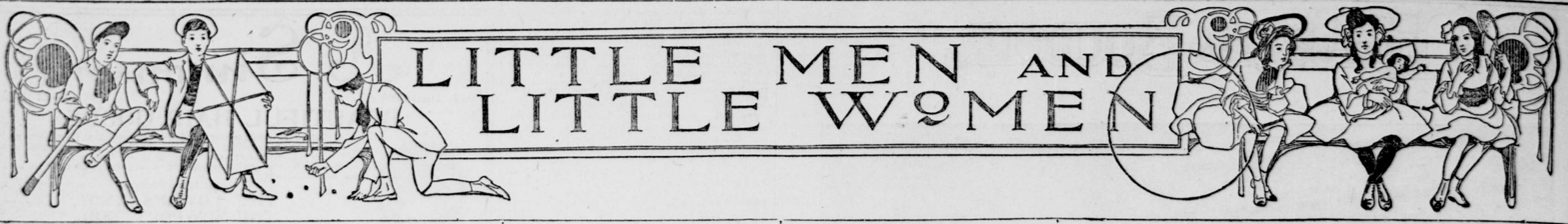

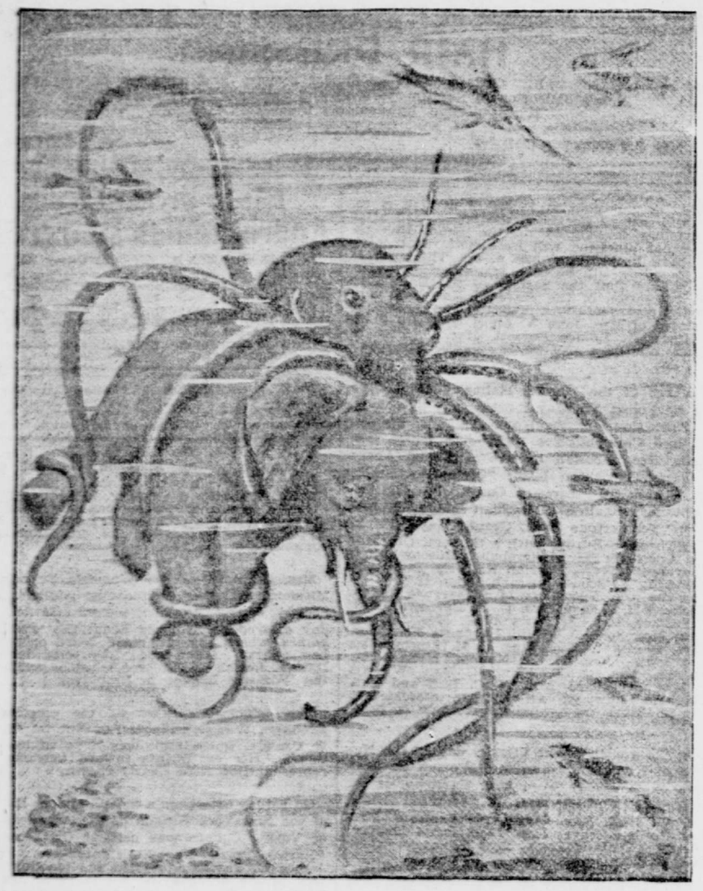

THE ELEPHANT IN THE GRASP OF AN OCTOPUS.

The Wonderful Electric Elephant.

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

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CHAPTER IX.

THE OCTOPUS AND THE SALT CAVE.

They had been travelling for many days without anything of interest happening and it was getting a trifle monotonous. Nothing but water, water everywhere and huge, ugly deep sea monsters to look at. They were now so far from shore that the bottom of the ocean was too deep for them to travel on, as the weight of the water alone would have crushed them; so they had to go right through the water or rise to the surface and speed along when it was calm; but even if they did that, there was nothing to see but miles and miles of water all around them. They never met a ship nor saw a sail in the distance, for they were out of the course that the vessels take.

One day the monotony was broken and in not a very pleasant way either, but in a manner that would have proved disastrous had it not been for the wonderful electric current that could be thrown into the elephant. They were going along at a good speed and both Harold and Ione were reading; Harold stopping occasionally to glance at the compass and see that the elephant was keeping the right course. Suddenly they came to a violent stop that threw them both off their seats.

