

LITTLE MEN AND LITTLE WOMEN



The Stolen Prince.

BY E. M. JAMESON.

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Only those who have experienced the pleasure of being borne through the air by a flight of birds, can fully realize the delight of the princess and Count Otho.

For quite five minutes they said not a word to each other, so curious were their sensations as the doves mounted higher and higher into the air. So steady was their flight that the hammock hardly swayed.

The sun shone down warmly from the cloudless blue sky, but the canopy of leaves threw a shade over them, and the soft whirr of the birds' wings raised a gentle breeze around them.

One snowy feather floated into the hammock, and this the princess placed in her golden hair, for the hood had fallen back long ere now; then a second flew down from a dove's wing, and Count Otho stuck it jauntily into the jeweled clasp of his cap.

But the doves never paused in their flight. Up, up they soared unwearingly; up, until the treetops were left far below; up, until the sky seemed to grow a more radiant blue, and the atmosphere clearer and colder.

The fields were like green toy meadows seen in the pages of a picture book, and the stream winding in and out among the sedges appeared to be only a thin line of silver.

The princess leaned over her side of the hammock and Otho on his side, so that there was no risk of its being overbalanced. There was so much to see. It was like travelling in foreign lands, amid fresh scenes such as they had never dreamed of.

The clear air made them very hungry, and presently the princess and Otho opened the little wallets, and each took out a cake. They were delicately frosted with sugar, dark brown in color, and though quite small, so small, indeed, that they looked as if they might be eaten in three bites, they were nevertheless large enough to satisfy the children's hunger.

The princess wished to crumble one of her cakes for the doves, until Otho reminded her that there was no ground on which to strew the crumbs.

And the doves steadily pursued their way. Hardly had the princess finished the last morsel of her cake when she saw that the birds were increasing their speed, flying higher still, straining their wings as if in fear of pursuit.

"What is the matter, I wonder," exclaimed Otho, "they seem frightened, princess."

The princess put her long hair back from her eyes, the speed at which they were travelling had caused the breeze to blow it over her face in wild confusion.

Then she uttered a cry of terror and covered her eyes with her hands.

"What is it, princess?" asked Otho, eagerly. "What do you see?"

Princess Nerissa sat erect and pointed to a white speck in the distance far behind them, a speck that intensified in the sunlight like silver, flashing nearer every moment.

And still Count Otho did not understand. "It is the white hawk," said the princess, pale and trembling.

"Not the great white bird that took Prince Noel away?" cried Otho.

"The wicked fairy, Golconda," said the princess, "and they say that hawks swoop down on doves and kill them."

Little by little the silver speck grew larger; swiftly flew the doves with their burden, until the long strands of green ribbon were strained to the uttermost, and the princess held her breath as she watched the struggle.

Otho's face, too, was pale and troubled, for it seemed that there was no escape from their wicked pursuer. Closer still came the great white bird and gold, and they thought they saw the ruby eyes gleaming with triumph. The wide, flapping wings seemed to be overshadowing them, and there appeared to be no loophole of escape when, with a whirl of wings the doves darted downward, down, down, toward a wooded bank beside a river.

The air whistled and sang in the children's ears, and the long golden locks of the princess streamed far above her head, for in the rapid descent the leafy canopy had been carried away, and no longer covered them.

They both closed their eyes involuntarily, and when they opened them again the hammock was resting upon the green turf, and the hawk was soaring away uttering shrill cries of vexation.

The poor doves were quite exhausted, and their danger had indeed been imminent, for on the white breast of the leading dove was a single drop of blood like a ruby.

The princess flew out of the hammock and knelt beside the wounded bird, caressing her, while Count Otho ran to dip his handkerchief in the stream. The dove showed her gratitude by nestling her head against the cheek of the princess, and cooling the sores and contusions. The other doves rested on the grass while Otho crumbled one or two of his cakes for them.

The princess wondered why there should be such peace and safety in this green spot; there was no sign of the wicked fairy, and the doves were preening their ruffled feathers and losing their looks of terror.

Her wonderment was soon to be satisfied. Just as she was wishing the doves could talk to her, as they talked with their old friend, there came a buzzing of wings beside her, and six great dragon flies, gauzy and glittering, flew along at a rapid pace and took up their position in the midst of the circle of doves.

They were large and haughty dragon flies, apparently filled with their own importance, for they strutted to and fro in a manner that made Count Otho want to laugh. But the largest and fiercest dragon fly was looking

at him intently with an air of suspicion, and Otho checked his desire. As for the princess, she could not take her eyes away from them. They were so ridiculously important and proud.

But she and Otho soon forgot them in the wonders which followed, for, flying through the air in twos and threes, in sixes and sevens, in dozens and scores, and finally in hundreds, came a troop of butterflies. Butterflies of every imaginable tint, looking in their flight like a wide parti-colored ribbon, and they all floated along as if they, like the dragon flies, had a mission to perform.

But there was no concert about the butterflies. They just floated through the air as gracefully as bits of dithought, and then, descending, lined up along the bank like a guard of honor.

No sooner were they in place than a whole regiment of squirrels came rattling, hopping along in the most comical way, and their bushy tails waving over their backs, and their bright eyes darting inquisitive glances at the visitors.

