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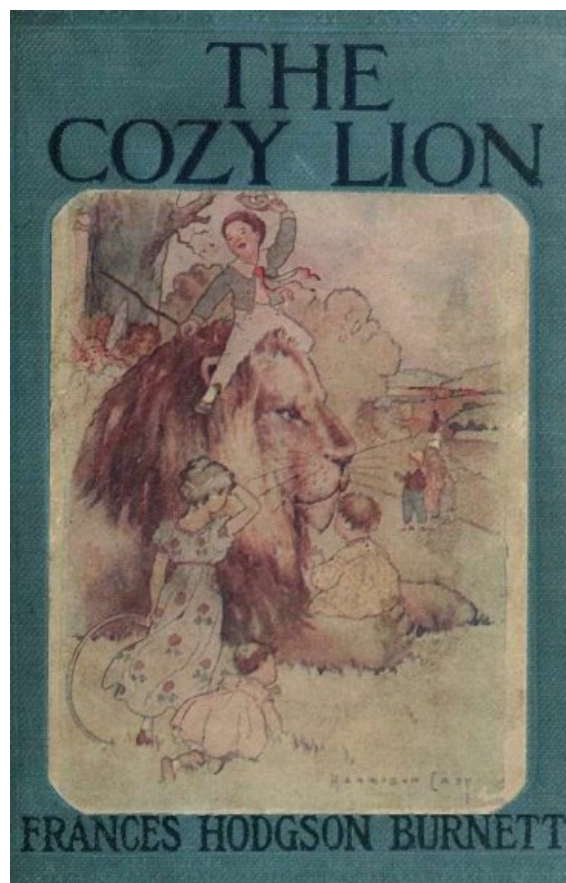
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE COZY LION: AS TOLD BY QUEEN CROSSPATCH ***





"That was the beginning of the most splendid fun
a picnic ever had."

The Cozy Lion

As told by Queen
Crosspatch

By

Frances Hodgson Burnett

Author of "Little Lord Fauntleroy,"

With Illustrations by Harrison Cady



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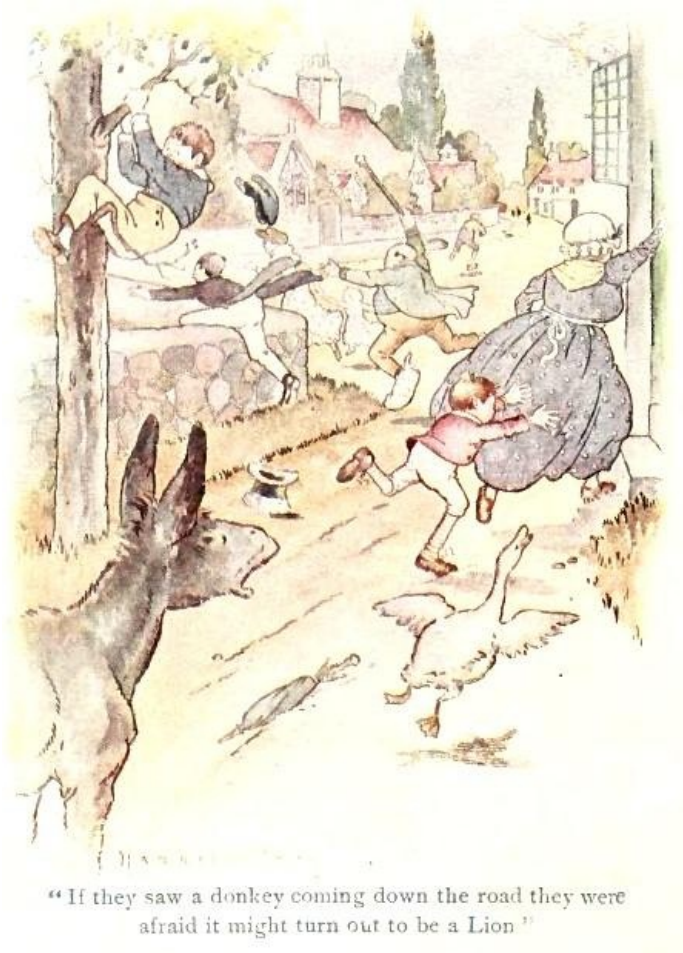
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I AM very fond of this story of the Cozy Lion because I consider it a great credit to me. I reformed that Lion and taught him how to behave himself. The grown-up person who reads this story aloud to children MUST know how to Roar.



“If they saw a donkey coming down the road they were afraid it might turn out to be a Lion.”

THE COZY LION

I SHALL never forget the scolding I gave him to begin with. One of the advantages of being a Fairy even quite a common one is that Lions can't bite you. A Fairy is too little and too light. If they snap at you it's easy to fly through their mouths, and even if they catch you, if you just get behind their teeth you can make them so uncomfortable that they will beg you to get out and leave them in peace.

Of course it was all the Lion's fault that I scolded him. Lions ought to live far away from people. Nobody likes Lions roaming about—particularly where there are children. But this Lion said he wanted to get into Society, and that he was very fond of children— little fat ones between three and four. So instead of living on a desert, or in a deep forest or a jungle he took the large Cave on the Huge Green Hill, only a few miles from a village full of the fattest, rosiest little children you ever saw.