"Gracious, Harold! What has happened? Have we broken down?" cried Ione.

"Goodness me! I don't know, but I think we must have run into something—it may be a submarine wreck. I must keep a lookout at the peep-hole after this and not be so careless or we'll get smashed all to pieces," said Harold, and just then elephant and all were picked up like a toy and turned completely over. For a second they were left standing on their heads, but only for a second, when they were given another whirl and turned right side up again.

Harold gathered himself together and rushed to one of the peep-holes. Horror of horrors! What did he see but a gigantic octopus facing them, with its long feelers sent out in all directions to wind round the elephant and crush it to death! Of course it thought the elephant alive and that it had found a nice, large morsel to eat. One of its many feelers was already wound round the body of the elephant while two or three others were writhing and twisting themselves round the legs and trunk. Had the elephant been alive it would have been crushed to death immediately; even as it was, it could be broken to pieces by the strength of the hideous devil fish. Harold quick as a flash turned the electricity into the skin of the elephant, which gave the octopus such a tremendous shock that it was killed instantly. The feelers loosened and the elephant was free again.

Ione was so frightened that her teeth chattered. "Of all the repulsive, terrifying objects I ever saw, that monster was the worst!"

"I agree with you," said Harold. "I have read about horrible, unshapely sea monsters, but no one even in his wildest dreams could imagine anything as repulsive as that gigantic, spidery looking octopus, with its long feelers as large around as a tree trunk and yet pliable enough to be twisted like a corkscrew, and what power and strength it had in them, even to pick this heavy elephant up as if it had been an India rubber ball! I never believed the stories I have heard about them or about the wonderful sea serpent, but hereafter, no matter how improbable the story may sound, I shall think it might be true," said Harold.

After their dangerous experience they kept a sharp lookout, speeding along as fast as they could, for they were both getting tired of travelling under the water. That same day they passed a sunken ocean liner. There she lay tipped half over and destined to drift and drift and drift, until she rotted to pieces and fell apart, which would take ages, held together as she was with iron bars and bolts, and too water-logged to sink.

As they passed this ship Harold exclaimed, "How lucky we did not run into it and get tangled in the rigging."

"Oh! how I wish we were out of this dreadful ocean! It is giving me the horrors and I am getting afraid to sleep or eat," said Ione. "How much longer do you think it will take us to reach the Sandwich Islands?"

"If I have made no mistake in my calculation we should reach there by to-morrow noon," replied Harold.

"There is one thing sure, Harold, I shall never go home to America by crossing the bed of the Pacific Ocean or any other ocean."

"How will you get home then?" asked Harold.

"I will stay on the other side or have you invent an airship and fly across," answered Ione.

"Why not put the elephant on board a ship and send it home as if it were a live elephant intended for some circus?" asked Harold.

"No, thank you, for then we would have to stay inside to work it to keep up the deception, and I do not care to stay in the hold of a ship shut up in an elephant and be seasick. So you see you will either have to build a bridge or a flying machine to get me over," answered Ione.

"If the old man who invented this elephant were alive, he could, I have no doubt, build a ship or flying machine of some kind that would carry us and the elephant, too, safely across the water," said Harold.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Harold, a few moments later. "I see land ahead."

"Where? Where?" cried Ione. "Do let me see it. Yes, yes, it is land, and a mountain at that, and it looks just like the Catalina Island. Oh! I am so happy to see land once more that I feel like dancing. But as I cannot do that, hand me my banjo and I will play and sing you a darky dance tune or two, while you put on full speed and see how quickly we can get there."

After travelling at a high rate of speed for over an hour they could see in the distance five distinct mountain cones that were as symmetrical as the old-fashioned sugar loafs, all standing about one hundred feet from each other. They were very curious, and looked as if they might be giant ant hills. As they came nearer they saw in the side of one of the mountains a large hole that looked like the entrance to an immense cave. This it really proved to be, but of such magnitude and magnificence was it that it had the appearance of being the entrance to a cathedral with tall spires all built of white rock crystal.

