

The
**WONDER
CLOCK**

OR

*four & twenty marvelous
Tales, being one for
each hour of the day;
Written & Illustrated*

By

Howard Pyle.

*Embellished with Verses by
Katharine Pyle.*

YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS
CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA

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PUT on my dream-cap one day and stepped into Wonderland.

Along the road I jogged and never dusted my shoes, and all the time the pleasant sun shone and never burned my back, and the little white clouds floated across the blue sky and never let fall a drop of rain to wet my jacket. And by and by I came to a steep hill.

I climbed the hill, though I had more than one tumble in doing it, and there, on the tip-top, I found a house as old as the world itself.

That was where Father Time lived; and who should sit in the sun at the door, spinning away for dear life, but Time's Grandmother herself; and if you would like to know how old she is you will have to climb to the top of the church steeple and ask the wind as he sits upon the weather-cock, humming the tune of Over-yonder song to himself.

"Good-morning," says Time's Grandmother to me.

“Good-morning,” says I to her.

“And what do you seek here?” says she to me.

“I come to look for odds and ends,” says I to her.

“Very well,” says she; “just climb the stairs to the garret, and there you will find more than ten men can think about.”

“Thank you,” says I, and up the stairs I went. There I found all manner of queer forgotten things which had been laid away, nobody but Time and his Grandmother could tell where.

Over in the corner was a great, tall clock, that had stood there silently with never a tick or a ting since men began to grow too wise for toys and trinkets.

But I knew very well that the old clock was the

Wonder Clock;

so down I took the key and wound it—gurr! gurr!
gurr!

Click! buzz! went the wheels, and then—tick-tock! tick-tock! for the Wonder Clock is of that kind that it will never wear out, no matter how long it may stand in Time’s garret.

Down I sat and watched it, for every time it struck it played a pretty song, and when the song was ended—click! click!—out stepped the drollest little puppet-

figures and went through with a dance, and I saw it all (with my dream-cap upon my head).

But the Wonder Clock had grown rusty from long standing, and though now and then the puppet-figures danced a dance that I knew as well as I know my bread-and-butter, at other times they jiggged a step I had never seen before, and it came into my head that maybe a dozen or more puppet-plays had become jumbled together among the wheels back of the clock-face.

So there I sat in the dust watching the Wonder Clock, and when it had run down and the tunes and the puppet-show had come to an end, I took off my dream-cap, and—whisk!—there I was back home again among my books, with nothing brought away with me from that country but a little dust which I found sticking to my coat, and which I have never brushed away to this day.

Now if you also would like to go into Wonderland, you have only to hunt up your dream-cap (for everybody has one somewhere about the house), and to come to me, and I will show you the way to Time's garret.

That is right! Pull the cap well down about your ears.

* * * * *

Here we are! And now I will wind the clock. Gurr! gurr! gurr!

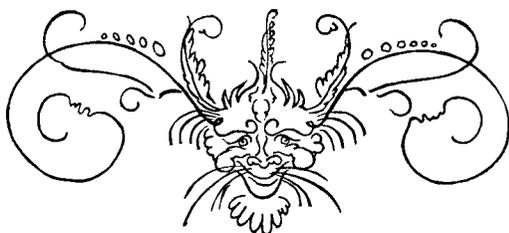
Tick-tock! tick-tock!



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One O'clock.



One of the *Clock*, and silence deep
Then up the *Stairway*, black and steep
The old *House-Cat* comes creepy-creep
With soft feet goes from room to room
Her green eyes shining through the *
 And finds all fast asleep. (gloom.)





I.



HERE was a king travelling through the country, and he and those with him were so far away from home that darkness caught them by the heels, and they had to stop at a stone mill for the night, because there was no other place handy.

While they sat at supper they heard a sound in the next room, and it was a baby crying.

The miller stood in the corner, back of the stove, with his hat in his hand. "What is that noise?" said the king to him.

"Oh! it is nothing but another baby that the good storks have brought into the house to-day," said the miller.

Now there was a wise man travelling along with the king, who could read the stars and everything that they

THE WONDER CLOCK

told as easily as one can read one's A B C's in a book after one knows them, and the king, for a bit of a jest, would have him find out what the stars had to foretell of the miller's baby. So the wise man went out and took a peep up in the sky, and by and by he came in again.

