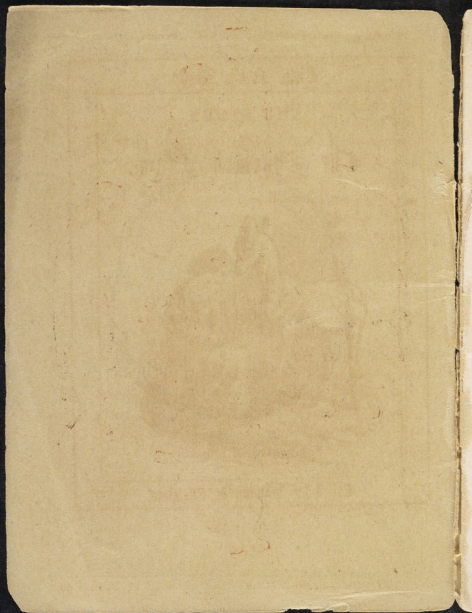




NEW YORK :—EVANS & DICKERSON, PUBLISHERS, 697 BROADWAY.



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from her Aunt

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Little Folk's Books.

THE STORY
OF
The Charmed Fawn.



Edited by Madame de Chatelain.

THE GREAT

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THE GREAT



THE GREAT

The Charmed Faun.

THERE was once a little brother who took his younger sister by the hand, and said to her: "We have never known a happy hour since we lost our mother. Our stepmother does nothing but beat or kick us all day long. She gives us dry crusts for our dinner, and treats us much worse than the dog under



the table; for he often gets a nice bit. What would our poor mother say if she knew how ill we are used?

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So come, let us go forth into the wide world." And away they wandered over meadows, fields, and stones, and whenever it rained the sister would say: "The sky is crying like our poor hearts." Towards evening, they reached a large wood, and what with grief, hunger, and fatigue, they were so exhausted that they took refuge in a hollow tree, where they fell fast asleep.

When they woke next morning, the sun was already high in the heavens, and its warm beams were falling right upon the tree. The brother then said: "Sister, I am very thirsty, and if I could but find a spring, I should be so glad to drink. I almost think I hear the sound of water bubbling just by."

And he took his sister by the hand, and they went to look for a stream. But their wicked stepmother, who was a witch, and was well aware that the children had run away, had slunk after them, and bewitched all the springs in the forest. So, when they reached a stream that ran sparkling over the pebbles, and the brother was going to drink of its water, the sister heard it murmur as it rushed along: "Whoever drinks out of me will become a tiger."

The sister then cried out: "I beseech you, brother,

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do not drink, or else you will become a wild beast, and tear me to pieces."

So the brother refrained from drinking, though he wanted sadly to quench his thirst, and said: "I will wait till the next stream."

And when they reached another spring, the sister heard it murmur: "Whoever drinks out of me will become a wolf."

Then the sister exclaimed, "I beseech you, brother,



do not drink, or you will become a wolf, and eat me up." So the brother did not drink, but answered: "I

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will wait till the next stream, but then I must drink, say what you will."

And when they reached the third spring, the sister heard it say, as it ran along: "Whoever drinks out of me will become a fawn."

Then the sister said: "Oh, brother, I beseech you not to drink, or you will become a fawn, and run away from me." But the brother had already knelt beside the stream, and stooped down and drunk of its



waters; and the first drop had no sooner moistened his lips than he was changed to a young fawn. The

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sister wept over her poor transformed brother, and the fawn wept likewise as he sat mournfully by her side. At length the little girl said: "Be easy, dear fawn, I will never leave you." She then took off her golden garter and put it round the fawn's neck, and gathered some rushes, and made a flexible rope, which she fastened to the collar, and thus led the little animal along, and went deeper into the forest. And after going a long, long way, she at last found an empty hut, where she thought they might live. She then went and fetched leaves and moss to make a soft bed for the fawn, and every morning she gathered roots, berries, or nuts for her own nourishment, and fresh grass for the fawn, who eat out of her hand, and frisked about as if he were pleased. When evening came, and the sister felt tired, she said her prayers, and then pillowed her head on the little fawn's back, and went to sleep. In short, they might have been very happy, if the brother had but retained his natural shape.

