

But the Coat hung the Valet on a nail, and snatched up the Cane.

"Now, look here, Mister Valet," said he. "I'm not going to be dusted and beaten and thumped. I'm just going to show you what it feels like, Mister Valet."

"What are you talking about, you stupid old Coat?" said the Valet.

"I'll let you see," said the Coat, flourishing the Cane.

The Cane could not help himself, for he was thin.

Thump, thump, thump, went the Coat, blowing out such clouds and clouds of dust from the Valet's clothes, never remembering he was covering himself with dust, and making himself look shockingly shabby. The Valet called out as loud as he could for help, but nobody heard him, and the Coat kept on thumping till his sleeves fairly ached. Then he dropped the Cane, fell on the dirty floor, and whisked his tails with great satisfaction.

The Cane jumped up, and lifted down the Valet, who went off to his own room.

A few days after, the master came in, and looked at the Coat, which he had meant to wear at a jolly garden party.

"Oh," said he, "how dreadfully shabby that Coat looks."

"Yes, sir," said the Valet, "he won't allow himself to be brushed or dusted."

"Oh, won't he?" said the Master, "that's all very fine, but it won't do for me." So he seized the Cane, and gave the Coat one good thump. But such a cloud of dust came out of the Coat that the Master threw down the Cane, and ran to the door.

"Oh," cried he, "I can't wear that frightful old thing any more. It is disgracefully shabby and dusty. Sell it to the first 'ole clo' man that comes along." But he took the Hat, and went to the nice party.

And what do you think became of this foolish Coat? Why, he was hung on a stick in a field to make a scare-crow. And serve him right, a stupid thing.

ALF AND THE PARROT.

The old Poll Parrot was in a rage;
He bounced and spluttered about in his cage.

The reason he felt so much displeased
Was because young Alf had worried and teased.

He pecked, and bobbed, and knocked with his beak,
Too much enraged to be able to speak.

To tease him was a scandalous shame:
Alf was a bad boy, and much to blame.

"I tell you, young Alf," at last Poll said,
"If you don't leave off, I'll snap off your head.

"You think you're allowed to tease a bird.
Now, that idea's extremely absurd.

"One thing, young Alf, is certain and sure—
Your worry and bother no more I'll endure.

"Another thing, Alf, is also clear:
I mean to walk out, and lock you in here."

Poor Alf screamed and bawled with rage
When Poll marched out, and put *him* in the cage!

Cried Alf, "I think this horrible bird
Is going to be as good as his word."

Laughed old Poll, as he perched on a chair,
"You thought to punish you I'd never dare.

"You may bawl or howl, or scream and rage—
I'm going to lock the door of the cage!"

Alfy did cry out—Oh! didn't he shout,
When he found the Parrot would not let him out!

Said Poll, "My dear boy, it's now *our* turn;
The world's upside down, as you have to learn."

So Alf was forced to make up his mind
In the cage of the Parrot to be confined.



THE CLEVER HARE.

"To be hunted, and trapped, and watched for by night, and—and—I don't know what, is most abominable!" said the Hare.

Some dogs had frightened him, and he had run—run like a hare, in fact, and then sat down upon his form to think. The dogs had not stood upon ceremony, so he didn't choose to stand upon forms, but sat down comfortably.

He twitched his ears, and scratched his wig, and thought.

"And I won't put up with it—*there*," said he, aloud. "It's only cowardice putting up with things. I'll get some fellows to help me, and we'll hunt the dogs."

At that moment he heard a sound.

"Wow! bow, wow, wow!" barked some dog, a little way off.

The Hare jumped up again, and flew off as quick as his legs would carry him. After running some distance, he sat down again, but this time he found neither forms nor ceremonies.

But he found something that was better. A gun and a sportsman's bag were lying near, and he eyed them.

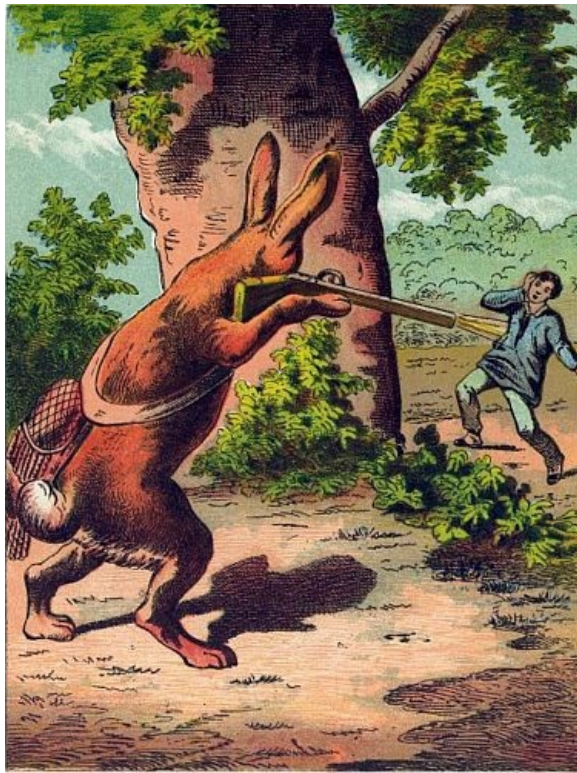
"I wonder if that gun would go off if I touched it!" he said to himself.

