

Under the snow-white coverlet, upon the snow-white pillow, lay the most beautiful little girl that Tom had ever seen. Her cheeks were almost as white as the pillow, and her hair was like threads of gold spread all about over the bed.

She might have been as old as Tom, or may be a year or two older; but Tom did not think of that. He thought only of her delicate skin and golden hair, and wondered whether she were a real live person, or one of the wax dolls he had seen in the shops. But when he saw her breathe, he made up his mind that she was alive, and stood staring at her as if she had been an angel out of heaven.

"No; she cannot be dirty. She never could have been dirty," thought Tom to himself. And then he thought, "And are all people like that when they are washed?" And he looked at his own wrist and tried to rub the soot off, and wondered whether it ever would come off. "Certainly I should look much prettier then, if I grew at all like her."

And looking round he suddenly saw, standing close to him, a little, ugly, black, ragged figure, with bleared eyes and grinning white teeth. He turned on it angrily. What did such a little black ape want in that sweet young lady's room? And behold, it was himself, reflected in a great mirror, the like of which Tom had never seen before!

And Tom, for the first time in his life, found out

that he was dirty, and burst into tears with shame and anger, and turned to sneak up the chimney again and hide, and upset the fender,¹ and threw the fire-irons down with a noise as of ten thousand tin kettles tied to ten thousand mad dogs' tails.

Up jumped the little white lady in her bed, and, seeing Tom, screamed as shrill as any peacock. In rushed a stout old nurse from the next room, and seeing Tom likewise, made up her mind that he had come to rob, plunder, destroy, and burn; and dashed at him, as he lay over the fender, so fast that she caught him by the jacket.

But she did not hold him. Tom had been in a policeman's hands many a time, and out of them, too, what is more; and he would have been ashamed to face his friends forever if he had been stupid enough to be caught by an old woman. So he doubled under the good lady's arms, across the room, and out of the window in a moment.

He did not need to drop out, though he would have done so bravely enough; nor even to let himself down a spout, which would have been an old game to him, for once he got up by a spout to the church roof, — he said to take jackdaws' eggs, but the policeman said to steal lead, — and, when he was seen on high, sat there till the sun got too hot, and came down by another spout, leaving the

¹ fen'der, a frame for keeping the fire from falling on the floor.

policemen to go back to the station house and eat their dinners.

But all under the window spread a tree with great leaves, and sweet white flowers almost as big as his head. It was a magnolia, I suppose; but Tom knew nothing about that, and cared less; for down the tree he went like a cat, and across the garden lawn, and over the iron railings, and up the park towards the wood, leaving the old nurse to scream murder and fire at the window.

The under gardener, mowing, saw Tom, and threw down his scythe, caught his leg in it, and cut his shin open, whereby he kept his bed for a week; but in his hurry he never knew it, and gave chase to poor Tom. The dairymaid heard the noise, got the churn between her knees and tumbled over it, spilling all the cream; and yet she jumped up and gave chase to Tom.

A groom, cleaning Sir John's hack¹ at the stables, let him go loose, whereby he kicked himself lame in five minutes; but he ran out and gave chase to Tom. Grimes upset the soot sack in the new-graveled yard, and spoilt it all utterly; but he ran out and gave chase to Tom. The old steward opened the park gate in such a hurry that he caught his pony's chain upon the spikes, and for aught I know it hangs there still; but he jumped off and gave chase to Tom.

The plowman left his horses at the headland, and

¹ hack, horse.

one jumped over the fence and pulled the other into the ditch, plow and all; but he ran on and gave chase to Tom. The keeper, who was taking a stoat¹ out of a trap, let the stoat go, and caught his own finger; but he jumped up and ran after Tom, and, considering what he said and how he looked, I should have been sorry for Tom if he had caught him.

