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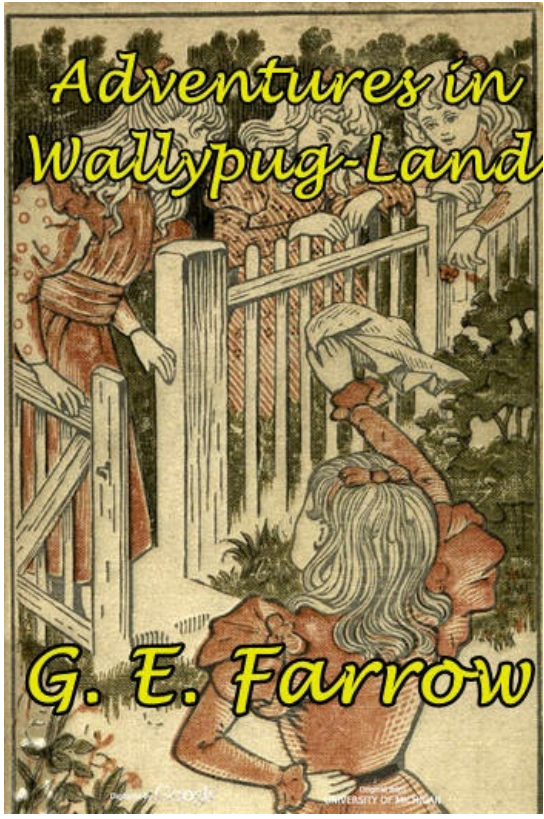
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So soon as we got into the street, we met the Turtle and the Pelican, walking arm-in-arm, and each smoking a cigarette.— [Page 151](#).

Wallypugland.

[3]

ADVENTURES IN WALLYPUG-LAND

BY G. E. FARROW
AUTHOR OF "THE WALLYPUG OF WHY,"
"THE WALLYPUG IN LONDON," ETC.

WITH FIFTY-SIX ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALAN WRIGHT

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DEDICATED
TO
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ADVENTURES IN WALLYPUG-LAND.

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PREFACE.

MY DEAR LITTLE FRIENDS,

I have again to thank you for the many kind and delightful letters which I have received from all parts of the world, and I cannot tell you how happy I am to find that I have succeeded so well in pleasing you with my stories.

What am I to say to the little boy who wrote, and begged "that, if the Wallypug came to stay with me again, would I please invite him too?" or to the other dear little fellow who came to me with tears in his eyes, to tell me that some superior grown-up person had informed him that "there never was a Wallypug, and it was all just a pack of nonsense"; that "Girlie never went to Why at all, and that in fact there was no such place in existence"?

[10]

I can only regretfully admit that, sooner or later as we grow up to be men and women, there are bound to be many fond illusions which are one by one ruthlessly dispelled, and that many of the dreams and thoughts which, in our younger days, we cherish most dearly, the hard, matter-of-fact world will always persist in describing as "a pack of nonsense." However, for many of us fortunately, this tiresome time has not yet arrived, and for the present we will refuse to give up our poor dear Wallypug—for whom I declare I have as great an affection and regard, as the most enthusiastic of my young readers.

You will see that in the following story I have described my own experiences during a recent visit to the remarkable land over which His Majesty reigns as a "kind of king", and I may tell you that, amongst all of the extraordinary creatures that I met there, there was not one who expressed the slightest doubt as to the reality of what was happening; while for my own part, I should as soon think of doubting the existence of the fairies themselves, as of the simple, kind-hearted, little Wallypug.

[11]

There now! I hope that I have given quite a clear and lucid explanation, and one which will prevent you from being made unhappy by any doubts which may arise in your mind as to the possibility, or probability, of this story. Please don't forget to write to me again during the coming year.

Believing me to be as ever,
Your affectionate Friend,
G. E. FARROW.

[12]

CONTENTS.

ADVENTURES IN WALLYPUGLAND.	
CHAP.	PAGE
I. How I Went to Why	13
II. A Strange Welcome	29
III. A Terrible Night	40
IV. Late for Breakfast	50
V. The Trial	62
VI. His Majesty is Deposed	74
VII. Foiled	83
VIII. The Little Blue People	94
IX. The Wallypug Recovers his Crown	103
X. The Home of Ho-Lor	116
XI. The Why and Wer-Har-Wei Railway	131
XII. Back Again at Why	145
XIII. A New State of Affairs	155
XIV. "Good for the Complexion"	165
XV. "Wallypug's Blush Limited"	175
XVI. "Au Revoir"	187
 THE BLUE DWARFS	 197



CHAPTER I.

HOW I WENT TO WHY.



MR. NOBODY.

FOR some time past I have been the guest of his Majesty the Wallypug at his palace in the mysterious kingdom of Why—a country so remarkable that even now I am only just beginning to get used to my strange surroundings and stranger neighbors. Imagine, if you can, a place where all of the animals not only talk, but take an active part in the government of the land, a place where one is as likely as not to receive an invitation to an evening party from an ostrich, or is expected to escort an elderly rhinoceros in to dinner; where it is quite an everyday occurrence to be called upon by a hen with a brood of young chickens just as you are sitting down to tea, and be expected to take a lively interest in her account of how the youngest chick passed through its latest attack of the “pip.”

[14]

In such a country, the unexpected is always happening, and I am continually being startled in the streets at being addressed by some dangerous-looking quadruped, or an impertinent bird, for I must say that as a class the birds are the most insolent of all the inhabitants of this strange land. There is in particular one old crow, a most objectionable personage, and a cockatoo who is really the most violent and ill-natured bird that I have ever been acquainted with.

[15]

She takes a very active interest in Parliamentary affairs, and is a strong supporter of woman’s wrongs.

“Every woman has her wrongs,” she declares, “and if she hasn’t she ought to have.”

You will naturally wish to know how I reached this strange country, and will, no doubt, be surprised when I tell you how the journey was accomplished.

One morning a few weeks since, I received a letter from his Majesty the Wallypug asking me to visit him at his palace at Why, in order to assist him in establishing some of our social customs and methods of government, which he had so greatly admired during his visit to England, and which he was desirous of imitating in his own land. A little packet was enclosed in the letter, bearing the words, “The shortest way to Why. This side up with *anxiety*.” “Well,” I thought, “I suppose they mean ‘This side up with *care*,’” and was proceeding very carefully to open the packet when a gust of wind rushed in at the window, and blowing open the paper wrapper, scattered the contents—a little white powder—in all directions. Some particles flew up into my eyes, and caused them to smart so violently that I was obliged to close them for some time till the pain had gone, and when I opened them again, what do you think? I was no longer in my study at home, but out on a kind of heath in the brilliant sunshine, and apparently miles from a house of any kind. A finger-post stood a little way in front of me, and I could see that three roads met just here. Anxiously I hurried up to the post to see where I was. One arm pointed, “To Nowhere.” “And I certainly don’t want to go there,” I thought; the other one was inscribed, “To Somewhere,” which was decidedly a little better, but the third one said, “To Everywhere Else.”

[16]

[17]



"THAT'S NOT MUCH USE."

"And, good gracious me," I thought, "that's not much use, for I don't know in the least now which of the last two roads to take." I was puzzling my brain as to what was the best thing to be done, when I happened to look down the road leading to "Nowhere," and saw a curious-looking little person running towards me. He had an enormous head, and apparently his arms and legs were attached to it, for I could see no trace of a body. He was flourishing something in his hand as he ran along, and as soon as he came closer I discovered that it was his card which he handed to me with a polite bow and an extensive smile, as soon as he got near enough to do so.

[18]

*"MR. NOBODY,
No. 1 NONESUCH-STREET,
NOWHERE,"*

is what I read.

The little man was still smiling and bowing, so I held out my hand and said:

"How do you do, sir? I am very pleased to make your acquaintance. Perhaps you can be good enough to tell me—"

The little man nodded violently.

"To tell me where I am," I continued.

Mr. Nobody looked very wise, and after a few moments' thought smiled and nodded more violently than ever, and simply pointed his finger at me.

[19]

"Yes, yes," I cried, rather impatiently; "of course I know that I'm here, but what I want to know is, what place is this?"

The little fellow knitted his brows, and looked very thoughtful, and finally staring at me sorrowfully, he slowly shook his head.

"You don't know?" I inquired.

He shook his head again.

"Dear me, this is very sad; the poor man is evidently dumb," I said, half aloud.

Mr. Nobody must have heard me, for he nodded violently, then resuming his former smile, he bowed again, and turning on his heels ran back in the direction of Nowhere, stopping every now and then to turn around and nod and smile and wave his hand.

"What a remarkable little person," I was just saying, when I heard a voice above my head calling out:

[20]

"Man! man!"

I looked up and saw a large crow perched on the finger-post. He had a newspaper in one claw, and was gravely regarding me over the tops of his spectacles.

"Well! what are you staring at?" he remarked as soon as he

caught my eye.

"Well, really," I began.

"Haven't you ever seen a crow before?" he interrupted.

"Of course I have," I answered rather angrily, for my surprise at hearing him talk was fast giving way to indignation at his insolent tone and manner.

"Very well, then, what do you want to stand there gaping at me in that absurd way for?" said the bird. "What did he say to you?" he continued, jerking his head in the direction in which Mr. Nobody had disappeared.

"Nothing," I replied.

"Very well, then, what was it?" he asked.

"What do you mean?" said I.

"Why, stupid, you said Nobody and nothing, didn't you, and as two negatives make an affirmative that means he must have said something."

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand," I said.

"Ignorant ostrich!" remarked the crow contemptuously.

"Look here," I cried, getting very indignant, "I will not be spoken to like that by a mere bird!"

"Oh, really! Who do you think you are, pray, you ridiculous biped? Where's your hat?"

I was too indignant to answer, and though I should have liked to have asked the name of the place I was at, I determined not to hold any further conversation with the insolent bird, and walked away in the direction of "Somewhere," pursued by the sound of mocking laughter from the crow.

[21]

[22]



"WHERE'S YOUR HAT?"

I had not gone far, however, before I perceived a curious kind of carriage coming towards me. It was a sort of rickshaw, and was drawn by a kangaroo, who was jerking it along behind him. A large ape sat inside, hugging a carpet bag, and holding on to the dashboard with his toes.

"Let's pass him with withering contempt," I heard one of them say.

"All right," was the reply. "Drive on."

"I say, Man," called out the Ape, as they passed, "we're not taking the slightest notice of you."

"Oh, aren't you? Well, I'm sure I don't care," I replied rather crossly.

The Kangaroo stopped and stared at me in amazement, and the Ape got out of the rickshaw and came towards me, looking very indignant.

"Do you know who I am?" he asked, striking an attitude.

"No, I don't," I replied, "and what's more, I don't care."

"But I'm a person of consequence," he gasped.

"You are only an ape or a monkey," I said firmly.

[23]

[24]

"Oh! I can clearly see that you don't know me," remarked the Ape pityingly. "I'm Oom Hi."

"Indeed," I said unconcernedly. "I am afraid I've never heard of you."

"Never heard of Oom Hi," cried the Ape. "Why, I am the inventor of Broncho."

"What's that?" I asked. "Good gracious! what ignorance," said the Ape; "here, go and fetch my bag," he whispered to the Kangaroo, who ran back to the rickshaw and returned with the carpet bag.

"This," continued Oom Hi, taking out a bottle, "is the article; it is called 'Broncho,' and is excellent for coughs, colds, and affections of the throat; you will notice that each bottle bears a label stating that the mixture is prepared according to my own formula, and bears my signature; none other is genuine without it. The Wallypug, when he returned from England and heard that I had invented it, declared that I must be a literary genius."



"There," continued Oom Hi, taking out the bottle, "is the article; it is called 'Broncho.'"—[Page 24](#).

Wallypugland.

"A what!" I exclaimed.

[25]

"A literary genius," repeated the Ape, smirking complacently.

"Why, what on earth has cough mixture to do with literature?" I inquired.

"I don't know, I'm sure," admitted Oom Hi, "but the Wallypug said that in England any one who invented anything of that sort was supposed to possess great literary talent."

"The Wallypug!" I exclaimed, suddenly remembering. "Am I anywhere near his Kingdom of Why, then?"

"Of course you are; it's only about a mile or two down the road. Are you going there?" inquired Oom Hi.

"Well, yes," I answered. "I've had an invitation from his Majesty, and should rather like to go there, as I'm so near."

"His Majesty; he—he—he, that's good," laughed the Kangaroo. "Do you call the Wallypug 'his Majesty'?" he asked.

[26]

"Of course," I replied, "he is a king, isn't he?"

"A *kind* of king," corrected Oom Hi. "You don't catch us calling him 'your Majesty,' I can tell you though, one animal is as good as another here, and if anything, a little better. If you are going to Why, we may as well go back with you, and give you a lift in the rickshaw."

"You're very kind," I said, gratefully.

"Not at all, not at all; jump in," said Oom Hi.

"Hold on a moment," said the Kangaroo. "It's *his* turn to pull, you know."

"Of course, of course," said the Ape, getting into the vehicle; "put him in the shafts!"

"What do you mean?" I expostulated.

"Your turn to pull the rickshaw, you know; we always take turns, and as I have been dragging it for some time it's your turn now." [27]

"But I'm not going to pull that thing with you two animals in it. I never heard of such a thing," I declared.

"Who are you calling an animal?" demanded the Kangaroo, sulkily. "You're one yourself, aren't you?"

"Well, I suppose I am," I admitted. "But I'm not going to draw that thing, all the same."

"Oh, get in, get in; don't make a fuss. I suppose I shall have to take a turn myself," said Oom Hi, grasping the handles, and the Kangaroo and myself having taken our seats we were soon traveling down the road. The Kangaroo turned out to be a very pleasant companion after all, and when he found out that I came from England told me all about his brother, who was a professional boxer, and had been to London and made his fortune as the Boxing Kangaroo. He was quite delighted when I told him that I had seen notices of his performance in the papers. We soon came in sight of a walled city, which Oom Hi, turning around, informed me was Why. And on reaching the gate he gave the rickshaw in charge of an old turtle, who came waddling up, and each of the animals taking one of my arms, I was led in triumph through the city gates to the Wallypug's palace, several creatures, including a motherly-looking goose and a little gosling, taking a lively interest in my progress, while a giraffe in a very high collar craned his neck through a port-hole to try and get a glimpse of us as we passed under the portcullis. [28]



CHAPTER II.

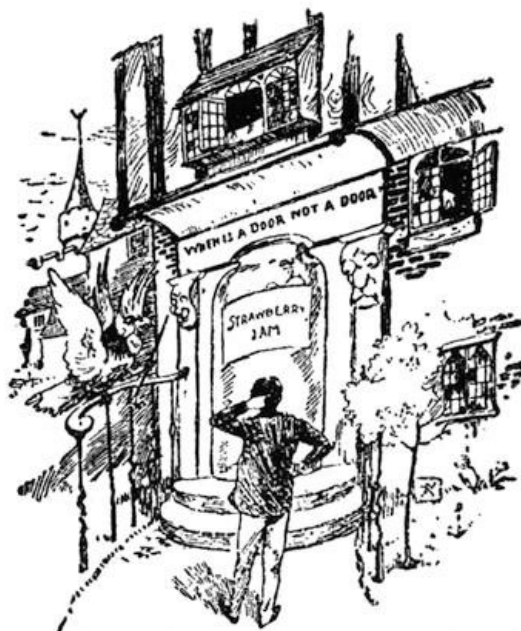
A STRANGE WELCOME.

E soon reached the Wallypug's palace, which stood in a large park in the center of the city of Why. I had been very interested in noticing the curious architecture in the streets as we passed along, but was scarcely prepared to find the palace such a very remarkable place. It was a long, low, rambling building, built in a most singular style, with all sorts of curious towers and gables at every point.

[30]

Oom Hi and the Kangaroo saw me as far as the entrance, and then took their departure, saying that they would see me again another day, and I walked up the stone steps, to what I imagined to be the principal door, alone. To my great surprise, however, I found that, instead of being the way in, it was nothing more or less than a huge jam-pot, with a very large label on it marked "Strawberry Jam," while above it were the words, "When is a door not a door?" "When is a door not a door?" I repeated, vaguely conscious of having heard the question before.

[31]



"SOLD AGAIN! SERVE YOU RIGHT!"

"Ha—ha—ha," laughed a mocking voice at the bottom of the steps, and looking down I saw an enormous Cockatoo with a Paisley shawl over her shoulders and walking with the aid of a crutched stick.

"Sold again, were you? Serve you right," she cried. "When is a door not a door? Pooh! fancy not knowing that old chestnut. Why! when it's a jar, of course, stupid. Bah!"

"It's a very absurd practical joke, that's all that I can say," I remarked, crossly, walking down the steps again. "Perhaps you can tell me how I am going to get into this remarkable place."

"Humph! Perhaps I can and perhaps I won't," said the Cockatoo. "I dare say it's a better place than you came from, anyhow. You're not the first man that has come down here with his superior airs and graces, grumbling and finding fault with this, that, and the other; but we'll soon take the conceit out of you, I can tell you. Where's your hat?"

[32]

This was the second creature that had asked me this question, and really they threw so much scorn and contempt into the inquiry that one would imagine that it was a most disgraceful offense to be without a head covering.

I thought the most dignified thing to do under the circumstances was to take no further notice of the bird, and was quietly walking

away when the Cockatoo screamed out again, "Where's your hat? Where's your hat? Where's your hat?" each time louder and louder, till the last inquiry ended in a perfect shriek.

"Don't be so ridiculous," I cried. "I've left it at home, if you must know."

[33]

"Down with the hatters!" screamed the Cockatoo irrelevantly, "Down with the Wallypug! Down with men without hats! Down with everybody and everything!" and the wretched bird danced about like a demented fury.

At the sound of all this commotion a number of windows in the upper stories of the palace were thrown open, and curious heads were popped out to see what was the matter. Among them and immediately over my head, I noticed the Doctor-in-Law.

"Oh! it's you, is it, kicking up all this fuss?" he remarked as soon as he recognized me.

"Well, really!" I replied, "I think you might have the politeness to say 'How do you do?' considering that it is some months since we met."

"Oh, do you indeed?" said the Doctor-in-Law, contemptuously. "Well, supposing I don't care one way or another. Where's your hat?"

[34]



"DOWN WITH THE DOCTOR-IN-LAW."

Before I could answer the Cockatoo had screamed out "Down with the Doctor-in-Law!" and the irate little man had replied by throwing a book at her head out of the palace window.



"I saw his Majesty, the Wallypug himself, running across the lawn towards me, with both hands stretched out in welcome."— [Page 35](#).

Wallypugland.

I was thoroughly disgusted at this behavior and at the strange reception that I was receiving, and had fully determined to try and find some way of getting home again, when, happening to turn round, I saw his Majesty the Wallypug himself running across the lawn towards me, with both hands stretched out in welcome, and his kind little face beaming with good nature. [35]

"How d'ye do? How d'ye do?" he cried. "So pleased to see you. Didn't expect you quite so soon, though. Come along—this way." And his Majesty led me to another entrance, and through a large square hall hung with tapestry and many quaint pieces of old-fashioned armor, to a door marked "His Majesty the Wallypug. Strictly private." I noticed, in passing, that the words, "His Majesty" had been partly painted out, and "What cheek!" written above them. Once inside the door, the Wallypug motioned me to a chair, and said, in a mysterious whisper, [36]

"I'm *so* glad you came before *she* returned; there's so much I want to tell you."

"Who do you mean?" I asked.

"Sh—Madame—er, my sister-in-law," he replied, with a sigh.

"Your sister-in-law!" I exclaimed. "Why, I didn't know you were married."

"Neither am I," said his Majesty, with a puzzled frown. "That's the awkward part about it."

"But how on earth can you possibly have a sister-in-law, unless you have a wife or a married brother?" I asked.

"Well, I've never quite been able to understand *how* they make it out," said the poor Wallypug, sorrowfully; "but I believe it is something mixed up with the Deceased Wife's Sister's Bill, and the fact that my uncle, The Grand Mochar of Gamboza, was married twice. Anyhow, when I returned from London I found this lady, who *says* that she is my sister-in-law, established here in the palace; and—and—" his Majesty sank his voice to a whisper, "she rules me with a rod of iron." [37]

I had no time to make further inquiries, for just then the door opened, and a majestic-looking person sailed into the room, and after looking me up and down with elevated eyebrows, pointed her finger at me, and said, in a stern voice:

"And *who* is this person, pray?"