"Did you ever see anything more solemn, grand and beautiful than that imposing looking entrance with the sun's rays falling aslant on its towers, filtering through the green water? And see how the sea anemones and the little pink shells are sticking to it like climbing roses, making it look more than ever like a cathedral with the ivy growing on it," Ione cried. "As anxious as I am to get to land, we shall have to stop and go inside, Harold, out of curiosity. Who knows but that we have found the home of the Sea King and his mermaid daughters!"

The entrance being large enough for them to enter, they shut down the speed to a slow walk and turning on the searchlight in the mouth of the elephant they proceeded to explore the cave.

The ground had an upward tendency and one hundred feet or more from the entrance they came out of the water and found before them a seemingly endless vista of sparkling pillars, domes and spires.

Their first glimpse of the grandeur and magnificence made them hold their breath and then exclaim, "How beautiful!" The searchlight had penetrated and lit up the furthermost corners and the lofty ceiling composed of dome upon dome hung with crystal stalactites, forming a lacelike pattern as if woven cunningly by human hands. The floor was spiked with hundreds of brilliant stalagmites of varying heights. Each dome rested on a fluted column fifty feet in height, thus making row after row of stately, glistening pillars. But the strangest part of all was that there seemed to echo from the dome and sides lovely strains of sweet music, swelling and resounding through the whole chamber, and then dying away in the distance, only to repeat itself with even more grandeur than before.

"Harold, do you see that enormous white shell with the pink tinted lining and scalloped edges, that opens and shuts as the water ebbs and flows?" asked Ione. "Well, listen, and you will find that every time it shuts and forces the water out, it makes that weird, musical sound; and if you look closely you will see all kinds and shapes of shells resting at the water's edge and all are opening and shutting just as the larger one is doing, and that is where this weird, sad music is coming from."

"It seems a shame to break off any of these perfect stalactites, but I must have a nice bit for a souvenir," said Harold.

He got out of the elephant and broke off a small, inconspicuous one. Looking at it closely he discovered that it was made of rock salt and that the whole cave was composed of the same material.

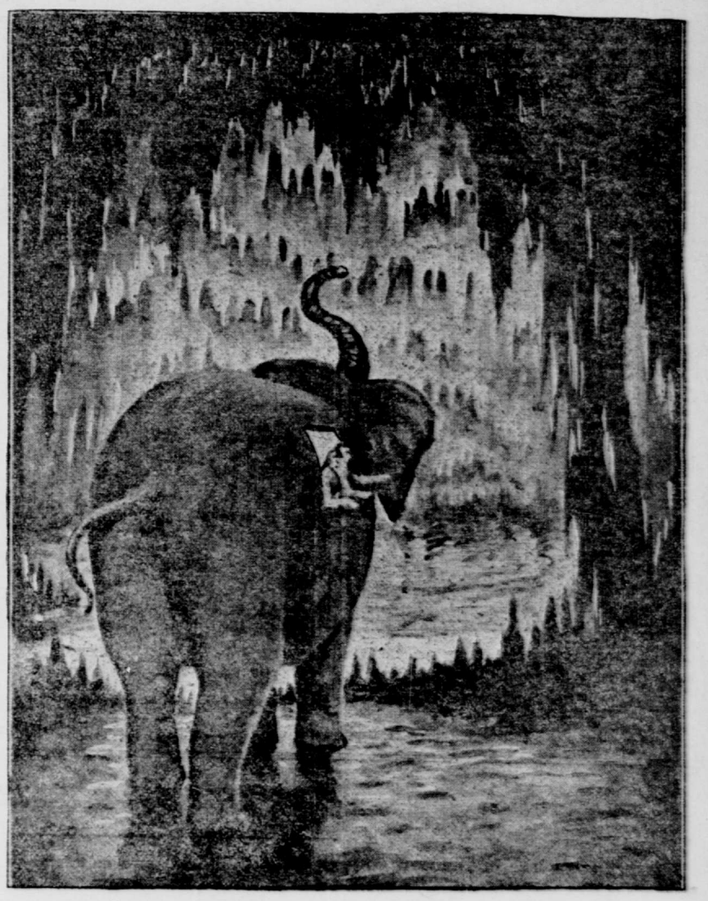
"Now I know where the ocean gets its salty taste," said Ione. "It is from large caves like this scattered all over the ocean's bed, and as the water runs in and out of them it thus becomes salty."