Sir John looked out of his study window (for he was an early old gentleman) and up at the nurse, and a martin dropped mud in his eye, so that he had at last to send for the doctor; and yet he ran out and gave chase to Tom. The Irishwoman, too, was walking up to the house to beg, — she must have got round by some by-way; but she threw away her bundle and gave chase to Tom likewise. Only My Lady did not give chase; for when she had put her head out of the window, her night-wig fell into the garden, and she had to ring up her lady's maid and send her down for it privately, which quite put her out of the running, so that she came in nowhere, and is consequently² not placed.

In a word, never was there heard at Hall Place — not even when the fox was killed in the conservatory³ among acres of broken glass and tons of smashed flower-pots — such a noise, row, hubbub, hullabaloo, and total contempt of dignity, repose, and order, as

¹ stoat, an ermine.

² con'se-quent-ly, therefore.

³ con-serv'a-to-ry, greenhouse.

that day when Grimes, the gardener, the groom, the dairymaid, Sir John, the steward, the plowman, the keeper, and the Irishwoman all ran up the park, shouting, "Stop thief!" in the belief that Tom had at least a thousand pounds' worth of jewels in his empty pockets; and the very magpies and jays followed Tom up, screaming and screaming as if he were a hunted fox beginning to droop his brush.

And all the while poor Tom paddled up the park with his little bare feet, like a small black gorilla fleeing to the forest.

Alas for him! there was no big father gorilla therein to take part,—to scratch out the gardener's inside with one paw, toss the dairymaid into a tree with another, and wrench off Sir John's head with a third, while he cracked the keeper's skull with his teeth as easily as if it had been a cocoanut or a paving stone.

However, Tom did not remember ever having had a father, so he did not look for one, and expected to have to take care of himself; while, as for running, he could keep up for a couple of miles with any stagecoach, if there was a chance of a copper, and turn coach-wheels on his hands and feet ten times following, which is more than you can do. Wherefore his pursuers found it very difficult to catch him; and we will hope that they did not catch him at all.

CHAPTER V.

TOM, of course, made for the woods. He had never been in a wood in his life; but he was sharp enough to know that he might hide in a bush or run up a tree, and, altogether, had more chance than in the open field. If he had not known that, he would have been foolisher than a mouse or a minnow.

But when he got into the wood, he found it a very different sort of place from what he had fancied. He pushed into a thick cover of rhododendrons,¹ and found himself at once caught in a trap.

The boughs laid hold of his legs and arms, poked him in his face and his stomach, made him shut his eyes tight (though that was no great loss, for he could not see at best a yard before his nose). And when he got through the rhododendrons, the hassock grass and sedges tumbled him over, and cut his poor little fingers afterwards most spitefully; the birches birched him as soundly as if he had been a nobleman at Eton,² and over the face, too (which is not fair switching, as all brave boys will agree); and the lawyers³ tripped him up and tore his shins as if they had shark's teeth—which lawyers are likely enough to have.

¹ rho'-do-den'dron, a rose tree; a shrub bearing beautiful flowers.

² E'ton, a noted school for boys. ³ lawyers, briars; brambles.

"I must get out of this," thought Tom, "or I shall stay here till somebody comes to help me,— which is just what I don't want."

But how to get out was the difficult matter. And indeed, I don't think he would ever have got out at all, but have stayed there till the cock robins covered him with leaves, if he had not suddenly run his head against a wall.

Now, running your head against a wall is not pleasant, especially if it is a loose wall, with the stones all set on edge, and a sharp-cornered one hits you between the eyes and makes you see all manner of beautiful stars.

The stars are very beautiful, certainly; but, unfortunately, they go in the twenty-thousandth part of a split second, and the pain which comes after them does not.

And so Tom hurt his head; but he was a brave boy, and did not mind that a penny. He guessed that over the wall the cover¹ would end; and up it he went, and over like a squirrel.

And there he was, out on the great grouse moors,² which the country folk called Harthover Fell,— heather,³ and bog, and rock,— stretching away and up, up to the very sky.

¹ cover, thicket.

² moor, a tract of poor land covered with heather.

³ heath'er, a plant common in Great Britain.