"Oh, this," said his Majesty, smiling nervously, and bringing me forward, "is the gentleman who was so kind to us in London, you know. Allow me to present him, Mr. Er—er——"

"I hope you have not been picking up any undesirable acquaintances, Wallypug," interrupted his Majesty's Sister-in-Law severely. "I don't like the look of him at all."

"I'm sorry, madame, that my appearance doesn't please you," I interposed, feeling rather nettled; "perhaps under the circumstances I had better——"

[38]



"I DON'T APPROVE OF YOU IN THE LEAST," SAID THE SISTER-IN-LAW.

"You had better do as you are bid and speak when you are spoken to," remarked the lady grimly. "Where's your hat?"

[39]

"I haven't one," I replied, rather abruptly, I am afraid, but I was getting quite tired of this continual cross-questioning; "and really I don't see that it's of the slightest consequence," I ventured to add.

"Oh! don't you," said his Majesty's Sister-in-Law, with a sarcastic smile. "Well, that's one of the *many* points upon which we shall disagree. Now, look here, I may tell you at once that I don't approve of you in the least; still, as you are here now you had better remain; but mind, no putting on parts or giving yourself airs and graces, or I shall have something to say to you. Do you understand?" And with a severe glance at me, the lady folded her arms and stalked out of the room, leaving his Majesty and myself staring blankly at one another.

[40]

CHAPTER III.

A TERRIBLE NIGHT.

My reception at Why had been such a very peculiar one that I had fully made up my mind to return home at once, but his Majesty the Wallypug begged me so earnestly to stay with him, at any rate for a few days, that I determined, out of friendship to him, to put up as best I could with that extraordinary person the Sister-in-Law, and the rest of the creatures, and remain, in order to help him if possible to establish his position at Why on a firmer basis.

So I took possession of a suite of rooms in the west wing of the palace, near his Majesty's private apartments, and we spent a very pleasant evening together in my sitting-room, playing draughts till bedtime, when his Majesty left me to myself, promising that he would show me around the palace grounds the first thing in the morning.

[41]

After he had gone, there being a bright wood fire burning in my bedroom, I drew a high-backed easy-chair up to the old-fashioned fireplace, and made myself comfortable for a little while before retiring for the night.

My bedroom was a large, old-fashioned apartment, with a low ceiling and curiously carved oak wainscoting, and I watched the firelight flickering, and casting all sorts of odd shadows in the dark corners, till I must have fallen asleep, for I remember awaking with a start, at hearing a crash in the corridor outside my bedroom door. A muttered exclamation, and a Pelican, carrying a bedroom candlestick marched in, and carefully fastened the door behind him.

"Great clumsy things—I can't think who can have left them there," he grumbled, sitting down and rubbing one foot against the other, as though in pain. And I suddenly came to the conclusion that he must have stumbled over my boots, which I had stood just outside the door, in order that they might be cleaned for the morning.

[42]

The Pelican had not noticed me in my high-backed chair, and, being rather curious to see what he was up to, I kept perfectly still.

Going over to a clothes press, which stood in one corner of the room, the bird drew forth a long white night-gown and a nightcap; these he proceeded solemnly to array himself in, and then, getting up on a chair, he turned back the bedclothes with his enormous beak, and was just about to hop into bed, when I thought that it was time for me to interfere.

"Here! I say, what are you up to?" I called out in a stern voice.



"He turned back the bedclothes with his enormous beak, and was just about to hop into bed."— Page 42.

Wallypugland.

"Oh—h-h! Ah—h-h! There's a man in my room!" screamed the Pelican, evidently greatly alarmed. "Murder! Fire! Police! Thieves!"

[43]

"Hold your tongue!" I commanded. "What do you mean by making all that noise at this time of night, and what are you doing in my room?"

"Your room, indeed!" gasped the bird; "my room you mean, you featherless biped, you!"

"Look here!" I remarked, going up to the Pelican, and shaking him till his beak rattled again. "Don't you talk to me like that, my good bird, for I won't put up with it." You see I was getting tired of being treated so contemptuously by all of these creatures, and was determined to put a stop to it, somehow.

"But it *is* my room. Let me go, I say!" screamed the bird, struggling to get free, and dabbing at me viciously with his great beak.

"It is not your room," I maintained; "and what is more, you are not going to stay here," and I pushed the creature towards the door.

[44]

"We'll soon see all about that," shouted the Pelican, wrenching himself from my grasp, and rushing at me with his beak wide open, and his wings outstretched.

He was an enormous bird, and I had a great struggle with him. We went banging about the room, knocking over the furniture and making a terrible racket. At last, however, I managed to get him near the door, and giving a terrific shove I pushed him outside, and, pulling the door to, quickly turned the key.

I could hear Mr. Pelican slipping and stumbling about on the highly polished floor of the corridor outside, and muttering indignantly. Presently he came to the door, and banging with his beak, he cried, "Look here! this is beyond a joke—let me in, I say—where do you suppose I am going to sleep?"

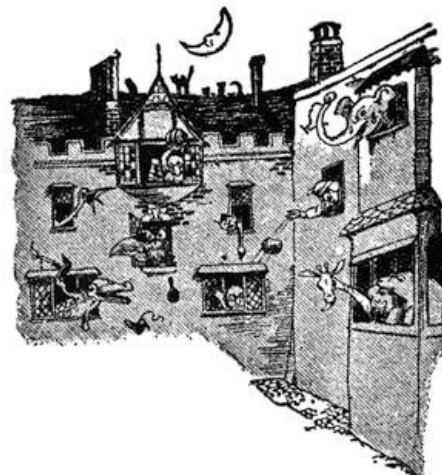
"Anywhere you like except here," I replied, feeling that I had got the best of it. "Go and perch or roost, or whatever you call it, on the banisters, or sleep on the mat if you like—I don't care what you do!"

[45]

"Impertinent wretch!" yelled the bird. "You only wait till the morning. I'll pay you out;" and I could hear him muttering and mumbling in an angry way as he waddled down the corridor to seek some other resting-place. "What ridiculous nonsense it is," I thought, as I tumbled into bed shortly after this little episode; "these creatures giving themselves such airs. No wonder the Wallypug is such a meek little person if he has been subjected to this sort of treatment all his life." And pondering over the best method of altering the extraordinary state of affairs, I dropped off to sleep.

I do not know how long it may have been after this, but a terrific din, this time in the courtyard below my window, caused me once more to jump from my bed in alarm. I could hear a most unearthly yelling going on, a babel of voices, and occasionally a resounding crash as though something hollow had been violently struck.

[46]



HE WAS INTERRUPTED BY A SHOWER OF MISSILES.

Pushing open the latticed windows I saw in the moonlight a little man dressed in a complete suit of armor with an enormous shield, like a dishcover, arranged over his head, playing the guitar, and endeavoring to sing to its accompaniment. He was continually interrupted, however, by a shower of missiles thrown from all of the windows overlooking the courtyard, out of which angry heads of animals and other occupants of the palace were thrust; he was surrounded by a miscellaneous collection of articles which had evidently been thrown at him, and some of them, had it not been for his suit of armor and the erection over his head, would have caused him considerable injury.

[47]

[48]



THE MUSICIAN TOOK TO HIS HEELS AND FLED.

He did not seem to mind them in the least, though, and continued singing amid a perfect storm of boots, brushes, and bottles, as though he was quite accustomed to such treatment: and it was only when an irate figure, which somehow reminded me of his Majesty's Sister-in-Law, clad in white garments and flourishing a pair of tongs, appeared in the courtyard, that he took to his heels and fled, pursued by the white-robed apparition, till both disappeared beneath an archway at the farther end of the courtyard. Most of the windows were thereupon closed, and the disturbed occupants of the palace returned to their rest. I was just about to close my lattice too, when I caught sight of a familiar figure at the adjoining window. It was my old friend A. Fish, Esq.

[49]

"Oh! id's you iz id," he cried. "You *have* cub thed, I heard that you were egspgeded."

"Yes, here I am," I replied. "How are you? How is your cold?"

"Oh, id's quide cured, thags; dote you dotice how butch better I speak?"

"I'm very glad to hear it, I'm sure," I replied, waiving the question and trying to keep solemn. "What's all this row about?"

"Oh! thad's the troubadour, up to his old gabes agaid; he's ad awful dusadce. I'll tell you about hib in the bordig—good dight." And A. Fish, Esq., disappeared from view.

[50]

CHAPTER IV.

LATE FOR BREAKFAST.

I AWOKE very early in the morning, just as it was daylight, and being unable to get to sleep again amid my strange surroundings, I arose and crept down-stairs as noiselessly as possible, intending to go for a long walk before breakfast.

At the bottom of the stairs I came upon a strange-looking white object, which, upon closer inspection, turned out to be the Pelican, asleep on the floor.

He was not sleeping as any respectable bird would have done, with his head tucked under his wing; but was lying stretched out on a rug in the hall, with his head resting on a cushion. His enormous beak was wide open, and he was snoring violently, and muttering uneasily in his sleep.

[51]



THE PELICAN WAS SNORING VIOLENTLY.

I did not disturb him for fear lest he should make a noise; but hurrying past him I made my way to the hall door, which after a little difficulty I succeeded in unfastening. An ancient-looking turtle with a white apron was busily cleaning the steps, and started violently as I made my appearance at the door.

"Bless my shell and fins!" he muttered; "what's the creature wandering about this time of the morning for; they'll be getting up in the middle of the night next. Just mind where you're treading, please!" he called out. "The steps have been cleaned, and I don't want to have to do them all over again."

[52]

I managed to get down without doing much damage, and then remarked pleasantly:

"Good morning; have you—"

"No, I haven't," interrupted the Turtle snappishly; "and what's more, I don't want to."

"What do you mean?" I inquired, in surprise.

"Soap!" was the reply.

"I don't understand you," I exclaimed.

"You're an advertisement for somebody's soap, aren't you?" asked the Turtle.

"Certainly not," I replied, indignantly.

"Your first remark sounded very much like it," said the Turtle suspiciously. "Good morning, have you used—"

"I wasn't going to say that at all," I interrupted. "I was merely going to ask if you could oblige me with a light."

[53]

"Oh, that's another thing entirely," said the Turtle, handing me some matches from his waistcoat pocket, and accepting a cigarette in return. "But really we have got so sick of those advertisement catchwords since the Doctor-in-Law returned from London with agencies for all sorts of things, that we hate the very sound of them. We are continually being told to 'Call a spade a spade,' which will be 'grateful and comforting' to 'an ox in a teacup' who is 'worth a guinea a box,' and who 'won't be happy till he gets it.'"

"It must be very trying," I murmured sympathetically.

"Oh, it is," remarked the Turtle. "Well," he continued in a business-like tone, "I'm sorry you can't stop—good morning."

"I didn't say anything about going," I ejaculated.

"Oh, didn't you? Well, I did then," said the Turtle emphatically. "Move on, please!"

"You're very rude," I remarked.

"Think so?" said the Turtle pleasantly. "That's all right then—good-by," and he flopped down on his knees and resumed his scrubbing.



THE TURTLE FLOPPED DOWN ON HIS KNEES AND RESUMED HIS SCRUBBING.

There was nothing for me to do but to walk on, and seeing a quaint-looking old rose garden in the distance, I decided to go over and explore.

I was walking slowly along the path leading to it, when I heard a curious clattering noise behind me, and turning around I beheld the Troubadour, still in his armor, dragging a large standard rosebush along the ground. [55]

"As if it were not enough," he grumbled, "to be maltreated as I am every night, without having all this trouble every morning. I declare it is enough to make you throw stones at your grandfather."

"What's the matter?" I ventured to ask of the little man.

"Matter?" was the reply. "Why, these wretched rosebushes, they *will* get out their beds at night, and wander about. I happened to leave the gate open last night, and this one got out, and goodness knows where he would have been by this time if I hadn't caught him meandering about near the Palace."

"Why! I've never heard of such a thing as a rosebush walking about," I exclaimed in surprise.



"IN YOU GO!"

"Never heard of a— Absurd!" declared the Troubadour, incredulously. "Of course they do. That's what you have hedges and fences around the gardens for, isn't it? Why, you can't have been in a garden at night-time, or you wouldn't talk such nonsense. All the plants are allowed to leave their beds at midnight. They are expected to be back again by daylight, though, and not go wandering about goodness knows where like this beauty," and he shook the rosebush violently. [56]

"In you go," he continued, digging a hole with the point of his mailed foot, and sticking the rosebush into it.

"Hullo!" he exclaimed, going up to another one, at the foot of which were some broken twigs and crumpled leaves. "You've been fighting, have you? I say, it's really too bad!"

"But what does it matter to you?" I inquired. "It's very sad, no doubt, but I don't see why you should upset yourself so greatly about it." [57]

"Well, you see," was the reply, "I'm the head gardener here as well as Troubadour, and so am responsible for all these things. I do troubling as an extra," he explained. "Three shillings a week and my armor. Little enough, isn't it, considering the risk?"

"Well, the office certainly does not seem overpopular, judging

from last night," I laughed. "Who were you serenading?"

"Oh, any one," was the reply. "I give it to them in turns. If any one offends me in the daytime I pay them out at night, see?"

"I serenaded the Sister-in-Law mostly, but I shall give that up. She doesn't play fair. I don't mind people shying things at me in the least, for you see I'm pretty well protected; but when it comes to chivying me round the garden with a pair of tongs, it's more than I bargained for. Look out! Here comes the Wallypug," he continued.

[58]

Sure enough his Majesty was walking down the path, attended by A. Fish, Esq., who was wearing a cap and gown and carrying a huge book.

"Ah! good morning—good morning," cried his Majesty, hurrying towards me. "I'd no idea you were out and about so early. I'm just having my usual morning lesson."

"Yes," said A. Fish, Esq., smiling, and offering me a fin. "Ever sidse I god rid of by cold I've been teaching the Wallypug elocutiod. We have ad 'our every bordig before breakfast, ad he's geddig on spledidly."

"I'm sure his Majesty is to be congratulated on having so admirable an instructor," I remarked, politely, if not very truthfully.



"His Majesty was walking down the path, attended by A. Fish, Esq., who was wearing a cap and gown and carrying a huge book." — [Page 58](#).

Wallypugland.

"Thags," said A. Fish, Esq., looking very pleased. "I say, Wallypug, recide that liddle thig frob Richard III., jusb to show hib how well you cad do id, will you? You doe thad thig begiddidg 'Ad 'orse, ad 'orse, by kigdob for ad 'orse.'"

[59]

"Yes, go on, Wallypug!" chimed in the Troubadour, indulgently.

"Oh, I don't know," said his Majesty, simpering nervously. "I'm afraid I should break down."

"Doe you wondt, doe you wondt," said A. Fish, Esq. "Cub alog, try id."

So his Majesty stood up, with his hands folded in front of him, and was just about to begin, when a bell in a cupola on the top of the palace began to ring violently.

"Good gracious, the breakfast bell! We shall be late," cried the Wallypug, anxiously grasping my hand and beginning to run towards the palace.

A. Fish, Esq., also shuffled along behind us as quickly as possible, taking three or four wriggling steps, and then giving a funny little hop with his tail, till, puffing and out of breath, we arrived at the palace just as the bell stopped ringing.

[60]

His Majesty hastily rearranged his disordered crown, and led the way into the dining hall.

A turtle carrying a large dish just inside the door whispered warningly to the Wallypug as we entered, "Look out! You're going to catch it," and hurried away.

A good many creatures were seated at the table which ran down the center of the room, and at the head of which his Majesty's Sister-in-Law presided, with a steaming urn before her. The Doctor-in-Law occupied a seat near by, and I heard him remark:

"They are two minutes late, madame. I hope you are not going to overlook it," to which the lady replied, grimly, "You leave that to me."

"Sit there," she remarked coldly, motioning me to a vacant seat, and the Wallypug and A. Fish, Esq., subsided into the two other unoccupied chairs on the other side of the table.

[61]

[62]

CHAPTER V.

THE TRIAL.

FOR a moment nobody spoke. The Wallypug sat back in a huddled heap in his chair, looking up into Madame's face with a scared expression. A. Fish unconcernedly began to eat some steaming porridge from a plate in front of him—and I sat still and waited events.

A band of musicians in the gallery at the end of the hall were playing somewhat discordantly, till Madame turned around and called out in an angry voice:

"Just stop that noise, will you? I can't hear myself speak."

[63]



"STOP THAT NOISE!"

The musicians immediately left off playing with the exception of an old hippopotamus, playing a brass instrument, who being deaf, and very near-sighted, had neither heard what had been said nor observed that the others had stopped. With his eyes fixed on the music stand in front of him, he kept up a long discordant tootling on his own account, gravely beating time with his head and one foot.

[64]

His Majesty's Sister-in-Law turned around furiously once or twice, and then seeing that the creature did not leave off, she threw a teacup at his head, and followed it up with the sugar basin.

The latter hit him, and hastily dropping his instrument, he looked over the top of his spectacles in surprise.

Perceiving that the others had left off playing, he apparently realized what had happened, and meekly murmuring, "I beg your pardon," he leaned forward with one foot up to his ear, to hear what was going on.

"I'm waiting to know what you have to say for yourselves," resumed Madame, addressing the Wallypug and myself.

"The train was late, and there was a fog of the hide," explained A. Fish, Esq., mendaciously, with his mouth full of hot porridge.

[65]

"A likely story!" said the good lady sarcastically. "A very convenient excuse, I must say; but that train's been late too many times recently to suit me. I don't believe a word of what you are saying."

"If I might venture a suggestion," said the Doctor-in-Law, sweetly, "I would advise that they should all be mulcted in heavy fines, and I will willingly undertake the collection of the money for a trifling consideration."

"It's too serious a matter for a fine," said the Madame severely. "What do you mean by it?" she demanded, glaring at me furiously.

"Well, I'm sure we are all very sorry," I remarked, "but I really do not see that being two minutes late for breakfast is such a dreadful affair after all."

"Oh! you don't, don't you?" said the Sister-in-Law, working herself up into a terrible state of excitement; "Well, I do, then. Do you suppose that you are going to do just as you please here? Do you think that I am going to allow myself to be brow-beaten and imposed upon by a mere man——"

"Who hasn't a hat to his back," interposed the Doctor-in-Law, spitefully.

"Hold your tongue," said the Sister-in-Law. "I'm dealing with him now. Do you suppose," she went on, "that I am to be openly defied by a ridiculous Wallypug and a person with a cold in his head?"

"I'b sure I havn'd," declared A. Fish, Esq., indignantly. "By code's beed cured this last bunth or bore."

"Humph, sounds like it, doesn't it?" said the lady, tauntingly. "However, we'll soon settle this matter. We'll have a public meeting, and see who's to be master, you or I."

"Hooray, public meeting! Public meeting!" shouted all the creatures excitedly.

"Yes, and at once," said the Sister-in-Law impressively, getting up and leaving the table, regardless of the fact that scarcely anybody had as yet had any breakfast.

The rest of the creatures followed her out of the room.

When they had quite disappeared and the Wallypug, A. Fish, Esq., and myself were left alone, I thought that we might as well help ourselves to some breakfast. So I poured out some of the coffee, which we found excellent, and had just succeeded in persuading his Majesty to try a little bread and butter, when some crocodiles appeared at the door and announced: "You are commanded to attend the trial at once."

"What trial?" I asked.

"Your own," was the reply. "You and the Wallypug are to be tried for 'Contempt of Sister-in-Law,' and A. Fish, Esq., is subpœnaed as a witness."

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" said the poor Wallypug, wringing his hands. "I know what that means. Whatever shall we do?"

"Dever bide, old chap. I do the best I cad to get you off," said A. Fish, Esq. "Cub alog, it will odly bake badders worse to delay."

So we allowed ourselves to be taken in charge by the crocodiles, and led to the Public Hall, his Majesty and myself being loaded with chains.

We found the Sister-in-Law and the Doctor-in-Law seated at the judges' bench when we entered. The Sister-in-Law wore a judge's red robe, and a long, flowing wig under her usual head-dress, and the Doctor-in-Law was provided with a slate, pencil, and sponge.

We were conducted to a kind of dock on one side of the bench, and on the other side appeared what afterwards transpired to be the witness box. The body of the hall was crowded with animals, craning their necks to catch a glimpse of us.

"Silence in court," screamed out a gaily-dressed ostrich, and the trial began.

"We'll take the man creature first," said the Sister-in-Law, regarding me contemptuously. "Now then, speak up! What have you got to say for yourself?"