He had only been living in the Cave a few days, but even in that short time the mothers and fathers had found out he was there, and everybody who could afford it had bought a gun and snatched it up even if they saw a donkey coming down the road, because they were afraid it might turn out to be a Lion. As for the mothers, they were nearly crazy with fright, and dare not let their children go out to play and had to shut them up in top rooms and cupboards and cellars, they were so afraid the Lion might be hiding behind trees to jump out at them. So everything was beginning to be quite spoiled because nobody could have any fun.

Of course if they had had any sense and believed in Fairies and had just gone out some moonlight night and all joined hands and danced slowly around in a circle and sung:

Fairies pink and Fairies rose
Fairies dancing on pearly toes
We want you, Oh! we want you!
Fairy Queens and Fairy slaves
Who are not afraid of Lions' Caves
Please to come to help us,

then it would have been all right, because we should have come in millions, especially if they finished with this verse:

Our troubles we can never tell
But if *you* would come it would all be well
Par-tic-u-lar-ly Silverbell.



“When I got to the Cave, the Lion was sitting outside his door and he was crying ”

But they hadn't sense enough for that—of course they hadn't—*of course they hadn't!* Which shows what loonies people are.

But you see I am much nicer than *un-fairy* persons, even if I have lost my nice little, pink little, sweet little Temper and if I am cross. So when I saw the children fretting and growing pale because they had to be shut up, and the mothers crying into their washtubs when they were washing, until the water slopped over, I made up my mind I would go and talk to that Lion myself in a way he wouldn't soon forget.

It was a beautiful morning, and the Huge Green Hill looked lovely. A shepherd who saw me thought I was a gold and purple butterfly and threw his hat at me—the idiot! Of course he fell down on his nose— and very right and proper too.

When I got to the Cave, the Lion was sitting outside his door and he was crying. He was one of these nasty-tempered, discontented Lions who are always thinking themselves injured; large round tears were rolling down his nose and he was sniffing. But I must say he was handsome. He was big and smooth and had the most splendid mane and tail I ever saw.



“ Then he opened his mouth and roared and
roared and ROARED ”

He would have been like a King if he had had a nicer expression. But there he sat sniffing.

"I'm so lonely," he said. "Nobody calls. Nobody pays me any attention. And I came here for the Society. No one is fonder of Society than I am."

I sat down on a flowering branch near him and shouted at him, "What's the use of Society when you eat it up?" I said.

He jumped up and lashed his tail and growled but at first he could not see me.

"What's it for *but* to be eaten up?" he roared. "First I want it to entertain me and then I want it for dessert. Where are you? Who are you?"

"I'm Queen Crosspatch—Queen Silverbell as was," I said. "I suppose you have heard of *me*?"

"I've heard nothing good," he growled. "A good chewing is what *you* want!"

He *had* heard something about me, but not enough. The truth was he didn't really believe in Fairies—which was what brought him into trouble.

By this time he had seen me and he was ignorant enough to think that he could catch me, so he laid down flat in the thick, green grass and stretched his big paws out and rested his nose on them, thinking I would be taken in and imagine he was going to sleep. I burst out laughing at him and swung to and fro on my flowery branch.



"He jumped up and lashed his tail?"

"Do you want to eat me?" I said. "You'd need two or three quarts of me with sugar and cream—like strawberries."
That made him so angry that he sprang roaring at my tree and snapped and shook it and tore it with his claws. But I flew up into the air and buzzed all about him and he got furious—just furious. He jumped up in the air and lashed his tail and *thrashed* his tail and **CRASHED** his tail, and he turned round and round and tore up the grass.
"Don't be a silly," I said. "It's a nice big tufty sort of tail and you will only wear it out."



"He was too frightened to hit anything"

So then he opened his mouth and roared and roared. And what do you suppose *I* did? I flew right into his mouth. First I flew into his throat and buzzed about like a bee and made him cough and cough and cough—but he couldn't cough me up. He coughed and he houghed and he woughed; he tried to catch me with his tongue and he tried to catch me with his teeth but I simply made myself tinier and tinier and got between two big fierce white double ones and took one of my Fairy Workers' hammers out of my pocket and hammered and hammered and hammered until he began to have such a jumping toothache that he ran leaping and roaring down the Huge Green Hill and leaping and roaring down the village street to the dentist's to get some toothache drops. You can just imagine how all the people rushed into their houses, and how the mothers screamed and clutched their children and hid under beds and tables and in coalbins, and how the fathers fumbled about for guns. As for the dentist, he locked his door and bolted it and barred it, and when he found *his* gun he poked it out of the window and fired it off as fast as ever he could until he had fired fifty times, only he was too frightened to hit anything. But the village street was so full of flashes and smoke and bullets that Mr. Lion turned with ten big roars and galloped down the street, with guns fired out of every window where the family could afford to keep a gun.

When he got to his home in the Huge Green Hill, he just laid down and cried aloud and screamed and kicked his hind legs until he scratched a hole in the floor of his cave.



“‘I am a poor, sensitive, lonely orphan
Lion,’ he said”

"Just because I'm a Lion," he sobbed, "just because I'm a poor, sensitive, helpless, orphan Lion nobody has one particle of manners. They won't even sell me a bottle of toothache drops. And I wasn't going to touch that dentist—until he had cured me and wrapped up the bottle nicely in paper. Not a touch was I going to touch him until he had done that."