They had lived a long while in the wilderness when it happened one day that the king went a hunting in the forest. When the fawn heard the sound of the

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horn, the yelping of the hounds, and the hallooing of the huntsmen, he longed to be present, and said to his sister: "Let me join the hunt, for I can keep away no longer." And he begged and begged till at last she consented. "Only pray come back again to-night," said she, "and as I shall shut my door against the huntsmen, mind you knock and say: 'Sister, let me in,' for if you do not say so, I shall not open the door."



The fawn now darted away, and was delighted to scent the fresh air as he bounded along.

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The king and his huntsmen saw the beautiful animal, and pursued it, but were unable to overtake it, and when they thought themselves certain to catch it, on a sudden it disappeared within the thicket. As it was now dark, it ran home, and knocked at the door, saying: "Sister, let me in." The little door was immediately opened, and in it jumped, and rested all night on its soft couch.

The next day the hunt was again abroad, and no sooner did the fawn hear the horn and the huntsmen's halloo, than he could not rest, but said to his sister: "Pray, sister, open the door, for I must be off." The sister accordingly opened the door, saying: "But remember to come back at night, and say the same words." When the king and the huntsmen again caught sight of the fawn with his golden collar, they all pursued him, only he was too swift for them, and evaded them all day long; but towards evening they managed to surround him, and one of the hunters wounded him slightly in the foot, so that he limped as he went along, and was obliged to return home very slowly. This enabled one of the huntsmen to watch him to the hut, when he heard him crying out:

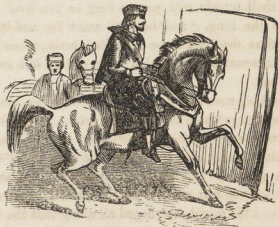
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"Sister, let me in," and saw the door was opened, and immediately closed again. The huntsman then went back, and told the king all he had seen and heard, and the monarch said that they should hunt again on the following day.

The sister was very much alarmed when the fawn came back wounded; but she washed off the blood, and bound some simples on the wound, and said: "Go and lie down, dear fawn, that you may get cured." The wound was so slight that it had healed by the next morning; and when the fawn again heard the huntsmen in the forest, he said: "I can't keep away, I must be after them; and they shall not catch me so easily again." The sister shed tears, and said: "They will certainly kill you, so I will not let you go." "Then I shall die of grief here instead, if you prevent my going," answered the fawn; "for when I hear the sound of the horn, I feel as if I wanted to jump out of my shoes." So the sister could not help opening the door, though she did it with a heavy heart, and the fawn bounded gaily across the forest. When the king saw him, he said to his huntsmen: "Now we must hunt him till evening, only mind no-

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body hurts him." Towards sunset the king said to the huntsmen who had followed the fawn the day before: "Come now, and shew me the hut where he dwells." On reaching the door, he knocked, and said:



"Dear sister, let me come in." The door flew open, and the king walked in, and beheld the most beautiful maiden he had ever seen. But the poor girl was very much frightened when she beheld the king with his golden crown on his head instead of her beloved fawn. Then the king looked at her in a kindly man-

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ner, and held out his hand to her, saying: "Will you accompany me to my palace, and become my queen?" "Yes," replied the maiden, "provided I may take my fawn with me, for I cannot abandon him." "The fawn shall remain with you as long as you live," rejoined the king, "and he shall want for nothing." Meantime the fawn came bounding home, when his sister fastened the rope to his collar, and led him away with her.

The king took the beautiful girl to his palace, where their marriage was celebrated with great pomp, and he lived very happily with his new queen, while the fawn was fondled and pampered, and had the run of the palace gardens. Meantime the wicked stepmother, whose cruelty had obliged the children to go forth into the wide world, had hoped all along that the little girl had been torn to pieces by the wild beasts in the forest, and that the little boy had been shot dead by some huntsmen, mistaking him for a real fawn. So when she heard how happy they were, envy and malice were continually gnawing at her heart, and she thought of nothing else but how she should bring them into trouble again. Her own daughter, too, who was

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one-eyed and as ugly as sin, kept kindling her bad passions by incessant reproaches, and saying, that it was she who ought to have been a queen. "Bè easy," said the old beldame; "when a good opportunity offers, I will not let it slip."

Accordingly, as soon as she heard that the queen had become the mother of a fine little boy, the old witch went to the palace while the king was out hunting, and having assumed the shape of one of the queen's maids, she went into her bedchamber, and said: "The bath is now ready, and if it pleases your majesty to get up before it grows cold, no doubt it will do you good." The witch's daughter, who was likewise at hand, then helped to lift the sick queen into the bath. No sooner had they done this, than they closed the door of the bath-room, where they had made such a fire, that they felt certain the beautiful young queen would be stifled instantaneously.

