

"Kathleen, why do you cry when the roses are in bloom?" it asked.

Kathleen started, much frightened, and looked about her, but saw nothing save the hollyhocks and the roses; though she did notice that the hollyhocks were nodding in the strangest way, as if in a gale of wind, and there was no wind at all.

"Kathleen," said the voice again, "look this way, and you will see me under the rose-bush."

The child looked eagerly and saw—what do you think she saw? A great, gray goose standing solemnly under the rose-bush, and, what was more amazing still, on the goose's back sat a tiny figure, all in gray with a pointed cap, and there was a shimmering harness on the bird, and the pixy held the reins and a long whip in her hands. Kathleen was so much amazed that she forgot to be frightened, and rubbed her eyes and looked again; and this time she saw the face under the hood, a small face with sparkling eyes and a happy smile; not a face to fear or distrust; indeed, a face so charming that the little girl smiled back through her tears.

"Who are you?" she asked timidly, trying not to offend this strange creature.

The pixy laughed and seemed to be thinking.

"Well," she said, "I think you may call me Mistress Good Hope; and now tell me, little mortal, why do you weep?"

At this, poor Kathleen's tears flowed afresh.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "do you pixies have to pay mortgages and chimney taxes?"

The pixy laughed gayly. "Nay," she replied, "we slide down chimneys—when they're not too sooty—but we do not pay a tax. Oh, no, but I have the special care of chimney taxes, and I stuck pins in some tax-gatherers only last week. So, you can't pay your tax?"

"No," answered Kathie sadly, "and we must lose our home, too."

Mistress Good Hope reflected. "This will never do," she said. "We must consult the King of the Pixies. Come, child, mount this other steed, and we'll go at once."

And to Kathleen's great amazement, another goose, precisely like the fairy's, all saddled and bridled, too, came waddling placidly up to her.

"Dear me," cried the child. "I never rode a goose before, never!"

"Come—come!" cried the pixy, impatiently; "there is not a moment to lose, if you want to



help your mother. The King of the Pixies is holding court, and if he chooses to help you, he can. But he never will if you dawdle under the hollyhocks and cry till your nose is red. That is not the way to succeed in this world, I can tell you, Mistress Tarkenwell; opportunity only comes once, and if you do not seize it — success is lost.”

As Mistress Good Hope uttered these sage words, the wild goose bowed low to Kathleen and spread its wings for her to mount; and the little girl, anxious to help her mother, seated herself on the bird's back, and immediately the two gray geese rose upward — like two clouds — with scarcely a motion of their great wings, and swept off through the air, — over the moor, and away! At first, Kathleen was a bit frightened, but there was so little movement, and her companion was so composed, that she began to forget everything in the enjoyment of this new and wonderful expedition. It was delightful; have you not often dreamed of flying, and longed to fly? So had Kathleen, and here she was really and truly skimming through the air without the trouble of even using a pair of wings, but seated comfortably on the back of a wild goose, who was — by the way — uncommonly tame.

Upward and onward the great birds swept, like twin ships sailing in that upper deep, and the wondering little mortal, clasping her arms about the goose's neck, looked down, down, at the great moor where she had played so often. She saw the breeze rippling over the blooming gorse, and she passed right over the tops of the tallest trees, and the sheep and cattle looked the size of kittens and mice. Strange to say, too, no one seemed to notice Mistress Good Hope and her companion; they passed close over the farmhouse roofs and they dipped low beside the great castle, Berry-Pomeroy, but no one saw them, or even seemed to look in their direction; and presently they were travelling lower among the tree-tops of the forest, and they heard the birds singing close to them among the branches. Kathleen gave a cry of delight.

“’Tis lovely!” she said, clasping her hands; “oh, thank you, Mistress Good Hope, for the pleasure.”

The pixy smiled and nodded. “It is pleasant,” she admitted, “but we think it finer to ride on a moonbeam; but that no mortal can do. Yonder, by the way, is the Abbot's Pool,” she added, pointing downward, “where the wishhounds always drink.