Now Tom was a cunning little fellow,— as cunning as an old Exmoor stag. Why not? Though he was but ten years old, he had lived longer than most stags, and had more wits to start with into the bargain.

He knew as well as a stag that if he backed, he might throw the hounds out. So the first thing he did, when he was over the wall, was to make the neatest double sharp to his right, and run along under the wall for nearly half a mile.

Whereby Sir John, and the keeper, and the steward, and the gardener, and the plowman, and the dairymaid, and all the hue-and-cry together went on ahead half a mile in the very opposite direction, and inside the wall, leaving him a mile off on the outside, while Tom heard their shouts die away in the wood, and chuckled to himself merrily.

At last he came to a dip in the land, and went to the bottom of it, and then he turned bravely away from the wall and up the moor; for he knew that he had put a hill between him and his enemies, and could go on without their seeing him.

But the Irishwoman, alone of them all, had seen which way Tom went. She had kept ahead of every one the whole time; and yet she neither walked nor ran. She went along quite smoothly and gracefully, while her feet twinkled past each

other so fast that you could not see which was foremost; till every one asked the other who the strange woman was. And all agreed, for want of anything better to say, that she must be in league¹ with Tom.

But when she came to the plantation, they lost sight of her; and they could do no less, for she went quietly over the wall after Tom, and followed him wherever he went. Sir John and the rest saw no more of her; and out of sight was out of mind.

And now Tom was right away into the heather, over just such a moor as those in which you have been bred, except that there were rocks and stones lying about everywhere, and that, instead of the moor growing flat as he went upwards, it grew more and more broken and hilly, but not so rough but that little Tom could jog along well enough, and find time, too, to stare about at the strange place, which was like a new world to him.

He saw great spiders there, with crowns and crosses marked on their backs, who sat in the middle of their webs, and when they saw Tom coming, shook them so fast that they became invisible.²

Then he saw lizards, brown and gray and green, and thought they were snakes, and would sting

¹ league (leeg), agreement to act together.

² in-vis'i-ble, that cannot be seen.

him; but they were as much frightened as he, and shot away into the heath. And then, under a rock, he saw a pretty sight, — a great, brown, sharp-nosed creature, with a white tag to her brush, and round her four or five smutty little cubs, the funniest fellows Tom ever saw.

She lay on her back rolling about and stretching out her legs and head and tail in the bright sunshine; and the cubs jumped over her, and ran round her, and nibbled her paws, and lugged her about by the tail, and she seemed to enjoy it mightily.

But one selfish little fellow stole away from the rest to a dead crow close by, and dragged it off to hide it, though it was nearly as big as he was. Whereat all his little brothers set off after him in full cry, and saw Tom; and then all ran back; and up jumped Mrs. Vixen, and caught one up in her mouth, and the rest toddled after her, and into a dark crack in the rocks; and there was an end of the show.

And next he had a fright; for, as he scrambled up a sandy brow, — whirr-pooof-cock-cock-kick, — something went off in his face with a most horrid noise. He thought the ground had blown up, and the end of the world come.

And when he opened his eyes (for he shut them very tight), it was only an old cock-grouse, who

had been washing himself in sand, like an Arab, for want of water, and who, when Tom had all but trodden on him, jumped up with a noise like the express train, leaving his wife and children to shift for themselves, like an old coward, and went off, screaming, "Cur-ru-u-uck, cur-ru-u-uck, — murder, thieves, fire, — cur-u-uck-cock-kick, — the end of the world is come, — kick-kick-cock-kick!"

He was always fancying that the end of the world was come when anything happened which was farther off than the end of his own nose. But the end of the world was not come, any more than the twelfth of August was, though the old grouse cock was quite certain of it.

So the old grouse came back to his wife and family an hour afterwards, and said solemnly, "Cock-cock-kick; my dears, the end of the world is not quite come, but I assure you it is coming the day after to-morrow."

But his wife had heard that so often that she knew all about it, and a little more. And, beside, she was the mother of a family, and had seven little poult¹ to wash and feed every day, and that made her very practical and a little sharp-tempered; so all she answered was, "Kick-kick-kick — kick, kick, kick — go and catch spiders, go and catch spiders — kick."