He opened his mouth so wide to roar with grief that I flew out of it. I had meant to give him a lesson and I'd given him one. When I flew out of his mouth of course his beautiful double teeth stopped aching. It was such a relief to him that it made quite a change in his nature and he sat up and began to smile. It was a slow smile which spread into a grin even while the tear-drops hung on his whiskers.

"My word! How nice," he said. "It's stopped."

I had flown to the top of his ear and I shouted down it.

"I stopped it," I said. "And I began it. And if you don't behave yourself, I'll give you earache and that will be worse."

Before I had given him his lesson he would have jumped at me but now he knew better. He tried to touch my feelings and make me sorry for him. He put one paw before his eyes and began to sniff again.

"I am a poor sensitive lonely orphan Lion," he said.

"You are nothing of the sort," I answered very sharply. "You are not poor, and heaven knows you are not sensitive, and you needn't be lonely. I don't know whether you are an orphan or not—and I don't care. You are a nasty, ill-tempered, selfish, biting, chewing thing."

"There's a prejudice against Lions," he wept. "People don't like them. They never invite them to children's parties—nice little fat, tender, children's parties—where they would enjoy themselves so much—and the refreshments would be just

what they like best. They don't even invite them to grown-up parties. What I want to ask you is this: has *one* of those villagers called on me since I came here—even a tough one?"

"Nice stupid they would be if they did," I answered.

He lifted up his right paw and shook his head from side to side in the most mournful way.



“‘I do not know the answer to that riddle,’ he said.”

"There," he said. "You are just as selfish as the rest. Everybody is selfish. There is no brotherly love or consideration in the world. Sometimes I can scarcely bear it. I am going to ask you another question, and it is almost like a riddle. Who did you ever see try to give pleasure to a Lion?"

I got into his ear then and shouted down it as loud as ever I could.

"Who did you ever see a *Lion* try to give pleasure to?" I said. "You just think over that. And when you find the answer, tell it to *me*."

I don't know whether it was the newness of the idea, or the suddenness of it, but he turned pale. Did you ever see a Lion turn pale? I never did before and it was funny. You know people's skins turn pale but a Lion's skin is covered with hair and you can't see it, so his hair has to turn pale or else you would never know he was turning pale at all. This Lion's hair was a beautiful tawny golden color to begin with and first his whiskers turned white and then his big mane and then his paws and then his body and last his long splendid tail with the huge fluffy tuft on the end of it. Then he stood up and his tail hung down and he said weakly:

"I do not know the answer to that riddle. I will go and lie down in my Cave. I do not believe I have one friend in this world." And he walked into his Cave and laid down and sobbed bitterly.

He forgot I was inside his ear and that he carried me with him. But I can tell you I had given him something to think of and that was what he needed. This way of feeling that nothing in the world but a Lion has a right to be comfortable—just because you happen to be a Lion yourself—is too *silly* for anything.

I flew outside his ear and boxed it a little.

"Come!" I said. "Crying won't do you any good. Are you really lonely—really—really—really so that it gives you a hollow feeling?"

He sat up and shook his tears away so that they splashed all about— something like rain.

"Yes," he answered, "to tell the truth I am—I *do* like Society. I want friends and neighbors—and I don't only want them for dessert, I am a sociable Lion and am affectionate in my nature—and clinging. And people run as fast as they can the moment they hear my voice." And he quite choked with the lump in his throat.

"Well," I snapped, "what else do you expect?" That overcame him and he broke into another sob. "I expect kindness," he said, "and invitations to afternoon teas—and g-g-arden parties—"



"Kindness and afternoon teas would have made the Cozy Lion happy"

"Well you won't get them," I interrupted, "If you don't change your ways. If you *eat* afternoon teas and garden parties as though they were lettuce sandwiches, you can't expect to be invited to them. So you may as well go back to the desert or the jungle and live with Lions and give up Society altogether."

"But ever since I was a little tiny Lion—a tiny, tiny one—I have wanted to get into Society. I *will* change—I will! Just tell me what to do. And do sit on my ear and talk down it and stroke it. It feels so comfortable and friendly."

You see he had forgotten that he had meant to chew me up. So I began to give him advice.

"The first things you will have to do will be to change your temper and your heart and your diet, and stop growling and roaring when you are not pleased."

"I'll do that, I'll do that," he said ever so quickly. "You don't want me to cut my mane and tail off, do you?"

"No. You are a handsome Lion and beauty is much admired." Then I snuggled quite close up to his ear and said down it, "Did you ever think how *nice* a Lion would be if—if he were much nicer?"

"N-no," he faltered.

"Did you ever think how like a great big cozy lovely dog you are? And how nice your big fluffy mane would be for little girls and boys to cuddle in, and how they could play with you and pat you and hug you and go to sleep with their heads on your shoulder and love you and adore you—if you only lived on Breakfast Foods and things— and had a really sweet disposition?"