"What an idea, Ione! You have the queerest thoughts sometimes; you make me laugh."

"Well, you can laugh, but if not that way how does it get its salty taste? Give me a better explanation if you can."

When they came out of the cave and had passed the five cone-shaped mountains they found they were in sight of a submarine mountain chain, and Harold, by consulting his map, found that the top of this chain formed the Sandwich Islands.

[To be continued.]



AN ENDLESS VISTA OF SPARKLING PILLARS, DOMES AND SPIRES.

The Stolen Prince.

BY E. M. JAMESON. ILLUSTRATED BY H. C. SANDY.

(Copyright: 1903: By The Tribune Association.)

CHAPTER VI.

Meantime in the kingdom from which Nerissa had stolen away there was great mourning. Of course, after Prince Noel, Nerissa was the heir to the throne.

Apart from the importance of her position, however, the loss of the little princess was severely felt, and every one in the kingdom went about with a sad face for many a day.

Then little by little the people grew cheerful again; they had no empty places in their homes as had the King and Count Otho's father; and as to the succession, there were still four little princesses to inherit the throne.

But the King could find comfort nowhere.

He pictured his little daughter in every imaginable danger—pursued by wild beasts, perhaps ill-treated by robbers, cold and hungry, and forlorn—until in the night he would start up in bed and clutch at the sword which lay within reach of his hand, only to find that it was but a dream.

How he longed to throw aside his kingly pomp and power, and go forth in search of his children! But it is a certain fact that a king, even in Fairyland, cannot do quite as he likes.

Throughout the length and breadth of the land his subjects sympathized with him in his trouble; the Queen feigned grief, but rejoiced in her heart that Nerissa had gone.

A great pang would go through her heart whenever she thought of the empty cradle and the cold, deserted nursery. It was shut up now, and no one entered it, and presently the cobwebs gathered on the walls, and the spiders threw their glistening filaments of gossamer from one corner to another, until they hung in festoons over the shining cradle. The prince's nurse, who had been liberated by the King, wished to keep the nursery aired and dusted, opened the windows every day, so that the air and sunshine might enter; but the Queen forbade any one to go into the room, and ordered the key to be brought to her, and for the future it hung from her golden girdle.

It was a very dull time indeed for the lords and ladies-in-waiting, as no one but the most stony hearted thought of enjoyment.

Still, it was undoubtedly bad for the country, and, after a time, the merchants drew up a petition, representing the serious loss to trade.

It was an immense petition—yards and yards and yards in length. Twenty 'prentice lads, dressed in their best, drew it to the Audience Chamber on a gayly decorated car. The services of ten of the stoutest apprentices were needed to bear it into the King's presence, to where he sat on his great Throne of State, surrounded by his Parliament.

The chief citizen, he who owned the largest ships, and was the possessor of the biggest money bags, represented the losses suffered by himself and his brother merchants; indeed, he could hardly repress a sob as he spoke of the ill done to commerce; and a tear rose in his eye as he pointed with a shaking hand to the petition, which was certainly vast enough to speak volumes without a word from himself.

"Countless lengths of silk, and lace, and velvet, and stuffs, your majesty," he said, ruefully, "hundreds upon hundreds of jewels and feathers and fallals, such as lords and ladies most delight in, all lying there upon the shelves in our warehouses, while our 'prentices are getting riotous and ill-conditioned through idleness."

He was glad of an opportunity to put in a timely word of warning; and the apprentices shuffled their feet at thus being brought before the King's notice. And, indeed, not one looked as if he had done hard work for many a day.

"Well, well," said the King, with a kindly smile, "we all have our idle moments, good Nathan. We will give your request due consideration."

The deputation withdrew, and the 'prentice lads bore away the petition and placed it in a cupboard in the Town Hall, where, no doubt, the rats and mice enjoyed its possession later. But it had done its work in the world, and had done it well, too, for after that the Court became more gay, and the courtiers gave balls and entertainments to one another as in former times, and it was a glorious year for trade.

But the King's brow was always sad; and sorrow followed him wherever he went.

He refused to send any more of his brave soldiers to strive with Golconda, for his army had already been lessened by her enchantments. He could only hope and pray that his children and little Count Otho would escape harm.