"Well," said the king, "and what did the stars tell you?"

"The stars tell me," said the wise man, "that you shall have a daughter, and that the miller's baby, in the room yonder, shall marry her when they are old enough to think of such things."

"What!" said the king, "and is a miller's baby to marry the princess that is to come! We will see about that." So the next day he took the miller aside and talked and bargained, and bargained and talked, until the upshot of the matter was that the miller was paid two hundred dollars, and the king rode off with the baby.

As soon as he came home to the castle he called his chief forester to him. "Here," says he, "take this baby and do thus and so with it, and when you have killed it bring its heart to me, that I may know that you have really done as you have been told."

So off marched the forester with the baby; but on his way he stopped at home, and there was his good wife working about the house.

"Well, Henry," said she, "what do you do with the baby?"

"Oh!" said he, "I am just taking it off to the forest to do thus and so with it."

BEARSKIN

“Come,” said she, “it would be a pity to harm the little innocent, and to have its blood on your hands. Yonder hangs the rabbit that you shot this morning, and its heart will please the king just as well as the other.”

Thus the wife talked, and the end of the business was that she and the man smeared a basket all over with pitch and set the baby adrift in it on the river, and the king was just as well satisfied with the rabbit’s heart as he would have been with the baby’s.

But the basket with the baby in it drifted on and on down the river, until it lodged at last among the high reeds that stood along the bank. By and by there came a great she-bear to the water to drink, and there she found it.

Now the huntsmen in the forest had robbed the she-bear of her cubs, so that her heart yearned over the little baby, and she carried it home with her to fill the place of her own young ones. There the baby thrived until he grew to a great strong lad, and as he had fed upon nothing but bear’s milk for all that time, he was ten times stronger than the strongest man in the land.

One day, as he was walking through the forest, he came across a woodman chopping the trees into billets of wood, and that was the first time he had ever seen a body like himself. Back he went to the bear as fast as he could travel, and told her what he had seen. “That,” said the bear, “is the most wicked and most cruel of all the beasts.”

“Yes,” says the lad, “that may be so, all the same I love beasts like that as I love the food I eat, and I long



The Baby drifts in the basket
Down the river to the reeds beside the bank
where the she-bear finds it.



BEARSKIN

for nothing so much as to go out into the wide world, where I may find others of the same kind.”

At this the bear saw very well how the geese flew, and that the lad would soon be flitting.

“See,” said she, “if you must go out into the wide world you must. But you will be wanting help before long; for the ways of the world are not peaceful and simple as they are here in the woods, and before you have lived there long you will have more needs than there are flies in summer. See, here is a little crooked horn, and when your wants grow many, just come to the forest and blow a blast on it, and I will not be too far away to help you.”

So off went the lad away from the forest, and all the coat he had upon his back was the skin of a bear dressed with the hair on it, and that was why folk called him “Bearskin.”

He trudged along the high-road, until he came to the king’s castle, and it was the same king who thought he had put Bearskin safe out of the way years and years ago.

Now, the king’s swineherd was in want of a lad, and as there was nothing better to do in that town, Bearskin took the place and went every morning to help drive the pigs into the forest, where they might eat the acorns and grow fat.

One day there was a mighty stir throughout the town; folk crying, and making a great hubbub. “What is it all about?” says Bearskin to the swineherd.

THE WONDER CLOCK

What! and did he not know what the trouble was? Where had he been for all of his life, that he had heard nothing of what was going on in the world? Had he never heard of the great fiery dragon with three heads that had threatened to lay waste all of that land, unless the pretty princess were given up to him? This was the very day that the dragon was to come for her, and she was to be sent up on the hill back of the town; that was why all the folk were crying and making such a stir.

“So!” says Bearskin, “and is there never a lad in the whole country that is man enough to face the beast? Then I will go myself if nobody better is to be found.” And off he went, though the swineherd laughed and laughed and thought it all a bit of a jest. By and by Bearskin came to the forest, and there he blew a blast upon the little crooked horn that the bear had given him.