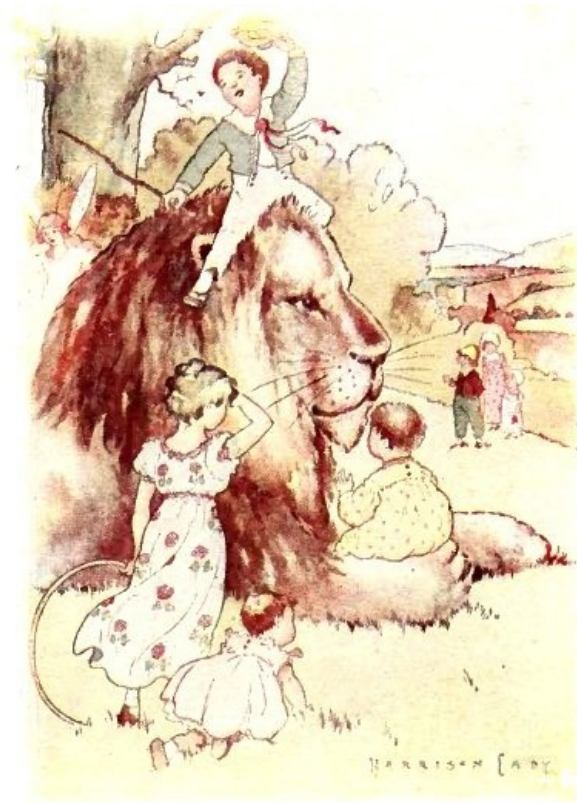
He must have been rather a nice Lion because that minute he began to look "kind of smiley round the mouth and teary round the lashes"—which is part of a piece of poetry I once read.

"Oh! Aunt Maria!" he exclaimed a little slangily. "I never thought of that: it *would* be nice."

"A Lion could be the coziest thing in the world—if he would," I went on.

He jumped up in the air and danced and kicked his hind legs for joy.

"Could he! Could he! Could he?" he shouted out. "Oh! let me be a Cozy Lion! Let me be a Cozy Lion! Hooray! Hooray! Hooray! I would like it better than being invited to Buckingham Palace!"



“Little children would just *flock* to see you
and play with you,” I said.”

"Little children would just *flock* to see you and play with you," I said. "And then if they came, their mothers and fathers couldn't be kept away. They would flock too."

The smile of joy that spread over his face actually reached his ears and almost shook me off.

"That *would* be Society!" he grinned.

"The very best!" I answered. "Children who are *real* darlings, and not imitations, come first, and then mothers and fathers—the rest just straggle along anywhere."

"When could it begin? When could it begin?" he panted out.

"Not," I said very firmly, "until you have tried some Breakfast Food!"

"Where shall I get it? Oh! Where? Oh! Where?"

"I will get it, of course," was my answer.

Then I stood up on the very tip of his ear and put my tiny golden trumpet to my lips. (And Oh! how that Lion did roll up his eyes to try to catch a glimpse of me!) And I played this tune to call my Fairy Workers:

I'm calling from the Huge Green Hill,
Tira-lira-lira,
The Lion's Cave is cool and still.
Tira-lira-lira.



"Every Fairy Worker with a little sack on his green back"

The Lion wishes to improve
 And show he's filled with tender love
 And *not* with Next Door Neighbor.
 The Lion wishes to be good.
 To fill him *full* of Breakfast Food
 Will aid him in his labor.

Bring Breakfast Food from far and near
 —He'll eat a dreadful lot I fear.
 Oh! Tira-lira-lira-la
 And Tira-lira-ladi.

A Lion learning to be good
 Needs Everybody's Breakfast Food.
 You workers bring it—Tira-la
 And Tira-lira-ladi.

Then the Fairy Workers came flying in clouds. In three minutes and three quarters they were swarming all over the Huge Green Hill and into the Lion's Cave, every one of them with a little sack on his green back. They swarmed here and they swarmed there. Some were cooks and brought tiny pots and kettles and stoves and they began to cook Breakfast Foods as fast as lightning. The Lion sat up. (I forgot to say that he had turned un-pale long before this and was the right color again.) And his mouth fell wide open, just with surprise and amazement. What amazed him most was that one out of all those thousands of little Workers in their green caps and smocks was the least bit afraid of him. Why, what do you think! My little Skip just jumped up and stood on the end of the Lion's nose while he asked me a question. You never saw anything as funny as that Lion looking down the bridge of his nose at him until he squinted awfully. He was so interested in him.

"Does he take it with sugar and cream, your Royal Silver-cross-bell-ness?" Skip asked me, taking off his green cap and bowing low.

"Try him with it in both ways," I said.

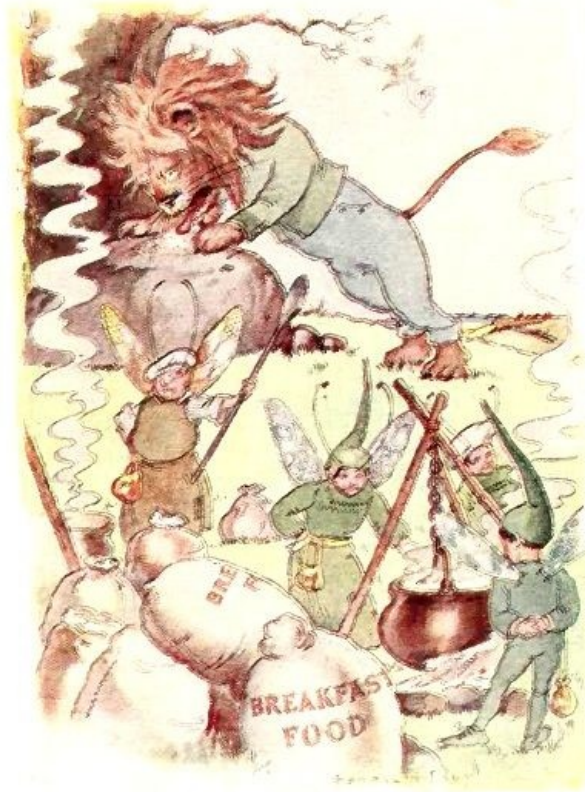
When the Workers had made a whole lot of all the kinds together they poured it into a hollow stone and covered it with sugar and cream.