One morning, ere the dew had been brushed from the grass, the King walked with his children in the palace garden. He was an early riser, and this was now his greatest solace, for since the loss of his two children, he had lavished a great affection on his remaining daughters.

The lions had joined the party; they sadly missed their favorite princess, and since her departure they had become so gentle and dispirited that none but the most evil minded trembled before them. And if any one but spoke Nerissa's name they would whine and look up appealingly. Their vigil for the night was ended, and now they roamed free. Three of the little princesses walked beside them and coaxed them to play hide and seek among the bushes, but Princess Topaze walked with her hand in her father's, trying to comfort him in his sorrow.

Round her neck, as round those of her sisters, hung a single spotless pearl strung on a thin chain of gold. They were worn, by the King's orders, day and night.

The blue eyes of the princess were clouded and sad as she raised them to her father's face, and seeing their sadness he tried to smile upon her.

"Run and play with your sisters," he said; "be merry as they are." The Princess Topaze shook her head.

"I cannot be merry," she said. "I am always, always, thinking of Nerissa and Noel."

The King's brow grew darker; he stroked her golden curls. "True, child," he said, "if we could only know their fate it would be some poor shred of comfort."

They walked on for a pace or two, then, suddenly, the little princess clapped her hands.

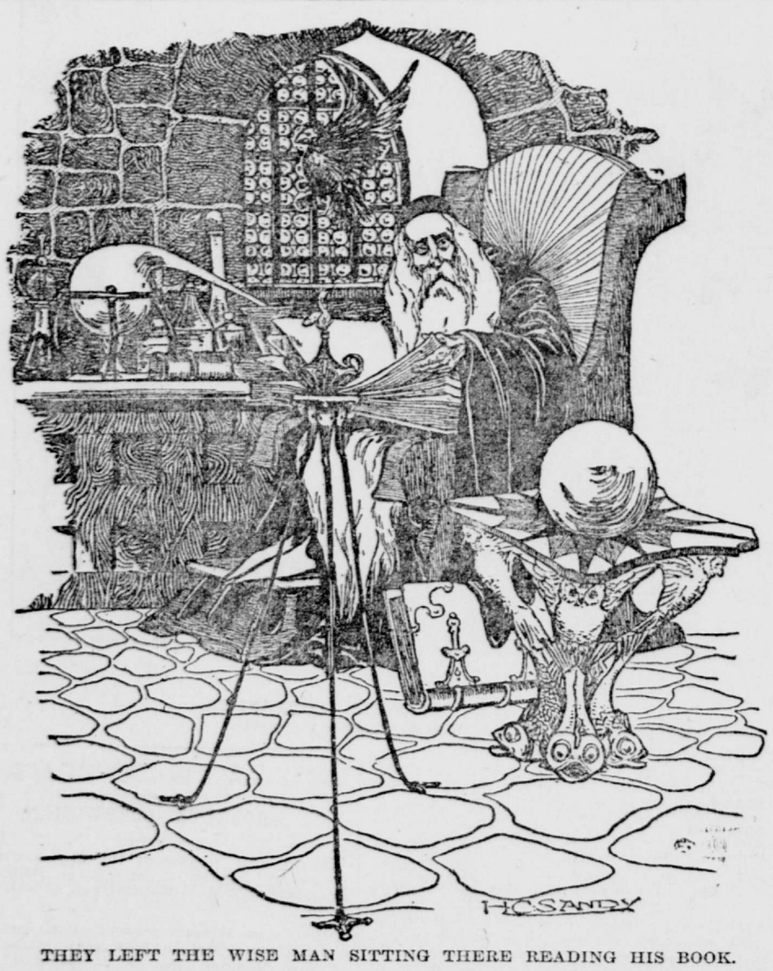
"I know, I know," she exclaimed; "let us ask the Wise Man. I believe he knows everything."

"What do you mean, child?" asked the King; "who is this Wise Man, and where does he live?"

"Why, he lives in the palace," said Princess Topaze, in surprise; "right up in the little turret of the white tower, father. Up at the very top where all the little barred windows are, not a great way from the sky."

"I have not been there since, as a lad, I explored the palace from dungeon to roof-top," murmured the King; "I know of no wise man."