They, too, formed in line behind the butterflies, while the dragon flies mounted guard and looked more pompous than before. Then came in view the most marvellous fairy chariot, drawn by twelve peacocks, with outspread plumage, shining blue and green, and gold in the sunlight. The chariot was seated pink in the form of a full blown rose, and in the midst of the pinkest petal sat the queen of the Good Fairies, Nerissa, knew she must be really good the moment she looked at her. There was such gentle kindness in her eyes, while her voice was very soft and sweet.

She beckoned to Nerissa, who approached with the wounded dove still upon her shoulder. The fairy queen stroked the soft plumage very tenderly with the tly wand she bore in her right hand. Her dress was the most wonderful thing Nerissa had ever seen, for one moment it looked pink, like the inside of a sea shell, and the next moment it was the pale green of a freshly budded tree, and it seemed to shade off to the tints of Parma violets. It was not the same for two moments together, being composed chiefly of moonshine, but it was most dazzling to the eyes. The queen's hair was golden, but it was a far paler gold than Nerissa's.

"You have been in great danger, princess," the queen said, turning to Nerissa; "you came to no harm, I hope?"

"None at all," replied Nerissa; "the dear doves flew so swiftly. When we came to this green bank the hawk flew away as if no longer able to touch us. Why was it your majesty?"

The fairy queen smiled. "This is most territory," she said, "and where I rule the wicked Golconda can do harm to no living thing. But alas! my lands are not as wide as hers; it is hard to think, princess, that the power of the wicked sometimes prevails over the good; but only for a time. A day will come when Golconda's power shall be utterly broken, and her victims freed. No one escapes her spells when upon her hands—but one day—"

She paused, and with a smile held out her hand to Otho, who took off his cap and knelt on one knee to kiss the queen's finger tips.

"You're in search of his majesty, Prince Noel," he said, looking up gravely in the queen's face; "perhaps your majesty will help us in our quest?"

"The queen graciously stroked the white dove, which still rested on Nerissa's shoulder. "I can help you to some extent, and can give you safe passage through my domains," she said; "but I cannot make your search easy, Count Otho. There is no easy way to Golconda's palace. He who wishes to succeed in his quest must learn to face

all the dangers that beset his path, and overcome them dauntlessly. Never lose heart—that is the great secret. I will give you a message to the King of the Gnomes, and he will help you for my sake. But you must come to my palace for a few hours, and the doves can go no further; they must return to the doves."

"I want to thank them, and say goodbye," said the princess, tearfully. "And I cannot make them understand, your majesty."

She put her lips to the dove's snowy neck, and kissed it in response.

"I think they understand," said the queen, while in obedience to a sign from her hand, the doves flew to the feet of the princess and Otho, and then, at a second sign from the Queen, they soared upward in a snowy flight, hovered for one moment overhead, then beat their wings in unison, until all that was visible of them was a white cloud on the horizon.

Yet another wave of the tly wand and the butterflies settled on the ribbons of the hammock, and the princess and Otho settled themselves in it, and away they went, following the queen's chariot, while the dragon flies flew on ahead, and the eager little squirrels flitted in the rear of the procession.

Away they went over hedges, pink with the wild rose and snowy with hawthorn spray, until in the distance they saw the white walls of the fairy queen's palace. Every window was brightly illuminated, and seemed—at least so the tired little princess and Count Otho thought—to smile a welcome.

They entered the palace, and the fairy queen, until all that was visible of them was a white cloud on the horizon.

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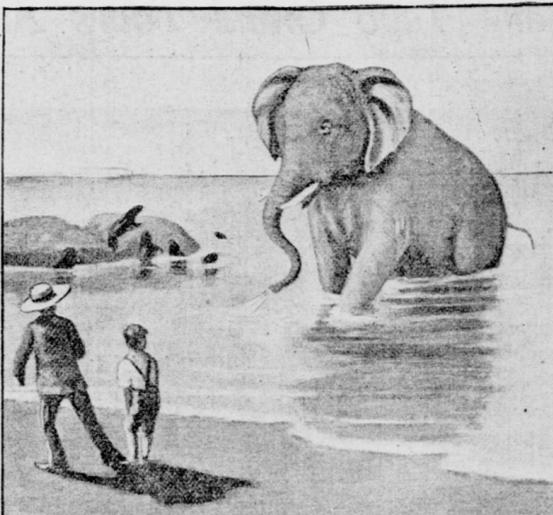
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SLOWLY AND QUIETLY WALKED OUT OF THE WATER.

Paint with the Indian plays much the same part as does dress with civilized peoples. For different functions he has different duds, and a confusion of these would mean everlasting disgrace and disaster.

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PRIZE FOR THE BEAR FAMILY.

Here is a family of bears—a mother and three little children. Like many another child, Baby Bear, the youngest, is always getting into mischief. You can see by the picture that his mother has lost all patience with him and is scolding him roundly for some naughtiness. Of course, he is sorry. You can tell that by his crestfallen expression.

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The Wonderful Electric Elephant.

BY FRANCES TRIGO MONTGOMERY. ILLUSTRATED BY C. M. COOLIDGE.

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CHAPTER VIII.

"Let us go on to the island now,"