¹ poult, chicks.

CHAPTER VI.

SO Tom went on and on, he hardly knew why; but he liked the great, wide, strange place, and the cool, fresh, bracing air. But he went more and more slowly as he got higher up the hill; for now the ground grew very bad indeed.

Instead of soft turf and springy heather, he met great patches of flat limestone rock, just like ill-made pavements, with deep cracks between the stones and ledges filled with ferns; so he had to hop from stone to stone, and now and then he slipped in between and hurt his little bare toes, though they were tolerably¹ tough ones; but still he would go on and up, he could not tell why.

What would Tom have said if he had seen walking over the moor behind him the very same Irishwoman who had taken his part upon the road? But whether it was that he looked too little behind him, or whether it was that she kept out of sight behind the rocks and knolls,² he never saw her though she saw him.

And now he began to get a little hungry, and very thirsty; for he had run a long way, and the sun had risen high in heaven, and the rock was as hot as an oven, and the air danced reels over it as it does over a limekiln,³ till everything round seemed quivering and melting in the glare.

¹ tol'er-a-bly, quite.

² knolls, small hills.

³ lime'kiln (-kil), a sort of oven where limestone is burned.

But he could see nothing to eat anywhere, and still less to drink.

The heath was full of bilberries and whinberries; but they were only in flower, for it was June. And as for water, who can find that on top of a limestone rock? Now and then he passed by a deep, dark swallow-hole, going down into the earth as if it was the chimney of some dwarf's house underground; and more than once, as he passed, he could hear water falling, trickling, tinkling, many, many feet below. How he longed to get down to it and cool his poor baked lips! But, brave little chimney sweep as he was, he dared not climb down such chimneys as those.

So he went on and on, till his head spun round with the heat, and he thought he heard church bells ringing a long way off.

"Ah!" he thought, "where there is a church there will be houses and people; and perhaps some one will give me a bit and a sup." So he set off again to look for the church; for he was sure that he heard the bells quite plain.

And in a minute more, when he looked round, he stopped again, and said, "Why, what a big place the world is!"

And so it was, for, from the top of the mountain he could see,—what could he not see?

Behind him, far below, was Harthover, and the

dark woods, and the shining salmon river; and on his left, far below, was the town, and the smoking chimneys of the collieries;¹ and far, far away, the river widened to the shining sea, and little white specks, which were ships, lay on its bosom. Before him lay, spread out like a map, great plains, and farms, and villages, amid dark knots of trees. They all seemed at his very feet; but he had sense to see that they were long miles away.

And to his right rose moor after moor, hill after hill, till they faded away, blue into blue sky. But between him and those moors, and really at his very feet, lay something to which, as soon as Tom saw it, he determined to go, for that was the place for him.

A deep, deep green and rocky valley, very narrow and filled with wood; but through the wood, hundreds of feet below him, he could see a clear stream glance.

Oh, if he could but get down to that stream! Then, by the stream, he saw the roof of a little cottage, and a little garden set out in squares and beds. And there was a tiny little red thing moving in the garden no bigger than a fly.

As Tom looked down, he saw that it was a woman in a red petticoat. Ah! perhaps she would give him something to eat. And there were the church bells ringing again. Surely there must be a

¹ col'lier-ies, coal mines.

village down there! Well, nobody would know him, or what had happened at the Place.

The news could not have got there yet, even if Sir John had set all the policemen in the country after him; and he could get down there in five minutes.

Tom was quite right about the hue-and-cry not having got thither; for he had come, without knowing it, the best part of ten miles from Harthover; but he was wrong about getting down in five minutes, for the cottage was more than a mile off, and a good thousand feet below.