"Ready, your Highnesses!" they all called out in chorus.

"Is that it?" said the Lion. "It looks very nice. How does one eat it? Must I bite it?"

"Dear me, no," I answered. "Lap it."

So he began. If you'll believe me, he simply reveled in it. He ate and ate and ate, and lapped and lapped and lapped and he did not stop until the hollow stone was quite clean and empty and his sides were quite swelled and puffed out. And he looked as pleased as Punch.



“He ate and ate and ate, and lapped and lapped and lapped”

"I never ate anything nicer in my life," he said. "There was a Sunday School picnic I once went to."

"A Sunday School picnic!" I shouted so fiercely that he blushed all over. The very tuft on his tail was deep rose color. "Who invited you?"

He hung his head and stammered.

"I was not exactly *invited*," he said, "and didn't go *with* the school to the picnic grounds—but I should have come back with it— at least some of it—but for some men with guns!"

I stamped on his ear as hard as ever I could.

"Never let me hear you mention such a subject again," I said. "Nobody in Society would speak to you if they knew of it!"

He quite shook in his shoes—only he hadn't any shoes.

"I'll never even think of it again," he said. "I see my mistake. I apologize. I do indeed!"

Now what *do* you suppose happened at that very minute? If I hadn't been a Fairy I should have been frightened to death. At that very minute I heard little children's voices singing like skylarks farther down on the Huge Green Hill—actually little children a whole lot of them!



“It sounds like a Sunday school pic—”
the Lion began to say.”

“It—it sounds like the Sunday School pic——” the Lion began to Say—and then he remembered he must not mention the subject and stopped short.

“Has your heart changed?” I said to him. “Are you sure it has?”

“I think it has,” he said meekly, “but even if it hadn't, ma'am, I'm so *full* of Breakfast Food I couldn't eat a strawberry.”

It happened that I had my heart glass with me—I can examine hearts with it and see if they have properly changed or not.

“Roll over on your back,” I said. “I will examine your heart now.”

And the little children on the Huge Green Hill side were coming nearer and nearer and laughing and singing and twittering more like skylarks than ever.

He rolled over on his back and I jumped off his ear on to his big chest. I thumped and listened and looked about until I could see his great heart and watch it beating—thub—thub—thub—thub. It actually had changed almost all over except one little corner and as the children's voices came nearer and nearer and sounded like whole nests full of skylarks let loose, even the corner was changing as fast as it could. Instead of a big ugly dark red fiery heart, it was a soft ivory white one with delicate pink spots on it.

“It has changed!” I cried out. “You are going to be a great big nice soft cozy thing, and you couldn't eat a picnic if you tried— and you will never try.”

He was all in a flutter with relief when he got up and stood on his feet.

And the laughing little voices came nearer and nearer and I flew to the Cave door to see what *was* happening.

It was really a picnic. And goodness! how dangerous it would have been if it had not been for me. That's the way I am always saving people, you notice.

The little children in the village had grown so tired of being shut up indoors that about fifty of them who were too little to know any better had climbed out of windows, and slipped out of doors, and crawled under things, and hopped over them, and had all run away together to gather flowers and wild Peachstrawberines, and lovely big yellow Plumricots which grew thick on the bushes and in the grass on the Huge Green Hill. The delicious sweet pink and purple Ice-cream-grape-juice Melons hung in clusters on trees too high for them to reach, but they thought they would just sit down under their branches and look at them and sniff and hope one would fall.



“The little children in the village had grown tired of being shut up indoors.”

And there they came—little plump girls and boys in white frocks and with curly heads—not the least bit afraid of anything: tumbling down and laughing and picking themselves up and laughing, and when they got near the Cave, one of my Working Fairies, just for fun, flew down and lighted on one little girl's fat hand. She jumped for joy when she saw him and called to the others and they came running and tumbling to see what she had found.

"Oh! Look—look!" she called out. "What is he! What is he! He isn't a bird—and he isn't a bee and he isn't a butterfly. He's a little teeny, weeny-weeny-weeny-weeny wee, and he has little green shoes on and little green stockings, and a little green smock and a little green hat and he's laughing and laughing."

And then a boy saw another in the grass—and another under a leaf, and he shouted out, too.

"Oh! here's another—here's another." And then the Workers all began to creep out of the grass and from under the leaves and fly up in swarms and light on the children's arms and hands and hats and play with them and tickle them and laugh until every child was dancing with fun, because they had never seen such things before in their lives.



“One of my Working Fairies, just for fun, flew down and alighted on a little girl’s fat hand”

I flew back to the Lion. He was quite nervous.

"It is a picnic," I said. "And now is your chance. Can you purr?"

"Yes, I can." And he began to make a beautiful purring which sounded like an immense velvet cat over a saucer of cream.

"Come out then," I ordered him. "Smile as sweetly as you can and don't stop purring. Try to look like a wriggling coaxing dog—I will go first and prevent the children from getting frightened."