Presently came the bear through the bushes, so fast that the little twigs flew behind her. “And what is it that you want?” said she.

“I should like,” said Bearskin, “to have a horse, a suit of gold and silver armor that nothing can pierce, and a sword that shall cut through iron and steel; for I would like to go up on the hill to fight the dragon and free the pretty princess at the king’s town over yonder.”

“Very well,” said the bear, “look back of the tree yonder, and you will find just what you want.”

Yes; sure enough, there they were back of the tree: a grand white horse that champed his bit and pawed the ground till the gravel flew, and a suit of gold and silver

BEARSKIN

armor such as a king might wear. Bearskin put on the armor and mounted the horse, and off he rode to the high hill back of the town.

By and by came the princess and the steward of the castle, for it was he that was to bring her to the dragon. But the steward stayed at the bottom of the hill, for he was afraid, and the princess had to climb it alone, though she could hardly see the road before her for the tears that fell from her eyes. But when she reached the top of the hill she found instead of the dragon a fine tall fellow dressed all in gold and silver armor. And it did not take Bearskin long to comfort the princess, I can tell you. "Come, come," says he, "dry your eyes and cry no more; all the cakes in the oven are not burned yet; just go back of the bushes yonder, and leave it with me to talk the matter over with Master Dragon."

The princess was glad enough to do that. Back of the bushes she went, and Bearskin waited for the dragon to come. He had not long to wait either; for presently it came flying through the air, so that the wind rattled under his wings.

Dear, dear! if one could but have been there to see that fight between Bearskin and the dragon, for it was well worth the seeing, and that you may believe. The dragon spit out flames and smoke like a house afire. But he could do no hurt to Bearskin, for the gold and silver armor sheltered him so well that not so much as one single hair of his head was singed. So Bearskin just rattled away the blows at the dragon—slish, slash, snip, clip—until all three heads were off, and there was an end of it.

THE WONDER CLOCK

After that he cut out the tongues from the three heads of the dragon, and tied them up in his pocket-handkerchief.

Then the princess came out from behind the bushes where she had lain hidden, and begged Bearskin to go back with her to the king's castle, for the king had said that if any one killed the dragon he should have her for his wife. But no; Bearskin would not go to the castle just now, for the time was not yet ripe; but, if the princess would give them to him, he would like to have the ring from her finger, the kerchief from her bosom, and the necklace of golden beads from her neck.

The princess gave him what he asked for, and a sweet kiss into the bargain, and then Bearskin mounted upon his grand white horse and rode away to the forest. "Here are your horse and armor," said he to the bear, "and they have done good service to-day, I can tell you." Then he tramped back again to the king's castle with the old bear's skin over his shoulders.

"Well," says the swineherd, "and did you kill the dragon?"

"Oh, yes," says Bearskin, "I did that, but it was no such great thing to do after all."

At that the swineherd laughed and laughed, for he did not believe a word of it.

And now listen to what happened to the princess after Bearskin had left her. The steward came sneaking up to see how matters had turned out, and there he found her safe and sound, and the dragon dead. "Whoever did

Bearskin slayeth y^e Dragon but
will not go with y^e Princess to y^e castle.



THE WONDER CLOCK

this left his luck behind him,” said he, and he drew his sword and told the princess that he would kill her if she did not swear to say nothing of what had happened. Then he gathered up the dragon’s three heads, and he and the princess went back to the castle again.

“There!” said he, when they had come before the king, and he flung down the three heads upon the floor, “I have killed the dragon and I have brought back the princess, and now if anything is to be had for the labor I would like to have it.” As for the princess, she wept and wept, but she could say nothing, and so it was fixed that she was to marry the steward, for that was what the king had promised.

At last came the wedding-day, and the smoke went up from the chimneys in clouds, for there was to be a grand wedding-feast, and there was no end of good things cooking for those who were to come.

“See now,” says Bearskin to the swineherd where they were feeding their pigs together, out in the woods, “as I killed the dragon over yonder, I ought at least to have some of the good things from the king’s kitchen; you shall go and ask for some of the fine white bread and meat, such as the king and princess are to eat to-day.”