He walked round and round it, and then cautiously pawed it. No: it didn't seem to have the least idea of going off.

Then he lifted it up, and grew quite bold.

"I wonder if I could shoot anything?" thought he.

He aimed at a bird, and brought it down.



"Bravo, bravo, bravo!" cried he. "I'll take this gun, and then if anybody tries to torment or to catch me, I'll—I'll kill them."

He hung the bag round his waist, and put the gun on his shoulder, then walked off to his home. On the way, a boy ran at him, and cried "Bo!" but he just pointed the gun, and the boy ran away.

The Hare lived all by himself, but he was very comfortable. Nobody could bother him, and he would have been quite content only for the men and the dogs.

Every day he practised with his gun till he got to be very skilful.

"Just let them come along
And they shall all soon see,
That they're all in the wrong
To plague and bother me.

Although I'm but a hare,
I think I'm very smart,
And can—let them beware—
Right well take my own part."

So he sang, as he sat one day polishing up his gun.

As he was busily at work, he heard a noise, and cocked his ear. Tramp, tramp, tramp, came along some one—a man. It was a poacher, who said to himself he was going to catch a fine fat Hare. The man cast an eye round, but the Hare hid, and watched.

Then the man stole nearer, and peeped round a tree.

"Aha!" said the Hare. "You want to catch me, and eat me, don't you? But I am going to catch you, and boil you for my supper."

The man only laughed, for it was preposterous the idea of a Hare catching a man, instead of a man catching a hare.

And the Hare just cocked his gun, put it to his shoulder, and fired. Then he did kill the poacher, and took him home, and stewed him with mushrooms for supper.



THE STRONG MAN AND THE INVALID

"WHERE'S the good of going on grumble, grumble, grumble, all the day long?" said the strong Man

to the Invalid. "Why, you get petted and have extra nice things to eat, beautiful bunches of grapes, and boiled chickens, and I don't know what."

"If you were *me*, you would not talk like that," said the Invalid, in a poor sick weak voice. "I'd eat dry bread, and never ask to be petted at all if I were strong, like you."

The Strong Man laughed, as if he didn't believe the Invalid.

"I have to work hard all day, and nobody seems to care a bit whether I'm tired or not," said he. "But if you only have a finger ache, everybody is running about trying to find something to do you good. And they come and read to you, and bring you flowers, and—and—"

"You just take my place for a day or two, and see how you'd like it," said the Invalid.

"Um—well, I shouldn't like to be ill, you know," said the Strong Man. "I shouldn't like to lie in bed, nor have the doctor coming to see me, because he'd give me nasty stuff to take."

"I'll be your doctor," said the Invalid. "But you must lie in bed. Come, take my place."

The Strong Man was ashamed to refuse.

"Well, now you are comfortable, I suppose," said the Invalid, tucking him in. "You must try to doze a little."



"But I'm not sleepy," said the Strong Man.

"You'll soon be tired, and go to sleep," said the Invalid. "I'm going away, but shall be back in an hour or two."

When he went away, the place seemed dreadfully dull. Not a sound was to be heard except the barking of a dog in a farm-yard near, and the cluck cluck of some hens.

"Dear, dear," said the Strong Man, "this is very tiresome."

Presently an old lady looked in.

"Poor dear, poor dear," said she, "I will read a nice book to you."

So she sat down and read out of a book. But the Strong Man didn't care about the book, and he thought the old lady stupid.

Then she went away, and by-and-by, a kind old gentleman came in with some chicken, and a glass of wine, and some beautiful white bread.

"Here," said he, "Take this, it will do you good."

But the Strong Man didn't feel hungry, and he was tired and cross by this time, so he wouldn't have any of it. Then some more people came in,

and talked to him, and told him the Invalid had gone to see the reapers, and tried to be kind to him. Then at last everybody stole away on tiptoe, and left him alone.