"There appears to be——" I began.

"Silence in court," shouted the ostrich, who was evidently an official.

"Surely I may be allowed to explain," I protested.

"Silence in court," shouted the bird again.

I gave it up and remained silent. "Call the first witness," remarked the Sister-in-Law impatiently, and the Turtle, whom I had seen cleaning the steps in the morning, walked briskly up into the witness-box.

"Well, Turtle, what do you know about this man?" was the first question.

[66]

[67]

[68]

[69]



"SILENCE IN COURT!"

SCREAMED THE OSTRICH.

[70]

"So please your Importance, I was cleaning my steps very early this morning, when the prisoner opened the door in a stealthy manner and crept out very quietly. 'Ho!' thinks I, 'this 'ere man's up to no good,' and so I keeps him in conversation a little while, but his language—oh!—and what with one thing and another and noticing that he hadn't a hat, I told him he had better move on. I saw him walk over to the rose garden and afterwards join the Wallypug and Mr. Fish. I think that's all, except—ahem—that I missed a small piece of soap."

"Soap?" said the Doctor-in-Law, elevating his eyebrows. "This is important—er—er—what kind of soap?" [71]

"Yellow," said the Turtle. "Fourpence a pound."

"Hum!" said the Doctor-in-Law, "very mysterious, but not at all surprising from what I know of this person—call the next witness."

The next witness was the Cockatoo, who scrambled into the box in a great fluster.

"He's a story-teller, and a pickpocket, and a backbiter, and a fibber, and a bottle-washer," she screamed excitedly, "and a heartless deceiver, and an organ-grinder, so there!" And she danced out of the witness-box again excitedly, muttering, "Down with him, down with him, the wretch," all the way back to her seat.

"Ah, that will about settle him, I fancy," remarked the Doctor-in-Law, putting down some figures on his slate and counting them up.

"What are you doing?" demanded the Sister-in-Law. [72]

"Summing up," was the reply. "The judges always sum up in England, you know; that's thirty-two pounds he owes. Shall I collect it?"

"Wait a minute till I pass the sentence," said the Sister-in-Law.

"Prisoner at the bar," she continued, "you have since your arrival here been given every latitude."

"And longitude," interrupted the Doctor-in-Law.

"And have taken advantage of the fact to disobey the laws of the land in every possible way. You have heard the evidence against you, and I may say more clear proof could not have been given. It appears that you are a thoroughly worthless character, and it is with great pleasure I order you to be imprisoned in the deepest dungeon beneath the castle moat, and fined thirty-two pounds and costs." [73]

Then pointing to me tragically, she called out, "Officers! take away that Bauble!" And I was immediately seized by two of the crocodiles, preparatory to being taken below.

CHAPTER VI.

HIS MAJESTY IS DEPOSED.

"STOP a minute!" cried Madame, as I was being led away. "We may as well settle the Wallypug's affair at the same time and get rid of them both at once. Put the creature into the dock."

His Majesty was hustled forward, looking very nervous and white, as he stood trembling at the bar, while Madame regarded him fiercely.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" she demanded.

"Ye-e-s!" stammered his Majesty, though what the poor little fellow had to be ashamed of was more than I could tell.

"I should think so, indeed," commented the lady. "Now then, call the first witness." [75]

The first witness was A. Fish, Esq., who coughed importantly as he stepped up into the box with a jaunty air. "Let's see, what's your name?" asked the Doctor-in-Law, with a supercilious stare. Now, this was absurd, for, of course, he knew as well as I did what the Fish's name was; but as I heard him whisper to Madame, the judges in England always pretend not to know *anything*, and he was doing the same.

"By dabe is A. Fish, you doe thadt well edough," was the answer.

"Don't be impertinent, or I shall commit you for contempt," said the Doctor-in-Law, severely. "Now then—ah—you are a reptile of some sort, I believe, are you not?"

"Certainly dot!" was indignant reply.

"Oh! I thought you were. Er—what do you do for a living?"

"I'b a teacher of elocutioid add a lecturer," said A. Fish, Esq., importantly. [76]

"Oh! indeed. Teacher of elocution, are you? And how many pupils have you, pray?"

"Well, ad presend I've odly wud," replied A. Fish, Esq., "and that the Wallypug."

"Oh! the Wallypug's a pupil of yours, is he? I suppose you find him very stupid, don't you?"

"Doe, I don't!" said A. Fish, Esq., loyally. "He's a very clever pupil, ad he's gettig od splendidly with his recitig."

"Oh! is he, indeed; and what do you teach him, may I ask?"

"I've taught hib 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star,' ad 'Billy's dead ad gone to glory,' ad several other things frob Shakespeare."

"Shakespeare? hum—ha—Shakespeare? I seem to have heard the name before. Who is he?"

"A great poet, born in England in 1564, m'lud," explained one of the Crocodiles.

"Really! He must be getting quite an old man by now," said the Doctor-in-Law, vaguely. [77]

"He's dead," said A. Fish, Esq., solemnly.

"Dear me! poor fellow! what did he die of?"

"Don't ask such a lot of silly questions," interrupted the Sister-in-Law, impatiently; "get on with the business. What has A. Fish to say on behalf of the Wallypug? that is the question."

"He's gettig od very dicely with his recitig," insisted A. Fish, Esq. "He was repeatig a speech from Richard III. to us this bordig whed the breakfast bell rang, ad that's why we were late at table."

"Oh! that's the reason, is it?" said the Sister-in-Law. "Bah! I've no patience with a man at his time of life repeating poetry. Positively childish, I call it. What was the rubbish?" she demanded, turning to the Wallypug.

"A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse," began his Majesty, feebly.

"What!" shrieked the Sister-in-Law, starting up from her seat. "Say that again!" [78]

"A-a horse, a horse, my-my kingdom for a horse," stammered the Wallypug, nervously.

"Traitor! Monster!" cried the Sister-in-Law furiously. "Hear him!" she screamed. "He actually has the effrontery to tell us to our faces that he is willing to sell the whole of this kingdom for a horse. Oh! it

is too much! the heartless creature! Oh-h!" and the lady sank back and gasped hysterically. At this there was a terrible uproar in the court—the animals stood up on the seats, frantically gesticulating and crying: "Traitor!" "Down with the Wallypug!" "Off with his head!" "Banish him!" "Send him to jail!" while above all could be heard the Cockatoo screaming:

"I told you so. I told you so! Down with the Wallypug! Off with his crown! Dance on his sceptre, and kick his orb round the town."

The poor Wallypug threw himself on his knees and called out imploringly, "It's all a mistake," and I tried in vain to make myself heard above the uproar.

[79]



"TRAITOR! MONSTER!" "OFF WITH HIS HEAD!"

The whole assembly seemed to have taken leave of their senses, and for a few moments the utmost confusion prevailed. The creatures nearest to the Wallypug seemed as though they would tear him to pieces in their fury, and if it had not been for his jailers, the Crocodiles, I am convinced they would have done him some injury. "This is outrageous," I managed to shout at last. "You are making all this disturbance for nothing. What the Wallypug said was merely a quotation from one of Shakespeare's plays."

[80]

"Oh, it's all very well to try and blame it on to poor Shakespeare, when you know very well he's dead and can't defend himself," was Madame's reply. "That's your artfulness. I've no doubt you are quite as bad as the Wallypug himself, and probably put him up to it."

"Yes. Down with him! Down with the hatless traitor!" screamed the Cockatoo.

And despite our protests the Wallypug and myself were loaded with chains and marched off by the Crocodiles, his Majesty having first been robbed of his crown, sceptre, and orb, and other insignia of Royalty by the Doctor-in-Law, who hadn't a kind word to say for his old sovereign, and who seemed positively to rejoice at his Majesty's downfall. I was highly indignant with his heartless ingratitude, but could do positively nothing, while all of my protests were drowned in the babel of sounds made by the furious creatures in the body of the court.

[81]



THE WALLYPUG WAS LOADED WITH CHAINS AND MARCHED OFF BY THE CROCODILES.

After being taken from the dock I was marched off in one direction and his Majesty in another, and the last view I had of the Wallypug was that of the poor little fellow being limply dragged along by two Crocodiles in the direction of the dungeons. I was conducted to the top room of a tower, in an unfrequented part of the palace, and there left to my reflections, without any one to speak to for the remainder of the day.

[82]

Towards the evening I heard some shouting at the bottom of the tower, and looking out as well as I could through the barred window, I saw the Doctor-in-Law rushing about with a packet of newspapers under one arm—and heard him calling out, in a loud voice, “Special edition! Arrest of the Wallypug! Shocking discovery! The Wallypug a traitor! Sister-in-Law prostrate with excitement! The Hatless Man implicated!” He was doing a roaring trade, as nearly everybody was buying papers of him, and excited groups of animals were standing about eagerly discussing what was evidently the cause of a tremendous sensation in the kingdom of Why.



“I saw the Doctor-in-Law rushing about with a packet of newspapers under one arm, calling out in a loud voice, ‘Special edition! Arrest of the Wallypug!’” — [Page 82](#).

Wallypugland.

[83]

CHAPTER VII.

FOILED!

I STOOD at the barred window for some time, watching the Doctor-in-Law rushing about with his papers, and then started back as a huge and disreputable-looking black Crow settled on the stone ledge outside.

I soon recognized him as being the bird who had behaved so impertinently to me on my first arrival at Why.

"Well!" he exclaimed, squeezing himself through the iron bars, and staring at me over the tops of his spectacles. "You have got yourself into a pretty muddle now, I must say. I should think you are thoroughly ashamed of yourself, aren't you?"

"Indeed, I'm not," I replied. "I'm not conscious of having done anything to be ashamed of, and as for that trial, why it was a mere farce, and perfectly absurd," and I laughed heartily at the recollection of it. [84]

"H'm! I'm glad you find it so amusing," remarked the bird sententiously. "You won't be so light-hearted about it to-morrow if they treat you as the papers say they purpose doing."

"Why, what do they intend to do then?" I exclaimed, my curiosity thoroughly aroused.

"Execute you," said the Crow solemnly. "And serve you jolly well right, too."

"What nonsense!" I cried, "they can't execute me for doing nothing."

"Oh, you think so, do you? Didn't you instigate the Wallypug to become a traitor, and sell the kingdom for the sake of a horse?" said the Crow, referring to his paper.

"Certainly not!" I cried emphatically.

"Well, they say you did, anyhow," said the Crow, "and they intend to chop off your head and the Wallypug's too. It won't matter you not having a hat then," he continued grimly. [85]

"But you don't mean it, surely!" I exclaimed. "They certainly can't be so ridiculous as to treat the affair seriously."

"Well, you see," said the bird, "things without doubt look very black against you. In the first place what did you want to come here at all for?"

"I'm sure I wish I hadn't," I remarked.

"Just so! So does every one else," said the Crow rudely. "Then, when you did come, you were without a hat, which is in itself a very suspicious circumstance."

"Why?" I interrupted.

"Respectable people don't go gadding about without hats," said the bird contemptuously, turning up his beak. "And then, the first morning after your arrival you must needs go prowling about the grounds before any one else was up." [86]



"WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO LEAVE ME IN YOUR WILL?"

"What are you going to leave me in your will?" he continued insinuatingly.

"Nothing at all," I declared. "And besides, I'm not going to make a will. I don't intend to let them kill me without a good struggle, I can tell you."

"H'm, you might as well let me have your watch and chain. It will only go to the Doctor-in-Law if you don't. He is sure to want to grab everything. I expect he will want to seize the throne when the Wallypug is executed. I saw him just now trying on the crown, and smirking and capering about in front of the looking-glass."

"The Doctor-in-Law is an odious little monster," I exclaimed.

"Oh, very well," cried the Crow, wriggling through the bars, "I'll just go and tell him what you say. I've no doubt he will be delighted to hear your opinion of him—and perhaps it will induce him to add something to your punishment. I hope so, I'm sure—ha—ha!"

And the wretched ill-omened bird flew away laughing derisively.

I could not help feeling rather uncomfortable at the turn which events had taken, for there was no knowing to what lengths the extraordinary inhabitants of this remarkable place might go, and if it had really been decided that the poor Wallypug and myself should be executed on the morrow, then there was no time to be lost in our efforts to effect an escape.

I was puzzling over the matter, and wondering what was best to be done, when I heard a bell ringing at the other end of the apartment.

"Ting-a-ling-a-ling-a-ling," for all the world like the ring of a telephone call bell.

I ran across the room, and sure enough, there was a telephone fitted up in the far corner. I hastily put the receiver to my ears, and heard a squeaky voice inquiring:

"Are you there? Are you 987654321?"

"Yes," I called out, for I thought that I might as well be this number as any other.

"Well," the voice replied, in an agitated way, "Aunt Kesiah has done it at last."

"What?" I shouted.



"Are you there?" cried A. Fish, Esq. "Yes; what is it?" I asked.— [Page 89](#).

Wallypugland.

"Proposed to the curate, and so all those slippers will be wasted. Don't you think we had better—"

But I rang off and stopped the connection, for I felt sure that the

[87]

[88]

[89]

communication was not intended for me.

Presently there was another ring at the bell, and this time I found myself connected with the exchange. I knew that it was the exchange, because they were all quarreling so.

"It was all your fault!" "No it wasn't." "Yes it was." "Well, you know A. Fish, Esq., is 13,579—so there." "Yes, and he wanted to be connected with the West Tower in the Palace."

"Connect me with 13,579, please," I called.

And a moment or two afterwards I heard a well-known voice sounding through the instrument, and I knew that A. Fish, Esq., was at the other end.

"Are you there?" he cried.

"Yes; what is it?" I asked.

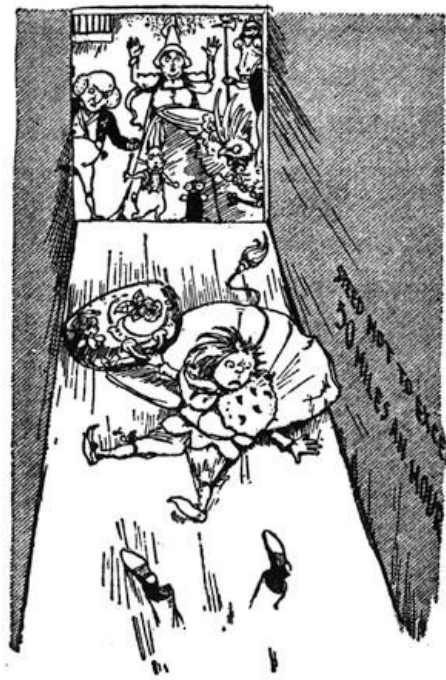
"There isn't a biddit to spare," he gasped; "lift up the loose stode dear the fireplace, ad you will find a secret staircase leadig to the dudgeod, where the Wallypug is ibprised; hurry for your life, he has discovered a way of escape."

I dropped the receiver, and flew to the fireplace. Yes, sure enough, there was the loose stone that A. Fish, Esq., had spoken of, and having raised it with some difficulty I found a narrow spiral staircase beneath, leading down into mysterious depths.

I plunged into the darkness, and after walking round and round, and down and down, for a considerable time I saw a faint light at the other end. I hurried forward as quickly as I could, and found myself in a dimly-lighted dungeon. The Wallypug was here alone, and was busily cramming everything he could lay his hands on into an enormous carpet-bag.

"Thank goodness, you have come!" he exclaimed, in a terrible fluster, when he saw me. "I was afraid you would be too late. We must escape at once if we would save our necks. Fortunately, I have just remembered that this dungeon is connected with the shute which the late Wallypug had constructed between here and Ling Choo, in China, which is on the other side of the world—it is enormously long and very steep, but quite safe—we must use it in order to get away. We are to be executed in the morning if we stay here, so I am informed; therefore, we must lose no time. I have just finished packing up. Ah! What's that?" he exclaimed, listening intently.

"Quick! they are coming!" he cried, as sounds were heard in the passage outside the dungeon door; and touching a spring, an enormous opening appeared in the wall. His Majesty gave me a sudden push, which sent me sprawling on to a smooth and very steep incline, and jumping down himself, we slid rapidly away into the unknown.



WE SLID RAPIDLY DOWN THE SHUTE.

[90]

[91]

[92]

That we were only just in time was evidenced by the cries of rage and disappointment which pursued us from the dungeon, as the Doctor-in-Law and the other creatures saw us escape from their clutches, and we could hear the Cockatoo's shrill cries grow fainter and fainter as we sped swiftly down the chute towards Ling Choo.

[93]

[94]

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LITTLE BLUE PEOPLE.

DOWN, and down, and down we flew, quicker and quicker each moment. The shute was as smooth as glass, and grew steeper than ever as we descended. His Majesty was a little way behind me, but the terrific rate at which we were traveling made it impossible for us to hold any conversation. Once or twice I shouted out something to him, but receiving no reply I soon gave that up. The attitude in which I was slipping down the shute was a most uncomfortable one, but after a considerable time I managed to turn over on to my back, and eventually to twist around, till, at any rate, I was traveling feet foremost, which was some slight consolation, although naturally I was dreadfully concerned as to what was to be our fate at the other end of our journey. "Slipping along at this rate," I thought, "we shall probably be smashed to a jelly when we do arrive at the bottom. At any rate I shall, for the Wallypug and the carpet-bag are bound to descend upon my devoted head."

[95]

By and by I began to grow very hungry, and then came another dismal thought. Supposing this extraordinary trip continued for any length of time, how should we get on for food?

We seemed to be traveling through a kind of tunnel, with very smooth walls on either side. The Wallypug had said that we were bound for China, and that that country was on the other side of the world. If so, then we were in for a pretty long journey. I twisted my head around, and tried to get a glimpse of his Majesty, who was only a few yards above me. I could see that he was struggling to get something out of the carpet-bag, and a few minutes afterwards a little packet of sandwiches came whizzing past my head. I managed to catch it as it fell upon the highly-polished boards by stretching out one leg just in time to prevent it from slipping too far.

[96]



I COULD SEE HE WAS STRUGGLING TO GET SOMETHING OUT OF THE CARPET-BAG.

The sandwiches were very good, and I enjoyed them immensely, and for a few moments almost forgot our strange surroundings. I was soon, however, recalled to a sense of our condition by the fact that we suddenly emerged from the tunnel into broad daylight, the shute apparently descending the steep sides of a high mountain. As soon as my eyes became accustomed to the light I noticed, to my great surprise, that everything in this new country was of a deep rich blue color. The rocks on the mountain side, the strange-looking trees, and even the birds—of which I could see several flying about—were all of the same unusual tint.

[97]

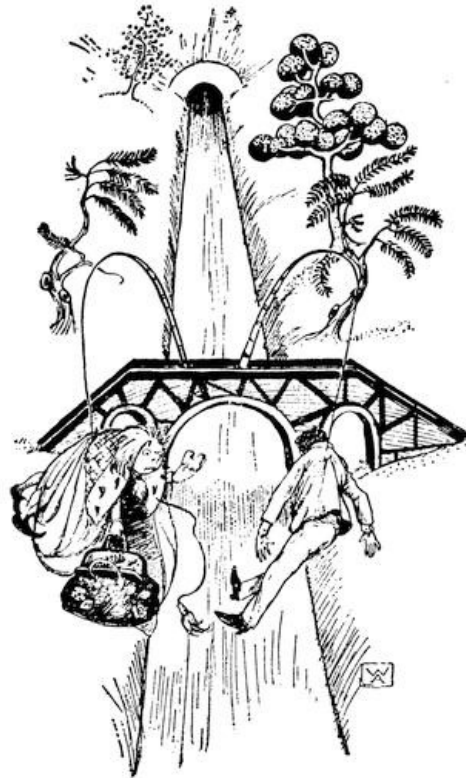
I had hardly noticed this fact, as we flew down the side of the mountain, when I felt myself suddenly pulled up with a jerk, and lifted high into the air in a most unaccountable manner, and when, after a moment or two, I recovered from the shock, I found that both the Wallypug and myself were suspended from a line at the end of two long fishing-rods which were fastened into a quaint little bridge

crossing the shute.

There we hung, dangling and bobbing about in front of each other in the most ridiculous way, the dear Wallypug still clinging to his carpet-bag with one hand, while in the other he clutched a half-eaten sandwich. I shall never forget his Majesty's surprised expression when he found himself hanging up the air in this unexpected way.

"Like being a bird, isn't it?" he remarked when at last he found a voice.