So out we went. I was riding in his ear and peeping out over the top of it. I did not let the children see me because I wanted them to look at the Lion and at nothing else.

What I did was to make them remember in a minute all the nicest Lions they had ever seen in pictures or in the circus. Many of them had never seen a Lion at all and the few who had been to a circus had only seen them in big cages behind iron bars, and with notices written up, "Don't go near the Lions."

When my Lion came out he was smiling the biggest, sleepest, curliest, sweetest smile you ever beheld and he was purring, and he was softly waving his tail. He stood still on the grass a moment and then lay down with his big head on his paws just like a huge, affectionate, coaxing dog waiting and begging somebody to come and pet him. And after staring at him for two minutes, all the children began to laugh, and then one Little *little* girl who had a great mastiff for a friend at home, suddenly gave a tiny shout and running to him tumbled over his paws and fell against his mane and hid her face in it, chuckling and chuckling.

That was the beginning of the most splendid fun a picnic ever had. Every one of them ran laughing and shouting to the Lion. It was such a treat to them to actually have a Lion to play with. They patted him, they buried their hands and faces in his big mane, they stroked him, they scrambled up on his back, and sat astride there. Little boys called out, "Hello, Lion! Hello, Lion!" and little girls kissed his nice tawny back and said "Liony! Liony! Sweet old Liony!" The Little Little Girl who had run to him first settled down right between his huge front paws, resting her back comfortably against his chest, and sucked her thumb, her blue eyes looking very round and big. She *was* comfy.

I kept whispering down his ear to tell him what to do. You see, he had never been in Society at all and he had to learn everything at once.

"Now, don't move suddenly," I whispered. "And be sure not to make any loud Lion noises. They don't understand Lion language yet."

"But oh! I am so happy," he whispered back, "I want to jump up and roar for joy."

"Mercy on us!" I said. "That would spoil everything. They'd be frightened to death and run away screaming and crying and never come back."

"But this little one with her head on my chest is such a *sweetie!*" he said. "Mayn't I just give her a little lick—just a little one?"

"Your tongue is too rough. Wait a minute," I answered.



“My Fairy Workers were swarming all about.”

My Fairy Workers were swarming all about. They were sitting in bunches on the bushes and hanging in bunches from branches, and hopping about and giggling and laughing and nudging each other in the ribs as they looked on at the Lion and children. They were as amused as they had been when they watched Winnie sitting on the eggs in the Rook's nest. I called Nip to come to me.

"Jump on to the Lion's tongue," I said to him, "and smooth it off with your plane until it is like satin velvet—not silk velvet, but satin velvet."

The Lion politely put out his tongue. Nip leaped up on it and began to work with his plane. He worked until he was quite hot, and he made the tongue so smooth that it was *quite* like satin velvet.

"Now you can kiss the baby," I said.

The Little Little Girl had gone to sleep by this time and she had slipped down and lay curled up on the Lion's front leg as if it was an arm and the Lion bent down and delicately licked her soft cheek, and her fat arm, and her fat leg, and purred and purred.

When the other children saw him they crowded round and were more delighted than ever.

"He's kissing her as if he was a mother cat and she was his kitten," one called out, and she held out her hand. "Kiss me too. Kiss me, Liony," she said.

He lifted his head and licked her little hand as she asked and then all the rest wanted him to kiss them and they laughed so that the Little Little Girl woke up and laughed with them and scrambled to her feet and hugged and hugged as much of the Lion as she could put her short arms round. She felt as if he was her Lion.

"I love—oo I love oo," she said. "Tome and play wiv us."

He smiled and smiled and got up so carefully that he did not upset three or four little boys and girls who were sitting on his back. You can imagine how they shouted with glee when he began to trot gently about with them and give them a ride. Of course everybody wanted to ride. So he trotted softly over the grass first with one load of them and then with another. When each ride was over he lay down very carefully for the children to scramble down from his back and then other ones scrambled up. The things he did that afternoon really made me admire him. A Cozy Lion is nicer to play with than anything else in the world. He shook Ice-cream-grape-juice Melons down from the trees for them.



"He shook ice-cream-grape-juice Melons down from the trees for them."

He carried on his back to a clear little running brook he knew, every one who wanted a drink. He jumped for them, he played tag with them and when he caught them, he rolled them over and over on the grass as if they were kittens; he showed them how his big claws would go in and out of his velvet paws like a pussy cat's. Whatever game they played he would always be "It," if they wanted him to. When the tiniest ones got sleepy he made grass beds under the shade of trees and picked them up daintily by their frocks or little trousers and carried them to their nests just as kittens or puppies are carried by their mothers. And when the others wanted to be carried too, he carried them as well.

The children enjoyed themselves so much that they forgot about going home altogether. And as they had laughed and run about every minute and had had *such* fun, by the time the sun began to go down they were all as sleepy as could be. But even then one little fellow in a white sailor suit asked for something else. He went and stood by the Lion with one arm around his neck and the other under his chin. "Can you roar, old Lion?" he asked him. "I am sure you can roar."

