

STORIES FOR CHILDREN



Eric Philbert Invents a Diver's Suit Which Enables Him to Discover the Mermaid Kingdom Down at the Bottom of the Sea. His Wonderful Adventures

ERIC, IN HIS NEW DIVER'S SUIT, STARTS INTO THE SEA

WHEN Eric Philbert was a very small boy he told his father that he wanted to be a diver when he grew up. This amused his parents, for Eric had never seen a diver, as he lived far from any harbor or other water where divers were employed. But he had seen pictures of them with their great copper helmets and funny suits, and ropes for hoisting them out of the sea, and tubes to pump air down to them. As he grew older he thought much about them and studied everything he could find regarding their work. This study led him to invent a new sort of helmet which would make fresh air for the diver. A small box was fastened to the back of the head-piece in which was a mixture of oxygen and hydrogen, and an automatic device forced the air inside of the two gases into the helmet, so that no air-tube was needed, and a man could stay down under water all day instead of coming up every little while for a rest from the pressure of the water, as the air the man used in the helmet would inflate his rubber suit and ease the water pressure so that he did not feel it at all. When he had his patent diving suit completed he went to a great harbor by the sea and showed it to ship owners and the naval officers, who thought it the very greatest thing they had ever seen, and told him his fortune was made. He was delighted at this, but he was even more pleased at having a chance to use his invention.

He could do nothing, and he kept on his way. Soon he found that he was going uphill, and he had to pedal harder. After awhile it got lighter, for the sun was up, and he was nearer to the surface. He began to see strange sea flowers and new kinds of brightly-colored fishes all about him, and when it really got full daylight he found that he was in a entirely different sort of sea bottom, where the ground was all cultivated as an end, and enclosed with fences made of many-colored shells. He wondered who had done all this, and then the Princess fell in love with him directly, for Eric was a very nice looking boy. She took him into all the rooms of the palace and showed him the wonderful treasures with which it was filled. There were strangely-shaped pearls that looked like animals or birds, huge fans of red coral, priceless and beautiful rare shells, all sorts of things that came from the countless ships that for thousands of years have been sinking to the bottom of the sea and collected by generations of

thieves by the hundred, and many a beautiful flower that Eric did not recognize; while sea-butterflies hovered over them in clouds. "It is a lovely garden," said Eric. "Yes," the Princess replied. "It would be perfect if it were not for the seaweeds. It keeps me busy fighting them. They grow so much faster than the flowers. Then, too, I have trouble with the sea-pigs that will persist in coming in and rooting up all my best plants." "Why not keep a big dogfish chained up near the wall, or several of them?" asked Eric.

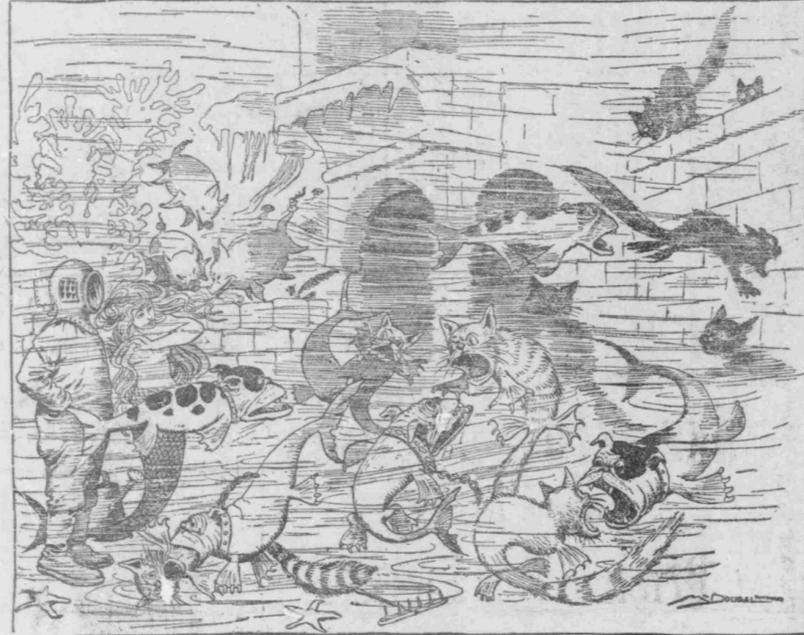
King promptly galloped up, and with one blow of his swordfish blade laid him out. Then they hunted for sea wolves until dark, chasing them over hills and down valleys for miles, while the water rang with howls and barks. Eric told the King that he had seen barks on the sea, but had never heard them before under water. In the evening they returned home, lighted all the way by great fishes who were like glow-worms, only immensely larger, for the deep sea is filled with such, which really light up the darkest places like so many big electric lamps. In the palace itself at night they kept in glass bowls many sunfish and moonfish to light the rooms, for the other fish were far too big and fierce to keep indoors. The household catfish used to dip into the bowls and catch the others when they had a chance, just as land cats will. Life was so pleasant down there in Merland that Eric forgot all about time, and stayed and stayed, for he loved the little Princess as well as she loved him. He helped her in the garden, went with her to drive home the sea cows in the evening, when the flying fish were swiftly flying home in great flocks to roost under the eaves of the palaces in the nests of white, pearly mud; he bossed the sunfish as they saved the firewood every morning; he dug holes to plant the bean poles for the young sea beans; gathered posies of all the wondrous flowers for the Queen; taught the King's drummers new tunes to play on the resounding drumfish; helped in the shearing of the sheephead in the autumn; gathered pearls and coral; visited the ancient wrecks strewn upon the ocean bottom, and collected curious treasure; explored the deep, dark caves with his electric lamp to their very depths; hunted the sea otter and the sea tiger; fished for sharks from the sea bottom; speared great lobsters, and in a hundred