However, down he went, like a brave little man as he was, though he was very footsore and tired, and hungry and thirsty; while the church bells rang so loud, he began to think that they must be inside his own head, and the river chimed and tinkled far below, and this was the song which it sang:—

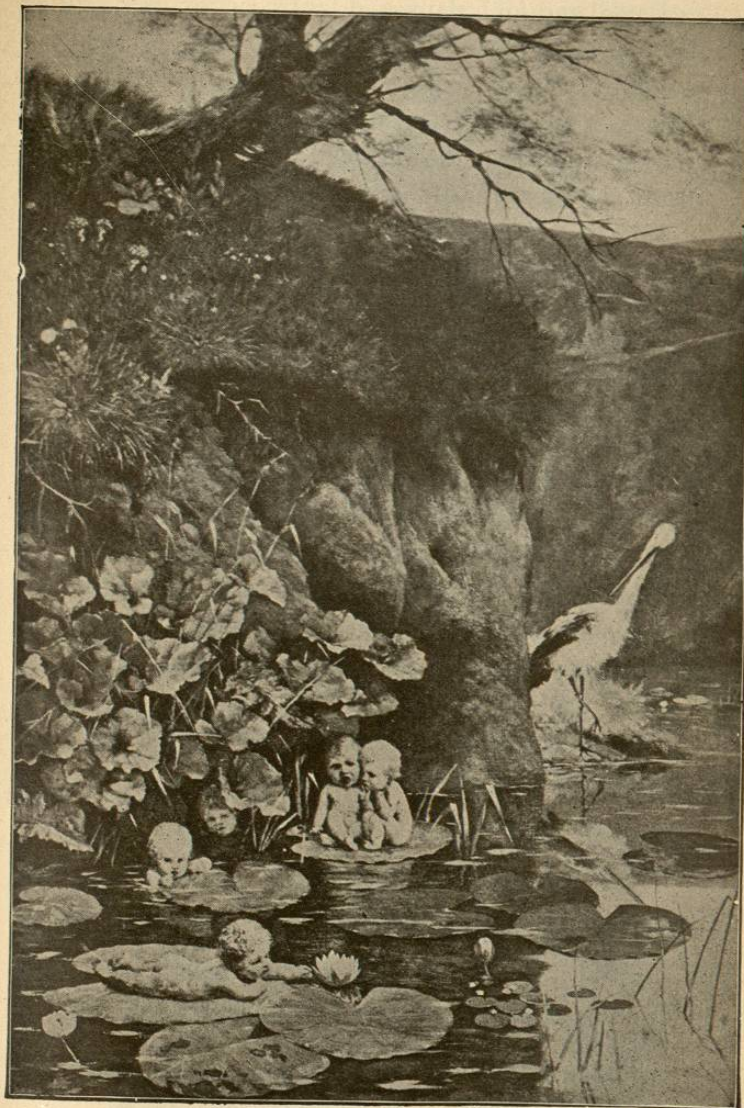
Clear and cool, clear and cool,
By laughing shallow and dreaming pool;
Cool and clear, cool and clear,
By singing shingle, and foaming wear;¹
Under the crag where the ouzel² sings,
And the ivied wall where the church bell rings,
Undeiled,⁴ for the undeiled;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child!

¹ *shin'gle*, stones worn by water; pebbles.

² *wear* (*wēr*) dam.

³ *ou'zel* (*oozl*), a bird of the thrush family.

⁴ *un-de-iled'*, not defiled or soiled; clean.



WATER BABIES.

F. DVORAK.

Dank¹ and foul, dank and foul,
 By the smoky town in its murky² cowl;³
 Foul and dank, foul and dank,
 By wharf and sewer and slimy bank;
 Darker and darker the further I go,
 Baser and baser the richer I grow;
 Who dare sport with the sin-defiled?
 Shrink from me, turn from me, mother and child!

Strong and free, strong and free,
 The floodgates are open, away to the sea;
 Free and strong, free and strong,
 Cleansing my streams as I hurry along
 To the golden sands, and the leaping bar,
 And the taintless⁴ tide that awaits me afar,
 As I lose myself in the infinite⁵ main,⁶
 Like a soul that has sinned and is pardoned again.
 Undeiled, for the undeiled,
 Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

So Tom went down, and all the while he never saw
 the Irishwoman going down behind him.