Then the Invalid came back. But by that time the Strong Man had had quite enough of being shut up in a sick room, so he jumped up, and ran to the door.

"I see you are not much to be envied," said he to the Invalid. "I don't think I shall ever envy anybody again so long as I have health and strength."

THE KITE'S LITTLE GAME

THE Kite laughed and chuckled to himself until his paper fairly crackled.

"We shall have such a game," said he to his paper Tails.

"We mostly do," squeaked the Tails.

There were eighteen of them, and they were all very frisky.

The Kite first winked one eye, then the other, then winked both together.

I'm afraid he was rather a vulgar sort of a Kite, but he was very jolly. His eyes were inclined to be goggly, yellow round the outside, with red in the middle. He was not a particularly good-looking Kite—in fact, he was really ugly—but he was very funny, and loved a joke.

The string suddenly wakened up out of a nap, hearing talk going on, "Eh, what's that?" said he.

"Don't know," said the Tails.

The Kite laughed again, and shook his round ears, and showed all his teeth in one wide grin. "We'll have a game this afternoon," said he, once more.

"Oh," said the String. "We mostly do."

The Kite stuck up his pointed chin, and shook his red paper beard. "I mean a different sort of game to what *you* mean," said he. "You mean, we have a game when young Walter takes us out. But I don't mean *that*."

"Then what *do* you mean?" said the String, who didn't care about guessing.

"When he takes us out, we have to go where *he* likes, and fly when he chooses us to fly," said the Kite. "Now *I* mean, we'll fly young Walter."

"Eh?" said the String.

The String was rather sleepy-headed, and didn't take in new ideas very quickly. He was so astonished now that he unrolled himself several yards, and wriggled about round the Kite, to look at him, as if he must be out of his mind.

"Eh?" said all the Tails, after a flutter of surprise. But they thought it was a joke, and that the Kite only meant to be funny. The Kite straightened himself, and looked very important. "When I say a thing, I mean it," said he, in a dignified manner.

"Well, but—" said one Tail, timidly.

"*Well*, but what?" snapped the Kite. "You don't know what you're talking about. I say we'll fly—"

At that minute up came Walter. He took hold of the Kite, and was winding up the String, when the Kite said—

"Master Walter, let's fly *you* to day!"

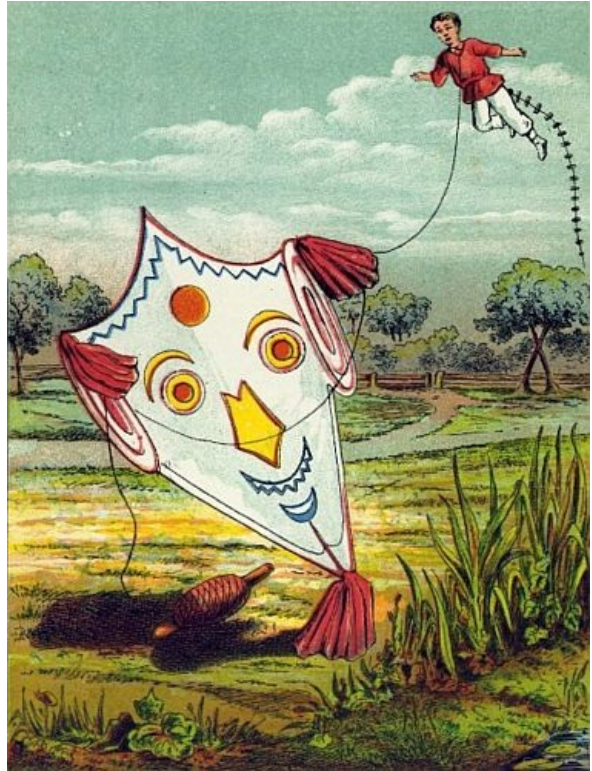
Walter stared and laughed.

"You couldn't," said he. "You're only made of paper."

"Let us try," said the Kite.

"I mustn't go far, then," said Walter, "because my mother would wonder where I was."

So the String was tied about Walter, and up he flew. It was very jolly, and he flew here and there like a bird. The Kite and the String were delighted, and the Tails kept on a chatter, chatter, chatter, like eighteen little magpies all in a row. But the Kite found it hard work after a time. He had to mind the string, and watch lest Walter should tumble down, and keep on doing this and doing that, instead of pleasantly fluttering about. He got cross and grumpy at last. "I think the old way's the best," said he. "Next time I'll go up. Old ways are best, after all."



THE BIRDS AND THE FISHES.