dodge aside it had caught in his strong clothing and carried him upward. The anchor was being hauled up by the crew of the brigantine Egg Plant, of Syracuse, New York, and he was pulled aboard and his helmet removed by the most astonished lot of sailors that ever ate hardtack. He told them to let him return to his dear little wife, but, of course, they thought him crazy and would not allow him to go overboard again. When he told them his story they would not believe him, and Captain Sparrowgrass said that he would lock him up if he kept repeating such a silly yarn.

So he was taken away to New Zealand on the Egg Plant, and did not get home for more than a year. His people were amazed to see him alive, but they, too, considered him insane, and after awhile he stopped talking about his submarine life and adventures, but his heart yearned for his mermaid wife constantly. He would go to the seashore and sit there gazing upon the waves, vainly hoping that she would appear, and he would weep when night came and he was compelled to return home. So two long years passed, during which time his folks watched him so carefully that he couldn't get another diving suit and return to his wife. But meanwhile the Princess Undine, who had caught a glimpse of her husband being carried away and had tried to get into her fish-tail swimming arrangement, but could not do it in time, had been seeking for him far and wide. In every sea from the Atlantic to the Pacific she had sought him, but as she knew nothing about the land she never went out of the water at all. Finally a distant cousin advised her to go up the many rivers of the land Eric had come from and seek him there. So one day she came into the harbor of the

big city where Eric lived, and, tired and disheartened, she looked out of the water at all the great buildings. She wondered how on earth she could ever find him, and to get a clearer view she clambered up upon a wharf, where, as she gazed at the city, she was suddenly seized by a big man, who, with hoarse shouts, carried her into the nearest house. Among the crowd which gathered was a man who kept a dime museum, and he bought Undine from her captor and took her to his museum, where he made her swim in a tank and exhibited her to thousands of people daily. Her heart was slowly breaking as day after day she sat there combing her golden hair, and she certainly would have died soon, but when she and Eric were both most disheartened her husband happened to pass Pyker's Dime Museum and saw her picture on the billboard outside. Well, it was soon over. When Eric got inside and saw Undine in the tank, and she had leaped into his arms, Mr. Pyker interfered. Eric told Undine to get into the tank for a moment while he attended to Mr. Pyker, and when he got through with Pyker there wasn't much left of the furniture and things in the museum, and the proprietor was about as much of a wreck. Then Eric got a cab and took his wife home. Now they live half the year on land and the other half in their submarine villa. All of the mer-folks come to visit them frequently, and it is such a common sight to see mermaids in that city that hardly any one notices them, except strangers. If you would like to see one, you only have to go there and you'll probably run across either a merman or a mermaid the very first hour, but you will not know them, because, unlike the little lambs in Mother Goose, they have left their tails behind them.

WALT McDUGALL.