There are wonderfully fine trout there. This is why it was called the Abbot's Pool: the old fellow used to catch the fish — when we let him; but, dear me, there are such a number of stories about the times when we did not let him, and ran off with his bait, and the little brown jug he always took with him. That, to be sure, was full of horrible stuff that the derricks used to light the beacon fire with; it burned tremendously, and the smell of it made some of the derricks act very queerly, — so queerly, indeed, that the King of the Derricks had to have five of them nailed up in a keg for a week, as a punishment, you know."

"Dear me, were you alive as long ago as that?" asked Kathleen, quite forgetful of her manners. "I know the stories of the abbot and his pool are very old. How old are you?"

The pixy colored angrily. "My dear," she said, "you should never ask a woman's age — it's extremely ill bred."

Kathleen, overcome with embarrassment, begged her pardon a thousand times, and to change the subject, said she wished that her mother could have some of the fish.

"That is easily done," replied the pixy, quite

herself again; and she whistled three times, through a daffodil bud, and behold, there was another pixy clambering up on the top of a tall birch tree, all dressed in green, and so much like the leaves that Kathleen could scarcely believe her eyes.

"Catch some trout immediately, little Good Deeds, and take them to the door of Dame Tarkenwell," ordered Mistress Good Hope; and the little green elf bowed and slid down the tree trunk, like a spider down its web.

"How pleased mother will be," thought Kathleen, and then sighed; "poor mother, she is so sad!"

The thought made the child sad, too, and they were silent as they swept through the forest; only she could not help looking down with pleasure at the wonderful bracken of ferns that made every glade in the woods beautiful with their waving fronds, and she heard, too, the music of hundreds of songsters. What a ride it was! but at last it came to an end, and the wild geese flew down, down into a lovely dell, right in the heart of the greenwood, locked in by tall and beautiful trees, and the ground covered with moss and carpeted with primroses. Here the two travellers alighted, and the pixy looked gravely at her companion.



"You certainly are not in court dress," she said, with a sigh; "but then, 'tis a case of necessity. Follow me, mortal, and do as I do."

While she was speaking, she had thrown aside her gray mantle, and now appeared in a wonderful court gown of rose leaves and petals, spangled with dew-drops, and looked so lovely that Kathleen glanced shyly down at her own homespun frock and her coarse pinner — in those days they called an apron a "pinner." But she was a sensible child and did not fret for better clothes than her mother could give her, and so she followed the pixy with wondering eyes, into the court of the "hill folk." They came first to a tall hedge of ferns, that nodded their beautiful plumes in the air, and here they were met by a row of pixies, walking two and two, dressed in the pink petals of roses and blowing little trumpets of mother-of-pearl; and these little creatures led the way through the ferns to a wide open space that was full of beautiful elves, all robed in the petals of flowers, and all standing in a semi-circle about a throne that was made entirely of congealed dew-drops. These were firm enough to hold the King of the Fairies, and yet as clear and sparkling as when they were first gathered in the morning by his

attendants. And on this marvellous throne, quite the most marvellous that monarch ever possessed, sat the charming little person who was called King of Pixyland, and he was robed — not in ermine or velvet, or jewels or lace — nay, in the petals of a lily of the field, more beautiful than the robes worn by Solomon in all his glory, and wearing on his head a crown of sunshine, while his sceptre was a ray of the full moon. He was receiving petitions from his subjects, and smiled graciously upon Mistress Good Hope and her companion, although Kathleen felt very big and very awkward, indeed, among these sprites, and it is certain that she would never have found her tongue at all; so it was well that Mistress Good Hope told the whole sad story for her, and told it well. His Majesty looked sympathetic, but, at first, shook his head.

"You know very well, Good Hope," he said, "that we never soil our fingers with anything so sordid and dirty as money, and she cannot pay the chimney tax with sunshine."