I think you will own
That it is very rare
To see fishes and frogs
Sail about in the air,

While the birds and the poultry
Are swimming about
Like so many mackerel
Or pikes, sprats, or trout,

In old times, the fishes,
And birds, were content
To remain all their lives
In their *own* element.

Things are different now:
They have changed the old times,
Turned the world topsy-turvy,
With no reasons or rhymes.

But I think you'll agree
It is simply absurd
For a fish to pretend
He is just like a bird.

But for birds to be fishes
Is really as bad:
One would fancy they all
Had surely gone mad.

For fishes cold water,
For birds a warm nest,
Of all places, truly,
Is *the* very best.



THE WONDERFUL SHOW.

ONE fine summer's afternoon, the Lion went trotting home in high good humour. As he went along, he kept muttering and grinning to himself, as if mightily pleased. When he got home, he banged at the door of his den with his tail. A Lion's tail is very strong and hard, you know, stronger and harder than any bell rope. The Lioness, his wife, was out at the back, combing out the manes of her young Lions, but presently she came and opened the door.

"My dear," cried the Lion, "*such* a piece of news!"

"Oh, indeed?" said the Lioness. "Have you found some travellers to eat?"

"Better than *that*," said the Lion, all a-glow, rubbing his paws.

"Oh, in-*deed*," said the Lioness, smiling. "Then it must be very good indeed."

"Yes," said the Lion. "Just guess, my love."

"How *can* I guess? I never was good at guessing. Besides, you could tell me quicker than I could guess," said the Lion's wife.

"How clever you are," said the Lion, putting his tawny head on one side, and looking admiringly at his queen. "Perhaps telling *is* the quickest way after all. Well—" Then he stopped, as if to tantalize.

"Well—what? How tiresome you are," said the Lioness.

"They have brought a cageful of humans to the town, and all the Beasts and all the Birds are going to see the show."

"*What!*" cried the Lioness, so astonished that she could hardly believe her ears.

The Lion skipped right round the parlour three times, snapping his claws like castanets. "Yes," said he, gleefully, "they used to lock *us* up, and let people pay to see us, and call us Wild Beasts, and Carnivora, and all sorts of ugly names. But times are changed. I wonder how they'll like it? We'll take our little beasts of children to see the show."

"You *shouldn't* call the little ducks Beasts," said the Lioness. "I wonder you don't call them a parcel of Cubs."

"Well, they *are* Beasts and Cubs, ain't they?" said the Lion.

"Well, never mind, I won't have them spoken of like that," said his wife. "When will you take me and the darling pets to see this wonderful show?"

"Come now," said the Lion, jingling his money in the purse he carried in the end of his tail.

"Oh, I'm not dressed," said the Lioness.

"You never are," said the Lion.

"That's true," said his wife. "Well, here! children! come along and see the Tame Humans."

The young cubs came rolling in, all tumbling over one another, like jolly little brutes as they were, and set up a wild roar of delight at hearing they were going out for the day. When they got half way, the Lion suddenly stopped and considered.

"I think," said he, "as we are going to change places with the humans, we ought to have all the fine things they used to have, so we'll buy some clothes."

"All right, my dear," said the Lioness.



So they went into a shop, which they found belonged to a very civil elephant. They were quickly fitted out with nice suits, and then trotted contentedly on. A large crowd of beasts and birds was going the same way, and at the door it was hard to get in. The greatest excitement prevailed—which means, you know, that people—animals, I mean—were laughing and talking, and wondering, and squeezing, and pushing, and treading on one another's toes, and saying "Where are you shoving to?" and "There's plenty of room," and "Don't be disagreeable," and "Don't lose your temper, pray," and asking questions, and all that kind of thing. The Lion and his wife were afraid to take in the children, so left them outside with an old Cow, who was herself too frightened to venture, and too fat to squeeze through the throng. Inside, the animals were all staring their hardest. The humans in the cages didn't at all relish being shown, and were very cross. A Wolf with a long stick was telling about all their ways, and poking them up to make them roar. One young man in a blue coat howled with rage, until a good-natured old Rhinoceros, with a red shawl, threw him a bun. He was so ungrateful as to kick it out of his cage, which offended the old Rhinoceros, as you may imagine.

Bear to the Lion, chuckling.

"Quite time too," answered the Lion.

"Times are changed, ain't they?" said a jolly old

The Ostrich craned his long neck, and stared as hard as he could, as did all the animals. The Lioness was very well pleased, but she hurried out to see after her children, while the Lion stayed to have a good look. In fact, there never had been such a sight seen in Beastland before, and I don't suppose there ever will be such a one again.



THE UNKIND TREES.