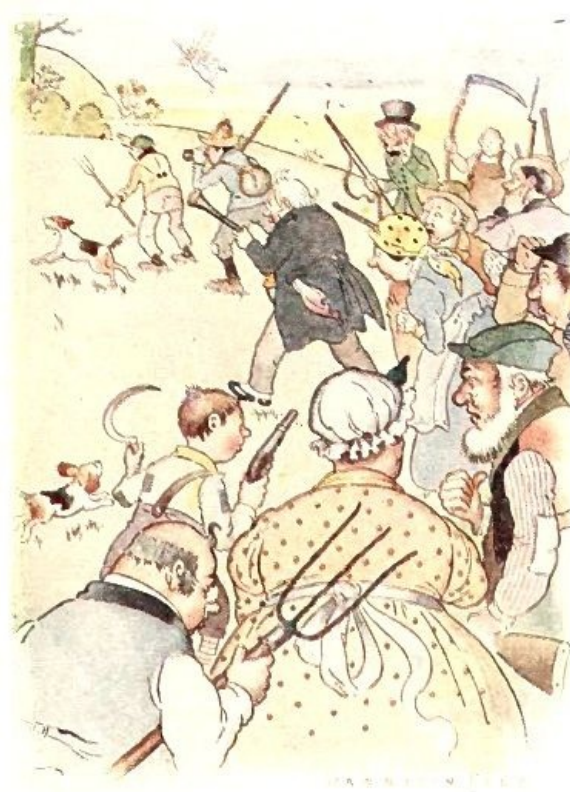
The Lion nodded slowly three times.

"He says 'Yes—Yes,'" shouted everybody, "Oh! do roar for us as loud as ever you can. We won't be frightened the least bit."

The Lion nodded again and smiled. Then he lifted up his head and opened his mouth and roared and *roared* and ROARED. They were not the least bit frightened. They just shrieked and laughed and jumped up and down and made him do it over and over again.

Now I will tell you what had happened in the village.

At first when the children ran away the mothers and fathers were all at their work and did not miss them for several hours. It was at lunch time that the grown-ups began to find out the little folks were gone and then one mother ran out into the village street, and then another and then another, until all the mothers were there, and all of them were talking at once and wringing their hands and crying. They went and looked under beds, and tables and in cupboards, and in back gardens and in front gardens, and they rushed to the village pond to see if there were any little hats or bonnets floating on the top of the water. But all was quiet and serene and nothing was floating anywhere—and there was not one sign of the children.



“At last the fathers armed themselves and began to march all together toward the Huge Green Hill”

When the fathers came the mothers all flew at them. You see it isn't any joke to lose fifty children all at once.

The fathers thought of the Lion the first thing, but the mothers had tried not to think of him because they couldn't bear it.

But at last the fathers got all the guns and all the pistols and all the iron spikes and clubs and scythes and carving knives and old swords, and they armed themselves with them and began to march all together toward the Huge Green Hill. The mothers *would* go too and *they* took scissors and big needles and long hat pins and one took a big pepper-pot, full of red pepper, to throw into the Lion's eyes.

They had so much to do before they were ready that when they reached the Huge Green Hill the sun was going down and what do you think they heard?

They heard this—

"Ro-o-a-a-arh! Ro-o-a-a-rh! Ro-o-a-a-arrh!" almost as loud as thunder. And at the same time they heard the shouts and shrieks of the entire picnic.

But *they* did not know that the picnic was shouting and screaming for joy.

So they ran and ran and ran—and stumbled and scrambled and hurried and scurried and flurried faster and faster till they had scrambled up the Huge Green Hill to where the Lion's Cave was and then they gathered behind a big clump of bushes and the fathers began to cock their guns and the mothers to sharpen their scissors and hat pins.

But the mother with the pepper-pot had nothing to sharpen, so she peeped from behind the bushes, and suddenly she cried out, "Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Look! Look! And don't fire a single gun, on any account."

And they all struggled to the front to peep. And *this*—thanks to Me—*was what they saw!*

On the green places before the Lion's Cave on several soft heaps of grass, the tiniest children were sitting chuckling or sucking their thumbs. On the grass around them a lot of others were sitting or standing or rolling about with laughter and kicking up their heels— and right in front of the Cave there stood the Lion looking absolutely angelic. His tail had a beautiful blue sash on it tied just below the tuft in a lovely bow, he had a sash round his waist, and four children on his back. The Little Little Girl was sitting on his mane which was stuck full of flowers, and she was trying to put a wreath on the top of his head and couldn't get it straight, which made him look rather rakish. On one side of him stood the little boy in the sailor suit, and on the other stood a little girl, and each one held him by the end of a rope of pink and white wild roses which they were going to lead him with.

The mother of the Little Little Girl could not wait one minute longer. She ran out towards her, calling out:—