The old crone then put a cap on her daughter's head, and laid her in the queen's bed, and tried to make her look as like her majesty as possible; only, not being able to give her back the eye that was missing, she bid her lie on that side so as to conceal

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the defect. Towards evening the king came home, and hearing that a son was born to him, was delighted at the news, and immediately went to see his beloved wife. As he approached the bed, the old crone cried out to him: "For goodness sake, do not draw the curtain, for the queen wants rest, and the light would hurt her." So the king retired, without imagining that a false queen was lying in the bed.

Towards midnight, when every one was asleep except the nurse who sat watching beside the cradle in the nursery, the door opened, and the real queen came in. She took the baby out of the cradle, and gave it some drink. She then shook up its little pillow, and put it back into the cradle, and covered it up with the counterpane. Nor did she forget the fawn, but went into the corner where it lay, and stroked its back. She then retired as silently as she had come, and the nurse inquired next morning of the sentinels whether any one had entered the palace during the night? But they all answered that they had seen nobody. She came in this manner for several nights running, but never spoke a word, and the nurse always saw her, but did not dare mention anything about it.

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After a time, the queen began to speak in the night, and her words ran as follows:—

“ Say, how is my baby, and how is my fawn ?

Twice more will I come, and then vanish at dawn.”

The nurse made no answer, but when she had disappeared, she went and told the king what she had heard. “ Gracious heavens! exclaimed the king, “ what can all this mean? To morrow night I will keep watch myself by the baby’s cradle.” And accordingly, when evening came, the king went into the nursery, and towards midnight the queen appeared again, and murmured :

“ Say, how is my baby, and how is my fawn ?

Once more will I come, and then vanish at dawn.”

And she then nursed the baby as she was wont to do before she disappeared. The king did not venture to speak to her, but on the following night he sat up again, when she came and said once more :

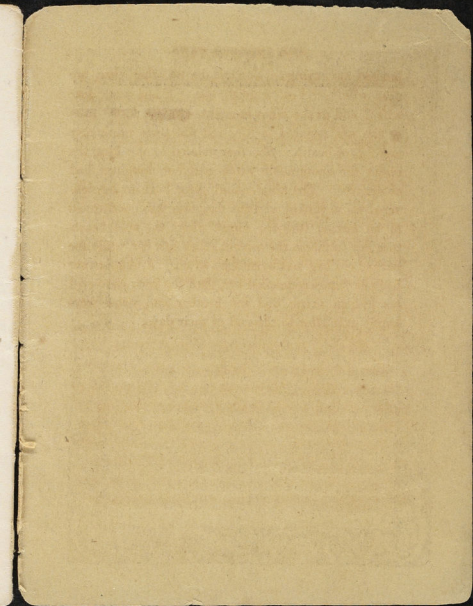
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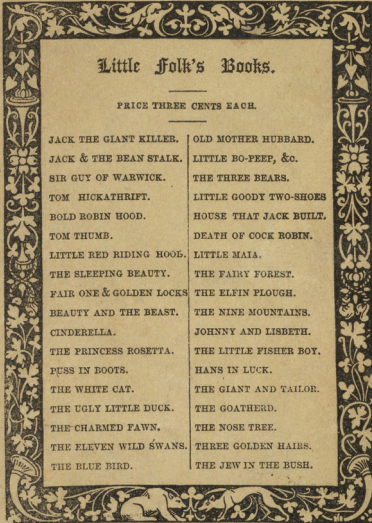
For the last time I come, and shall vanish at dawn.”

The king could now restrain himself no longer, and

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jumped up crying: "You can be no other than my dear wife." "Yes," replied she, "I am your dear wife;" and at the same moment, ~~she was restored to life, and was once more rosy and full of health.~~ she was restored to life, and was once more rosy and full of health. She then related to the king the crime the abominable witch and her daughter had committed. The king caused them both to be delivered up to justice, and the daughter was condemned to be carried into the forest, where the wild beasts tore her to pieces the moment they saw her, while the wicked old hag was burnt for a witch. And no sooner had the flames consumed her, than the fawn recovered his human shape, and the brother and sister were happy ever after to the end of their days.





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