Dear, dear, but you should have seen how the swineherd stared at this and how he laughed, for he thought the other must have gone out of his wits; but as for going to the castle—no, he would not go a step, and that was the long and the short of it.

“So! well, we will see about that,” says Bearskin, and he stepped to a thicket and cut a good stout stick,

Thus the Princess sits and weeps and weeps.



and without another word caught the swineherd by the collar, and began dusting his jacket for him until it smoked again.

“Stop, stop!” bawled the swineherd.

“Very well,” says Bearskin; “and now will you go over to the castle for me, and ask for some of the same bread and meat that the king and princess are to have for their dinner?”

Yes, yes; the swineherd would do anything that Bearskin wanted him.

“So! good,” says Bearskin; “then just take this ring and see that the princess gets it; and say that the lad

THE WONDER CLOCK

who sent it would like to have some of the bread and meat that she is to have for her dinner.”

So the swineherd took the ring, and off he started to do as he had been told. Rap! tap! tap! he knocked at the door. Well, and what did he want?

Oh! there was a lad over in the woods yonder who had sent him to ask for some of the same bread and meat that the king and princess were to have for their dinner, and he had brought this ring to the princess as a token.

But how the princess opened her eyes when she saw the ring which she had given to Bearskin up on the hill! For she saw, as plain as the nose on her face, that he who had saved her from the dragon was not so far away as she had thought. Down she went into the kitchen herself to see that the very best bread and meat were sent, and the swineherd marched off with a great basket full.

“Yes,” says Bearskin, “that is very well so far, but I am for having some of the red and white wine that they are to drink. Just take this kerchief over to the castle yonder, and let the princess know that the lad to whom she gave it upon the hill back of the town would like to have a taste of the wine that she and the king are to have at the feast to-day.”

Well, the swineherd was for saying “no” to this as he had to the other, but Bearskin just reached his hand over toward the stout stick that he had used before, and the other started off as though the ground was hot

BEARSKIN

under his feet. And what was the swineherd wanting this time—that was what they said over at the castle.

“The lad with the pigs in the woods yonder,” says the swineherd, “must have gone crazy, for he has sent this kerchief to the princess and says that he should like to have a bottle or two of the wine that she and the king are to drink to-day.”

When the princess saw her kerchief again her heart leaped for joy. She made no two words about the wine, but went down into the cellar and brought it up with her own hands, and the swineherd marched off with it tucked under his coat.

“Yes, that was all very well,” said Bearskin, “I am satisfied so far as the wine is concerned, but now I would like to have some of the sweetmeats that they are to eat at the castle to-day. See, here is a necklace of golden beads; just take it to the princess and ask for some of those sweetmeats, for I will have them,” and this time he had only to look towards the stick and the other started off as fast as he could travel.

The swineherd had no more trouble with this asking than with the others, for the princess went down-stairs and brought the sweetmeats from the pantry with her own hands, and the swineherd carried them to Bearskin where he sat out in the woods with the pigs.

Then Bearskin spread out the good things, and he and the swineherd sat down to the feast together, and a fine one it was, I can tell you.

“And now,” says Bearskin, when they had eaten all

Bearskin and y^e swineherd have a grand feast.



that they could, “it is time for me to leave you, for I must go and marry the princess.” So off he started, and the swineherd did nothing but stand and gape after him, with his mouth open, as though he were set to catch flies. But Bearskin went straight to the woods, and there he blew upon his horn, and the bear was with him as quickly this time as the last.

“Well, what do you want now,” said she.

“This time,” said Bearskin, “I want a fine suit of clothes made of gold-and-silver cloth, and a horse to ride on up to the king’s house, for I am going to marry the princess.”

BEARSKIN

Very well; there was what he wanted back of the tree yonder; and it was a suit of clothes fit for a great king to wear, and a splendid dapple-gray horse with a golden saddle and bridle studded all over with precious stones. So Bearskin put on the clothes and rode away, and a fine sight he was to see, I can tell you.

And how the folks stared when he rode up to the king's castle. Out came the king along with the rest, for he thought that Bearskin was some great lord. But the princess knew him the moment she set eyes upon him, for she was not likely to forget him so soon as all that.