THE FIGHT IN THE PRINCESS' GARDEN

this, and kept his eyes open to see if there were any people about. Then suddenly he saw, on a little hill ahead of him, a small house with its doorway open. He rode to it and looked in. There was nobody within, and it certainly seemed as if it had been long ago forsaken, as the walls were covered with moss and shells, while eels and starfish and clams were all about. He went on, and soon espied another and a much larger house, up to which he rode slowly. Just as he reached it, out came a beautiful mermaid, whose golden hair swept about her form like a ruddy mist. Her deep blue eyes, as blue as the sea itself, opened wide in mingled fear and astonishment as she stopped and stared at him. She was so frightened to run away, and Eric, jumping quickly from his bicycle, took her hand and said: "Don't be frightened, my pretty mermaid. I will not hurt you. I am only a boy, and I have just come to see what's down here in the ocean."

The mermaid, who was only a child, trembled a little, but she tried to smile as she looked into the helmet and saw that she was like a mermaid, and not some horrid sea monster come to devour her, for there are many such in the deep ocean. "Do you live here?" asked Eric, looking around at the pretty garden that spread all about the beautiful house that was built of red and white coral. "Yes," the little mermaid replied. "I am the daughter of the Mer-King, and this is our palace. My father is out hunting now, but my mother, the Queen, is at home. Will you come in and see her?" "I should be delighted," replied Eric, for of course he wanted to see the inside of a merman's house. She led him in and called the Queen. The interior of the palace was even more beautiful than the outside, for its walls were all inlaid with great pearls that gleamed like white stars. Some of them were as big as eggs, and Eric wondered what they might be worth, for he had never heard of such pearls. Here and there a great diamond, a sapphire, or an emerald shone out among the white pearls, or an immense opal burned like a fiery eye, lighting up the soft shadows. Gold chairs and tables stood about, in fact, everything was of gold in the whole palace, and as he was so splendid that it took the boy's breath away.

That's a grand idea!" she replied. "I will ask father to lend me one, for he has a whole kennel of them which he keeps for hunting the sea-wolves in the coral forest." They went indoors to ask for the dogfish. The King was sitting on his throne of coral, listening to the complaint of a merman whose oyster bed had been slept in by somebody, and was all mused up. The King called in his special policeman, who wore a big starfish as a badge, and told him to find the merman who had gone to sleep in another's oyster bed with his sea boots on. Then he listened to his daughter's request, and told her to go to the kennels and pick out all the dogfish she wanted, but he said she would have to feed them herself. They went and got ten of them and chained them to the sea wall of the garden, but when she was feeding them a whole flock of half-wild catfish came pouring over, and they went for the dog biscuits, and there was a terrific fight, I tell you!

You could have heard the squalling and barking for seven miles, and the way the fur and scales flew was a sight! The water was full of pieces of catfish and dogfish for several acres, but the dogs won. While they were fighting, so that no one thought of anything else, the old and foxy sea pig stole into the back garden and just ate a whole cartload of sea cabbages and rooted up half the sea plum orchard. It was only when a little sea urchin, who sold newspapers, cried out that the pigs were discovered and driven away. To reward the sea urchin the King bought every copy of The Deep Sea Soundings, which was the name of the paper he sold. The next day they all went hunting, mounted on splendid sea horses that went like the wind. The dogfish were let loose, and before long had roused a sea lion which had captured a sea cow and was eating it in a little grove of seaweed. The

other ways enjoyed his life down beneath the waves. So in this manner several years passed, and everybody had forgotten the boy who had gone to sea in a diving suit. He was supposed to have been drowned, of course. Eric had married the sea king's daughter and was living happily down there, when one day as he was standing outside of the house in his diving suit a great anchor came sweeping along, and before he could

He put on his diving suit the next day and went into the sea. A great crowd of people were gathered on the beach, who cheered him as he entered the surf, and that was the last he heard of human voices for a time, for as the sound died away in the roar of the sea he entered a new world, the submarine world, which is known only to the diver, and very little known at that. He was well provided with both food and water, as he intended to go a long distance into the ocean and find out all about the bottom of the sea. He took along an electric light and a camera, for he wanted to get many pictures of the queer things he expected to see down there. The sea bottom slanted away very gradually, and was as smooth as a floor. Great drumfish and cod and sheephead swam up to him and stared at the big glass eyes of his helmet, probably thinking that Eric was a new kind of a fish, and the eels and lobsters nibbled at his head-socket as he walked along. Once in a while he would come to a great mass of seaweed like a green field, growing higher than his head, and he would turn aside and travel far to pass around it, but as he got deeper the ocean floor was free of weed, except in small spots. It grew darker and darker as he proceeded, until the sunlight seemed to come through a thick fog, although it was still daylight, for the shadows of the great fishes swimming above him swept along the bottom as the clouds shadows do along the fields on the land. Finding the bottom of the sea so new level, and smooth, Eric conceived a new idea, and, turning, retraced his steps to the shore. Many of the people, who had expected him to fall and return soon were waiting there yet, and they laughed when he walked out all dripping. But Eric also laughed and went to a bicycle store, where he bought a wheel and came back on it.