"H'm, not much," I replied. "I feel more like a fish at the end of this line. I wish some one would come and help us off. There's a hook, or something, sticking into my shoulder, and it hurts no end." You see there was evidently something at the end of the lines which had caught into our clothes, and the hook, or whatever it was, just touched my shoulder. It did not hurt very much, but just enough to make me feel uncomfortable.



"I wonder where we are," said the Wallypug, looking about him. "What a funny colour everything is, to be sure."— [Page 98](#).

Wallypugland.

"I wonder where we are," said the Wallypug, looking about him. "What a funny color everything is, to be sure."

"Yes, isn't it?" I replied. And truly it was a most remarkable scene. There was a curious little kind of temple in the distance and a number of most extraordinary-looking trees; and these, and the grass, and, in fact, everything that could be seen, were of a bright blue tint.

"I know what those trees are called," said the Wallypug, pointing to some remarkable looking ones, with a lot of large blue globes on the branches instead of leaves.

"What?" I asked.

"Gombobble trees," said his Majesty. "I've seen pictures of them before."

"Where?" I asked, more for the sake of something to say than for anything else.

"On our willow-pattern plates at home," said his Majesty. "There were those and the wiggle-woggely trees, you know."

"I wonder," he continued speculatively, "if by any chance we are there."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"I wonder if this is the place which is shown on the willow-

pattern plates," said his Majesty.

Before I could reply we heard an excited exclamation from the bank, and turning around as well as we could we saw two curious little blue people dressed in flowing blue costumes.

"Oh!" they exclaimed, when they saw us, throwing up their hands in a comical little way, "we've caught something. What funny things! What are they?"

"I wonder if they bite," cried the shorter of the two.

"Do you bite, you funny things, you?" cried the other, shaking her head at us.

"No, of course not," said the Wallypug. "Help us to get down, will you, please?"

"Not yet," said both of the little blue creatures, shaking their heads simultaneously. "What are your names?"

[101]



"OH!" THEY EXCLAIMED, "WHAT ARE THEY?"

"I'm the Wallypug," explained his Majesty graciously, "and this gentleman is——"

"He, he, he! He, he, he! He, he, he!" giggled the little blue people. "They're Wallypugs. Two great big fat Wallypugs. Oh, oh! what funny things. Let's go and fetch Ho-lor." And they ran off as fast as their little blue legs would carry them.

[102]

[103]

CHAPTER IX.

THE WALLYPUG RECOVERS HIS CROWN.

His Majesty and myself stared at each other in dismay. Our position was growing more and more uncomfortable every moment, and, added to this, I had a growing impression that the rods to which we were attached would sooner or later break with our weight.

"Well! I do think that they might have helped us off the hooks, at any rate," grumbled his Majesty, discontentedly.

"So do I," I rejoined, and was about to add something else when my attention was attracted to the peculiar behavior of the two blue birds which we had previously noticed circling about over our heads.

They were wheeling round and round in a most eccentric manner, and as they drew closer we could see that they were as singular in appearance as they were in their manner. [104]

"Why, they've got ever so many wings!" cried his Majesty in surprise.

"Go away!" he shouted, as one of them fluttered past his face. The birds, however, were not to be got rid of so easily, and, uttering shrill little cries, they hovered about over his Majesty's head, every now and then making a vicious dart at the sandwich which he still held in one hand.

"Oh! take them away!—take them away!" he shouted, dropping his carpet-bag in alarm, and evidently forgetting that I was as incapable as he was of driving them off.

"Throw your sandwich away!" I shouted; "it's that they are after, I believe."

His Majesty did so, and we soon had the satisfaction of seeing the birds squabbling over it on the bank at the side of the shute. [105]



"GO AWAY!" SHOUTED HIS MAJESTY.

"Fortunate I tied my bag to the string of my cloak, wasn't it?" remarked the Wallypug, when they had gone. "I should have lost it else. Oh, look! What's that coming down the shute?" he cried, as something suddenly came rolling and bounding down the steep incline. [106]

"O—o—o—h!" he continued delightedly, as it stopped, caught in the mouth of the carpet-bag which, attached to the cord of his Majesty's cloak, dangled down the shute. "Why, it's my crown! They must have thought that I wanted it, and sent it down after me. How very kind of them. Wasn't it?"

I had my own opinions on the subject, and held my peace, for I felt quite sure that it was not through any intentional kindness that the crown had found its way to its proper owner.

His Majesty very carefully drew up the carpet-bag with its precious burden, and soon had the intense satisfaction of putting the crown of Why on his royal head once more.

"Oh!" he cried with a little sigh of satisfaction, "it does seem nice to have it on again. I'm afraid that I should soon have caught a cold in my head, like A. Fish, Esq., if I had gone without it much longer."

[107]

"Gracious!" he cried, pointing excitedly towards the top of the shute, "there's something else coming down! Why it's the Doctor-in-Law and Madame. Oh!—and the Cockatoo—and—the Rabbit and the Mole. Bless me! if the whole of Why isn't coming along."

It was quite true; attached to a strong rope a long line of creatures was coming down the shute, the Doctor-in-Law leading the way.

He soon caught sight of us dangling at the end of our rods, and calling out "Halt!" in a loud voice, he pulled at the rope as a sign that they were to stop. This signal was passed along by the others, and the Cockatoo, who was attached to the rope in a very uncomfortable manner, gave a loud "squ-a-a-k" as the sudden jerk caused it to tighten about her neck.

The signal, however, managed somehow to reach those at the other end, for the procession suddenly came to a standstill.

"Oh, there you are then!" called out the Doctor-in-Law in a severe voice. "Thought you had escaped us, I suppose."

The Cockatoo, in a voice choking with rage, and the tightened rope, shrieked out, "Down with the traitors!" while the Rabbit passed the word along, "It's all right. We've found them."

"Just you come down and tie yourself to this rope at once!" called out Madame, glaring fiercely at the Wallypug.

[108]

"Shan't!" shouted his Majesty defiantly, pushing his crown further on to his head.

"What!" screamed the good lady, in a terrible passion. "Do you dare to rebel?"

"Yes, I do," called out his Majesty bravely. "I don't believe you are my sister-in-law at all, and I'm not going back to Why to be snubbed and ill-treated for you or any one else—so there. You can't get at me, hanging up here, and I don't mean to get down till you're gone. Yah!"

"Oh, we'll soon see all about that," called out the Doctor-in-Law, working himself to the edge of the shute, and trying to climb up the steep sides of the bank.

We watched his endeavors with considerable anxiety, for if he did succeed in getting on to the bank, it would be an easy matter for him to get at us, by means of the bridge. The rope, however, by which he was attached to the Sister-in-Law was not sufficiently long to enable him to do this, and while he was unfastening it there was a sudden cry in the direction of the tunnel, and a moment afterwards, screaming, kicking, and struggling, the whole party rapidly disappeared down the shute.

[109]

The rope had given way!

"He, he, he! Ha, ha!" laughed his Majesty, as the huddled mass vanished in the distance. "What a lark! Oh what a muddle they will be in when they reach the bottom."

I tried to imagine what would be the result, and came to the



A LONG LINE OF CREATURES WAS COMING DOWN THE SHUTE.

[110]

conclusion that, uncomfortable as I was in my present position, I would rather be where I was than attached to the rope with the others.

In the meantime the little blue people, their curiosity evidently aroused by the noise, were hurrying towards us as quickly as possible, bringing with them a very stout blue person, who was waddling along, being alternately pushed and pulled by the others in their eagerness to reach us.

[111]

"See, there they are!" cried the little lady whose name we afterwards found out was Gra-Shus. "Oh my! Aren't they a funny color?"

"Shall we get them down?" asked the other, whose name was Mi-Hy.

The little fat man regarded us critically, and said nothing for a moment or two, then he nodded his head violently.

"You're sure you won't bite?" said Mi-Hy, looking up into my face.

"No, of course not. Don't be silly," I replied.

Thereupon, after a great deal of pulling and pushing on the part of Mi-Hy and Gra-Shus, the rods to which we were attached were swung around, and the Wallypug and myself alighted, one on either side of the bank.

His Majesty smoothed his rumpled garments, and, adjusting his crown to a more becoming angle, positively swaggered across the bridge to where the three little blue people stood in a line to receive us.

[112]

"This is Ho-Lor," said Mi-Hy, pushing the little fat man forward, while Gra-Shus bashfully hid behind the ample folds of his gorgeous blue skirts.

"How do you do?" asked his Majesty graciously.

"Do what?" asked Ho-Lor, smilingly.

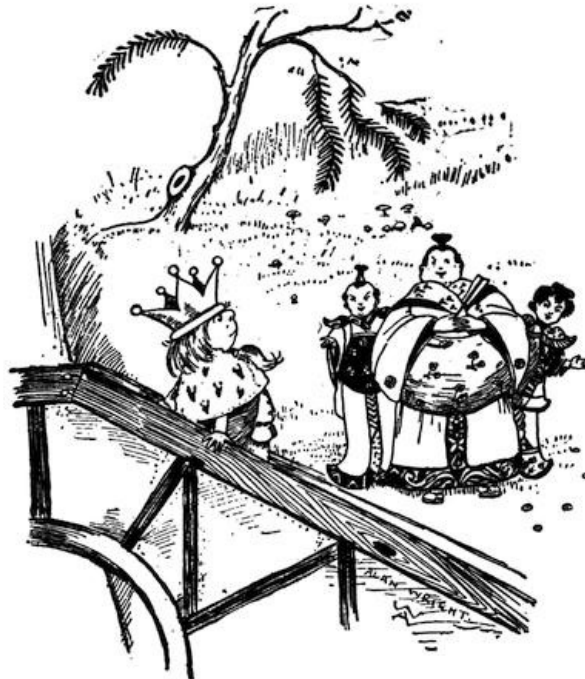
"I mean, how are you?" explained the Wallypug.

"You mean *what* am I, I suppose?" said the little man, putting on a puzzled expression.

"No, I don't," said the Wallypug. "I mean just what I say—How are you?"

"But I don't understand," replied Ho-Lor. "How am I what?"

"His Majesty the Wallypug of Why," I explained, "wishes to say, that he hopes you are quite well."



His Majesty swaggered across the bridge to where the three little blue people stood in a line to receive us.— [Page 112](#).

Wallypugland.

"Oh! I beg your pardon" said Ho-Lor. "How very stupid of me. But you know, the fact is, we get such a lot of foreigners down here, and they do ask such funny questions. A Frenchman we caught the other day actually asked me how I carried myself. Wasn't it rude of him—considering my weight too?"

"You're a Wallypug, too, aren't you?" asked Gra-Shus, looking smilingly up into my face.

"Oh, no!" I replied; "I am only his Majesty's guest."

"His Majesty! Do you mean that?" said Mi-Hy, pointing to the Wallypug.

The Wallypug drew himself up with an air of offended dignity.

"I am not a 'that'; I'm a kind of a king," he explained, in a tone of remonstrance.

"O-oo!" exclaimed the little blue people, falling down on their knees and bowing their foreheads to the ground, with their hands stretched out before them. "Pray forgive us, Majestuous Wallypug, we thought you were only an ordinary person. You see we've never caught a king before. Oh! don't chop our heads off, will you?"



"PRAY FORGIVE US," EXCLAIMED THE BLUE PEOPLE.

"Of course not," said his Majesty, kindly.

"But kings always chop off people's heads, don't they?" cried the little people, anxiously.

"Oh dear no," said the Wallypug.

"Get up; or you'll spoil your clothes. Could we have a cup of tea, please? We are rather fatigued with our long journey."

The little blue people immediately jumped up and led the way to where behind a clump of curious blue trees the quaintest little boat you could possibly imagine was moored against the bank. A blue lake stretched as far as the eye could reach, and a number of little islands were dotted about it. On one, a little larger than the rest, a quaint little blue pagoda could be seen.

CHAPTER X.

THE HOME OF HO-LOR.

"I LIVE over there," said Ho-Lor with pride, pointing to the island with the pagoda on it. "Mi-Hy shall row us across, and Gra-Shus shall make us some tea."

"Oh! yes," said Gra-Shus clapping her hands. "And we'll show Mr. Majesty Wallypug our beautiful pet dog—won't we?"

It was impossible not to be interested in these quaint and simple-minded little folk, and after we had all stepped into the little boat and Mi-Hy had pushed off, his Majesty was soon chatting affably with Ho-Lor, who explained that he was a mandarin of the Blue Button, and ninety-eighth-cousin-twice-removed to the Emperor of China.

We soon reached the opposite bank, and his Majesty having been ceremoniously assisted out of the boat, we ascended a slight hill, and soon found ourselves before Ho-Lor's residence. To our great surprise we found that it exactly resembled the building so familiar to all who have seen a willow-pattern plate. [117]

The tall pillars at the portico, the quaintly-shaped curly roofs, the little zig-zag fence running along the path, and the curious trees, all seemed to be old friends—while two little islands, one of which was connected to the mainland by a quaint bridge, completed the picture.

The two birds, which had by this time finished squabbling about the sandwich, were billing and cooing over our heads, and the sight of them seemed suddenly to convince us of the identity of the spot.

"Why, this must be the land of the Willow-pattern plate," cried his Majesty excitedly.

"Yes, it is," admitted Ho-Lor. "Don't you think it is a very pretty spot?" [118]

"Charming," declared the Wallypug; "I have often wanted to come here."

"The real name of the place," said Ho-Lor, "is Wer-har-wei, and it is a portion of China; but come, you must see our little dog; I can hear that Mi-Hy has gone to fetch him."

"His name is Kis-Smee," said Gra-Shus, "and he is such a dear old thing. We've had him ever since he was a puppy."

There was a sound of barking, and a confused clattering of chains, which told of a dog being unloosed. A moment afterwards there came bounding out of the house the most extraordinary-looking creature that I have ever beheld.

It was a very fat and atrociously hideous animal, bearing but slight resemblance to a dog. Its enormous mouth wore a perpetual grin, and was decorated at the corners with curious little scallops. It was bandy-legged, and its hinder legs were much longer than the front ones. Added to this, the skin on its haunches was wrinkled up into curious kind of rosettes, while its tail was really all sorts of shapes.



"Come along, good dog! come and speak to the pretty Wallypugs."— [Page 119](#).

Wallypugland.

This beautiful creature came careering down the steps, dragging Mi-Hy with him, and was hailed with delight by Gra-Shus, who cried in endearing tones:

[119]

"Come along, good dog! Come and speak to the pretty Wallypugs. Good Kis-Smee. Good dog, then!"

His Majesty clutched my arm nervously, and retreating behind the carpet-bag, regarded Kis-Smee with a certain amount of suspicion, while I must confess to having experienced a slight feeling of uneasiness myself. For if Kis-Smee took it into his ugly head to object to us, there was no knowing what might be the result.

There was no occasion for alarm, however, for Kis-Smee turned out to be one of the mildest and best-behaved of dogs.

[120]

He made great friends with the Wallypug at once, and clumsily gamboled, or, as his Majesty explained it, "flumped," about him in the most friendly manner.

"He doesn't take to strangers as a rule," said Ho-Lor, "but he certainly seems to have taken a fancy to you."

"He is a beautiful creature," said his Majesty, politely patting the huge animal a little nervously.

"Oh! I don't know about that," remarked Ho-Lor, looking very pleased nevertheless. "He is of a very rare breed, though."

"What kind of dog do you call him?" I inquired.

"He's a smirkler dog," replied Ho-Lor proudly.

"A what?" I exclaimed.

"A smirkler. He smirkles for mivlets you know," was the reply.

[121]

"Good gracious. What are they?" cried the Wallypug.

"Mivlets?" asked Ho-Lor.



"HE IS A BEAUTIFUL CREATURE," SAID HIS MAJESTY.

His Majesty nodded.

"Why young mivs, of course."

"But what are mivs?" asked his Majesty curiously.

"Things that are smirkled for," replied Ho-Lor promptly. "But come. I see that Gra-Shus has prepared some tea for us." [122]

We entered the little blue temple and were each presented with a little blue rug, upon which we sat cross-legged, as we observed that Mi-Hy and Ho-Lor were doing. Gra-Shus served us in blue cups what tasted like delicious tea, but which looked exactly like blue ink. No sooner had we taken a few sips than I noticed that the Wallypug was slowly turning a light blue color, while at the same moment he stared at me fixedly a moment, and then exclaimed: "Why, what a funny color you are!"

I looked at my hands, and found them a rich blue shade.

"We look like the Oxford and Cambridge boat race, don't we?" he continued: "I'm so glad that I'm Cambridge!"

I did not at all approve of the change, for although we did not look so very remarkable in the midst of our strange surroundings, I could not help thinking what an extraordinary object I should be considered in London if I ever reached that place again. [123]

"Oh! Aren't they pretty now?" exclaimed Gra-Shus, clapping her hands and dancing about excitedly.

"I am glad you think so," I replied, in a huff.

"Don't you like it? Would you rather have been green? We've plenty of green tea, you know, if you wish."

"Thanks! I should prefer being my original color, if you don't mind," I replied.

"Dear me! I'm very sorry, but I'm afraid we're out of that color. Let's see! Crushed strawberry, wasn't it?"

"Oh! let's stay blue for a little while," pleaded his Majesty. "It's such a change, and so very uncommon, you know!"

So blue we remained, and directly after we had finished our tea Mi-Hy brought around the little blue boat again, and we went for a row on the ornamental lake. [124]

Somehow or another Kis-Smee was left behind, and although the Wallypug suggested putting back for him, it was finally decided, however, not to do so.



WE WENT FOR A ROW ON THE ORNAMENTAL LAKE.

"Perhaps he will smirkle a mivlet while we are away," said Ho-Lor.

And I confidently hoped that he might do so, for I was as curious as was the Wallypug to know what the term meant.

Just then we passed a curious little blue island with one tiny house on it, standing in the midst of some curious trees and strangely-shaped rocks. "Let's go ashore and fish," suddenly suggested Mi-Hy.

"Oh! yes, do," cried the Wallypug. "I love fishing; but I'm never allowed to do so in my own land."

"Why not?" inquired Ho-Lor.

"The fishes object," replied his Majesty, sadly; "they say that it gives them the tooth-ache."

"How absurd of them," said Ho-Lor, sympathetically.

"Yes; isn't it perfectly ridiculous?" replied his Majesty; "for they really haven't any teeth, you know."

By this time the boat had reached the shore, and we all scrambled out and assisted Ho-Lor up the steep rocks.

From within the little blue house Mi-Hy brought some rods and lines, and we began to fish. There was no bait of any kind, but this Ho-Lor explained was not necessary.

Under the circumstances I was not surprised to find that we did not get a bite for a considerable time.

At last, however, the Wallypug announced with a delighted shout, "I've got one!" and we all ran over to see what it was.

Slowly his Majesty wound up his line, while Mi-Hy hung over the rocks with a landing net. "I've got it!" he shouted. "Oh, what a beauty!" and diving his hand into the net, he drew out—what do you think? An empty ink-bottle!

I couldn't help laughing at his Majesty's disappointed face, but Ho-Lor seemed positively to think that it was a catch worth having. "It's in capital condition," he exclaimed, examining it critically, "and has a beautifully-shaped neck."

"But it's only an old ink bottle," objected the poor Wallypug.

"What else did you expect to catch, I should like to know?" said Mi-Hy. "Some people are never satisfied. Many a time I have fished here a whole day and only caught a piece of blotting paper or a pen-wiper."

"What funny things to catch!" exclaimed the Wallypug.

"They are very appropriate things to get from a lake of ink," said Ho-Lor rather huffily.

"Oh! I'm sure I beg your pardon, I had no idea it was real ink," said his Majesty, apologetically. "I don't think we had better fish any longer," he said putting away his rod. "I hoped to have caught some real fish, you know."

"Never heard of them. What are they?" asked Ho-Lor.

"Why, things with scales, you know," exclaimed the Wallypug.

"Oh, you mean weighing machines," said Mi-Hy.