The king brought Bearskin into where they were feasting, and had a place set for him alongside of himself.

The steward was there along with the rest. "See," said Bearskin to him, "I have a question to put. One killed a dragon and saved a princess, but another came and swore falsely that he did it. Now, what should be done to such a one?"

"Why this," said the steward, speaking up as bold as brass, for he thought to face the matter down, "he should be put in a cask stuck all round with nails, and dragged behind three wild horses."

"Very well," said Bearskin, "you have spoken for yourself. For I killed the dragon up on the hill behind the town, and you stole the glory of the doing."

"That is not so," said the steward, "for it was I who brought home the three heads of the dragon in my own hand, and how can that be with the rest?"

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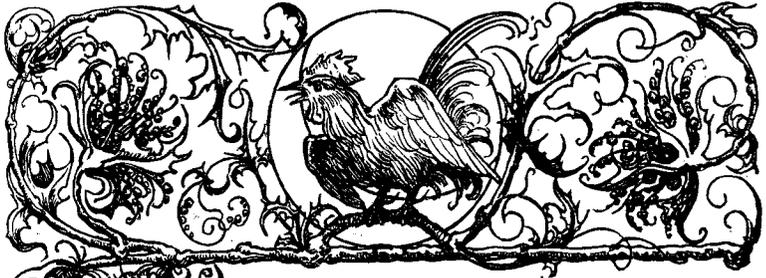
Then Bearskin stepped to the wall, where hung the three heads of the dragon. He opened the mouth of each. "And where are the tongues?" said he.

At this the steward grew as pale as death, nevertheless he still spoke up as boldly as ever: "Dragons have no tongues," said he. But Bearskin only laughed; he untied his handkerchief before them all, and there were the three tongues. He put one in each mouth, and they fitted exactly, and after that no one could doubt that he was the hero who had really killed the dragon. So when the wedding came it was Bearskin, and not the steward, who married the princess; what was done to him you may guess for yourselves.

And so they had a grand wedding, but in the very midst of the feast one came running in and said there was a great brown bear without, who would come in, willy-nilly. Yes, and you have guessed it right, it *was* the great she-bear, and if nobody else was made much of at the wedding you can depend upon it that she was.

As for the king, he was satisfied that the princess had married a great hero. So she had, only he was the miller's son after all, though the king knew no more of that than my grandfather's little dog, and no more did anybody but the wise man for the matter of that, and he said nothing of it, for wise folk don't tell all they know.



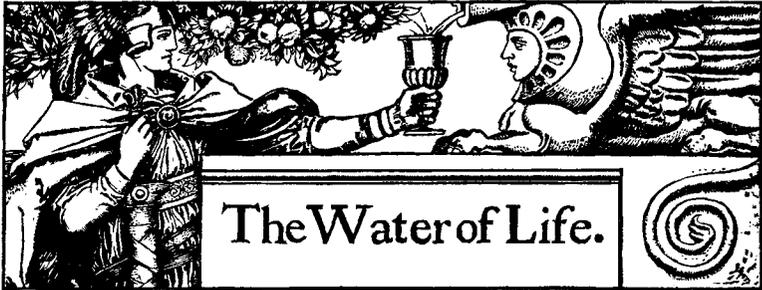


Tvvo O'clock.

The *Black Cock* crowed;
The *Moon* was bright;
The *Red Cock* answered
Through the night. ●

Big Gretchen, sleeping,
Turned in bed,
And tossed her arms
Above her head. ☾

The old *Hound* stretched.
And, breathing deep,
He settled down
Again to sleep. ☾



II.



ONCE upon a time there was an old king who had a faithful servant. There was nobody in the whole world like him, and this was why: around his wrist he wore an armlet that fitted as close as the skin. There were words on the golden band; on one side they said:

“WHO THINKS TO WEAR ME ON HIS ARM
MUST LACK BOTH GUILLE AND THOUGHT OF HARM.”

And on the other side they said:

“I AM FOR ONLY ONE AND HE
SHALL BE AS STRONG AS TEN CAN BE.”