In a New World

Sea-Moss for a Bed. He rode right into the surf again and all the people cheered. This time he traveled so fast that in a few minutes he was far from shore and deep in the ocean, going along like a streak, while all the fishes darted away in terror before him. Soon it grew so dark that he had to light his electric lamp, which sent gleaming rays into the green ahead of him a great distance, but everywhere else it was as black as coal. When he had ridden for seven or eight hours he got off and laid himself down upon a bed of sea moss, where he slept until he felt quite rested, for as day and night were all the same down there, he didn't bother about it. He still far earlier than he had ever seen before. He ate his breakfast and then mounted his wheel. Riding as fast as he could, he was about to get way down into the sea, before his provisions gave out—he went on, and as it was all down hill, he did go very fast—faster than he had ever gone before. Once in a while he could see looming up ahead a great dark mass, which would turn out to be some sunken ship all encrusted with shells and seaweed, but he didn't stop to examine any of them. It was while he was turning aside from one of these, however, that he saw the first mermaid. She was swimming slowly along when Eric approached, and he had a good view of her, but the instant she saw him she darted away in fright. Later he saw another, and then a couple of mermen, with long green whiskers and hair. They did not see him, and he got very near to them before they were aware of his approach. When they did see him they fled in great alarm, for, of course, he didn't look like anything they had ever seen before. Eric was much disappointed, for he couldn't speak to them, and, of course,

He Meets the King. While they were thus engaged the King came home and was very much pleased to see Eric. He was familiar with the appearance of men, having often gone to the surface of the sea and watched the fishermen or sailors on ships, but he had always been rather afraid of them, as all mermen are. Eric was delighted with all that he saw, and when the King asked him to remain with them he readily agreed. He found that the fish-tail with which these people are provided, and which you have seen in all pictures of mermaids, was only a sort of outside dress, and that it was always removed when indoors, so that they looked just like human beings, with legs exactly like ours. Many visitors came to see the boy, and for days the palace was filled with curious mer-folk, some of them coming on great sea coaches drawn by dozens of sea horses, from far around on the other side of the world. They asked all manner of questions about the people on land, and some of them even said they would like to accept Eric's invitation and visit him on shore some day. Undine took him out to see her garden, where she spent most of her time. It was all laid out with every kind of sea plant you ever heard of, and lots that nobody on land knows about. There were rows of sea-cucumbers almost ripe, and sea-pickles ready for pickling, great flaming beds of sea-anemones of all colors, sea-

men—gold from old Spanish galleons, weapons from Vikings' dreki (or dragons, as their ships were called), and from Greek or Roman triremes or ancient Egyptian ships; golden vases out of wrecked Phoenician galleys and modern things from vessels of to-day, things that the mermen didn't understand, but which, because they were strange, they treasured, such as clocks, opera glasses, tomato cans, trumpets, telescopes, coffee pots, compasses and the like.

THE PRINCESS WAS THE STAR ATTRACTION IN PYKER'S MUSEUM. Men and women endowed with horns are not by any means unknown in the world we live in to-day. A short time ago Surgeon Lamprey, of the army medical staff, met with and studied three horned men in Africa, each having a horn on either side of his nose. "While serving on the Gold Coast," said he, "I had opportunities of making drawings of these people. The first horned man I had an opportunity of observing was a Fantee named Coffea, aged about 22 years, from the little village of Amanquanta, in Wasau territory. The second horned man was a long-faced youth, aged about 18, named Quashe Jabin, from the Gamin territory, and not a kinsman of the first one. From a statement made by him through a Fantee interpreter, I gathered that this hornlike growth had been in existence as long as he could remember. The third case was that of Cudjo Dan-sa, aged about 35. He stated through an interpreter that so far as he was aware this horn-like knob had grown of itself. It certainly had grown larger as he had grown older. It gave him no inconvenience. He could see and smell perfectly. Hundreds of cases more remarkable have recently been collected in an interesting report by Drs. George Gould and Walter Pyle, both well-known pathologists. "Human horns," say they, "are far more frequent than ordinarily supposed. Nearly all the older writers cite examples. Many mention horns on the head. "In the ancient times horns were symbols of wisdom and power. Michael Angelo, in his famous sculpture of Moses, has given the patriarch a pair of horns." There is a greater frequency of horns among women than among men, according to these authorities.