"No! no! I mean—"

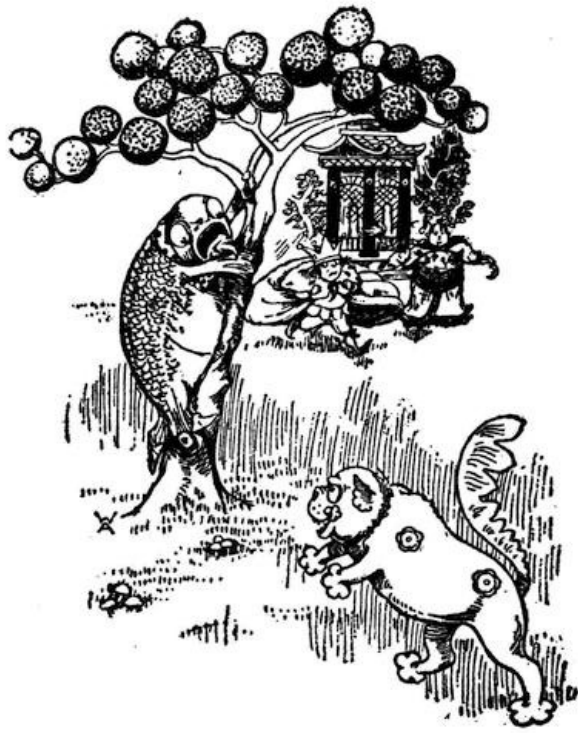
"Hark! what's that?" said Ho-Lor, putting his hand to his ear.

"Come on! That's Kis-Smee barking. I expect he has smirkled a mivlet. Come along, hurry up, or we shall be too late."

We hurriedly launched the little boat, and were soon on our way across the little lake.

The sound of furious barking, mingled with a strangely familiar voice, came from behind Ho-Lor's house, and hurrying forward we came suddenly upon a remarkable sight.

Kis-Smee was prancing madly round a gombobble tree to the lower branches of which A. Fish, Esq., was clinging in an agony of fright.



Kis-Smee was prancing madly round a gombobble tree to the lower branches of which A. Fish, Esq., was clinging in an agony of fright.— [Page 128](#).

Wallypugland.

“Lie dowd, sir! Lie dowd, good dog, thed!” he shouted, while Kis-Smee barked and made sudden furious little darts at the fish’s tail. [129]

“Why, it’s A. Fish, Esq.,” cried his Majesty, hurrying forward anxiously. “Come away, Kis-Smee! Lie down, sir!”

Kis-Smee left his quarry in the tree, and came bounding up to the Wallypug, wagging his great clumsy tail delightedly.

“Good gracious!” exclaimed Mi-Hy, staring in amazement at A. Fish, Esq. “That’s not a mivlet, I’m sure—what on earth is the creature?”

“Oh, that’s A. Fish, Esq., a great friend of mine,” hastily explained his Majesty, running to his assistance, for when Kis-Smee had left him, poor A. Fish, Esq., had dropped off the gombobble tree, and was now lying exhausted on the blue grass beneath.

“What a dreadful bodster!” he cried, waving Kis-Smee off as we approached. “Keep hib off. Take hib away!” [130]

“It’s all right,” said his Majesty, reassuringly, “he won’t bite you now that we are here.”

Indeed, directly the dog discovered that A. Fish, Esq., was a friend of the Wallypug’s, he went up to him, and grinning in an absurd way, held out a paw to be shaken, which favor, however, was declined by A. Fish, Esq., who evidently regarded these overtures with a certain amount of suspicion, and looked greatly relieved when Ho-Lor and Mi-Hy, seeing that we were engaged with a friend, considerately left us to ourselves, and took Kis-Smee away with them.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WHY AND WER-HAR-WEI RAILWAY.

"FANCY seeing you!" cried his Majesty, as we sat down beside the Fish under the gombobble tree. "How ever did you get here? And what's the news at Why?"

"Oh, thad's a log story," said A. Fish, Esq., and proceeded to tell us how that after we had escaped from Why, by means of the shute, there had been a great commotion in the place, and the Doctor-in-Law was furious. He declared that we should not slip through his hands in this way, and had a long conversation with the Sister-in-Law and the others as to the best way of affecting our capture. Finally they decided to attach themselves to a long rope, and come down the shute in pursuit of us. [132]

A. Fish, Esq., made the excuse that his cold was too bad to permit him to join the party, and waited till they had got a good way down, and then cut the rope. He thought that this would be the best way of being of service to us. And so it was, of course, for goodness only knows where our pursuers were by this time.

A little while after he had cut the rope A. Fish, Esq., came across the Crow, who told him that he had been informed by two duffer birds (which was the name of the curious blue birds which we had noticed) that we were here at Wer-har-wei, and had immediately set about to discover the best way to get here.

He went in the first place to the station-master at Why, and found him, as usual, engaged in squabbling with the porter. [133]

They were arguing as to whether a certain signal should be up or down.

The station-master declared that the signal should always be up on the up line and down on the down line. This the porter would not agree to, so it was at last decided to put one up and one down and leave them so, and then the engine-drivers could do as they pleased about going on or stopping.



AS USUAL THE STATION-MASTER WAS SQUABBLING WITH THE PORTER.

When they had quite settled this dispute, A. Fish, Esq., had asked them if there were any trains running between Why and this place, and at first they had said no; but presently the porter remembered that there was a certain train which started on some days and went no one knew where. [134]

No one was ever known to travel by it, and the engine-driver, who was an old salamander by the name of Mike, was deaf and dumb, and could neither read nor write, so that they had never been able to find out from him where his train went to. It had some letters on it which corresponded with those on the station-master's collar, but no one had ever been able to discover what they meant. They were popularly supposed to stand for Weary Waiting and Horribly Wobbly Railway, the initials on the station-master's collar being W.W.H.W.R., but A. Fish, Esq., had by a brilliant inspiration come to the conclusion that they stood for Why and Wer-har-wei Railway, and when the train, which consisted of only one carriage and the engine, came into the station, he jumped in, to the intense surprise of Mike, who had never had a passenger before, and who in [135]

his agitation recklessly put two shovelfuls of coal into the furnace, and, giving a frantic "toot" on the whistle, started off at full speed.

"It was a dreadful journey," said A. Fish, Esq., "ad I dever had so bedy ups and dowds id all by life."

We didn't quite understand what he meant by this at the moment, but a little later on we discovered the reason to our cost.

After an eventful journey, A. Fish, Esq., had arrived at this place, and had found on alighting from the train that no one was to be seen, and he was just about to kick at the door of Ho-Lor's house when Kis-Smee came bounding out. Poor A. Fish, Esq., had been terribly alarmed, and had made for the nearest tree, and was vainly trying to climb up into it when we made our appearance. [136]

"If I were you," he advised, "I should certaidly cub back to Why at odce, for the people all seeb to be rejoiced thad Madame and the Doctor-id-Law have gode away, ad I think thad they would willingly forgive you for having said, 'Ad horse! ad horse! by kigdob for ad horse!'"

After talking the matter over for a few minutes we decided that perhaps it would be the best thing to do, and as the little blue station was only just at the back of Ho-Lor's house we thought that perhaps by hurrying we should catch the same train back to Why by which A. Fish, Esq., had come. So we set out to try and find the little blue people, to bid them "good-by," and thank them for their hospitality.

We found them at the station sitting beside Mike, to whom it appeared they were in the habit of being very kind on his occasional visits.

They seemed quite sorry to hear that we were leaving them so soon, and insisted upon making the Wallypug a present of Kis-Smee, and of stuffing into my pocket an enormous gombobble as a souvenir of my visit. Then there was just time to look at the "train" before we started. I must say that of all crazy, ramshackle affairs it was quite the worst that I had ever seen. To begin with, the wheels were all sorts of shapes, and not one of them was quite round. There was only one compartment, and that had no windows in it. And the engine! Well, it was something like Puffing Billy, only a little worse. [137]

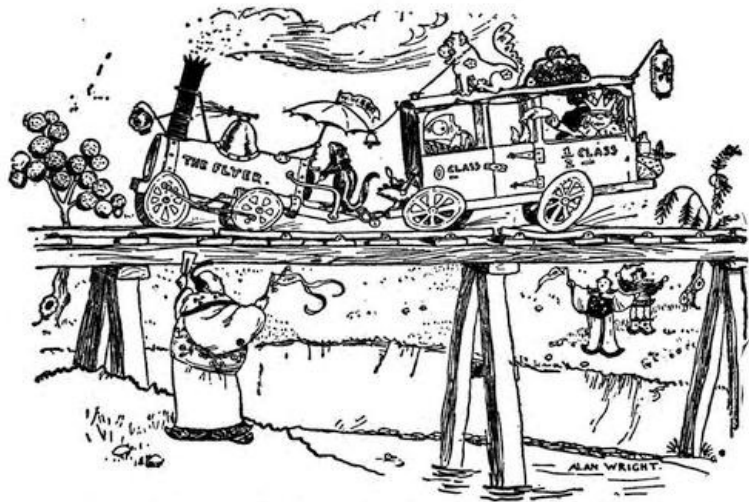
There was no room for Kis-Smee in the carriage, so we were obliged to chain him up on the roof, evidently much to his disgust.

I must confess to a certain feeling of uneasiness when, having taken our seats, the engine gave a snort, and puffing out a volume of dense black smoke and smuts, started us on our journey.

By reason of the odd shape of our wheels and the unevenness of the rails the carriage pitched and tossed about like a ship at sea, and our passage over a little wooden viaduct, where on either side the little blue people stood waving their adieux with quaint little flags, was, I am convinced, attended with considerable danger. [138]

It was really a dreadful journey. The carriage pitched backward and forward, and rolled from side to side with every revolution of the wheels, while poor Kis-Smee, on the top, kept slipping about in the most painful manner. His Majesty's carpet-bag, which had not been securely fastened to the top of the carriage, slipped off soon after we started, and though we rang the bell violently Mike refused to stop, and it was lost forever.

"Fortunately there was not much in it!" his Majesty gasped between the jerks which the irregular motion of the train occasioned. "Only a tooth-brush and small cake of soap."



The carriage pitched backward and rolled from side to side.— [Page 138](#).

Wallypugland.

"But it felt quite full," I remarked in surprise.

[139]

"Yes," explained his Majesty. "I stuffed it full of paper and things, because I thought that it would look so bad for a king to be traveling about without any luggage."

Just then there was a yelp and a howl from Kis-Smee, and looking out of the window we found that the poor creature had fallen from the roof and was hanging down by the chain which was attached to the top of the carriage, and was in momentary danger of being strangled.

We managed, after a prolonged struggle, to haul him in through the window, and, although we were rather crowded, to find room for him in the carriage. We had hardly settled down into our places, however, before the train came to a standstill, and Mike came to the door in a great state of agitation.

"Av yez plaze, sor," he began.

"Why! I thought you were deaf and dumb," I cried.

[140]

"Och—that's all gammon sure—oi can talk all roight, and hear all roight too when it suits me purpose. Well, now, ye see when the dog fell off the roof he upset me coal-scuttle, and never a bit of coal is there left. Would ye be good enough, kind gentlemen, to go back and pick some up off the line, it's only about a moile and a half back."

The engine, it appeared, could not be reversed, and, as there was no chance of getting a supply anywhere else, nothing remained but for his Majesty and myself to go back with the coal-scuttle and pick some of the spilt coal up.

Kis-Smee bounded delightedly at our side; but we did not take A. Fish, Esq., with us, as he complained of a pain in his tail, and we feared that the long walk might make it worse.

"I shall amuse byself while you are away by giving Bike ad elocutiod lessod," he said, as we left him.

[141]

But Mike, who was undoing his bundle preparatory to having some dinner, did not look very enthusiastic over the project, and I am almost certain I heard him mutter, "Not if I know it," as we were walking away.

We found the coal, as we expected, beside the line, after we had walked a little over a mile, and his Majesty and myself picked it up, and packing it in the scuttle, took turns in carrying it back to the train again.

We had nearly arrived at the spot where the train was waiting for us, when his Majesty noticed some curious flowers growing in a little copse beside the line, and we put down our coal-scuttle and went to gather them. While we were doing so, however, we heard a wild shout, and looking up beheld an enormously tall and thin man running towards us, gesticulating violently.

He was waving some wire and leather dog muzzles in one hand.

[142]



THE TALL THIN MAN WAS WAVING SOME MUZZLES.

"Where's his muzzle?" he demanded, pointing to Kis-Smee. "Can't you see the dog is mad and must be muzzled immediately?"

"I'm sure he's not," cried the Wallypug, indignantly, and patting Kis-Smee's head. [143]

"He is," declared the man. "All dogs are mad, and I insist upon them being muzzled."

"Very well," I interposed. "You had better try and put a muzzle on this one yourself."

"Oh! I'll soon do that," cried the man, selecting a large muzzle from the collection which he carried with him. "Come here, sir! Good dog, then."

Kis-Smee growled, and grinning more than ever made a dart at the man, who dropped his muzzles and fled, screaming, "Mad dog! Mad dog!" at the top of his voice.

His Majesty and myself, laughing heartily at his discomfiture, hurried back to the train without meeting with any further adventures.

A. Fish, Esq., and Mike seemed to be rather cool towards each other, I thought, and I heard afterwards that they had not got on at all well with the "elocution" lesson—in fact, Mike had absolutely refused to be instructed in that very necessary art. [144]

Of course we told them of our adventure with the man in the wood, and Mike explained that he was well known as "The Long Man of Muzzledom," and was quite harmless, though rather silly, being under the impression that all dogs and cats were mad and should be muzzled.

"Well, he didn't muzzle Kis-Smee, anyhow," said his Majesty, as we took our seats in the carriage, and the train once more started for Why.

After several hours of bumping and jolting, we were delighted to see the familiar towers and gables of his Majesty's palace in the distance, and knew that we had at last arrived at the end of our journey.

CHAPTER XII.

BACK AGAIN AT WHY.

KIS-SMEE was overjoyed to get out of the train, and eagerly strained at the chain which his Majesty had affixed to his collar, in his endeavor to get through the barrier.

The porter, however, who pretended not to know us, demanded our tickets.

"It's all right," said his Majesty, smilingly. "I'm the Wallypug, you know."

"Nonsense," said the porter. "The Wallypug was ugly enough, goodness knows, but he hadn't a *blue* face like you; besides, Wallypug or no Wallypug, you don't get through here without a ticket, I can tell you."

Here was a pretty pickle. We had not thought in the least about tickets, and in fact had no idea that any would be required. [146]

"I certainly shan't let you pass the barrier without," said the porter, in answer to our explanations.

"But what are we to do?" asked the Wallypug. "Can't we pay at this end?"

"Certainly not. My instructions are to demand a ticket of every one passing this barrier, and unless you give me one you cannot go through."

"But I tell you we haven't any. Can't you tell us what to do?"

"Go back for them, I should say," said the porter, yawning unconcernedly. "Now then, one thing or another. Are you going to give me the tickets or not?"

"How can we give them to you if we haven't any?" demanded the Wallypug. The porter slammed the door to impatiently, and went a little way up the platform, turning around to call out warningly, "If we find any suspicious-looking characters hanging about the station premises we shoot them." [147]



THE PORTER DEMANDED OUR TICKETS.

"What nonsense!" cried the Wallypug, rattling and kicking the gate. "We can't stop here all day. Let's call the station-master. Hi! hi! station-master!" he shouted.

No one answered for a few minutes, but eventually a door some little distance up the platform opened, and the old station-master made his appearance, puffing and blowing, and followed by the porter, carrying a huge blunderbuss. [148]

"Now then, what's all this noise about?" he demanded.

"We want to get out, if you please," said the Wallypug.

"Where are your tickets," demanded the station-master.

"We are very sorry," I began in explanation.

"Hold your tongue, and speak when you are spoken to," interrupted the station-master.

"Where are your tickets?"

"They haven't any," explained the porter officiously. "They are trying to defraud the company."

"H'm, funny-looking lot of people, too," remarked the station-master. "Who are they, do you know?"

"That," said the porter, pointing to his Majesty, "says he is the Wallypug."

"What! *that* color!" objected the station-master. "The Wallypug! Indeed, what nonsense!"

"But, indeed, I am the Wallypug," declared his Majesty, "and we turned this color after we drank the tea, you know."

"Turned blue through drinking tea!" said the station-master incredulously.

"Ha! ha! a *likely* story," laughed the porter derisively.

"Perhaps it will wear off in time," said the Wallypug, "like being sunburnt does."

"Very well then, you had better stop here till it does," said the station-master. "Look here!" he cried, turning to the porter, "you stop here at the barrier, and don't let them through until they have turned a respectable color, and you can recognize them."

"But it may take weeks," began his Majesty.

"Hold your tongue!" said the station-master sharply. "If you have any nonsense with them, shoot them," he added to the porter, depositing the blunderbuss beside the barrier, and going back to the other end of the platform.

Whatever we should have done I cannot think, if just at that moment the porter's wife had not put her head out of the signal-box and called to him to "come in at once and mind the baby," while she "did a little shopping."

"But he's on duty, ma'am," expostulated the station-master.

"I don't care anything about *that*; you come in at once, Bill," shouted the woman, and the porter meekly left the barrier and disappeared within the signal-box.

Of course we all rushed through the gate at once, and the station-master catching sight of Kis-Smee, who had meanwhile slipped his chain, fled up the platform in dismay.

Kis-Smee, evidently thinking him fair game, started off in pursuit, and it was not till the station-master had bolted into his office and locked the door that we could get him to come back to our call.



FLED UP THE PLATFORM IN DISMAY.

So soon as we got into the street we met the Turtle and the Pelican, walking arm-in-arm, and each smoking a cigarette.

"Hullo, Wallypug!" exclaimed the Pelican. "Why, we thought you were at Wei-hai-wei."

"Wer-har-wei, you mean," laughed his Majesty.

"It's all the same," announced the Pelican. "Well, how have you been getting on?"

His Majesty explained as briefly as possible the adventures we had passed through, and then inquired how affairs were progressing at Why.

"Oh, not very well, I'm afraid," said the Pelican. "You see, there has been no one to take the lead since you've been away. We tried a Republican form of government, and elected Oom-Hi as president, but he became so extravagant—wanted a new top-hat every day, and insisted on a gilded coach to ride in; and at last we caught him

tampering with the public funds, so we had to dismiss him. Have you heard about Broncho?"

"No," said his Majesty.

"Well, it didn't answer as a cough mixture, so Oom-Hi turned it into a patent meat extract, and called it Vimbril, and it killed ever so many people."

[153]

"Indeed!" exclaimed the Wallypug, anxiously. "Any one I know?"

"Madame and a few other folk," was the reply; "and the Doctor-in-Law is not expected to recover."

"Good gracious! Why, we thought them at the other end of the world. However did they get back to Why again?"

"Oh, they sent us a cablegram when they got to China, and we let down an enormously long rope and pulled them up the shute again, you know. But it was a very long journey, and they had nothing to eat on the way. So as soon as we hauled them up we gave them each a large dose of Vimbril. Madame expired at once," he added, with a sob.

The tears were streaming down the Turtle's nose as he sympathetically joined in the Pelican's weeping.

[154]

"What about the Doctor-in-Law?" inquired his Majesty, solicitously.

"Oh, he has a very strong constitution, you know, and he may pull through. We've got him back at the palace in his old quarters."

"Poor fellow! Poor fellow!" said the Wallypug, sympathetically. "Let's go and see what we can do for him."

I thought this very kind of his Majesty, considering all he had suffered through the Doctor-in-Law's ingratitude; but the good-hearted little fellow was full of sympathy, and hurried towards the palace with all speed.

[155]

CHAPTER XIII.

A NEW STATE OF AFFAIRS.

"Oh my! Good gracious me!" exclaimed a voice as we approached the entrance to the palace and looking up we beheld the Cockatoo perched on a window-sill. "Just look at these creatures. *What* a color. Why, why," she exclaimed, peering at us closely, "I'm bothered if it isn't the Wallypug and the Hatless Man, and the great Mr. A. Fish, Esq. Where have you been? What did you come back for? What do you want?" she screamed.

"It's dud of your busidess," replied A. Fish, Esq., shortly.

"Oh! isn't it," said the Cockatoo furiously. "I'll soon show you whether it's none of my business or not. To begin with, the Wallypug and the headless traitor"—

[156]

"Do you mean me?" I interrupted, "because I am not headless yet, you know."



"WHAT A COLOR!" EXCLAIMED THE COCKATOO.

"Headless, or hatless, it's all the same," said the Cockatoo, "you might as well run about without your head for all the good it is to you," she added insolently. "Well you two are escaped prisoners," she ran on, "and I shall see that you are locked up again, so there."

[157]

"But it was all a mistake," said His Majesty mildly.

"What was?" yelled the bird.

"What I said about a 'horse a horse, my kingdom for a horse!' you know," said the Wallypug.