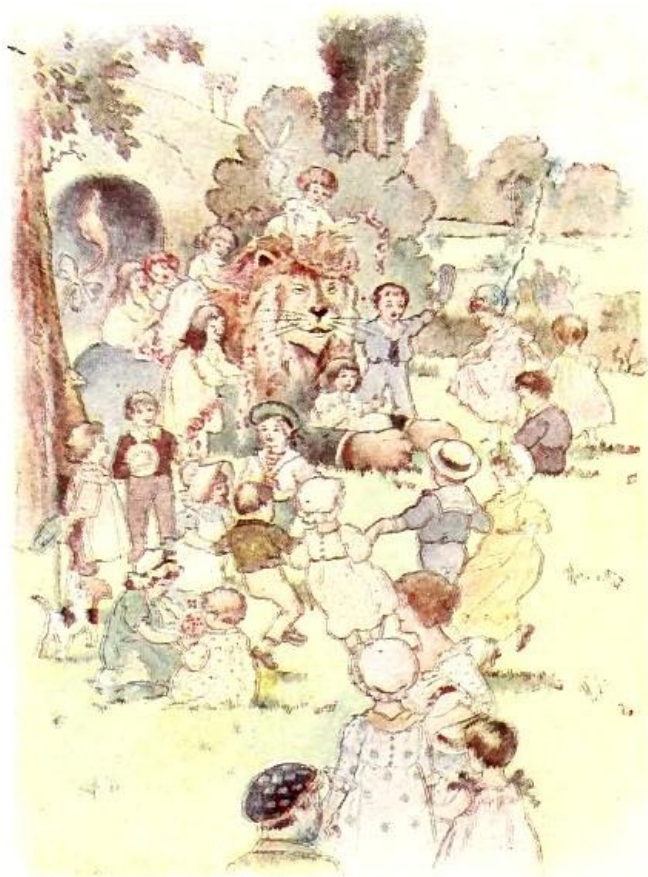
"Oh! Betsy-petsy! Oh! Betsy-petsy! Mammy's Lammy-girl!"

And then the other mothers threw away their scissors and hat pins and ran after her in a crowd.

What that clever Lion did was to carefully lie down without upsetting anybody and stretch out his head on his paws as if he was a pet poodle, and purr and purr like a velvet cat.

The picnic simply shouted with glee. It was the kind of picnic which is always shouting with glee.

"Oh! Mother! Mother! Father! Father!" it called out. "Look at our Lion! Look at our Lion! We found him ourselves! He's ours."



"Oh, Mother! Mother! Father! Father! Look at our Lion! We found him ourselves! He's ours!"

And the sailor boy shouted,

"He'll roar for me, Mother!"

And the rest cried out one after another,

"He'll sit up and beg for me!"

"He'll carry me by my trousers!"

"He can play tag!"

"He'll show you his claws go in and out!"

"Mother, ask him to take you on his back to get a drink."

"May he go home and sleep with me, Mother?"

It was like a bedlam of skylarks let loose this time, and the Lion had to do so many tricks that only determination to show how Cozy he was kept up his strength. He was determined to prove to the Fathers and Mothers that he *was* Cozy.

And he did it.

From that time he was the Lion of the Village. He was invited everywhere. There never was a party without him. Birthday parties, garden parties, tea parties, wedding parties—he went to them all. His life was one round of gaiety.

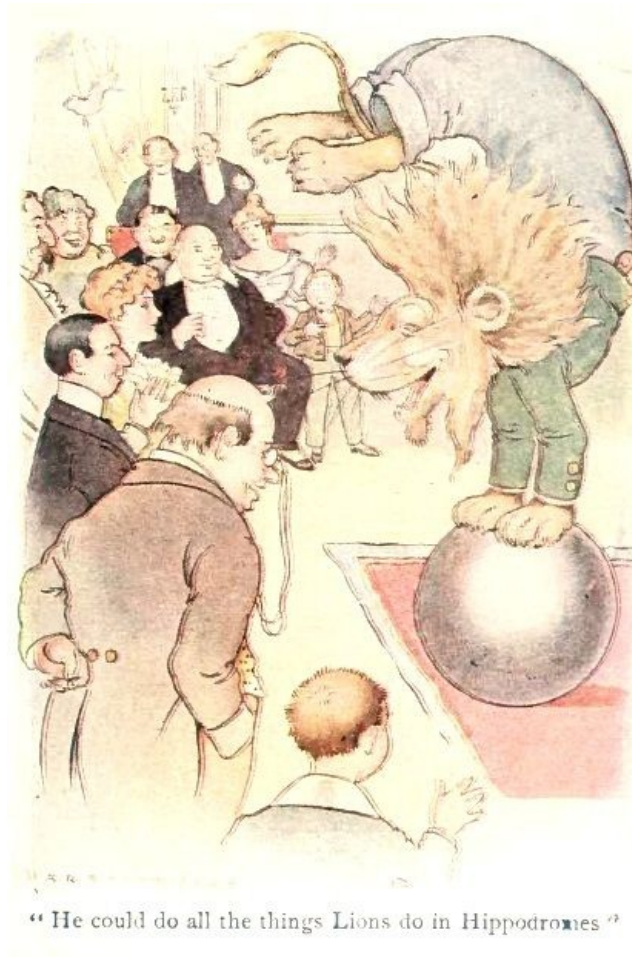
He became *most* accomplished. He could do all the things Lions do in Hippodromes—and a great many more. The Little Little Girl gave him a flute for a present and he learned to play on it beautifully. When he had an evening at home he used to sit at his Cave door and play and sing. First he played and then he sang this—

My Goodness Gracious Me!
This *is* Socier-tee!
My Goodness Gracious Mercy Me!
This *is* Socier-ier-tee!
It *is* Socier-tee!

He had composed it himself.



The next story I shall tell you is about my Spring Cleaning. That will show you how I have to work when the winter is over and how, if it were not for Me, things would never be swept up and made tidy for the summer. The primroses and violets would NEVER be wakened, or the Dormice called up, or anything. It IS a busy time, I can tell you.



“ He could do all the things Lions do in Hippodromes ”

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE COZY LION: AS TOLD BY QUEEN CROSSPATCH ***

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