At last the old king felt that his end was near, and he called the faithful servant to him and besought him

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to serve and aid the young king who was to come as he had served and aided the old king who was to go. The faithful servant promised that which was asked, and then the old king closed his eyes and folded his hands and went the way that those had travelled who had gone before him.

Well, one day a stranger came to that town from over the hills and far away. With him he brought a painted picture, but it was all covered with a curtain so that nobody could see what it was.

He drew aside the curtain and showed the picture to the young king and it was a likeness of the most beautiful princess in the whole world; for her eyes were as black as a crow's wing, her cheeks were as red as apples, and her skin as white as snow. Moreover, the picture was so natural that it seemed as though it had nothing to do but to open its lips and speak.

The young king just sat and looked and looked. "Oh me!" said he, "I will never rest content until I have such a one as that for my own."

"Then listen!" said the stranger, "this is a likeness of the princess that lives over beyond the three rivers. A while ago she had a wise bird on which she doted, for it knew everything that happened in the world, so that it could tell the princess whatever she wanted to know. But now the bird is dead, and the princess does nothing but grieve for it day and night. She keeps the dead bird in a glass casket, and has promised to marry whoever will bring a cup of water from the Fountain of Life, so that the bird may be brought back to life



he young king looks upon y^e beautiful picture which the stranger showeth him.



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again.” That was the story the stranger told, and then he jogged on the way he was going, and I, for one, do not know whither it led.

But the young king had no peace or comfort in life for thinking of the princess who lived over beyond the three rivers. At last he called the faithful servant to him. “And can you not,” said he, “get me a cup of the Water of Life?”

“I know not, but I will try,” said the faithful servant, for he bore in mind what he had promised to the old king.

So out he went into the wide world, to seek for what the young king wanted, though the way there is both rough and thorny. On he went and on, until his shoes were dusty, and his feet were sore, and after a while he came to the end of the earth, and there was nothing more over the hill. There he found a little tumbled-down hut, and within the hut sat an old, old woman with a distaff, spinning a lump of flax.

“Good-morning, mother,” said the faithful servant.

“Good-morning, son,” says the old woman, “and where are you travelling that you have come so far?”

“Oh!” says the faithful servant, “I am hunting for the Water of Life, and have come as far as this without finding a drop of it.”

“Hoity, toity,” says the old woman, “if that is what you are after, you have a long way to go yet. The fountain is in the country that lies east of the Sun and west of the

THE WATER OF LIFE

Moon, and it is few that have gone there and come back again, I can tell you. Besides that there is a great dragon that keeps watch over the water, and you will have to get the better of him before you can touch a drop of it. All the same, if you have made up your mind to go you may stay here until my sons come home, and perhaps they can put you in the way of getting there, for I am the Mother of the Four Winds of Heaven, and it is few places that they have not seen.”

So the faithful servant came in and sat down by the fire to wait till the Winds came home.

The first that came was the East Wind; but he knew nothing of the Water of Life and the land that lay east of the Sun and west of the Moon; he had heard folks talk of them both now and then, but he had never seen them with his own eyes.

The next that came was the South Wind, but he knew no more of it than his brother, and neither the West Wind for the matter of that.

Last of all came the North Wind, and dear, dear, what a hubbub he made outside of the door, stamping the dust off of his feet before he came into the house.

“And do you know where the Fountain of Life is, and the country that lies east of the Sun and west of the Moon?” said the old woman.

Oh, yes, the North Wind knew where it was. He had been there once upon a time, but it was a long, long distance away.

THE WONDER CLOCK

“So; good! Then perhaps you will give this lad a lift over there to-morrow,” said the old woman.

At this the North Wind grumbled and shook his head; but at last he said “yes,” for he is a good-hearted fellow at the bottom, is the North Wind, though his ways are a trifle rough perhaps.

So the next morning he took the faithful servant on his back, and away he flew till the man’s hair whistled behind him. On they went and on they went and on they went, until at last they came to the country that lay east of the Sun and west of the Moon; and they were none too soon getting there either, I can tell you, for when the North Wind tumbled the faithful servant off his back he was so weak that he could not have lifted a feather.