"Why don't you say what you mean then?" cried the Cockatoo. "Well, I shall have you locked up anyhow. Here, Crocodile," she shouted, "just come and arrest these creatures will you?"

"Shan't!" replied a voice from within; "who are you ordering about. If you want them arrested, do it yourself. I'm not going to do as *you* tell me, so there! besides, all the prisoners have been set free that Madame sentenced, you know that well enough?"

"Yah! Down with him, down with Crocodiles; down with pale-blue Wallypugs and hatless men; down with fishes of all sorts. Down with everybody and everything; down with——."

[158]

We did not stop to hear any more of her ravings, but passed through and up into the Doctor-in-Law's old rooms.

We found him looking very weak and ill, but he recognized us all, and held out his hand to the Wallypug, who told him encouragingly that he would soon be well again.

"Yes, ad thed I'll teach you elocutiod for dothig," promised A. Fish, Esq.

The Doctor-in-Law smiled faintly, and whispered that what was keeping him back most was the thought of the heavy doctor's bill which he would have to pay when he got better.

The good-natured little Wallypug made him very happy by promising to pay this amount for him, and we left the little man

looking very much brighter than when we entered.



We found the Doctor-in-Law looking very weak and ill, but he recognized us all and held out his hand to the Wallypug.— [Page 158](#).

Wallypugland.

The rest of the morning was spent in his Majesty's private apartments, discussing all sorts of plans for the future, for, as the Wallypug very properly remarked, now that the Mother-in-Law had gone he should have a freer hand in the administration of affairs. [159]

A. Fish, Esq., busied himself in preparing an elaborate lecture, which he said he would deliver in public on the morrow, on the "Unreasonableness of Misunderstandability," and which would, he hoped, clearly explain away the mistake which had been made, in accusing his Majesty of treason, in connection with his unfortunate recitation of "A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!"

While we were thus busily engaged there came an impatient tap-tap-tapping at the door, and on opening it we beheld the Crow looking more disreputably untidy than ever. He carried a large bundle of papers and a quill pen. "Ahem!" he began importantly, "I call on behalf of the *Daily Whyer* a new paper which I have just established, and which I am happy to say has already an enormous circulation in Why. It is very cheap (four copies for a penny), and contains an enormous amount of totally unreliable information; besides which there is a page devoted to domestic matters, highly interesting to ladies, and includes receipts for artistically furnishing your house with old tea chests and soap boxes, painted with enamel and draped with art muslin; there are also several poems weekly on the subject of 'Baby's Little Socks,' which are immensely popular with some people, here is one of them," he cried, turning to the back page of his paper, a copy of which he had with him. [160]

"Oh! the baby's little socks,
Darling baby's little socks;
When the kettle's softly steaming,
When the firelight's glow is gleaming,
And I'm sitting idly dreaming,
Whisper gently, 'baby's socks.'

"Oh the darling little socks;
Baby's *baby's* little socks;
Toys that baby fingers scatter,
Little feet that pitter-patter,
Tittle tongues—but there—no matter,
Let's get back to baby's socks."

[161]

"There," he concluded triumphantly, "what do you think of that?"

"Well, I don't wish to be rude," I remarked, "but I certainly think it's the greatest rubbish I've ever heard in all my life."

"Rubbish!" he exclaimed, "Why all the ladies who read the *Daily Whyer* think it *beautiful*. I have to get the same gentleman to write verses like that nearly every day."

"Do you mean to tell me," I replied, "that a man writes such

twaddle as that."

"Oh! you're jealous, that's what's the matter with you. A man write them? of course he does."

"And do you pay him for these precious contributions," I exclaimed in surprise.

"I *promise* to pay him ever so much a year," said the Crow, "but—er—ahem—I have a very bad memory. I have several contributors whom I pay on the same system, it's a very *cheap* way," he sniffled. "I've copied it from a contemporary."

"Well, we're very busy just dow," said A. Fish, Esq., "would you bind telling us your busidess ad goig, because we wandt to ged to work agaid."

"Oh! to tell you the truth," said the Crow, "I wanted to know if the Wallypug would let me print an interview with him in to-morrow's paper. You have just returned from Wer-har-wei, I believe, haven't you; I was sitting on the signal post at the station just now and saw you arrive. I think my readers would be very interested in hearing your impressions of the country."

I took his Majesty aside and pointed out to him that very possibly an interview with him appearing in the paper would have a good effect on his people, and he could use it as a means of advertising the reforms he intended making in the government of the land; and his Majesty agreeing with me on the point, he seated himself comfortably in his own particular chair, and the Crow, perching on the back of another, the interview began.

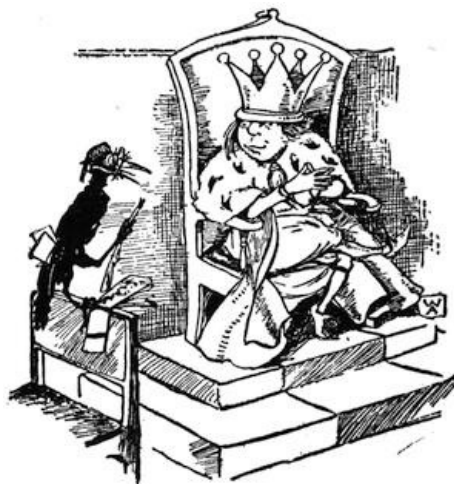
"Let's see," said the Crow, making a great spluttering with his pen, which was cross-nibbed and broken. "When were you born?"

"Well, really," said his Majesty, "I, er—was so young at the time that I scarcely remember."

"Oh, well, I'll put it down as Y. D. 987; that will do as well as any other date."

"Why Y. D.?" I inquired, curiously.

"Year of disgrace," was the prompt reply. "Bless me! this must be a Post Office pen," he went on, as the pen scattered the ink about in all directions. "They are always bad, you know." Then, having asked the Wallypug no end of questions, not only about our journey, but on all sorts of private matters also, the wretched-looking bird gathered up his papers, which were covered with unintelligible blots and scratches and scattered in all parts of the room, and, tucking them under his wing, departed, to have the matter set up in print.



"THIS MUST BE A POST OFFICE PEN," SAID THE CROW.

[162]

[163]

[164]

[165]

CHAPTER XIV.

“GOOD FOR THE COMPLEXION.”

THE Crow had scarcely left the room when there was another knock, and without waiting for a reply the Cockatoo burst into the room in a fine fluster. She was followed by the Kangaroo and Oom Hi.

“Look at them! *Look at them!*” she blurted out, “did you ever see such objects in all your life. What a color!”

“Hm! Eggshell blue,” said the Kangaroo, examining the Wallypug critically. “Very extraordinary tint. Never seen a face that shade before.”

“The other one is worse,” declared the Cockatoo, pointing at me derisively. “I always knew he was something disreputable. I believe,” she added, sinking her voice into a hoarse whisper, “I believe he has let himself out as an advertisement for Stephen’s Blue-black Ink, or Ricket’s Paris Blue. What depravity. Down with him! Duck him in the pond! Scrub him with sandpaper! Boil him!” and so she went on.

“What’s all this bother about?” I exclaimed. “Don’t you see that his Majesty is engaged. If you don’t immediately go about your business I will have you put out of the room.”

“Oh! will you indeed,” exclaimed the Cockatoo excitedly, “I should like to see you attempt it. It strikes me that *you* are the one that will be put out. We can stand a good deal down here, but a hatless object with a *blue* face. Ough!”

“Here, come and do your duty,” she shouted, going to the door, and the two Crocodiles entered and caught hold of me roughly by the collar. “Bring them out into the courtyard,” shouted the infuriated bird, and before I could protest I was bundled unceremoniously out of the house by the Crocodiles, the Kangaroo and Oom Hi following with the Wallypug.



“Ough! ough!” spluttered his Majesty. “You’re putting it all in my eyes. Oh, ach! do-o-n’t! Stop! I say, *do* leave off.”—
[Page 167.](#)

Wallypugland.

“Now then,” said the Cockatoo, stopping before a large tub of water which stood on the ground, “see what soap and water will do.”

The Kangaroo rummaged about and discovered a small hard piece of yellow soap, and Oom Hi brought forth a good sized sponge,

[166]

[167]

and together they gave the poor little Wallypug such a scrubbing as I should think he had never had before in all his life.

"Ough! ough!" spluttered his Majesty. "You're putting it all in my eyes. Oh, ach! do-o-on't! Stop! I say, *do* leave off. Ough!"

The poor little fellow was nearly choked.

Oom Hi sponged the soap away and the Cockatoo stared critically at the poor Wallypug, who stood there with the water streaming from his face and the tips of his fingers. [168]

"Hasn't done the slightest good," she declared; "better scrape him with a putty knife, I think."

"Stop a minute!" said the Kangaroo, "I have it," and he went up and whispered something in Oom Hi's ear.

"Capital! capital! go and fetch a bottle," cried Oom Hi, and the Kangaroo rushed off, returning a minute later with a large bottle marked Vimbril.

"Oh! don't! don't!" cried the poor Wallypug. "I'm not going to take any of that stuff. It killed the lady who called herself my Sister-in-Law you know, and it made the Doctor-in-Law ill. Take it away."

"Of course you are not going to take any, Wallypug," said Oom Hi soothingly, "but there will be no harm in trying the effect upon your complexion. It *might* make you the proper color again you know, and in that case I could alter the name and call it 'Wallypug's Blush,' and advertise it well; no doubt it would be a great success. Put some on the sponge," he continued, holding it out to the Kangaroo, who poured out some of the nasty looking stuff. [169]

"No! no! don't. Ough!" shuddered his Majesty, but despite his protests his face was well rubbed with the fluid.

"Worse than ever, he's light brown now," said the Cockatoo.

"Oh! wipe it off! wipe it off," implored the Wallypug.

"No!" said Oom Hi, who seemed very greatly disappointed at the non-success of his experiment, "let it dry on."

"We had better put him in the stocks," he declared, "to prevent him from rubbing it off." So the poor little Wallypug was led off to the stocks and securely fastened in, with his hands spread out to dry, and with strict injunctions not to move till he was told. [170]



HIS MAJESTY IN THE STOCKS.

The last view that I had of his Majesty was of the poor little fellow, utterly worn out with his exertions, meekly sitting in the stocks and falling into an uneasy slumber, from which, however, he was frequently awakened by the bees and flies, which, attracted by the sticky stuff on his face and hands, flocked around him as though he were a pot of jam. [171]

"We might keep *this* as a curiosity," said the Cockatoo, turning her attention to me next. "Put in a cage with a large label, 'Blue-faced and hatless man, Dangerous!' he ought to be an attraction to our menagerie. I think that's what we'll do with him," and despite my struggles and protests I was ignominiously marched off by the Crocodiles, who continued to make rude and personal remarks about my appearance all the way to the dungeon, where it appeared I was to spend my time till a cage could be prepared for me.

Of course I was terribly indignant at my treatment, but was

absolutely powerless to prevent it And the only thing that I could do when the Crocodiles had left me alone, after a few parting jeers, was to consider the best way of effecting my escape.

[172]



MADE RUDE AND PERSONAL REMARKS ABOUT MY APPEARANCE.

I was pondering seriously upon this question, when suddenly I remembered the Gombobble with which the little blue people had presented me when I left Wer-har-wei. Taking it from my pocket I idly wondered if it were good to eat or not. It felt soft and looked something like a huge blue orange or a melon; getting out my penknife I plunged it in and cut the fruit open. Inside was a white juicy pulp which looked very tempting, so trusting to its being good to eat I took a bite.

[173]

It was delicious!

I took another bite, and then, happening to look at my hands, I discovered to my great delight that they were regaining their proper color.

"Come, this is better," I cried, tackling a third piece; and then suddenly remembering the poor Wallypug, I carefully cut the Gombobble in half and put part of it aside for his Majesty, and was just about to eat another little piece myself, when, happening to look up, I caught sight of Mr. Nobody from Nowhere, squeezing through the bars of my dungeon window.

[174]

He was as smiling and happy as ever, and made me an elaborate bow with an elegant flourish, and then looked so very knowing that I felt sure that he had something important to communicate.

[175]

CHAPTER XV.

"WALLYPUG'S BLUSH LIMITED."

"How do you do?" I began.

The little fellow bowed and smiled and brought forth a scrap of paper and a pencil.

On the paper he wrote, "Quite well thanks, how are you?" and added the words, "Can I be of any service to you?"

I pondered a moment, and then recollected that he would be a capital medium of communication between the Wallypug and myself.

"Do you know where the stocks are?" I inquired.

Mr. Nobody nodded vigorously.

"His Majesty the Wallypug is there," I ventured.

Mr. Nobody nodded again very energetically, and I could see that he knew all about it. Moreover he wrote on his paper, "Poor Wallypug!" and looked most sympathetic.

"Would you like to help him?" I inquired.

The little man nodded again, and seemed quite delighted at the prospect.

Handing him the half of the Gombobble which I had reserved for his Majesty, I said, "Take this to the Wallypug immediately and, *if he is quite alone*, tell him to eat it all, and on no account to tell any one how he became possessed of it."

Mr. Nobody nodded to show that he understood, and, taking the piece of Gombobble, he squeezed through the bars of my cell, and was soon running off in the direction of the stocks.

I awaited his return with some anxiety, and was delighted to see when he did come back, that his face was beaming with delight.

[176]

[177]



MR. NOBODY NODDED.

"His Majesty has regained his complexion, and is very grateful to you," he wrote hurriedly, clapping his hands and capering about.

"Now go and tell Oom Hi and the Kangaroo, and if they come to the conclusion that his Majesty's complexion has been restored through using the stuff they call 'Wallypug's Blush,' don't say anything to the contrary; it will put them into a good temper and perhaps make them kinder to his Majesty."

Mr. Nobody seemed quite to understand and hurried off again. He did not come back, but about half an hour afterwards there was

[178]

a noise at the door of my cell, and after a great deal of fumbling at the lock, Oom Hi and the Kangaroo entered.

Oom Hi carried a basin and the Kangaroo a bottle of Vimbril, or Wallypug's Blush, as it was now called.

They looked very amiable, and after some kind remarks about the weather Oom Hi cleared his throat and said in a sort of apologetic voice:

[179]



OOM HI CARRIED A BASIN, AND THE KANGAROO A BOTTLE OF VIMBRIL.

"Er, we didn't mean to be *too* severe, you know, and what we have done has been all for the best. You will be pleased to hear that my invaluable preparation, 'Wallypug's Blush,' has proved perfectly satisfactory, and his Majesty the Wallypug is a living testimony to its worth. His beautiful complexion has entirely returned, and I have no doubt if we could persuade you to use it too it would be equally successful in your case. You will try it, won't you?" he pleaded earnestly.

[180]

"Of course if my complexion, such as it is, is restored, I shall be released from here?" I hazarded.

"Oh! certainly," said both animals at once, and so after surreptitiously devouring the remainder of the Gombobble, I permitted the creatures to smear my face over with their precious rubbish on the distinct understanding that I should be allowed to have a good wash afterwards.

The Gombobble acted perfectly, and the animals were delighted when they saw the result, as they of course put it down to the effect of their "Wallypug's Blush."

"Go and fetch the Cockatoo," said Oom Hi, "she shall judge for herself."

So the Kangaroo went off to fetch her.

[181]

"Wonderful preparation, isn't it?" said Oom Hi, gazing affectionately at his bottle of "Wallypug's Blush."

"Very!" I remarked.

"I *knew* it must be good for something or another," he went on, "but of course we could not tell exactly what till we had tried. It *very nearly* cured a cold once, you know, when I called it Broncho, though I am bound to admit that it was not exactly a success as Vimbril. Do you think 'Wallypug's Blush' a good title," he asked anxiously.

"It's a very striking one," I admitted.

"I shall advertise it well in the *Daily Whyer*, you know, and—Oh! here comes the Cockatoo," he added, as that bird came bustling into the cell.

"Now then, what's this I hear?" she began, giving me a keen glance; "'Wallypug's Blush' restored your complexion. Why so it has, though I cannot say much for it even now. However, since you have no longer a blue face you are scarcely likely to be valuable as a curiosity, so you had better get about your business," and, flinging

[182]

open the door, the Cockatoo motioned me out with her crutched stick.

You may be sure I was not long in availing myself of my liberty and hurrying to the spot where I had last seen his Majesty.

The stocks were empty, but a little further off I found A. Fish, Esq., who seemed delighted to see me.

"Well I dever!" he exclaimed; "I heard you were going to be exhibited as a freak. What stories people do tell, to be sure."

I briefly explained what had happened and inquired if he knew where the Wallypug was.

"Oh yes, he's gode back to the Palace," said A. Fish, Esq. "He's id a rare way aboutu you."

So I thought it best, in order to relieve his Majesty's anxiety, to seek him there.

It was now getting dusk, and seeing a light in his Majesty's private apartments, I went up and knocked at the door.

"Come in!" cried a voice which I had no difficulty in recognizing, and on opening the door I found the good little man pacing to and fro in a state of great agitation.

"Oh! it's you," he exclaimed in a relieved voice, and came forward to welcome me eagerly. "I was just wondering how on earth I could get you out of the Cockatoo's clutches; she's a wretched creature, isn't she?"

"Well she is a trial, certainly," I agreed, "and I think if I were you I should adopt some very strong measures for preventing her from interfering as she does."

"Hm! yes," said his Majesty, "let's go and hear what the Doctor-in-Law has to say about it; he may be able to advise us as to the best way of putting her down, and though he will probably charge pretty stiffly for it, his advice *is* worth having sometimes."

So we went together to the Doctor-in-Law's room.

We were surprised to hear several voices talking excitedly within, and when in reply to a rather impatient "Come in!" we opened the door, we were astonished to see the Doctor-in-Law in his dressing-gown and slippers, in busy consultation with Oom Hi, the Kangaroo, and the Cockatoo.

"I've been greatly interested in hearing of the success of 'Wallypug's Blush,'" said the little man, "and am just helping Oom Hi (ahem, for a consideration) to draw up a prospectus for turning it into a Limited Company. In consideration of the payment to me of several thousands of pounds, I am about to become a director, and am to be paid several thousands more for persuading the Cockatoo to join the board too."



We were astonished to see the Doctor-in-Law in his dressing-gown and slippers, in busy consultation with Oom Hi, the Kangaroo, and the Cockatoo.— [Page 184](#).

Wallypugland.

"But," I objected, "what do you claim that 'Wallypug's Blush'

does?"

"Oh, it restores people with blue complexions to their natural color, you know."

"But surely there will be a very limited sale," I said; "there cannot be very many people with blue faces, you know."

"Oh, *of course*, you must try and spoil everything with your absurd objections," said the Cockatoo crossly.

"Yes, I really don't see that your contention has much weight," said the Doctor-in-Law. "Provided it is only advertised enough, the public will buy *any* rubbish, whether it does what it professes to do or not. And we shall simply call it 'Wallypug's Blush *for the complexion*,' you know; besides, even if it doesn't answer, we can turn it into something else, Boot Polish or Hair Wash, you know."

[186]

And so seeing them so busily and enthusiastically engaged in the business of drawing up the prospectus, we said good-night and retired to our rooms.

[187]

CHAPTER XVI.

"AU REVOIR."

THE next morning all was excitement at the palace. The news of our return had spread abroad, and in the morning copy of the *Daily Whyer*, which his Majesty found on the breakfast-table when we went down, a full and, I must say, surprisingly accurate account of the interview appeared, together with the information that his Majesty would attend Parliament in state in the afternoon, and that an address from the throne would be read, in which certain changes in the Government would be suggested. There was also a paragraph about A. Fish, Esquire's, lecture upon the "Unreasonableness of ability," which the editor advised everybody to try and hear.

[188]

His Majesty was in quite a fluster, and we spent several hours in preparing an elaborate written speech which he was to read out in the afternoon; and then, having settled this and other matters to our satisfaction, we took Kis-Smee out for a little walk just before luncheon.

One of the first persons we met was the Crocodile at the Lodge. He looked once or twice at his Majesty, as if in doubt, and then at Kis-Smee.

On seeing the latter his eyes sparkled, and he came up and spoke at once.

"Hullo, Wallypug!" he began unceremoniously.

His Majesty bowed, a little distantly I thought.

"*What* a fine fat dog!" exclaimed the Crocodile, pointing to Kis-Smee. "Is he for sale?"

"Certainly not," said the Wallypug.

The Crocodile sighed. "Just my luck," he remarked, "I love dogs and I should so enjoy taking this one home to tea with me. Perhaps you will let him visit me sometimes. What's his name?"