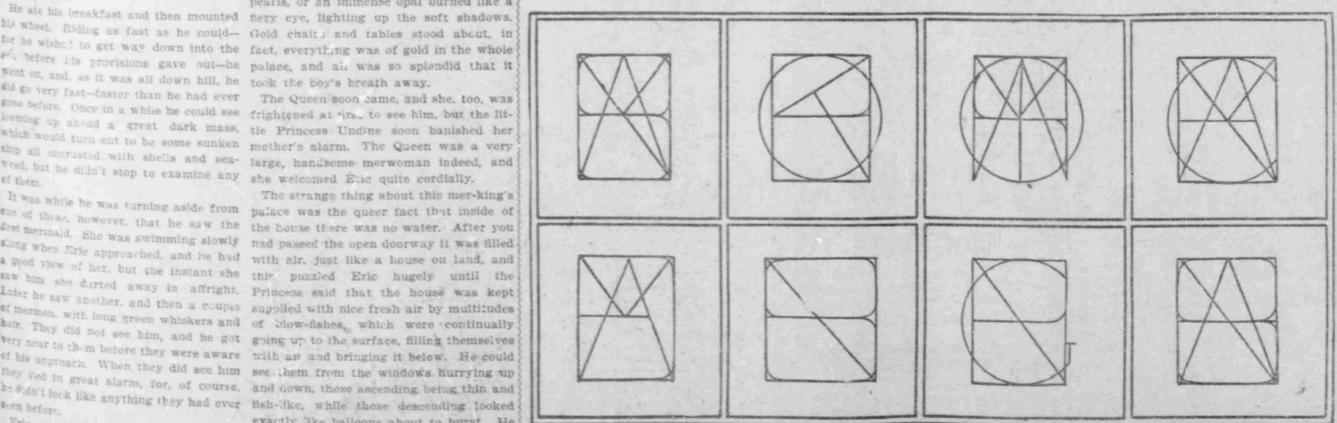


THE PRINCESS WAS THE STAR ATTRACTION IN PYKER'S MUSEUM

HUMAN BEINGS WHO HAVE HORNS AND TAILS

The combination of horns and tail on a human being would naturally give rise to extravagant superstition. There is a description of such a case in a recent medical report. The creature, said to have been dubbed the "Hoodoo of Flato," was born eight years ago in Minnesota. He was a boy 5 weeks old when described. He had hair two inches long all over his body; his features were fendish, and his eyes shone like beads beneath his shaggy brows. He had a tall eighteen inches long, horns from the skull, a full set of teeth, and clawlike hands. He snapped like a dog, crawled on all fours, and refused the natural sustenance of a normal child. The country people considered this devil-child a punishment for a rebuff that the mother gave a Jewish peddler selling crucifixion pictures. Fabricius, the famous Italian anatomist of the fourteenth century, records that he saw a man with horns on his head, and who chewed the cud. Human rumination, or cud chewing, has been recognized as a fact by medical men for years, according to Drs. Gould and Pyle. A Swede of 35, living in Germany, and apparently healthy, was observed, they say, by a Dr. Winstler to retire after meals to some remote place where he might enjoy his bovine habit. Dr. Chatterd some years ago reported that he had seen in Baltimore an old woman with a horn on her nose. It was "more than an inch long, and nearly shaped like that of the rhinoceros." Dr. Saxton reports that he has seen several horns from ears of patients. There are further reports of such protuberances found on the eyelids, the nape of the neck, the lower lip and the chin.—London Express.

THE MONOGRAM WORD PUZZLE



The monograms last week spelled the names of American statesmen. They were Webster, Monroe, Sumner, Clay, Seward, Jefferson, Henry and Blaine. The monograms to-day spell the names of famous American generals.