"He is very, very wise," said the little princess earnestly, "wiser than all the great lords who go to parliament, father. Let us go and seek him; he is very wise."



THEY LEFT THE WISE MAN SITTING THERE READING HIS BOOK.

THREE OF THE LITTLE PRINCESSES PLAYED HIDE AND SEEK AMONG THE BUSHES WITH THE LIONS.

She took the King by the hand, and together they mounted the wide marble steps of the palace, and then, up the marble staircase with its balustrades supported by graceful swans in gleaming silver; on still, higher and higher, until the stairs grew winding and steep, and they had to pause a while for breath.

Then on again, up a narrow stone staircase, thick with cobwebs and spiders' looms.

At the topmost stair they saw before them a low, iron-clamped door, studded with nails, red and rusty.

The princess gave three timid knocks with her small hands. Then they heard a voice bidding them enter, and as the King lifted the latch the door swung back heavily upon its hinges.

The room was small and very dimly lighted, and at first they could hardly distinguish the Wise Man. He sat at the window with its narrow bars, reading from a great book upon his knee.

He was dressed in a long dark robe, and his snowy hair and beard flowed nearly to the ground.

He raised his head and looked at them with the most piercing eyes the King had ever seen; they were such keen eyes, and yet appeared to have lived for endless years. On the back of his chair perched a great eagle, which flapped its wings at their approach, and fixed his proud gaze upon them.

"It is the King, my father," said the little princess, surprised that the Wise Man remained seated.

"His majesty is welcome," replied the Wise Man in a voice that sounded very far away.

The King sat down on a small stool and took his little daughter upon his knee, and conversed with the Wise Man, telling him of his sorrow.

And all the time the great eagle sat motionless, his bright eyes fixed unblinkingly upon his master's guests.

The Wise Man sat buried in thought for some moments. Then he raised his head and looked in the King's face. Long and searchingly he looked; then he broke the silence.

"Thou art a good man and a worthy king," he said, "and thine is no common grief. I will seek for thy children's weal or woe. But the child must help me."

The little princess looked up. She had been toying with a great transparent ball which stood upon the table. It was a pale, clear green, like an emerald, and all the light in the room concentrated upon it dazzlingly.

"Bring it hither, princess," said the Wise Man; and very carefully, bearing it in two hands, the princess carried the ball to him. He turned it round and round many times, and said some words they did not understand. Then he held it toward the princess.

"Do not touch it," he said. "Look into the very midst of the ball, princess, and tell thy father what thou seest."

The princess put her hands behind her back, and, bending forward, looked earnestly and in silence, while the pale green light shone reflected in her face.

Then she uttered a cry of wonder.

"I see a green wood," she murmured; "there are birds, and Nerissa is there and Otho. They are wearing such strange green cloaks, and oh, there are such numbers of birds, beautiful, pearly ones!"

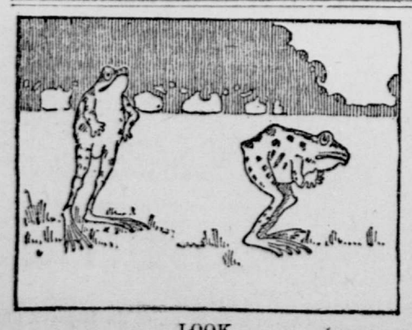
She clapped her hands with delight, and then uttered in exclamation, "Oh, they are gone, quite gone."

The Wise Man put the ball upon the table, and the King sprang forward to look into its depths; but he saw nothing save the green, translucent shades of an emerald.

"Rest content," said the Wise Man gravely; "only a child can read the wonders of the emerald ball. The children are safe, and for the present that must content thee. Farewell."

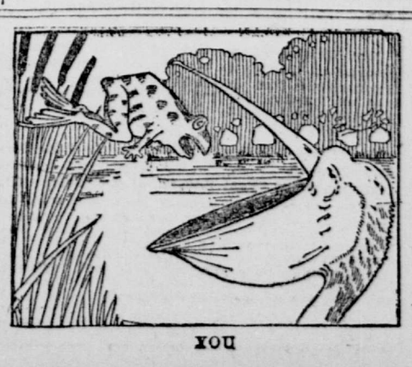
And the King, taking Princess Topaze by the hand, left him sitting there reading his book, while the eagle fixed his bright eyes unblinkingly upon the sun and beat his wings against the window bars.