[189]



"OH! REALLY, WALLYPUG, THIS IS SO SUDDEN."

"Kis-Smee," said his Majesty.

"Oh! really Wallypug, this is so sudden," said the Crocodile, smirking, "I'd no idea you were so affectionate. I'm so bashful, too. I couldn't really think of kissing you in public."

"No, no!" explained his Majesty hastily—"Kis-Smee is the dog's name; you asked me what his name was, you know."

[190]

"Oh!" said the Crocodile, looking greatly disappointed. "I misunderstood you. Very sorry, I'm sure. Well, what are you going to do now?"

His Majesty told him of the meeting in the afternoon, and the Crocodile promised to come.

"That is," he added, "if I may bring my invalid with me."

"Who is that?" asked the Wallypug.

"Oh! a very feeble old joke I've got staying with me," said the Crocodile. "I could bring him in the perambulator, you know—the one I used to wheel the weak cup of tea about in—he's such a nice old man."

"What is he, did you say?" asked his Majesty.

"An old joke," repeated the Crocodile, "his name is Joe Miller, and he eats nothing but chestnuts, and even they have to be very ancient before he can digest them. Oh! he's a character, I can tell you. Make you die of laughing the *first* time you meet him; but as he always says the same thing over and over again—for hours and hours, he is rather trying at times. However, I will bring him along, and you can judge for yourself."

[191]

We left the Crocodile then and went back to luncheon—after which we set out for the House of Words.

We found that quite a lot of Creatures were waiting in the lobby for the doors to open.

There was the Doctor-in-Law, telling a funny story to the Pig, for which he afterwards made a charge of one pound nineteen and elevenpence, describing it as *Professional Attendance*—and wording the bill as follows:

To One pig, one guinea (guinea-pig),	£1 1 0
"Laugh and grow fat," one joke,	0 6 8

	£1 19 11

And to the Mole, who happened to overhear the joke, he made another charge; but the Mole got out of paying for it on the plea that he *couldn't see it*; but whether he meant the bill or the joke I could never find out, Moles are notoriously blind.

[192]

Oom-Hi was there and the Turtle too, and A. Fish, Esq., listened, open-mouthed, while they discussed the state of affairs.

The Cockatoo, irrepresible as ever, held forth on the subject of Socialism to an interested audience, consisting of the Crocodile and the Rabbit. While the Crow filled in a few spare moments by interviewing the Pelican. The Creatures stood aside very politely to allow his Majesty and myself to enter, Kis-Smee growling ominously at the Cockatoo, who screamed, "Down with domestic animals," as he passed. This remark of hers gave offense to the Pig also, who demanded to know if she was referring to him.



Oom-Hi was there and the Turtle too, and A. Fish, Esq., listened, open-mouthed, while they discussed the state of affairs.— [Page 192](#).

Wallypugland.

"Of course not," replied the Cockatoo; "you're not a domestic animal, are you?"

[193]

"Sure an I am that same in me own country," said the Pig, who was evidently of Irish descent.

"Och down with the dirty landlords thin," screamed the

Cockatoo, which caused the Pig to laugh and put him in a good temper again.

"I couldn't bring the old joke along after all," whispered the Crocodile to me, as we squeezed through the door; "he is more feeble than ever." "How's Kis-Smee?"

"Quite well, I think, thank you," I replied.

"Isn't he delightfully fat," whispered the Crocodile, smacking his lips. "About three nice large mouthfuls, I should say," he concluded mysteriously, winking one eye at me.

I haven't the remotest idea what he meant, and besides I hadn't time to think about it then, for the meeting was about to commence.

We all found seats, and A. Fish, Esq., being called upon to open the proceedings, he commenced his learned treatise upon the "Unreasonableness of Misunderstandability."

What it was all about I haven't the remotest idea, for what with his extraordinary way of talking, and the continual interruptions of the animals, who would keep shouting, "Hear! hear!" "Question!" "Withdraw!" "Order! order!" etc., at all kinds of odd moments, I could not hear a word that was being said. Moreover, the hall was unaccountably hot and stuffy, and for some time I had the greatest difficulty in keeping awake; and at last my head sank down and I dozed off, awaking at intervals when the Cockatoo was unusually energetic; but at last even her voice was silenced, and I remember no more till I awoke with a start, and found myself, to my great dismay, back again in my own study in London.

I have addressed several letters to "His Majesty the Wallypug, The Royal Palace, Why," as I am very anxious to know how affairs are going on there; but I am sorry to say they have always been returned through the post, marked in blue pencil, "*Not known. Insufficient address.*"



RETURNED THROUGH THE POST.

[194]

[195]

[196]

[197]

THE BLUE DWARFS:

AN ADVENTURE IN THURINGEN.

"And then on the top of the Caldon Low
There was no one left but me."

MARY HOWITT.

"I LIKED the blue dwarfs the best—far, far the best of anything," said Olive.

"The blue dwarfs!" repeated Rex. "What *do* you mean? Why can't you say what you mean plainly? Girls have such a stupid way of talking!"

"What can be plainer than *the blue dwarfs*?" said Olive rather snappishly, though, it must be allowed, with some reason. "We were talking about the things we liked best at the china place. *You* said the stags' heads and the inkstands, and *I* say the blue dwarfs."

[198]

"But I didn't see any dwarfs," persisted Rex.

"Well, I can't help it if you didn't. You had just as much chance of seeing them as I had. They were in a corner by themselves—little figures about two inches high, all with blue coats on. There were about twelve of them, all different, but all little dwarfs or gnomes. One was sitting on a barrel, one was turning head-over-heels, one was cuddling his knees—all funny ways like that. Oh, they were lovely!"

"I wish I had seen them better," said Rex regretfully. "I do remember seeing a tray full of little blue-looking dolls, but I didn't notice what they were."

Olive did not at once answer. Her eyes were fixed on something she saw passing before the window. It was a very, very little man. He was not exactly humpbacked, but his figure was somewhat deformed, and he was so small that but for the sight of his rather wizened old face one could hardly have believed he was a full-grown man. His eyes were bright and beady-looking, like those of a good-natured little weasel, if there be such a thing, and his face lighted up with a smile as he caught sight of the two, to him, strange-looking children at the open window of the little village inn.

[199]

"Guten Tag," he said, nodding to them; and "Guten Tag," replied the children, as they had learnt to do by this time to everybody they met. For in these remote villages it would be thought the greatest breach of courtesy to pass any one without this friendly greeting.

Rex drew a long breath when the dwarf had passed.

"Olive——" he began, but Olive interrupted him.

"Rex," she said eagerly, "that's *exactly* like them—like the blue dwarfs, I mean. Only, of course, their faces were prettier—nice little china faces, rather crumply looking, but quite nice; and then their coats were such a pretty nice blue. I think," she went on consideringly—"I think if I had that little man and washed his face *very* well, and got him a bright blue coat, he would look just like one of the blue dwarfs grown big."

[200]

Rex looked at Olive with a queer expression.

"Olive," he said in rather an awe-struck tone; "Olive, do you think perhaps they're *real*? Do you think perhaps somewhere in this country—in those queer dark woods, perhaps—that there are real blue dwarfs, and that somebody must have seen them and made the little china ones like them? Perhaps," and his voice dropped and grew still more solemn; "*perhaps*, Olive, that little man's one of them, and they may have to take off their blue coats when they're walking about. Do you know, I think it's a little, just a very little frightening? Don't you, Olive?"

[201]

"No, of course I don't," said Olive, and, to do her justice, her rather sharp answer was meant as much to reassure her little brother as to express any feeling of impatience. Rex was quite a little fellow, only eight, and Olive, who was nearly twelve, remembered that when she was as little as that, she used sometimes to feel frightened about things which she now couldn't see anything the least frightening in. And she remembered how once or twice some of her big cousins had laughed at her, and amused themselves by telling her all sorts of nonsense, which still seemed terrible to her when she was alone in her room in the dark at night. "Of course

there's nothing frightening in it," she said. "It would be rather a funny idea, I think. Of course it can't be, you know, Rex. There are no dwarfs, and gnomes, and fairies now."

"But that little man was a dwarf," said Rex.

[202]

"Yes, but a dwarf needn't be a fairy sort of person," explained Olive. "He's just a common little man, only he's never grown as big as other people. Perhaps he had a bad fall when he was a baby—that might stop his growing."

"Would it?" said Rex. "I didn't know that. I hope I hadn't a bad fall when I was a baby. Everybody says I'm very small for my age." And Rex looked with concern at his short but sturdy legs.

Olive laughed outright.

"Oh, Rex, what a funny boy you are! No, certainly, you are not a dwarf. You're as straight and strong as you can be."

"Well, but," said Rex, returning to the first subject, "I do think it's very queer about that little dwarf man coming up the street just as you were telling me about the blue dwarfs. And he *did* look at us in a funny way, Olive, whatever you say, just as if he had heard what we were talking about."

[203]

"All the people look at us in a funny way here," said Olive. "We must look very queer to them. Your sailor suit, Rex, and my 'Bolero' hat must look to them quite as queer as the women's purple skirts, with bright green aprons, look to us."

"Or the bullock-carts," said Rex. "Do you remember how queer we thought them at first? *Now* we've got quite used to seeing queer things, haven't we, Olive? Oh! now do look there—at the top of the street—there, Olive, did you ever see such a load as that woman is carrying in the basket on her back? Why, it's as big as a house!"

He seemed to have forgotten about the dwarfs, and Olive was rather glad of it. These two children were traveling with their uncle and aunt in a rather out-of-the-way part of Germany. Out-of-the-way, that is to say, to most of the regular summer tourists from other countries, who prefer going where they are more sure of finding the comforts and luxuries they are accustomed to at home. But it was by no means out-of-the-way in the sense of being dull or deserted. It is a very busy part of the world indeed. You would be amazed if I were to tell you some of the beautiful things that are made in these bare homely little German cottages. For all about in the neighborhood there are great manufactories and warehouses for china and glass, and many other things; and some parts of the work are done by the people at home in their own houses. The morning of the day of which I am telling you had been spent by the children and their friends in visiting a very large china manufactory, and their heads were full of the pretty and wonderful things they had seen.

[204]

And now they were waiting in the best parlor of the village inn while their uncle arranged about a carriage to take them all on to the small town where they were to stay a few days. Their aunt was tired, and was resting a little on the sofa, and they had planted themselves on the broad window-sill, and were looking out with amusement at all that passed.

[205]

"What have you been chattering about all this time?" said their aunt, suddenly looking up. "I think I must have been asleep a little, but I have heard your voices going on like two birds twittering."

"Have we disturbed you, Auntie?" asked Olive, with concern.

"Oh no, not a bit; but come here and tell me what you have been talking about."

Instantly Rex's mind went back to the dwarfs.

"Auntie," he said seriously, "perhaps you can tell me better than Olive can. Are there really countries of dwarfs, and are they a kind of fairies, Auntie?"

Auntie looked rather puzzled.

[206]

"Dwarfs, Rex?" she said; "countries of dwarfs! How do you mean?"

Olive hastened to explain. Auntie was very much amused.

"Certainly," she said, "we have already seen so many strange things in our travels that it is better not to be too sure what we may not see. But any way, Rex, you may be quite easy in your mind, that if ever you come across any of the dwarfs, you will find them very good-natured and amiable, only you must be very respectful—always say 'Sir,' or 'My lord,' or something like that to them, and bow a great deal. And you must never seem to think anything they do the

least odd, not even if they propose to you to walk on your head, or to eat roast fir-cones for dinner, for instance."

Auntie was quite young—not so very much older than Olive—and very merry. Olive's rather "grown-up" tones and manners used sometimes to tempt her to make fun of the little girl, which, to tell the truth, Olive did not always take quite in good part. And it must for Olive be allowed, that Auntie did sometimes allow her spirits and love of fun to run away with her a little too far, just like pretty unruly ponies, excited by the fresh air and sunshine, who toss their heads and gallop off. It is great fun at first and very nice to see, but one is sometimes afraid they may do some mischief on the way—without meaning it, of course; and, besides, it is not always so easy to pull them up as it was to start them.

[207]

Just as Auntie finished speaking the door opened and their uncle came in. He was Auntie's elder brother—a good deal older—and very kind and sensible. At once all thoughts of the dwarfs or what Auntie had been saying danced out of Rex's curly head. Like a true boy he flew off to his uncle, besieging him with questions as to what sort of a carriage they were to go on in—*was* it an ox-cart; oh, mightn't they *for once* go in an ox-cart? and might he—oh, might he sit beside the driver in front?

[208]

His uncle laughed and replied to his questions, but Olive stayed beside the sofa, staring gravely at her aunt.

"Auntie," she said, "you're not *in earnest*, are you, about there being really a country of dwarfs?"

Olive was twelve. Perhaps you will think her very silly to have imagined for a moment that her aunt's joke could be anything but a joke, especially as she had been so sensible about not letting Rex get anything into his head which could frighten him. But I am not sure that she was so very silly after all. She had read in her geography about the Lapps and Finns, the tiny little men of the north, whom one might very well describe as dwarfs; there might be dwarfs in these strange Thuringian forests, which were little spoken of in geography books; Auntie knew more of such things than she did, for she had traveled in this country before. Then with her own eyes Olive had seen a dwarf, and though she had said to Rex that he was just an odd dwarf by himself as it were, not one of a race, how could she tell but what he might be one of a number of such queer little people? And even the blue dwarfs themselves—the little figures in the china manufactory—rather went to prove it than not.

[209]

"They may have taken the idea of dwarfs from the real ones, as Rex said," thought Olive. "Any way I shall look well about me if we go through any of these forests again. They must live in the forests, for Auntie said they eat roast fir-cones for dinner."

All these thoughts were crowding through her mind as she stared up into Auntie's face and asked solemnly—

"Auntie, were you in earnest?"

[210]

Auntie's blue eyes sparkled.

"In earnest, Olive?" she said. "Of course! Why shouldn't I be in earnest? But come, quick, we must get our things together. Your uncle must have got a carriage."

"Yes," said he, "I have. *Not* an ox-cart, Rex. I'm sorry for your sake, but for no one else's; for I don't think there would be much left of us by the end of the journey if we were to be jogged along the forest roads in an ox-cart. No! I have got quite a respectable vehicle; but we must stop an hour or two on the way, to rest the horses and give them a feed, otherwise we could not get through to-night."

"Where shall we stop?" said Auntie, as with the bundles of shawls and bags they followed the children's uncle to the door.

"There is a little place in the forest, where they can look after the horses," said he; "and I daresay we can get some coffee there for ourselves, if we want it. It is a pretty little nook. I remember it long ago, and I shall be glad to see it again."

[211]

Olive had pricked up her ears. "A little place in the forest!" she said to herself; "that may be near where the dwarfs live: it is most likely not far from here, because of the one we saw." She would have liked to ask her uncle about it, but something in the look of her aunt's eyes kept her from doing so.

"Perhaps she *was* joking," thought Olive to herself. "But perhaps she doesn't know; *she* didn't see the real dwarf. It would be rather nice if I did find them, *then* Auntie couldn't laugh at me any more."

They were soon comfortably settled in the carriage, and set off.

The first part of the drive was not particularly interesting; and it was so hot, though already afternoon, that they were all—Olive especially, you may be sure—delighted to exchange the open country for the pleasant shade of a grand pine forest, through which their road now lay.

[212]

“Is it a very large forest, Uncle?” said Olive.

“Yes, very large,” he replied rather sleepily, to tell the truth: for both he and Auntie had been nodding a little, and Rex had once or twice been fairly asleep. But Olive’s imagination was far too hard at work to let her sleep.

“The largest in Europe?” she went on, without giving much thought to poor Uncle’s sleepiness.

“Oh yes, by far,” he replied, for he had not heard clearly what she said, and fancied it was “the largest hereabouts.”

“Dear me!” thought Olive, looking round her with awe and satisfaction. “If there are dwarfs anywhere, then it must be here.”

And she was just beginning another. “And please, Uncle, is——?” when her aunt looked up and said lazily—

[213]

“Oh, my dear child, do be quiet! Can’t you go to sleep yourself a little! We shall have more than enough of the forest before we are out of it?” Which offended Olive so much that she relapsed into silence.

Auntie was a truer prophet than she knew; for when they got to the little hamlet in the wood, where they were to rest, something proved to be wrong with one of the horse’s shoes; *so* wrong, indeed, that after a prolonged examination, at which all the inhabitants turned out to assist, it was decided that the horse must be re-shod before he could go any farther; and this made it impossible for the party who had come in the carriage to go any farther either. For the nearest smithy was two miles off; the horse must be led there and back by the driver, which would take at least two, if not three, hours. It was now past six, and they had come barely half way. The driver shook his head, and said he would not like to go on to the town till morning. The horse had pricked his foot; it might cause inflammation to drive him farther without a rest, and the carriage was far too heavy for the other horse alone, which had suddenly struck the children’s uncle as a brilliant idea.

[214]

“There would be no difficulty about the harnessing, any way,” he said to Auntie, laughing; “for all the vehicles hereabouts drawn by one horse have the animal at one side of a pole, instead of between shafts.”

But Auntie thought it better to give in.

“It really doesn’t much matter,” she said; “we can stay here well enough. There are two bedrooms, and no doubt they can give us something to eat; beer and sausages, and brown bread any way.”

And so it was settled greatly to Olive’s satisfaction; it would give her capital opportunities for a dwarf hunt! though as to this she kept her own counsel.

[215]

The landlady of the little post-house where they had stopped was accustomed to occasional visits of this kind from benighted or distressed travelers. She thought nothing of turning her two daughters out of their bedroom, which, it must be owned, was very clean, for Auntie and Olive, and a second room on the ground-floor was prepared for Rex and his uncle. She had coffee ready in five minutes, and promised them a comfortable supper before bedtime. Altogether, everything seemed very satisfactory, and when they felt a little refreshed, Auntie proposed a walk—“a good long walk,” she said, “would do us good. And the landlady says we get out of the forest up there behind the house, where the ground rises, and that there is a lovely view. It will be rather a climb, but it isn’t more than three quarters of an hour from here, and we have not walked all day.”

[216]

Uncle thought it a good idea, and Rex was ready to start at once; but Olive looked less pleased.

“Don’t you want to come, Olive?” said Auntie. “Are you tired? You didn’t take a nap like the rest of us.”

“I am a little tired,” said Olive, which was true in one sense, though not in another, for she was quite fit for a walk. It struck her that her excuse was not quite an honest one, so she added, “If you don’t mind, I would rather stay about here. I don’t mind being alone, and I have my book. And I do so like the forest.”

“Very well,” said her uncle; “only don’t lose yourself. She is

perfectly safe," he added, turning to her aunt; "there are neither wolves, nor bears, nor robbers nowadays, in these peaceful forests."

So the three set off, leaving Olive to her own devices. She waited till they were out of sight, then she made her preparations. [217]

"I'd better take my purse," she said to herself, "in case I meet the dwarfs. Auntie told me to be very polite, and perhaps they would like some of these tiny pieces; they just look as if they were meant for them." So she chose out a few one-pfennig copper coins, which are much smaller than our farthings, and one or two silver pieces, worth about twopence-halfpenny each, still smaller. Then she put in her pocket half a slice of the brown bread they had had with their coffee, and arming herself, more for appearance'-sake than anything else, with her parasol and the book she had with her in her traveling bag, she set off on her solitary ramble.

It was still hot—though the forest trees made a pleasant shade. Olive walked some way, farther and farther, as far as she could make out, into the heart of the forest, but in her inexperience she took no sort of care to notice the way she went, or to make for herself any kind of landmarks. She just wandered on and on, tempted first by some mysterious little path, and then by another, her mind full of the idea of the discoveries she was perhaps about to make. Now and then a squirrel darted across from one tree to another, disappearing among the branches almost before Olive could be sure she had seen it, or some wild wood birds, less familiar to the little foreigner, would startle her with a shrill, strange note. There were here and there lovely flowers growing among the moss, and more than once she heard the sound of not far off trickling water. It was all strangely beautiful, and she would greatly have enjoyed and admired it had not her mind been so full of the queer fascinating idea of the blue dwarfs. [218]

At last—she had wandered about for some time—Olive began to feel tired.