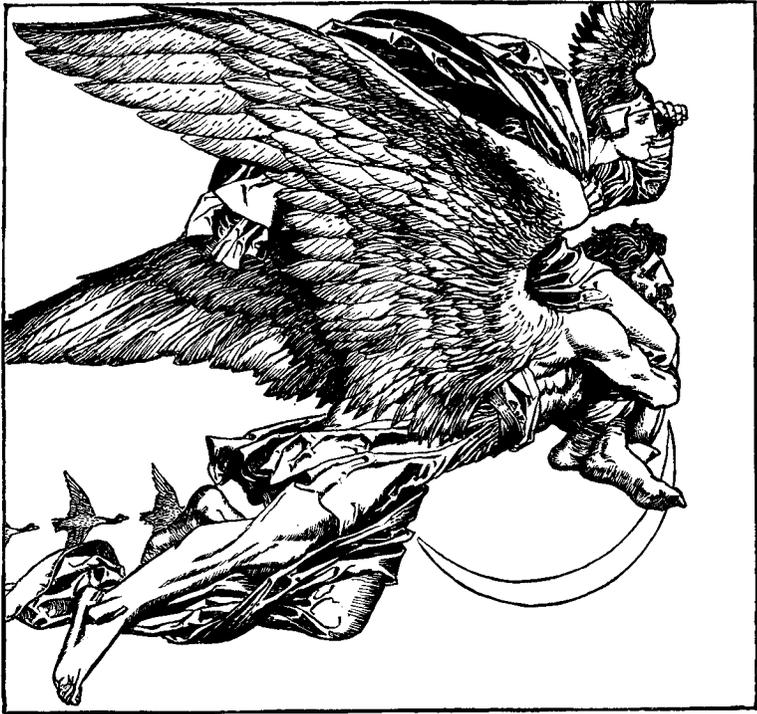
“Thank you,” said the faithful servant, and then he was for starting away to find what he came for.

“Stop a bit,” says the North Wind, “you will be wanting to come away again after a while. I cannot wait here, for I have other business to look after. But here is a feather; when you want me, cast it into the air, and I will not be long in coming.”

Then away he bustled, for he had caught his breath again, and time was none too long for him.

The faithful servant walked along a great distance until, by and by, he came to a field covered all over with sharp rocks and white bones, for he was not the first by many who had been that way for a cup of the Water of Life.

The North Wind flies with y^e Faithful Servant.



There lay the great fiery dragon in the sun, sound asleep, and so the faithful servant had time to look about him. Not far away was a great deep trench like a drain in a swampy field; that was a path that the dragon had made by going to the river for a drink of water every day. The faithful servant dug a hole in the bottom of this trench, and there he hid himself as snugly as a cricket in the crack in the kitchen floor. By and by the dragon awoke and found that he was thirsty, and then started down to the river to get a drink. The faithful servant lay as still as a mouse until the dragon was just above where he was hidden; then he thrust his sword

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through its heart, and there it lay, after a turn or two, as dead as a stone.

After that he had only to fill the cup at the fountain, for there was nobody to say nay to him. Then he cast the feather into the air, and there was the North Wind, as fresh and as sound as ever. The North Wind took him upon its back, and away it flew until it came home again.

The faithful servant thanked them all around—the Four Winds and the old woman—and as they would take nothing else, he gave them a few drops of the Water of Life, and that is the reason that the Four Winds and their mother each are as fresh and young now as they were when the world began.

Then the faithful servant set off home again, right foot foremost, and he was not as long in getting there as in coming.

As soon as the king saw the cup of the Water of Life he had the horses saddled, and off he and the faithful servant rode to find the princess who lived over beyond the three rivers. By and by they came to the town, and there was the princess mourning and grieving over her bird just as she had done from the first. But when she heard that the king had brought the Water of Life she welcomed him as though he was a flower in March.

They sprinkled a few drops upon the dead bird, and up it sprang as lively and as well as ever.

But now, before the princess would marry the king she must have a talk with the bird, and there came the



he young king bringeth y^e cup
of water of life to the beautiful Queen.



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hitch, for the Wise Bird knew as well as you and I that it was not the king, who had brought the Water of Life. "Go and tell him," said the Wise Bird, "that you are ready to marry him as soon as he saddles and bridles the Wild Black Horse in the forest over yonder, for if he is the hero who found the Water of Life he can do that and more easily enough."