(To be continued.)



LOOK

BEFORE



YOU

LEAP. —(Chums.

SKYE, OF SKYE.

Skye, of Skye, when the night was late,
And the burly porter drowsy grew,
Ran down to the silent pier, to wait
Till the boat came in with its hardy crew.

Skye, of Skye, as he sat on the pier,
Turned seaward ever a watchful eye;
And his shaggy ears were pricked to hear
The plash of oars, as the boat drew nigh.

Skye, of Skye, when they leaped ashore,
Greeted the crew with a joyful cry—
Kissed their hands, and trotted before
To the inn that stood on the hilltop high.

Within was the porter sound asleep—
They could almost hear his lusty snore;
Then Skye, of Skye, with an antic leap,
Would pull on the bell-rope that swung by the door.

Then was the bolt drawn quickly back—
Then did the jolly crew stream in;
And—"Landlaird, bring us your best auld sack!"
And—"Aweel, aweel, where hae ye been?"

Then Skye, of Skye, on the beach-white floor,
Sanded that day by the housemaid neat,
Lay down to rest him—his vigils o'er,
With his honest nose between his feet.

But Skye, of Skye, as he rolled his eye
On the friendly crowd, heard his master say,
"Na, na, that doggie ye couldna buy—
Not though his weight in gold ye would pay!"

Skye, of Skye, they have made him a bed
On the wind-swept cliff, by the ocean's swell;
On the stone they have reared above his head,
You may see a little dog ringing a bell.

—(Edith M. Thomas, in Our Animal Friends.

PLAYED A JOKE ON A HAWK.

Hawks, writes the author of "Travels in a Tree-top," have an unusual amount of curiosity. They are trapped, he says, almost as often through their curiosity as through their fear. Sometimes in winter, when there is little to attract their attention, an unbaited trap, if of a new shape or variety, is quite as likely to land a victim as if it held a moist appetizing mouse.

Once a trick was played upon a splendid black hawk that had been mousing over the fields for half the winter. It often perched upon a straw stack, instead of in the lone hickory tree that stood sentinel-like in the centre of the field. Early one morning a plump meadow mouse, with an inflated bladder attached to it by a string, was placed on the top of the stack. The bladder and cord were concealed by the straw. The hawk was apparently a little suspicious when he first noticed the mouse. He was not used to seeing a mouse remain perfectly still in that way, especially when he began to circle about with his great black wings close down to the stack. Presently he alighted in a wary way on one end of the stack; then he walked nearer, eyed the mouse sharply, and pecked at it. At last he seized it in his talons and made off for the hickory. Halfway there, however, he noticed the bladder attached, and gave the mouse a violent jerk to free it from the strange appendage. This only served to make the bladder bob up and down more furiously, and with a scream of terror the hawk dropped the mouse and all and fled to the woods. It was some time before he was again seen in the neighborhood of the straw stack.

THE LOST CAP.

He hunted through the library,
He looked behind the door,
He searched where baby keeps his toys
Upon the nursery floor;
He asked the cook and Mary,
He called mamma to look,
He even started sister up
To leave her Christmas book.

He couldn't find it anywhere,
And knew some horrid tramp
Had walked in through the open gate
And stolen it, the scamp!
Perhaps the dog had taken it
And hidden it away;
Or else perhaps he'd chewed it up
And swallowed it in play.

And then mamma came down the stairs,
Looked through the closet door,
And there it hung upon its peg,
As it had hung before.
And Tommy's cheeks turned rosy red,
Astonished was his face,
He couldn't find his cap—because
'Twas in its proper place!

—(The Youth's Companion.

TRICK WITH A PENNY.

To pierce a penny with a fine sewing needle does not at first seem an easy thing to do. But it is really very simple when done in the following manner: Stick the needle lengthwise through a cork, allowing the point to project a little. If the needle is longer than the cork, cut off the head with nippers. Place the penny and the cork on a soft board and hit the cork sharply with a hammer. The needle is kept by this from slipping aside, and as it is harder than the copper of the penny the coin is easily perforated even by the finest point.