"Ah, do not turn me away," cried poor Kathleen, in distress after hoping so much. "Surely, your Majesty will help my poor mother, since her rich uncle will not!"



"Ah, indeed," said the king, "will he not? And who, pray, is your mother's uncle, and where does he live?"

"He's an alderman in London, sire," replied Kathie, "and his name is Solomon Moneybags."

"Go you, quickly, Special Torment," said the king, to one of his attendants, "and give that rich uncle the gout in his toes; and do you, Mischief, paint his nose red and swell it, when he drinks his sack."

Having thus disposed of old Moneybags, his Majesty fell into deep thought and the whole court was silent, full of expectation. At last, the king spoke again.

"Go, Mistress Good Hope," he said, "and take this poor child to the King of the Derricks, he can settle it for her; and say to him, that I will help him next time he sends for me, if he will do this good turn. Take with you the golden precepts — wrapped in vapor — and, if all goes well, give them to this mortal. There's no time to lose, for my messengers report that the tax-collector is on the way now, and has only been delayed by the necessity of picking off the burs that my people keep sticking into him. Therefore, consider yourselves

dismissed," and he waved his sceptre, adding in a stern tone, "shed no more tears, mortal, as you have already nearly drowned two infant pixies, and you can see that — if you continue to weep here — the whole court will have to take to boats; it's a perfect deluge! So please be off at once!"

Thus sternly dismissed, Good Hope and Kathleen mounted their wild geese in hot haste and rode and rode — over forest and moor — toward the sea.

"Whither do we go now?" cried Kathie, a little frightened, for they had left behind them the river Dart and Dartmoor and were speeding south south-east, at a terrible rate so that everything was blurred to her eyes.

"We are going to Berryhead," replied the pixy. "The derricks are there just now, keeping the Pirate Cave."

"Oh, surely you don't mean to go near the pirates?" cried Kathleen, breathless with fear, for the pirates were very wicked people and came only too often to Devon in those days.

"Pshaw, foolish child!" retorted Good Hope, "of course not; and if we did, they would not see us, for we are invisible."

Kathleen pinched herself hard. "How can we



be?" she said, "when I'm just as much alive as I was."

The pixy laughed. "You are invisible because of me," said she; "but look, there is Berryhead, where many, many years ago a people called the Romans landed and took possession of this part of the country;" and as she spoke she pointed out a bold headland jutting out into the beautiful blue sea.

It was a wild spot; great crags of reddish stone loomed up, and the red sands stretched out where the tide was rising, wave after wave, crested with foam and dancing in the sunlight, and away from the shore the turf was as green as an emerald. Kathleen had never been so far from home before, and she was delighted when the geese flew lower and lower; but she did not feel so safe when they began to go out over the water itself and approached two wonderful rocks that loomed out of the sea.

"These are called the Parson and the Clerk," said the pixy, "and here I must blow the trumpet," and as she spoke, she alighted on the crag, and, picking up a sea-shell, blew three shrill blasts.

The signal was immediately answered from the cliffs of Berryhead, and the pixy directed the geese

to fly over and alight there, at the mouth of the cavern. A good deal frightened, but ashamed to confess it, Kathleen dismounted with her guide, and the two entered the cave which was lighted by sea-anemones, hung along the vaulted roof. They passed through a long winding gallery, beautiful with hanging pieces of rock of glorious colors, and in the centre of the cave they found a great room filled with queer little men, all dressed in red from top to toe, and each wearing a cock's feather in his cap. But what amazed Kathleen most was the cave itself, for all sides of it were lined with bags and bags of gold; broad gold pieces, Spanish pistoles, livres of Tours, and nuggets from the mines of Africa and Peru; and on top of the largest heap sat the King of the Derricks, cross-legged, tasting a dried tobacco leaf and making horrible faces.