The princess did as the bird told her, and so the king missed getting what he wanted after all. But off he went to the faithful servant. "And can you not saddle and bridle the Wild Black Horse for me?" said he.

"I do not know," said the faithful servant, "but I will try."

So off he went to the forest to hunt up the Wild Black Horse, the saddle over his shoulder and the bridle over his arm. By and by came the Wild Black Horse galloping through the woods like a thunder gust in summer, so that the ground shook under his feet. But the faithful servant was ready for him; he caught him by the mane and forelock, and the Wild Black Horse had never had such a one to catch hold of him before.

But how they did stamp and wrestle! Up and down and here and there, until the fire flew from the stones under their feet. But the Wild Black Horse could not stand against the strength of ten men, such as the faithful servant had, so by and by he fell on his knees, and the faithful servant clapped the saddle on his back and slipped the bridle over his ears.

"Listen now," says he; "to-morrow my master, the king, will ride you up to the princess's house, and if

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you do not do just as I tell you, it will be the worse for you; when the king mounts upon your back you must stagger and groan, as though you carried a mountain.”

The horse promised to do as the other bade, and then the faithful servant jumped on his back and away to the king, who had been waiting at home for all this time.

The next day the king rode up to the princess’s castle, and the Wild Black Horse did just as the faithful servant told him to do; he staggered and groaned, so that everybody cried out, “Look at the great hero riding upon the Wild Black Horse!”

And when the princess saw him she also thought that he was a great hero. But the Wise Bird was of a different mind from her, for when the princess came to talk to him about marrying the king he shook his head. “No, no,” said he, “there is something wrong here, and the king has baked his cake in somebody else’s oven. He never saddled and bridled the Wild Black Horse by himself. Listen, you must say to him that you will marry nobody but the man who wears such and such a golden armlet with this and that written on it.

So the princess told the king what the Wise Bird had bidden her to say, and the king went straightway to the faithful servant.

“You must let me have your armlet,” said he.

“Alas, master,” said the faithful servant, “that is a woful thing for me, for the one and only way to take



The Faithful Servant gives y^e
young King y^e golden bracelet from his
wrist as the other desires. **C**



THE WATER OF LIFE

the armlet off of my wrist is to cut my hand from off my body.”

“So!” says the king, “that is a great pity, but the princess will not have me without the armlet.”

“Then you shall have it,” says the faithful servant; but the king had to cut the hand off, for the faithful servant could not do it himself.

But, bless your heart! The armlet was ever so much too large for the king to wear! Nevertheless he tied it to his wrist with a bit of ribbon, and off he marched to the princess’s castle.

“Here is the armlet of gold,” said he, “and now will you marry me!”

But the Wise Bird sat on the princess’s chair. “Hut! tut!” says he, “it does not fit the man.”

Yes, that was so; everybody who was there could see it easily enough; and as for marrying him, the princess would marry nobody but the man who could wear the armlet.

What a hubbub there was then! Every one who was there was sure that the armlet would fit him if it fitted nobody else. But no; it was far too large for the best of them. The faithful servant was very sad, and stood back of the rest, over by the wall, with his arm tied up in a napkin. “You shall try it too,” says the princess; but the faithful servant only shook his head, for he could not try it on as the rest had done, because he had no hand. But the Wise Bird was there and knew what he

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was about. “See now,” says he, “maybe the Water of Life will cure one thing as well as another.”

Yes, that was true, and one was sent to fetch the cup. They sprinkled it on the faithful servant’s arm, and it was not twice they had to do it, for there was another hand as good and better than the old.

Then they gave him the armlet; he slipped it over his hand, and it fitted him like his own skin.

“This is the man for me,” says the princess, “and I will have none other;” for she could see with half an eye that he was the hero who had been doing all the wonderful things that had happened, because he said nothing about himself.

As for the king—why, all that was left for him to do was to pack off home again; and I, for one, am glad of it.

And this is true; the best packages are not always wrapped up in blue paper and tied with a gay string, and there are better men in the world than kings and princes, fine as they seem to be.