CHAPTER VII.

A MILE off, and a thousand feet down. So Tom
 found it; though it seemed as if he could
 have chucked a pebble on to the back of the woman

¹ dank, damp.

² murk'y, gloomy.

³ cowl, a kind of hood.

⁴ taint'less, pure.

⁵ in'fi-nite, endless.

⁶ main, the ocean.

in the red petticoat who was weeding in the garden,
 or even across the dale to the rocks beyond.

For the bottom of the valley was just one field
 broad, and on the other side ran the stream; and
 above it, gray crag, gray down, gray stair, gray moor,
 walled up to heaven.

A quiet, silent, rich, happy place; a narrow crack
 cut deep into the earth; so deep, and so out of the
 way, that the bad bogies¹ can hardly find it out.

And first Tom went down three hundred feet of
 steep heather, mixed up with loose brown gritstone as
 rough as a file, which was not pleasant to his poor
 little heels as he came bump, stump, down the steep.
 And still he thought he could throw a stone into the
 garden.

Then he went down three hundred feet of lime-
 stone terraces,² one below the other, as straight as if
 a carpenter had ruled them with his ruler and
 then cut them out with his chisel. There was no
 heath there, but—

First, a little grass slope, covered with the prettiest
 flowers, rockrose and saxifrage,³ and thyme⁴ and
 basil,⁵ and all sorts of sweet herbs. Then bump down
 a two-foot step of limestone; then another bit of grass

¹ bo'gies, bad spirits; hobgoblins.

² ter'-ra-ces, banks or slopes raised one above the other.

³ sax'i-frage, a plant that grows in the crevices of rocks.

⁴ thyme (time), a fragrant plant.

⁵ bas'il, a species of mountain mint.

and flowers; then bump down a one-foot step; then another bit of grass and flowers, for fifty yards, as steep as the house-roof.

Then another step of stone, ten feet high; and there he had to stop himself, and crawl along the edge to find a crack; for if he had rolled over, he would have rolled right into the old woman's garden, and frightened her out of her wits.

Then, when he had found a dark, narrow crack full of green-stalked fern such as hangs in the basket in the drawing-room, and had crawled down through it with knees and elbows, as he would down a chimney, there was another grass slope, and another step, and so on, till — oh, dear me! I wish it was all over! and so did he. And yet he thought he could throw a stone into the old woman's garden.

At last he came to a bank of beautiful shrubs, — whitebeam with its great silver-backed leaves, and mountain ash, and oak; and below them cliff and crag, cliff and crag, with great beds of crowned ferns and wood sage; while through the shrubs he could see the stream sparkling, and hear it murmur on the white pebbles. He did not know that it was three hundred feet below.

You would have been giddy, perhaps, at looking down; but Tom was not. He was a brave little chimney sweep; and when he found himself on the top of a high cliff, instead of sitting down and crying,

he said, "Ah, this will just suit me!" though he was very tired; and down he went, by stock and stone, sedge and ledge, bush and rush, as if he had been born a jolly little black ape, with four hands instead of two.

And all the while he never saw the Irishwoman coming down behind him. But he was getting terribly tired now. The burning sun on the fells had sucked him up; but the damp heat of the woody crag sucked him up still more.

At last he got to the bottom. But, behold, it was not the bottom! — as people usually find when they are coming down a mountain. For at the foot of the crag were heaps and heaps of fallen limestone, of every size, from that of your head to that of a stage-wagon, with holes between them full of sweet heath fern; and before Tom got through them he was out in the bright sunshine again; and then he felt, once for all and suddenly, as people generally do, that he was b-e-a-t, beat.

You must expect to be beat a few times in your life, little man, if you live such a life as a man ought to live, let you be as strong and healthy as you may; and when you are, you will find it a very ugly feeling. I hope that that day you may have a stout, stanch friend by you who is not beat; for, if you have not, you had best lie where you are and wait for better times, as poor Tom did.