"I may as well sit down a little," she thought; "I have lots of time to get back. This seems the very heart of the forest. They are just as likely to be seen here as anywhere else." [219]

So Olive ensconced herself in a comfortable corner, her back against the root of a tree, which seemed hollowed out on purpose to serve as an armchair. She thought at first she would read a little, but the light was already slightly waning, and the tree shadows made it still fainter. Besides, Olive had plenty to think of—she did not require any amusement. Queer little noises now and then made themselves heard—once or twice it really sounded as if small feet were pattering along, or as if shrill little voices were laughing in the distance; and with each sound, Olive's heart beat faster with excitement—not with fear.

"If I sit very still," she thought, "who knows what I may see? Of course, it would be much nicer and prettier if the dwarfs were quite tiny—not like the little man we saw in the street at that place—I forget the name—for he was not pretty at all—but like the blue dwarfs at the manufactory. But that, I suppose, is impossible, for they would be really like fairies. But they might be something between: not so big as the little man, and yet bigger than the blue dwarfs." [220]

And then Olive grew a little confused in trying to settle in her mind how big, or how small rather, it was possible or impossible for a nation of dwarfs to be. She thought it over till she hardly seemed sure what she was trying to decide. She kept saying to herself, "Any way, they could not but be a good deal bigger than my thumb! What does that mean? Perhaps it means more in German measures than in English, perhaps—"

But what was that that suddenly hit her on the nose! Olive looked up, a very little inclined to be offended; it is not a pleasant thing to be hit on the nose; could it be Rex come behind her suddenly, and playing her a trick? Just as she was thinking this, a second smart tap on the nose startled her still more, and this time there was no mistake about it; it came from above, and it was a fir-cone! Had it come of itself? Somehow the words, "Roast fir-cones for dinner," kept running in her head, and she took up the fir-cone in her fingers to examine it, but quickly dropped it again, for it was as hot as a coal. [221]

"It has a very roasty smell," thought Olive; "where can it have come from?"

And hardly had she asked herself the question, when a sudden

noise all round her made her again look up. They were sliding down the branches of the tree in all directions. At first, to her dazzled eyes, they seemed a whole army, but as they touched the ground one by one, and she was able to distinguish them better, she saw that after all there were not so *very* many. One, two, three, she began quickly counting to herself, not aloud, of course—that would not have been polite—one, two, three, up to twelve, then thirteen, fourteen and so on up to—yes, there were just twenty-four of them.

[222]

“Two of each,” said Olive to herself; “a double set of the blue dwarfs.”

For they were the blue dwarfs, and no mistake! Two of each, as Olive had seen at once. And immediately they settled themselves in twos—two squatted on the ground embracing their knees, two strode across a barrel which they had somehow or other brought with them, two began turning head-over-heels, two knelt down with their heads and queer little grinning faces looking over their shoulders, twos and twos of them in every funny position you could imagine, all arranged on the mossy ground in front of where Olive sat, and all dressed in the same bright blue coats as the toy dwarfs at the china manufactory.

Olive sat still and looked at them. Somehow she did not feel surprised.

[223]

“How big are they?” she said to herself. “Bigger than my thumb? Oh yes, a good deal. I should think they are about as tall as my arm would be if it was standing on the ground. I should think they would come up above my knee. I should like to stand up and measure, but perhaps it is better for me not to speak to them till they speak to me.”

She had not long to wait. In another moment two little blue figures separated themselves from the crowd, and made their way up to her. But when they were close to her feet they gave a sudden jump in the air, and came down, not on their feet, but on their heads! And then again some of her aunt’s words came back to her, “If they should ask you to stand on your head, for instance.”

“Dear me,” thought Olive, “how did Auntie know so much about them? But I do hope they won’t ask me to stand on *my* head.”

[224]

Her fears were somewhat relieved when the dwarfs gave another spring and came down this time in a respectable manner on their feet. Then, with a good many bows and flourishes, they began a speech.

“We are afraid,” said the first.

“That the fir-cones,” said the second.

“Were rather underdone,” finished up the first.

Olive really did not know what to say. She was dreadfully afraid that it would seem so very rude of her not even to have *tasted* the cones. But naturally she had not had the slightest idea that they had been intended for her to eat.

“I am very sorry,” she said, “Mr.—, sir! my lord! I beg your pardon. I don’t quite know what I should call you.”

“With all respect,” said the first.

[225]

“And considering the circumstances,” went on the second.

Then just as Olive supposed they were going to tell her their names, they stopped short and looked at her.

“I beg your pardon,” she began again, after waiting a minute or two to see if they had nothing else to say; “I don’t quite understand.”

“Nor do we,” they replied promptly, speaking for the first time both together.

“Do you mean you don’t know what *my* name is?” said she. “It’s Olive, *Olive*” for the dwarfs stood staring as if they had not heard her. “OLIVE!” she repeated for the third time.

“Green?” asked the first.

“No!” said Olive. “Of course not! *Green* is a very common name—at least—”

“But you called us ‘blue,’” said the second; and it really was a relief to hear him finish a sentence comfortably by himself, only Olive felt very puzzled by what he said.

[226]

“How do you know?” she said. “How could you tell I called you the blue dwarfs?” and then another thought suddenly struck her. How very odd it was that the dwarf spoke such good English! “I thought you were German,” she said.

"How very amusing!" said the dwarfs, this time again speaking together.

Olive could not see that it was very amusing, but she was afraid of saying so, for fear it should be rude.

"And about the fir-cones," went on the first dwarf. "It is distressing to think they were so underdone. But we have come, all of us," waving his hand in the direction of the others, "to invite you to supper in our village. There you will find them done to perfection."

Olive felt more and more uncomfortable.

"You are very kind," she said. "I should like to come very much if it isn't too far; but I am afraid I couldn't eat any supper. Indeed, I'm not hungry." And then a bright thought struck her. "See here," she went on, drawing the half slice of bread out of her pocket, "I had to put this in my pocket, for I couldn't finish it at our afternoon coffee."

[227]

The two dwarfs came close and examined the piece of bread with the greatest attention. They pinched and smelt it, and one of them put out his queer little pointed tongue and licked it.

"Not good!" he said, looking up at Olive and rolling about his eyes in a very queer way.

"I don't know," said Olive; "I don't think it can be bad. It is the regular bread of the country. I should have thought you would be accustomed to it, as you live here."

The two dwarfs took no notice of what she said, but suddenly turned round, and standing with their backs to Olive called out shrilly, "Gueton Tag." Immediately all the other dwarfs replied in the same tone and the same words, and to Olive's great surprise they all began to move towards her, but without altering their attitudes—those on the barrel rolled towards her without getting off it; the two who were hugging their knees continued to hug them, while they came on by means of jerking themselves; the turning head-over-heels ones span along like wheels, and so on till the whole assemblage were at her feet. Then she saw unfolded before her, hanging on the branches of the tree, a large mantle, just the shape of her aunt's travelling dust-cloak, which she always spread over Olive in a carriage, only, instead of being drab or fawn-colored, it was, like the dwarfs' jackets, bright blue. And without any one telling her, Olive seemed to know of herself that she was to put it on.

[228]

She got up and reached the cloak easily; it seemed to put itself on, and Olive felt very happy and triumphant as she said to herself, "Now I'm really going to have some adventures."

[229]

The dwarfs marched—no! one cannot call it marching, for they had about a dozen different ways of proceeding—they moved on, and Olive in the middle, her blue cloak floating majestically on her shoulders. No one spoke a word. It grew darker and darker among the trees, but Olive did not feel frightened. On they went, till at last she saw twinkling before them a very small but bright blue light. It looked scarcely larger than the lamp of a glow-worm, but it shone out very distinct in the darkness. Immediately they saw it the dwarfs set up a shout, and as it died away, to Olive's surprise, they began to sing. And what do you think they sang? Olive at first could hardly believe her ears as they listened to the thoroughly English song of "Home, sweet Home." And the queerest thing was that they sang it very prettily, and that it sounded exactly like her aunt's voice! And though they were walking close beside her, their voices when they left off singing did not so much seem to stop as to move off, to die away into the distance, which struck Olive as very odd.

[230]

They had now arrived at the trunk of a large tree, half way up which hung the little lamp—at least Olive supposed it must be a lamp—from which came the bright blue light.

"Here we are," said one of the dwarfs, she did not see which, "at the entrance to our village." And thereupon all the dwarfs began climbing up the tree, swarming about it like a hive of bees, till they got some way up, when one after another they suddenly disappeared. Olive could see all they did by the blue light. She was beginning to wonder if she would be left standing there alone, when a shout made her look up, and she saw two dwarfs standing on a branch holding a rope ladder, which they had just thrown down, and making signs to her to mount up by it. It was quite easy; up went Olive, step by step, and when she reached the place where the two dwarfs were standing, she saw how it was that they had all disappeared. The tree trunk was hollow, and there were steps cut in

[231]

it like a stair, down which the dwarfs signed to her that she was to go. She did not need to be twice told, so eager was she to see what was to come. The stair was rather difficult for her to get down without falling, for the steps were too small, being intended for the dwarfs, but Olive managed pretty well, only slipping now and then. The stair seemed very long, and as she went farther it grew darker, till at last it was quite dark; by which time, fortunately, however, she felt herself again on level ground, and after waiting half a minute a door seemed to open, and she found herself standing outside the tree stair, with the prettiest sight before her eyes that she had ever seen or even imagined.

[232]

It was the dwarf village! Rows and rows of tiny houses—none of them more than about twice as high as Olive herself, for that was quite big enough for a dwarf cottage, each with a sweet little garden in front, like what one sees in English villages, though the houses themselves were like Swiss *châlets*. It was not dark down here, there was a soft light about as bright as we have it at summer twilight; and besides this each little house had a twinkling blue light hanging above the front door, like a sign-post. And at the door of each cottage stood one of the dwarfs, with a little dwarf wife beside him; only, instead of blue, each little woman was dressed in brown, so that they were rather less showy than their husbands. They all began bowing as Olive appeared, and all the little women curtsying, and Olive seemed to understand, without being told, that she was to walk up the village street to see all there was to be seen. So on she marched, her blue cloak floating about her, so that sometimes it reached the roofs of the houses on each side at the same time.

[233]

Olive felt herself rather clumsy. Her feet, which in general she was accustomed to consider rather neat, and by no means too large for her age, seemed such great awkward things. If she had put one of them in at the window of a dwarf house, it would have knocked everything out of its place.

"Dear me!" thought Olive, "I had no idea *I* could seem clumsy! I feel like a great plowman. I wish I were not so big."

"Yes," said a voice beside her, "it has its disadvantages;" and Olive, looking down to see who spoke—she had to look down for everything—caught sight of one of the two dwarfs with whom she had first spoken. She felt a little ruffled. She did not like this trick of the dwarf hearing what she thought before she said it.

[234]

"Everything has its disadvantages," she replied. "Don't you find yourself very inconveniently small when you are up in *our* world?"

"Exactly so," said the dwarf; but he did not seem the least put out.

"They are certainly very good-tempered," said Olive to herself. Then suddenly a thought struck her.

"Your village is very neat and pretty," she said; "though, perhaps—I don't mean to be rude, not on any account—"

"No," interrupted the dwarf; "Auntie told you on no account to be rude."

"Auntie!" repeated Olive, in astonishment; "she is not *your* auntie!"

"On no account," said the dwarf, in the same calm tone, but without seeming to take in that Olive meant to reprove him.

"It's no use trying to make them understand," said Olive to herself.

[235]

"Not the least," said the dwarf; at which Olive felt so provoked that she could have stamped her feet with irritation. But as *thinking* crossly seemed in this country to be quite as bad as *speaking* crossly, she had to try to swallow down her vexation as well as she could.

"I was going to say," she went on quietly, "that to my taste the village would be prettier if there was a little variety. Not all the houses just the same, you know. And all of *you* are so like each other, and all your little brown wives too. Are there no *children* dwarfs?"

"Doubtless. Any quantity," was the answer.

"Then where are they all?" said Olive. "Are they all asleep?" She put the last question rather sarcastically, but the sarcasm seemed to be lost on the little man.

"Yes, all asleep," he replied; "all asleep, and dreaming. Children are very fond of dreaming," he went on, looking up at Olive with

[236]

such a queer expression, and such a queer tone in his voice too, that Olive got a queer feeling herself, as if he meant more than his words actually said. Could he mean to hint that *she* was dreaming? But a remark from the dwarf distracted her thoughts.

"Supper is ready," he said. "They are all waiting." And turning round, Olive saw before her a cottage a good deal larger than the others; in fact, it was almost high enough for her, with considerable stooping, to get in at the door. And through the windows she saw a long table neatly covered with a bright blue table-cloth, and spread with numbers of tiny plates, and beside each plate a knife and fork and a little blue glass cup. Two great dishes stood on the table, one at each end. Steam was rising from each, and a delicious smell came out through the open windows.

"I did not know I was so hungry," thought Olive; "but I do *hope* it isn't fir-cones." [237]

"Yes," said the dwarf; "they'll be better done this time."

Then he gave a sort of sharp, sudden cry or whistle, and immediately all the dwarfs of the village appeared as if by magic, and began hurrying into the house, but as soon as they were in the middle of the passage they fell back at each side, leaving a clear space in the middle.

"For you," said the first dwarf, bowing politely.

"Do you always have supper here altogether like that?" said Olive. "How funny!"

"Not at all." said the dwarf; "it's a table d'hôte. Be so good as to take your place."

Olive bent her head cautiously in preparation for passing through the door, when again the same sharp cry startled her, and lifting her head suddenly she bumped it against the lintel. The pain of the blow was rather severe. [238]

"What did you do that for?" she exclaimed angrily. "Why did you scream out like that? I——" But she said no more. The cry was repeated, and this time it did its work effectually, for Olive awoke. Awoke—was it waking?—to find herself all in the dark, stiff and cold, and her head aching with the bump she had given it against the old tree-trunk, while farther off now she heard the same shrill hoot or cry of some early astir night-bird, which had sounded before in her dreams.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" she sobbed, "what shall I do? Where am I? How can I ever find my way in the dark? I believe it was all a trick of those nasty blue dwarfs. I don't believe I *was* dreaming. They must be spiteful goblins. I wish I had not gone with them to see their village." And so for some minutes, half asleep and half awake, Olive stayed crouching by the tree, which seemed her only protector. But by degrees, as her senses—her common sense particularly—came back to her, she began to realize that it was worse than useless to sit there crying. Dark as it was, she must try to find her way back to the little inn, where, doubtless, Auntie and the others were in the greatest distress about her, the thought of which nearly made her burst out crying again; and poor Olive stumbled up to her feet as best she could, fortunately not forgetting to feel for her book and parasol which were lying beside her and slowly and tremblingly made her way on a few steps, hoping that perhaps if she could manage to get out of the shadow of the trees it might not be quite so dark farther on. She was not altogether disappointed. It certainly grew a very little less black, but that it was a very dark night there was no denying. And, indeed, though it had not been dark, she would have had the greatest difficulty in finding her way out of the wood, into which she had so thoughtlessly penetrated. Terrifying thoughts, too, began to crowd into her mind, though, as I think I have shown you, she was not at all a timid child. But a forest on a dark night, and so far away from everywhere—it was enough to shake her nerves. She hoped and trusted there was no fear of wolves in summer-time; but bears!—ah! as to bears there was no telling. Even the hooting cries of the birds which she now and then again heard in the distance frightened her, and she felt that a bat flapping against her would send her nearly out of her mind. And after a while she began to lose heart—it was not quite so dark, but she had not the very least idea where she was going. She kept bumping and knocking herself against the trunks; she was evidently not in a path, but wandering farther and farther among the forest trees. That was about all she could feel sure of, and after two or three more vain efforts Olive fairly gave up, and, sinking down on [241]

the ground, again burst into tears.

"If I but had a mariner's compass," she thought, her fancy wandering off to all the stories of lost people she had ever heard of. Then she further reflected that a compass would do her very little good if it was too dark to see it, and still more as she had not the slightest idea whether her road lay north, south, east, or west. "If the stars were out!" was her next idea; but then, I am ashamed to say, Olive's ideas of astronomy were limited. She could have perhaps recognized the Plow and the Pole star, but she could not remember which way they pointed. Besides, she did not feel quite sure that in Thüringen one would see the same stars as in England or Paris; and, after all, as there were none visible, it was no good puzzling about it, only if they *had* been there it would not have seemed so lonely. Suddenly—what was that in the distance? A light, a tiny light, bobbing in and out of sight among the trees? Could it be a star come out of its way to take pity on her? Much more likely a Will-o'-the-wisp; for she did not stop to reflect that a dry pine forest in summer-time is not one of Will-o'-the-wisp's favorite playgrounds. It was a light, as to that there was no doubt, and it was coming nearer. Whether she was more frightened or glad Olive scarcely knew. Still, almost anything was better than to sit there to be eaten up by bears, or to die of starvation; and she eagerly watched the light now steadily approaching her, till it came near enough for her to see that it was a lantern carried by some person not high above the ground. A boy perhaps; could it be—oh, joyful thought!—could it be Rex? But no; even if they were all looking for her it was not likely that they would let Rex be running about alone to get lost too. Still, it must *be* a boy, and without waiting to think more Olive called out —

[242]

[243]

"Oh, please come and help me! I'm lost in the wood!" she cried, thinking nothing of German or anything but her sore distress.

The lantern moved about undecidedly for a moment or two, then the light flashed towards her and came still nearer.

"*Ach Gott!*" exclaimed an unfamiliar voice, and Olive, peering forward, thought for half a second she was again dreaming. He was not, certainly, dressed in blue, and he was a good deal taller than up to her knee; but still he was—there was no doubt about it—he was a dwarf! And another gaze at his queer little figure and bright sparkling eyes told Olive that it was the very same little man who had smiled at Rex and her when he saw them leaning out of the inn window that very afternoon.

She didn't feel frightened; he looked so good-natured and so sorry for her. And somehow Olive's faith in the possible existence of a nation of dwarfs had received a shock; she was much more inclined to take things prosaically. But it was very difficult to explain matters. I think the dwarf at the first moment was more inclined to take *her* for something supernatural than she was now to imagine him a brownie or a gnome. For she was a pretty little girl, with a mass of golden fair hair and English blue eyes; and with her hat half fallen off, and her cheeks flushed, she might have sat for a picture of a fairy who had strayed from her home.

[244]

Her German seemed all to go out of her head. But she managed to remember the name of the village where they had been that afternoon, and a sudden recollection seemed to come over the dwarf. He poured out a flood of words and exclamations, amidst which all that Olive could understand was the name of the village and the words "*verirrt*," "*armes Kind*," which she knew meant "lost" and "poor child." Then he went on to tell that he too was on his way from the same village to somewhere; that he came by the woods, because it was shorter, and lifting high his lantern, gave Olive to understand that he could now show her the way.

[245]

So off she set under his guidance, and, only fancy! a walk of not more than ten minutes brought them to the little inn! Olive's wanderings and straying had, after all, drawn her very near her friends if she had known it. Poor Auntie and Rex were running about in front of the house in great distress. Uncle and the landlord and the coachman had set off with lanterns, and the landlady was trying to persuade Auntie that there was not *really* anything to be afraid of; neither bears, nor wolves, nor evilly-disposed people about: the little young lady had, doubtless, fallen asleep in the wood with the heat and fatigue of the day; which, as you know, was a very good guess, though the landlady little imagined what queer places and people Olive had been visiting in her sleep.

[246]

The dwarf was a well-known person thereabouts, and a very harmless, kindly little man. A present of a couple of marks sent him off to his cottage near by very happy indeed, and when Uncle returned a few minutes later to see if the wanderer had been heard of, you can imagine how thankful he was to find her. It was not so *very* late after all, not above half-past ten o'clock, but a thunderstorm which came on not long after explained the unusual darkness of the cloud-covered sky.

"*What* a good thing you were safe before the storm came on!" said Auntie, with a shudder at the thought of the dangers her darling had escaped. "I will take care never again to carry my jokes too far," she resolved, when Olive had confided to her the real motive of her wanderings in the wood. And Olive, for her part, decided that she would be content with fairies and dwarfs in books and fancy, without trying to find them in reality.

[247]

"Though all the same," she said to herself, "I should have liked to taste the roast fir-cones. They did smell so good!" "And, Auntie," she said aloud, "were you singing in the wood on your way home with Uncle and Rex?"

"Yes," said Auntie, "they begged me to sing 'Home, sweet Home.' Why do you ask me?"

Olive explained. "So it was *your* voice I heard when I thought it was the dwarfs," she said, smiling.

And Auntie gave her still another kiss.

THE END.

[248]

[249]

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[252]

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[253]

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