"Dear me," he remarked, "why do these strange mortals load their ships with such fearful weeds? This, they tell me, comes from the Virginia Colony that they're all so wild over. 'Tis not fit for a decent pirate; no wonder the ship went down! Listen to me, derricks: never bring another bit of that horrible weed into my caverns, on pain of being made mortals!"



As he spoke, Mistress Good Hope and Kathleen were ushered in, and he listened to their petition with some impatience, all the while wiping his tongue with a piece of seaweed to take away the taste of tobacco.

"So," he said, when Good Hope had finished speaking, "so you want money to pay the tax and the mortgage! Look at this money; here is a lesson for mortals. They all want it; they work for it, they cheat for it, they steal for it, and they die for it — and a precious lot of good it does them. Now, this was all stolen; a lot of pirates brought it here and hid it — and what happened? Why, bless your hearts, after they had been stealing it and hiding it for twenty years, their ship went to the bottom, with all on board, out there by the Parson and Clerk, and here is the gold — collecting dirt and rust, and a perfect nuisance to us;" he waved his hand airily. "We derrick guard it — out of pure compassion — to keep these wretched mortals from cutting each other's throats for it, and yet the King of the Pixies is foolish enough to want to give some of it to a poor, stupid child like that one with you."

Poor Kathleen began to lose all hope of helping

her mother, on hearing this bitter speech, and she fell on her knees in the greatest distress.

"If it please your Majesty," she cried, "only pay the chimney tax for my mother, and I will bless you forever."

The king was really very good hearted — kings often are, when they take off their crowns — and at the sight of the child's grief, wiped his eyes hastily with a blade of grass.

"Dear, dear," he said, "that tobacco has given me the grippe;" then he looked sharply at a chest in the corner. "Jake and Jeffrey," he said, "go harness the wishhounds — six of them — and put that chest of gold on the sledge. Let them take it to this mortal's home and pay that creature the tax-gatherer, and see that he falls in a mud puddle afterwards."

Kathleen began to pour out her gratitude, for she was indeed transported with joy, but he held up his hand.

"No thanks," he said sharply; "I have given you a great fortune, but it is only the seed of discord to scatter in the world; for money, my dear child, is the current coin of the evil one, and I expect it will plunge you into misery."



At this little Good Hope unrolled her bundle of vapor and placed three beautiful flowers on Kathie's bosom.

"Nay," she said gently, "the King of the Pixies has given her a talisman: if only she never allows these blossoms to fade, she will be ever happy and fortunate; for the white blossom is Honesty, the golden one Content, and the red one the Thankful Heart, and if she keeps these fresh upon her bosom, she will be safe and well to the end of her life."

Kathleen was so overcome with all these kindnesses that she could only thank the givers with tearful eyes, and she followed the pixy out to the open plain, at the other side of the cliffs, where she saw the wishhounds that she had feared so much; tall, graceful, beautiful creatures they were, too, harnessed to a wonderful sledge of sea-shells, on which was the chest of uncounted treasure. Swiftly she mounted her goose and away they flew — just off the ground so as to keep near the wishhounds, who sped fleetly as winged creatures, over the moors. So happy was the child that the journey seemed short indeed, and she was surprised to see her own dear home in front of her, before she knew she was so near it. And

there, sure enough, was the tax-collector; and her mother, with a white face and tearful eyes, had just told him that she could not pay, and that her little girl had vanished, when Kathleen came running up with her hands full of broad gold pieces to pay the debts. Oh, what thankfulness there was, and what wonder! The tax-gatherer was driven off by the derricks and the pixies, who managed to trip him up in a huge mud-puddle, so that he went on in a very ill humor, while Kathleen and her mother looked at the wonderful chest that now stood in the middle of the kitchen.

It was a fortune, so that there was never any more suffering or worry for money; nor was there any wrong-doing with the fairy gift, for Kathleen never allowed the three wonderful flowers to fade, but kept them fresh on her heart as long as she lived; and she lived to be a very old woman, and a very wise and good one.