"You know it's ridiculous, and we mustn't put up with it any longer," said the Plane Tree. He wasn't called the Plane Tree because he was not good looking, but because he always spoke his mind.

"That's what *I* say," grumbled the Elm.

"To be sure," cried the Oak, in a deep, deep, deep voice—you would have fancied it came out of his boots. But I forgot: of course Oaks don't wear boots—but that does not signify.

The Aspen and the Sycamore sighed, and shook their leaves, and looked wise.

The Chestnut and the Beech whispered to one another, and waved their boughs indignantly.

"Yes," said the Poplar, a tall, straight, stiff tree, with a squeaky voice, "I *do* think it's a shame the Wood-cutters should be allowed to come here and cut us up whenever they choose. The Government, or the Parish, or the Local Authorities, or—or—*somebody*, ought to hinder them."

"Everybody encourages them to do it," said the Box Tree, angrily. The Box Tree was rather fond of fighting, and that's how he came by his name.

"I know what we ought to do," said the Birch, "Whip them."

"Chop them up," cried the Plane Tree, who was fond of carpentry.

The trees all fluttered their leaves. They were rather frightened at the ideas of the Birch and Plane.

"Well," growled the Oak. But he couldn't think of anything to say, so was obliged to stop.

The Ivy had not said a word, but listened to everything. Now she lifted up her head, and spoke—so softly that it seemed as if the summer wind was rustling through her leaves.

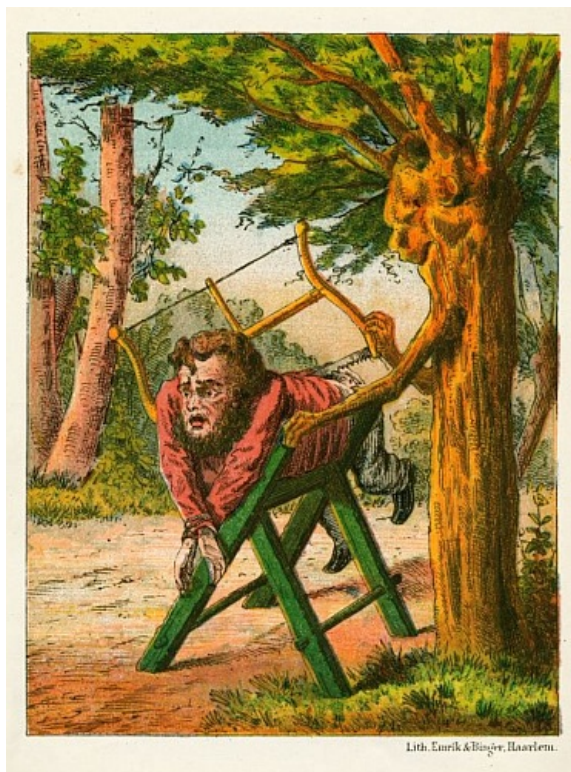
"I think," said the gentle Ivy—and though she spoke so sweetly, her voice could be heard by every tree—"I think when there are so many branches to spare, and when it is an improvement to the trees to be lopped and pruned a little bit, it is foolish to object. And when we know the poor wood-cutters make their living by cutting wood in the forest, and when poor children are often shivering in the winter for want of fire, it is selfish to grumble about a few fagots of wood."

There was a deep stillness. Not a word did any tree speak, till the Elm said, with a bit of a sneer, "Ivy does not know what she is talking about."

"She means well," said the Cedar, "but she does talk nonsense." "So she does," murmured some other trees.

Ivy hung her head, and heard with grief and displeasure that the very next wood-cutter who came through the forest should be chopped up, as an example. In the afternoon, Hans came along, singing gaily to himself. He looked about, and noticed some branches that might be cut off without spoiling the trees, for he loved the trees, and would not have hurt them for the world. But as he laid down his saw on his wooden horse, it was snatched by the Birch with its long arms, and he felt himself whipped up.

"Oh, oh, oh," cried Hans.



"Ho, ho, ho," cried the trees, maliciously.

Ivy covered herself with her own leaves, for she could not bear to see so sad a sight, and she cried. So Hans was cut up, and his poor children had nobody to earn any money to buy them food, for their mother was dead. And the wood-cutters were afraid to come near the forest, lest they should be served like Hans. And what happened? Why, there was nobody to prune the trees, and they grew so thick that their branches all got entangled and twisted, and they smothered one another.

Transcriber's Notes:

Obvious punctuation errors repaired.

The remaining corrections made are indicated by dotted lines under the corrections. Scroll the mouse over the word and the original text will appear.

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